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ECLECTIC SYMBOLISM:

THE INTERPLAY OF *JAPONISME* AND CLASSICISM IN

THE FOLDING SCREENS BY

THOMAS WILMER DEWING, 1896-1900

by

MITSUTOSHI OBA

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

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Adviser: Professor Katherine Manthorne

This study is a multicultural and multimedia reexamination of the aesthetics of folding screens created by the American painter Thomas Wilmer Dewing (1851-1938) between 1896 and 1900. These screens were executed exclusively for the Detroit houses of his patron Charles Lang Freer and Freer's business partner, Frank J. Hecker. During the 1890s, Freer was recognized as a major *japonophile* for whom Dewing not only created paintings but also purchased Japanese *objets d'art*.

In Dewing's screens, the impact of Japanese art is revealed by such visual devices as pairing of screens, continuous scenes across the paired screens, right-to-left orientation of iconography, and non-illusionistic style. These *japoniste* elements were combined by Dewing with classical elements: the Arcadian landscapes with mythological female figures in Grecian garments. Moreover, the frames of the screens designed by Stanford White were derived directly from ancient Greek temples. Interestingly, this cultural synthesis is also reflected in the ways in which these screens can be folded for display: in the *byôbu* way (z-shape) and in the manner of a Christian folding altarpiece in which the central panel is framed by side panels.

Inspired by British Aestheticism and French Symbolism as well as the idealist tradition and eclecticism in Victorian America, Dewing alluded to the eclectic styles of patrons' houses in his folding screens. What Dewing created with the eclectic juxtaposition of (and further conflation of) *japonisme* and classicism in those folding structures and painted images was a synaesthetic evocation

of music, poetry, and theater, suggesting his reference to Baudelairian *correspondances* as well as Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The double dimensionality and double folding-system of Dewing's screens not only efface the boundaries of art objects but also help to bring out a new visual expression of sensory correspondences as well as a new understanding of theater in the age of Symbolism. This point is further articulated in this study through investigations of Dewing's cultural milieu as well as his artistic activities including a multicultural masque play of 1894 directed by Dewing to celebrate Freer's first Asian tour.

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INTRODUCTION

Between 1896 and 1900, the American painter Thomas Wilmer Dewing (1851-1938) created a series of folding screens that stand, as Sarah Burns puts it, "at some point between pure painting and pure furniture."[1] These screens were executed exclusively for the Detroit houses of his patron Charles Lang Freer and Freer's business partner, Frank J. Hecker. During the 1890s, Freer was recognized as a major *japonophile* for whom Dewing not only created paintings but also purchased Japanese *objets d'art*.

In Dewing's screens, the impact of Japanese art is revealed by such visual devices as pairing of screens (which is a distinctive feature of *byôbu*, or Japanese folding screens), continuous scenes across the paired screens, right-to-left orientation of iconography, and non-illusionistic style. These *japoniste* elements were combined by Dewing with classical elements: the Arcadian landscapes with mythological female figures in Grecian garments. Moreover, the frames of the screens designed by Stanford White were derived directly from ancient Greek

temples. Interestingly, this cultural synthesis is also reflected in the ways in which these screens can be folded for display: in the *byôbu* way (z-shape) and in the manner of a Christian folding altarpiece in which the central panel is framed by side panels. These *japoniste* and classical elements are effectively conflated to evoke music, poetry, and theater, suggesting Dewing's reference to the Baudelairian notion of sensory correspondences as well as Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

In this study, I will argue that the synthesis of *japonisme* and classicism in Dewing's screens, which is evident and explicit both in two-dimensional (painted images) and three-dimensional (frames and structures) works, was the artist's deliberate strategy to create theatrical spaces in specific Victorian houses. It was, as I will explore, largely derived from the prevailing ideas of Symbolism. I will articulate this point, referring to Dewing's cultural milieu as well as his activities including a multicultural masque play of 1894 directed by Dewing to celebrate Freer's first Asian tour.

An aesthetic affinity between Dewing's art and European Symbolism was already suggested by Burns in her above-cited dissertation of 1979. However, her focus is on Dewing's art in the context of late-nineteenth-century poetic painting derived from the American idealist tradition. Symbolism in Dewing's art is also suggested by Charles Eldredge in his *American Imagination and Symbolist Painting*,[2] the first and only comprehensive account of the impact of the European Symbolist movement on American art. However, his remarks on Dewing are very brief and make no reference to screens.

Dewing's socio-cultural activities, his basic aesthetic concerns as well as his artistic development have been superbly examined by Susan Hobbs in her catalogue for the first comprehensive retrospective exhibition of his art, held at the Brooklyn Museum in 1996, as well as in her previously published articles.[3] Although Hobbs discusses Dewing's screens and historical background for his *japonisme* and provides various hints of the impact of contemporary European Symbolism on his art, they are subordinate parts of her investigation and further

clarification is necessary. My study is thus to be an additional, yet hopefully crucial, contribution to her effort.

As feminist and socio-cultural interpretations have become vogue in recent studies of late-nineteenth-century American art, Dewing has emerged as a pivotal figure because of his elitist Aestheticism and his aristocratic, enigmatic female images. However, Dewing's artistic intentions have remained rather obscure. In a recent dissertation focusing exclusively on Dewing's art, "A Modern Instance: Thomas Dewing and Aesthetic Vision at the Turn of the Century,"[4] Lee Glazer discusses the artist's "anti-commercial commercialism," which refers to his exhibition strategies to raise the commercial value of his art by showing his works in such a way as to proclaim that his art was directed towards selected intellectuals rather than for the general public. While the Dewing-Freer association is the central issue of her thesis, Glazer almost totally ignores Dewing's folding screens which were designed exclusively for the private houses of his patrons

without any commercialization, a fact that jeopardizes Glazer's theory of "anti-commercial commercialism."

In *Art and the Higher Life: Painting and Evolutionary Thought in Late Nineteenth-Century America*,[5] Kathleen Pyne associates Dewing's aristocratic female figures with late-nineteenth-century evolutionary theory. Concerning *The Four Sylvan Sounds*, the first pair of Dewing's series of screens, she argues that the synthesis of Eastern mysticism and Western humanism was the way in which *fin-de-siècle* American intellectuals and artists supported their Transcendentalist tradition as well as Spencerian social evolutionism. Her perceptive social analysis is relevant to the current study, as Dewing's concern with the 'high arts' certainly reflects Spencerian evolutionism. Pyne, however, does not go on to analyze the further aesthetics of *The Four Sylvan Sounds*-- musicality, poetics, and theatricality--evoked by the East-West synthesis.

In recent studies on the art of Dewing, investigations of contemporary music, poetry, and theater in relation to his art have been rather scarce after Burns's initial (yet in-depth) analysis of Dewing's works in the context of

nineteenth-century American idealist literature. The examination of contemporary music, poetry, and theater is crucial to the reading of Dewing's works not only because they were his favorite cultural pastimes and ones he shared with his wife, the poet-playwright-painter Maria Oakey Dewing, but also because they constitute the central iconography of his art. Dewing's concepts and depictions of 'music', 'poetry', and 'theater' are the keys to associating his academic classicism of the late 1870s and Aestheticism of the next decade with his unique Tonalism, developed in his paintings of the 1890s.[6] They are, moreover, the keys to seeing the interaction between two distinctive subjects within his Tonalist mode: landscapes with figures and women in interiors. That the visual and performing arts as well as literature were vigorously correlated in the Symbolist movement is documented by Henri Dorra in his superb interpretation and compilation of contemporary Symbolist writings.[7]

Inspired by British Aestheticism and French Symbolism as well as the idealist tradition and eclecticism in Victorian America, Dewing alluded to the eclectic styles of

patrons' houses in his folding screens. What Dewing created with the eclectic juxtaposition of (and further conflation of) *japonisme* and classicism in those folding structures and painted images was a synaesthetic evocation of music, poetry, and theater. The double dimensionality and double folding-system of Dewing's screens not only efface the boundaries of art objects but also help to bring out a new visual expression of sensory correspondences as well as a new understanding of theater in the age of Symbolism. Thus, 'eclectic Symbolism' is the term I choose to define those screens.

*

In Thomas Dewing's paintings, including his screens, female figures are almost invariably featured. Hence, interpreting meanings of those women has been a prevailing issue among contemporary and later writers of his art. In his introduction to the 1963 exhibition catalogue of Dewing's works, Lloyd Goodrich proclaimed: "The recurring theme in Thomas Dewing's art is womankind. His ethereal creatures . . . are exquisite sonnets to femininity."[8] Thirty-three years later, in her essay for the most

comprehensive exhibition catalogue of the artist, Barbara Dayer Gallati confirms: "Thomas Wilmer Dewing's dominant iconographic theme was the woman."[9] Associating the artist's female figures with specific women, particularly his wife and models, Gallati claims that Dewing's paintings were more "highly personal statements than . . . overarching declarations of the era's philosophical, social, or aesthetic climate."[10]

Gallati's argument is in response to the variety of recent interpretations of Dewing's female figures such as the one by Kathleen Pyne. For Pyne, the reading of women in his art is the principal issue in the study of Dewing's art because the "precise meaning of Dewing's female figures . . . has remained problematic," while his artistic style has been well-examined.[11] In the light of Spencerian evolutionary theory, largely popular in late-nineteenth-century America, Pyne sees Dewing's figure as representing the "evolved Anglo-American woman."[12] For Bailey van Hook, on the other hand, Dewing's female imagery "occupied a realm that was defined as 'ideal' . . . against the 'real' world that was defined as masculine."[13] In the latest

dissertation on Dewing, Trudi Abram claims that Dewing's "enigmatic woman . . . threatened the gender status quo" as she was "distinctly different from either the true-woman or the New Woman,"[14] two contrasting female stereotypes prevalent in later-nineteenth-century America.

It seems that viewing Dewing's art as the representation of womanhood was already common during his own days as the perceptive critic Charles H. Caffin warned: "To the careless eye Thomas W. Dewing's pictures are merely studies in femininity."[15] Those recent studies on the art of Dewing are, however, by no means careless. They include discerning contextualization of his works with exhaustive documentation, to which I am largely indebted in the current study. Nevertheless, the unanimous priority they give to the femininity in Dewing's art could lead their readers to disregard all other aspects of his art and aesthetics. Those studies show diverse readings of Dewing's art endlessly possible for such poetic and semi-abstract works by an artist who did not clarify his artistic intention beyond a few suggestions in his private letters (Abram even claims to disregard the artist's

intention for the sake of the originality of her theory).[16] Yet, no matter how diverse their interpretations are and how much each emphasizes a unique socio-cultural context, their invariable focus on femininity lead us to believe that Dewing's concern in his art was, above all, womanhood.

According to the artist's friend, Nelson C. White, when Dewing was told that "he was a subtle interpreter of women" he replied: "Not at all. All I ever did was to insist that my model should have *brains*!"[17] When Sadakichi Hartmann, the pioneer critic of art photography, asked Dewing about the significance of models for his paintings, Dewing replied: "the photographer cannot get away from his model; he will always get something which will resemble the model, . . . while I merely use one as a suggestion."[18] Royal Cortissoz, Dewing's "faithful friend of more than four decades,"[19] wrote that Dewing's figures "remain always the creatures of his own domain, the domain of an exquisitely *dehumanized* beauty [emphasis mine]."[20] Dewing once expressed his conformity with this critic's idea for his art, while writing that other critics' descriptions "seemed so foreign to my intention."[21]

For Dewing, female figures were integral parts of his abstract scheme. Yet, it is true that those comments by Dewing and his contemporaries certainly reflect his view(s) of woman. The intention of an artist is never the sole vehicle with which to interpret the work of art. In the age of "The Death of the Author," the artist in fact disappears once a work is executed, leaving the viewer the "multiplicity" of imagery and context.[22] It is in this "multiplicity" of imagery in Dewing's art, however, I would like to question the sole focus of womanhood in recent Dewing studies.

After decades of painstaking research on Dewing, Susan Hobbs writes: "The relationship between technique and image in his art suggests that he intended to reconfigure or redefine the elusive, subjective idea of beauty."[23] While I am in accord with Hobbs's view of reconfigured beauty in Dewing's art, the "relationship between technique and image in his art" seems to indicate that his concern was something more specific: namely, the representation of music, poetry, and theater. Dewing's attempt to associate his paintings with those 'high arts' is evident and

paramount not only in concept but also in painted images. In the following chapters, I will argue that a series of folding screens Dewing created in the late 1890s was a culmination of Dewing's distinctive aesthetics towards music, poetry, and theater in his art.

By exploring the unrivaled depth of Dewing's *japonisme* beyond stylistic appropriation and by situating it in a larger cultural context than often one-sided *japoniste*-historiography, this study is also intended to contribute toward a new perspective in studies of *japonisme*. Moreover, with my multicultural and cross-cultural investigation as well as multi/cross-media approach, I hope to initiate a new dialogue in art historical studies.

*

In chapter one, after discussing the paradoxical nature of Dewing's art and life and the seeming discrepancy between his art and the major currents of the late nineteenth century, I will trace his works in the light of representations of 'music', 'poetry', and 'theater', so as to argue that his art in fact had developed around consistent aesthetics. I will also discuss how the idea of

depicting those 'high arts' was derived from his unique sensitivity to classicism.

In the second chapter, I will examine style and aesthetics of Dewing's folding screens in relation to the patrons' houses as well as folding screens in Japan and in the West. Examining details of the screens both in framework and painting, I will point out classicist features and *japoniste* ones and how qualities of permanence and impermanence were synthesized to create an enigmatic vision of 'music' and 'poetry'.

In the third chapter, I will consider Dewing's *japonisme* in the context of the late-nineteenth-century American fascination for the "Far Eastern" culture as well as in relation to Freer's collection of Japanese art. I will also argue that American *japonisme* was not merely artists' appropriation of stylistic principles they found in Japanese art but deeply related to the ideological and spiritual contexts of Victorian America.

In the last chapter, in order to find out the meaning of double dimensionality and double folding-system of Dewing's screens, I will explore his cultural milieu

beginning with his own production of a multicultural masque in 1894 to celebrate Freer's first Asian tour. Examining the aesthetics of international Symbolism as a meeting ground of visual arts, music, poetry, and theater, I will suggest that the interplay of *japonisme* and classicism in Dewing's screens was his Symbolist scheme to create visions of 'music', 'poetry', and, above all, 'theater' of total art.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1] Sarah Lea Burns, "The Poetic Mode in American painting: George Fuller and Thomas Dewing" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1979), 236.

[2] Charles Eldredge, *American Imagination and Symbolist Painting* (New York: Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, 1979).

[3] Susan A. Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing: Beauty Reconfigured* (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1996); see also Susan Hobbs, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing: The Early Years, 1851-1885," *American Art Journal* 13 (Spring 1981), 4-35 and "Thomas Dewing in Cornish, 1885-1905," *American Art Journal* 17 (Spring 1985), 2-32, among her numerous articles on Dewing.

[4] Lee Glazer, "A Modern Instance: Thomas Dewing and Aesthetic Vision at the Turn of the Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996).

[5] Kathleen Pyne, *Art and the Higher Life: Painting and Evolutionary Thought in Late Nineteenth-Century America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).

[6] See chapter one, for the discussion of the American Tonalism and why Dewing's art is unique among Tonalist paintings.

[7] Henry Dorra, ed., *Symbolist Art Theories: A Critical Anthology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[8] *A Loan Exhibition: Thomas W. Dewing, 1851-1938* (New York: Durlacher Bros., 1963), introductory page.

[9] Barbara Dayer Gallati, "Beauty Unmasked: Ironic Meaning in Dewing's Art," in Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 51.

[10] Ibid., 53.

[11] Kathleen Pyne, "Evolutionary Typology and the American Woman in the Work of Thomas Dewing," *American Art* 7 (fall 1993), 13.

[12] Ibid., 21.

[13] Bailey Van Hook, *Angels of Art: Women and Art in American Society, 1876-1914* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 13.

[14] Trudi Abram, "Representations of American Femininity: True-Woman, New Woman, and Thomas Wilmer Dewing's Enigmatic Woman" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1999), 34.

[15] Charles H. Caffin, "The Art of Thomas W. Dewing," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 116 (April 1908), 714.

[16] Abram clearly states: "My study differs from previous scholarship because I do not focus on the intention of the artist . . .," Abram, "Representations of American Femininity," 15.

[17] *A Loan Exhibition: Thomas W. Dewing,* no page number.

[18] Sadakichi Hartmann, "A Photographic Enquête," *Camera Notes* 5 (April 1902), 237.

[19] Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing,* 43.

[20] Royal Cortissoz, *American Artists* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), 54.

[21] Thomas Wilmer Dewing to Royal Cortissoz, August 19, 1895, Royal Cortissoz Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

[22] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in his *The Rustle of Language,* translated by Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 49-55.

[23] Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, ix.

CHAPTER ONE

"MAKE THEM BOTH SUBJECTIVE"[1]: ART AND LIFE OF THOMAS WILMER DEWING AND THE MEANING OF HIS CLASSICISM

One of the most progressive painters of Victorian America, Thomas Wilmer Dewing primarily worked in New York City when the eclectic taste in the arts and material culture was at its peak.[2] For his occasional relief from the heat and materialism of urban life, he spent his summers at the artists' colony in Cornish, New Hampshire from 1885 to 1905 (fig. 1).[3] The rural atmosphere of Cornish inspired him to create his best known outdoor series featuring elegantly dressed aristocratic women in greenish-toned landscapes as exemplified in *After Sunset* of 1892 (fig. 2). "My decorations," as Dewing fondly called those aesthetically challenging works, "belong to the poetic & imaginative world where a few choice spirits live."[4]

Between 1896 and 1900, while he was working on these "decorations," Dewing also executed another type of "decoration": folding screens. In these screens, classical elements derived from ancient Greece combined with

Japanese-inspired exotic and abstract elements are finely synthesized to evoke "the poetic & imaginative world" even more eloquently than do the Cornish landscapes. The synthesis is evident and explicit in the style and iconography of the paintings as well as in the framing and structural system of the screens, as we will explore in detail later. This synthesis associates those private and seemingly peripheral art objects (which were thus scarcely mentioned in the contemporary writings on Dewing) with various contemporary art movements as well as other cultural facets of Victorian America. The interplay of *japonisme* and classicism in Dewing's screens addresses the complexity, ambiguity, and even contradiction of this second type of "decoration." Dewing's screens are essentially marginal as art objects because they are at the same time paintings and furniture, two-dimensional and three-dimensional.

For those who knew Dewing, the beauty of his art was quite contradictory to his outlook and personality. His friend Nelson C. White wrote: "As a man, [Dewing] presented some outward contradictions. . . . It seemed strange, and

still does, that this large powerful man should have produced pictures of such rare refinement and delicacy of feeling."[5] Ezra Tharp, who visited Dewing's studio in 1914, wondered "how just such pictures came to be painted by such a man, a tall, fierce, bristling man, bitterly ready to quarrel, using a witty tongue so as to cause bitterness in others."[6] Another friend of Dewing's also comments that Dewing "did not look in the least like the type who would be painting Dewings."[7] The variety of paradoxes are also found within his indefinite artistic style itself. While Kathleen Pyne states that Dewing's "place as a leader of the movement toward aestheticism and tonalism has been firmly established" in the recent reevaluation of late-nineteenth-century American art history, it still seems that Dewing's place as an artist of a particular movement is as "problematic" as "the precise meaning of Dewing's female figures" that Pyne superbly examines in her article.[8] Dewing's place "as a leader" of any movement is, in fact, quite ambiguous as the following overview of his art suggests.

The Paradox of Dewing's Art

Thomas Dewing was a classicist, established partly through his study at a French academic art school (the Académie Julian) from 1876 to 1878 and partly through his assimilation of British Aestheticism in his earlier career. H. Barbara Weinberg, however, credits Dewing's Parisian training as the definitive source for his entire artistic creation. Concerning one of his early aesthetic works,[9] *A Garden* of 1883 (fig. 3), Weinberg claims: "like the Aesthetic movement itself . . . the work is also entirely consistent with the late nineteenth-century French academic spirit which exerted formative influence not only on Dewing but also on Moore, Alma-Tadema, and Whistler."[10] Applying her idea to Dewing's "characteristic mature works," Weinberg concludes: "Whistler and English Aestheticism, Corot and Vermeer are often, and properly, credited for their impact on Dewing, but his response to such sources had its roots in his Parisian training."[11]

In fact, Corot's impact on Dewing preceded his Parisian training and Vermeer became a significant source for Dewing after his mature period.[12] British Aestheticism

and French academic painting indeed resemble each other in their classicism. Nevertheless, there exists considerable disparity between those two artistic styles particularly in "spirit" as shown in the art-for-art's-sake ideal in the works of Albert Moore and James McNeill Whistler. Dewing's early paintings in fact show more affinity with British Aestheticism than French academic painting.[13] Royal Cortissoz, an influential contemporary critic and close friend of Dewing's, claimed that his works "have something that cannot be drawn from Academic sources." "How pointedly," Cortissoz maintained: "how distinctly, Mr. Dewing detaches himself from that sterile school of craftsmen who have sought to establish in America the Parisian ideal of mere technical polish, irrespective of theme."[14]

Interestingly, however, Cortissoz also differentiated Dewing's art from Aestheticism: "standing between art for the sake of art, and subject for the sake of subject, he reaches the only sound solution by cutting the Gordian knot."[15] His representation of female figures, indeed, considerably lacks the explicit eroticism and seductive

props that are so pervasive in British and American aesthetic painting as well as in French academic classicism of the late nineteenth century. In Dewing's oeuvre, we seldom see the nudity, the voluptuous plumpness, the transparency of garments, seductive gazes and gestures of figures, or the completely passive bodies of sleeping beauties. The gaze toward the viewer occasionally appears in Dewing's figures, yet the seductive nature of the gaze is hardly the central issue of his art. The female gaze in his art is primarily for the poetic and intellectual evocation, to embellish the enigma of the whole picture.

Dewing was also Symbolist in his perpetual allusion to music, poetry, and theater, in his subjective use of colors, and in his depiction of enigmatic female images. Dewing himself remarked: "Choose your theme as you will . . . an unimportant theme if you prefer. Keep your art. But make them both subjective."[16] Understanding of his art in the context of international Symbolism is crucial for his mature works of the 1890s, as I will argue later. Unlike dominant Symbolist pictures of his age, however, his images hardly represent horror, anxiety, or decadence.[17] In Ezra

Tharp's terms: "he is rarefied, decadent . . . yet how far from the decadence of a decadent age."[18] While he obsessively depicted female figures, his women hardly appear to be either the "*femme fatale*" or the "Modern Madonna," two conflicting yet closely related female images dominant in *fin-de-siècle* Symbolist painting.[19]

The difficulty of categorizing him as an artist is exemplified in Abraham A. Davidson's characterization of Dewing as one of "the visionaries of 'the normal'" who are "the least aggressively visionary," whereas he is "the most visionary" among "tonalists" who are essentially "visionaries."[20] For Lloyd Goodrich, Dewing's art represents "the half real, half visionary sense of a dream world."[21] Dewing was indeed a visionary as well as a 'realist' in larger sense of the term. Containing "no imaginative extravaganzas, no obvious earmarks of the bizarre,"[22] his paintings such as the Cornish landscapes and women in interiors recreate real sites and real people. Though subjective, those paintings do not conceal the iconography of the modern life of women at leisure. And again, Dewing deconstructs the realism. As Cortissoz has

pointed out, Dewing "does not forget that he is working in the present, and he shows the realists what can be done with the substance of modern life, modern environment."[23]

There are further paradoxes in his art. Dewing became a member of the conventional National Academy of Design while actively participating in the progressive Society of American Artists. Yet still, the most radical shift in his art, the shift from the British-Aesthete mode with classical figures toward the visionarity of modern life, was to come right after his election to National Academician in 1888. Dewing "had stopped producing imaginative subjects," Susan Hobbs rightly claims: "A New phase began."[24]

This shift coincided with his use of much looser brush strokes to create the mist-like tonality in a whole picture, the definitive departure from the academic tradition. His mature works such as *The Hermit Thrush* (1890; fig. 6) and *In the Garden* (c. 1872-94; fig. 7) are thus often characterized as "Tonalist." The Tonalist movement in American art, which culminated around 1896, was derived from variety of sources such as the "Dutch

Barbizon" art, paintings of James McNeill Whistler and Puvis de Chavannes, and American Romanticism tradition.[25] In a Tonalist painting, as William H. Gerdts puts it, "a single color dominated . . . [and] forms were perceived through an overall colored atmosphere or mist which produced an evenness of hue throughout."[26] Tonalists' emphasis on spirituality, poetic evocation, "feelings of reverie and nostalgia," as well as "abstract simplification"[27] is also shared with Dewing's paintings of the 1890s.

However, the artists of the American Tonalist movement were "all landscapists" except for Dewing and George Fuller.[28] Although Dewing's paintings of the 1890s are certainly Tonalist in technique and aesthetics, his constant thematization of figures as well as his expansion of Tonalist theme to interiors make him at odd in the movement. And yet, he was to be *the* Tonalist among members of the Ten American Painters formed in 1898. Although the Ten American Painters was not formed as an Impressionist group, most of the members were master Impressionists and it has been largely (and mistakenly) regarded as *the*

American Impressionist group.[29] While being strongly associated with those leading modernists, Dewing would gradually abandon the abstract approach explored in his "decorations" so as to concentrate on the old-masters-inspired paintings of women in interiors such as *The Necklace* of 1908 (fig. 8).[30]

According to Susan Hobbs and Barbara Dayer Gallati: "Dewing's opposing needs were a desire to be accepted and admired by the artistic community and a determination to remain apart from it by virtue of his unique approach to art."[31] His art is, in a sense, centric *and* eccentric. He always associated himself with major art organizations and movements of his time, but his art always marginalized him within each movement.

The series of folding screens created in the late 1890s does not really solve the puzzle of his art. On the contrary, they make the above-mentioned radical shift of the late 1880s ineffective, for they proclaim his return to classicism and Aestheticism. Furthermore, they are "at some point between pure painting and pure furniture."[32] As paintings, they are masterpieces of Aesthete-Tonalist-

Symbolism. As furniture, they can be located at some point where the American Renaissance, the Arts and Crafts, and Art Nouveau converge. Given the paradoxical nature of Dewing's art and life, the multiplicity and uncategorizable nature of his screens seem intentional. With closer examination of Dewing's oeuvre, however, we also realize that those folding screens in fact embody the aesthetics that are consistent throughout his career.

We will now look into the details of his life and art in the light of music, poetry, and theater and see how representations of those 'high arts' unite his oeuvre of various styles even more strongly than the 'womanhood', which is generally regarded as his consistent theme. His ambition to synthesize those 'high arts' and go beyond them with his brush seems to have begun during his youth. Recalling his shared moments with Dewing, Nelson White again remarked: "[Dewing] studied music to a point that he played the violin in a theatre orchestra."[33] Dewing did not pursue that career not simply because he also had talent in drawing and acting but because of his family circumstance.

Music in Dewing's Art

Dewing was born in 1851 as the fifth and last child of a family of modest means in Boston. His paternal and maternal ancestors both came from England to settle in Massachusetts in the mid-seventeenth century. His father, Paul, from a family of farmers, was eventually able to run a paper mill because of his marriage to Sophronia Durant who came from a prosperous family of land and mill owners in Newton. Dewing's alcoholic father, however, soon lost his fortune and died when Dewing was still twelve. Thereafter, he was apprenticed in a lithography shop and subsequently worked as a taxidermist as well as a clerk. But his unusual talent in drawing and lithography established him as a local artist by 1872. Within three years his skillful black-and-white chalk portraits, as exemplified in the *Portrait of Walt Whitman* (1875; fig. 9), became well-known enough to attract the attentions of wealthy patrons as far as Albany, New York, where he was invited to paint their portraits. There he earned enough money to go to Paris for study in 1876.

In Paris, Dewing enrolled in the Académie Julian, a private art school with strong ties to the government-sponsored École des Beaux-Arts. Although he studied with Gustave-Rudolphe Boulanger, the Néo-Grec painter of Ancient and Near Eastern themes, and Jules-Joseph Lefebvre who painted allegorical female nudes, the artist who exerted lasting impact on Dewing was neither one of those renowned teachers but their Néo-Grec friend Jean-Louis Hamon. What Dewing learned most from the classicism of Hamon was not academic techniques but the musicality of composition in line, color, and tone.[34] Dewing would soon realize that some of the leading British painters were practicing classicism as a means to evoke musicality in their images.

The most exuberant iconography, often conspicuous but occasionally hidden and evoked by other elements--throughout Dewing's major paintings from *A Musician* of 1877 to *The Singer* of 1924--is that of 'music'. In his oeuvre, a variety of musical instruments--from ancient to medieval to modern--are depicted as the central iconographical elements. They are neither additional props for narratives nor metaphors for ideological themes (with a few

exceptions) but the sights and sites from which tone, rhythm, and fragrance emanate and vibrate with lines, colors, textures, and bodies, representing the theme which is 'music' itself.

A Musician of 1877 (fig. 10) is probably the first work done after his return form Paris.[35] A strong sense of anatomy, volume, chiaroscuro, as well as finish, seen in the undraped upper body of female figure dominating this canvas, clearly reflect Dewing's Parisian training. Although the academy-derived eroticism in the voluptuous nude with closed eyes (very rare in his oeuvre) could suggest Orientalist anecdotal connotations, there is no explicit element for a spectator to make sense of the scene as a narrative. More prominent in this painting is in fact Dewing's tendency toward Aestheticism as exemplified in such denarrativized paintings as Albert Moore's *A Musician* of 1865-6 (fig. 11).

In his review of the Society of American Artists exhibition of 1878, H.C. Brunner wrote that Dewing's *A Musician* "shows us a young woman who has been making desperate efforts to be pre-Raphaelite, and who has

signally failed. She has sat down before a pre-Raphaelite background, in a state of pre-Raphaelite nudity, with a feebly pre-Raphaelite bullrush in a pot by her side."[36] What the reviewer is referring here is most likely the late Pre-Raphaelitism which is similar to Aestheticism.[37] The reviewer regarded *A Musician* as a failed Pre-Raphaelite not only because of its academic classicism but possibly because the subject of this painting seemed even more ambiguous than British counterparts. While Moore's musician plays a lyre next to his private audiences, Dewing's musician is alone and she does not even play her violin.

Though seemingly after her performance, the musician's pose, facial features, and hands holding her violin in Dewing's picture are neither emotional (or tense) enough to suggest her rapture nor relaxed enough to suggest a state of reverie. She is rather in a state in which tension and repose resonate: she is in a state of performance, or at least, her mind is. Her music is evoked by rhythmic patterns on the vibrant hanging, which covers the space behind her, eliminating spatial perspective and narrative

at the same time. Though chiaroscuro is obvious, the color range in the picture is limited to reddish tones, derived from the unprimed mahogany panel used for the painting. The reddish brown of the mahogany deliberately appears here and there on the panel echoing the red and wood of her violin, her flesh, her hair, her drapery, and the animated hanging. 'Music' is thus depicted.

Despite that harsh criticism on *A Musician*, Dewing made a big step toward diminishing French academic aspects and enhanced the quality of Aestheticism in *A Song* painted the following year (fig. 12). Upon visiting Dewing's studio in 1878, George Fuller, an eminent painter of poetic evocation, commented on Dewing's *A Song* in his letter to his wife:

> I called this evening on Mr. Dewing a young man lately returned from Paris, where he has been studying as long as his purse would let him--only a year or so, but his drawing is perfect and he has a great deal of poetic power and although he is quite doubtful of himself I think he has a future before him with his poems and I have been telling him so. I wish you could see a picture he is painting. The Song--something in the way of Hamon. So unlike nature and yet so like its name--the Song.[38]

Fuller clearly saw Hamon's influence on *A Song* as well as how music itself was the theme of this painting.

In the following year, Dewing even more boldly eliminated French academism in his *Morning* (fig. 5), whose composition is "more strikingly stylized."[39] In this period when Dewing's style was transforming, 'music' remained as the iconographic constant. Stylized elements on this canvas echo with sounds and rhythms from the long brass horns being played by two women in the center. A Boston reviewer of this painting wrote that Dewing was the "Boston representative of the Burne-Jones school of English painters."[40]

Dewing left Boston for New York in 1880. In his works of the 1880s the impact of British Aestheticism became definitive. By this time Dewing must have been aware of Walter Pater's influential treatise, *The Renaissance*. Published in 1873, this highly self-referential yet aesthetically profound account of the art of the Italian Renaissance would soon become vogue among aesthetes. In this book, Pater proclaimed: "All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music."[41] Thus musicality of color and form became the dominant concern in aesthetic painting. The musicality of Dewing's paintings, however,

was still more tangible than Pater's concept of music, as he kept depicting musical instruments, such as the ones in *A Garden* of 1883 (fig. 3), *Gloria* of 1884 (fig. 13), or *The Days* of 1886 (fig. 14).

Both of Dewing's new subjects, women in interiors and Cornish-derived landscapes with figures, were initiated with 'music' as the central iconography. In his first painting of a woman in an interior, *Lady with a Lute* of 1886 (fig. 15), a woman in contemporary costume replaced the classical images Dewing had been depicting. The woman sitting on the bench is illuminated in an interior of otherwise total darkness where both reality and otherworldliness are somehow diminished. The lute is intimately held and touched by her, but not played: the artist's strategy to encourage us to anticipate her music emanating from darkness. It is, however, difficult for us to focus on her music because both the woman and her lute are depicted with crisp and detailed delineation and refined chiaroscuro. One possible explanation for the shift in Dewing's style around 1890 as exemplified in another woman in an interior, *The Piano* of 1891 (fig. 16),

is that he found a better solution for associating specific musical contents with the aesthetics toward a visual representation of 'music'.

In his Tonalist landscapes with figures, 'music' prevails. One of his earliest Cornish landscapes, the *Summer* of 1890 (fig. 17), depicts the four illuminated figures elegantly dancing across the canvas of deep green foliage to the melody of the harpist seen on the right. The musician's presence breaks symmetrical placement of dancing figures so as to suggest movement and the temporality of rhythm and sound. Inspired by the musicality of this painting, Richard Watson Gilder wrote the following poem:

> Behold these maidens in a row,
> Against the birches' freshening green;
> Their lines like music sway and flow;
> They move before the emerald screen
> Like broidered figures dimly seen
> On woven cloth, in moony glow--
> Graceful, gracious, and serene.
> They hear the harp; its lovely tones
> Each maiden in each motion owns,
> As if she were a living note
> Which from that curved harp doth float.[42]

Dewing's paintings such as *Summer*, also inspired George Parsons Lathrop to write that the artist's works were

"rhythmic or musical in color and design."[43] Musical instruments continue to appear in such Cornish landscapes as *The Song* of 1891 (fig. 18) and *The Garland* of 1899 (fig. 19).

According to Ezra Tharp, Dewing, in the early twentieth century, "seems to have been bored by the whole decorative school. He swung back to Chardin and over to Vermeer, his most intimate influence of all."[44] But his depiction of 'music' continued as seen in the *Brocart de Venise* of 1904-5 (fig. 20), *The Singer* of 1924 (fig. 21), and a number of other women in interiors. It was thus quite appropriate for the Steinway & Sons to commission Dewing to paint the lid of the concert grand art-case piano for Theodore Roosevelt's White House. The painting was executed in 1904 (fig. 22).[45]

Scholars have unanimously suggested that one of the most important sources for Dewing in depicting 'music' in his canvases is the art of American expatriate painter James McNeill Whistler (1843-1903), who was instrumental in the development of British Aestheticism. Since the 1860s, largely inspired by Japanese art he passionately collected,

as well as by the unique classicism of his closest friend Albert Moore, Whistler had painted figures and landscapes of subtle tonality and bold asymmetry, to which he gave such musical titles as "symphony," "harmony," and "nocturne." Speaking of the abstract and denarrativized quality of his paintings, Whistler remarked: "As music is the poetry of sound, so is painting the poetry of sight, and the subject-matter has nothing to do with harmony of sound or of colour."[46]

Whistler's works and aesthetics were well-known among progressive American painters since Dewing's early career, but the impact of Whistler on Dewing became decisive in his mature period of the 1890s when his major patron Charles Lang Freer was on his way to form a distinguished collection of Whistler's works. Whistler's association with Freer and Dewing will be discussed further in later chapters. It should be noted here, however, that Dewing's depiction of 'music' was, as we have seen, more specific than the abstract nature of 'music' in Whistlerian design principle.

At first glance, Dewing's Tonalist masterpiece *The Hermit Thrush* of 1890 (fig. 6) might seem to suggest that his aesthetics became closer to that of Whistler. Indeed, in this painting, musicality is evoked by subtle tonality and minimalist composition of perfect balance in asymmetry. With this Whistlerian work, however, Dewing went beyond the expatriate, as well as beyond Aestheticism, as he extended the meaning of music to natural sounds. In this Cornish landscape inhabited by two graceful figures and the unseen Hermit Thrush, the sight and sounds (seeing and hearing) become reciprocal, and music and painting are fully integrated to evoke synaesthetic experience, which reflects Dewing's affinity with the new current of Symbolism. The Hermit's song, "the grand climax of all bird music,"[47] would become that of poet when he painted *The Recitation* the following year (fig. 23).

Poetry in Dewing's Art

The above-quoted passage by Pater expressing the musicality of all the arts is well-known, but lines preceding it are often disregarded. What Pater emphasized

was that there was reciprocity between the arts, each of which has "its own specific order of impressions, and an untranslatable charm." Pater continued:

> yet it is noticeable that, in its special mode of handling its given material, each art may be observed to pass into the condition of some other art . . . reciprocally to lend each other new forces. . . . some of the most delightful music seems to be always approaching to figures, to pictorial definition. Architecture . . . often finds a true poetry . . . [and] the actors in a theatrical mode of life . . . poetry also . . ., finding guidance from the other arts, the analogy between a Greek tragedy and a work of Greek sculpture, between a sonnet and a relief, of French poetry generally with the art of engraving, being more than mere figures of speech . . .[48]

The reciprocity of music and poetry in the art of Dewing was already suggested by Gilder's poem for Dewing's *Summer* of 1890. Poetry was always with Dewing as was his music since his early career. In the late 1870s, George Fuller had vigorously told Dewing that the younger artist "has a great deal of poetic power" and "has a future before him with his poems."[49]

Dewing's zest for poetry in his art was probably one important factor in his engagement to Maria Oakey (1845-1927), which occurred within a few months of his first visit to her, shortly after his determined move to New York

City in mid-October of 1880.[50] Six years older than Dewing, Maria Oakey had already established her name as one of the most progressive painters in New York, having participated in the foundation of the Society of American Artists in 1877. Although she had painted both figure and still-life works, her marriage to Dewing directed her to focus on depicting the flowers found in her fabulous garden at their Cornish home, as exemplified by the *Garden in May* of 1895 (fig. 24).[51]

Born to a genteel family, Maria Oakey had an enthusiasm for reading and writing poetry before practicing painting as her profession. When she was seventeen, she decided to "abandon writing for painting" because "it is easy to write [but] it is almost impossible to paint," so that she was "swept with desire for art & achievement in it."[52] As a writer, she in fact published several poems as well as books and articles on household decoration.[53] Although Dewing and Oakey's sudden engagement was "surprising" for Emma Lazarus, a close friend of Oakey's, "their art-theories seem exactly in accord," as observed by

Lazarus who is known today as one of major poets of American Renaissance.[54]

After their marriage in 1881, Dewing's taste for poetry would be refined by his wife, as well as through his connections with poets such as Lazarus and Charles de Kay, who were associated with the prominent circle of Richard Watson Gilder. The Gilder circle was a major salon for the artists, writers, musicians, and actors of New York in the late nineteenth century. Gilder was the editor of the *Scribner's Monthly* (and of the *Century Magazine*) and himself a poet, as we have seen. Maria Oakey had already enjoyed a strong Gilder connection before her marriage, ever since her artist-comrade Helena de Kay had become Gilder's wife.[55]

In 1883, Thomas Dewing illustrated his wife's poem entitled the "Summer" (fig. 25), which appeared in Gilder's *Century Magazine*:

> See where the summer comes with heat of days
> And garlanded with lily and with rose,
> Down the bright garden's fragrant, sheltered ways,
> With rhythmic footsteps dreamily she goes.
>
> Not here she stays her steps, but passed through,
> With pensive mien, the tasseled fields of corn,
> Where late the evening stored its wealth of dew --

Jewels too early stolen by the morn.

But at the eventide she pauses where
The water-lilies float upon the pool,
And tender is the perfume-burdened air,
And the night breezes moist and soft and cool.

'Tis thus I give the summer all my praise,
'Tis thus I love her in her sweet repose,
Not with the passionate heat of summer days,
Though garlanded with lily and with rose.[56]

According to Sarah Burns, Dewing's illustration for this poem suggests his awareness of "Japanese formal abstraction" and the "English Aesthetic Movement." "The whole design," Burns maintains, "represents a synthesis of the symbolic and the decorative at the service of poetry."[57]

In *The Days* of 1886 (fig. 14), his most renowned work of Aestheticism, Dewing himself associated his painting with a specific poem, which he inscribed on the frame of this painting.[58] It was "Days" written by the eminent poet and essayist of Transcendentalism Ralph Waldo Emerson:

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wished, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,

Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.[59]

Dewing's choice of Emerson may well have been influenced by the literary taste of Maria who highly admired the eminent poet. Their close poet-friend Emma Lazarus was a protégé of Emerson and was invited to write an essay at the master's death in 1882 for the popular *Century Magazine*. There Lazarus asserted that Emerson "was the inspirer and sustainer of countless heroes of some of the bravest deeds in our history."[60]

In his Tonalist works, Dewing found a new approach to representing 'music' and 'poetry' in his use of rough yet fluid brushstrokes. However, he occasionally added reference to a specific poem as in the *Night, Dawn, and Day* of 1892 (fig. 26), the circular mural that he painted for the ceiling of a café at the Hotel Imperial in New York. Unlike *Summer* or *The Days*, however, reference to a poem is not apparent in this mural. But we know the reference, as did his contemporaries, because of Charles de Kay's article on the ceiling mural. Admiring this mural as "poetic in conception," de Kay stated:

> If he [the viewer] knows his Emerson, the lines may occur to him which were sung in the town-hall in Concord on the Glorious Fourth, 1857:
>
> "O tenderly the haughty day
> Fills his blue urn with fire:
> One morn is in the mighty heaven
> And one is our desire."
>
> The Chances are, however, that he scarcely knows that Emerson was a poet. The painter of this ceiling does, and it was with that verse running through his head that he composed his cartoon.[61]

Charles de Kay was a brother of Helena de Kay Gilder. He must have known Emerson personally as the relationship between De Kay and Emma Lazarus seems far beyond that of friends ("more than platonic," according to Bette Roth Young).[62] Lazarus showed De Kay's poems to Emerson, saying "Is it not a pity he has so small an audience?" "Not at all," replied Emerson, "he has you and now he has me."[63] Given the Dewings' intimate friendship with Gilder and Lazarus, there is no doubt that Dewing was aware of De Kay's essay on his mural even before its publication. Dewing's reference to the particular poem by Emerson might have been mentioned to De Kay by the artist himself.

Dewing's knowledge of poetry and music, as well as his keen sensitivity to them, brought him intriguing visual

expressions, in which 'music' and 'poetry' were conflated. One such instance is *The Hermit Thrush* of 1890. Emerson had written in his poem *Birds*:

> Bring your music and rhythmic flight,
> Your colors for our eyes' delight;[64]

With *The Recitation* of 1891, Dewing's association of music and poetry transformed into another sphere, as he painted both a performer and her audience. A 'theater'--a private one--was depicted.

Theater in Dewing's Art

Like 'music' and 'poetry', the 'theater' was a significant theme in Dewing's paintings. Since his childhood, Dewing had loved to entertain people with his acting and even wished for a career on the professional stage.[65] Nelson White asserted that Dewing was a "gifted amateur actor and loved all aspects of the theatre."[66] Although Dewing did not become a professional actor, his ambition for acting continued and was realized in the theatrical entertainments practiced with his friends in the Cornish art colony, as we will see in the last chapter.

Dewing was also a member of the Players Club in New York, which was organized by the eminent actor Edwin Booth in 1888 as "a club for men involved with the theater and the arts."[67] The building of the Players Club was designed by one of Dewing's closest friends, Stanford White. According to Patricia Jobe Pierce, "Dewing took seriously the performances at the Players Club," in which he himself participated, and "his love for the theater influenced his painting compositions."[68]

Narrative painting--with its historical, religious, or literary themes--still dominated late-nineteenth century Western art (at least in academies) and was, almost by definition, theatrical. According to Michael Fried, the influential eighteenth-century playwright and art critic Denis Diderot even considered a theater itself as a spectacle "before a canvas, on which a series of . . . *tableaux* follow one another as if by magic." The *tableaux*, for Diderot, were "visually satisfying, essentially, silent, seemingly accidental groupings of figures."[69] Fried elucidates that, as the "importance of visual or pictorial considerations for drama" was asserted by Diderot, the

"primacy of dramatic and expressive considerations for painting" was affirmed as well: thus the rise of the "representation of figures absorbed in action or passion" in the mid-eighteenth century, which continued into the nineteenth century through the development of Neo-(and academic) classicism.[70]

The theatricality that infused the classicism of Boulanger and Lefebvre seems to have exerted an impact on Dewing even more strongly than their technical refinements which Dewing certainly learned. What Dewing explored in his compositions inspired by theater, however, was not a series of dramatic figures "absorbed in action or passion" but rather the symbolic representation of 'theater' itself. Hamon's influence on Dewing was significant in this regard as well. It was Dewing himself who introduced Hamon to the American public and he did so through his lithographic copy of Hamon's *The Human Comedy* of 1852 (fig. 27), which was reproduced along with other lithographs after Hamon in *American Art Review* in 1881 (fig. 28).[71] While *The Human Comedy* is a representation (or reconstruction) of theater production, Dewing's other lithograph for the same magazine

reproducing the symbolic *Twilight* by Hamon (fig. 29) shows theatricality in its ethereality, as well as a sense of privacy or secrecy.[72] Likewise, Dewing experimented with the representation of 'theater' with a variety of approaches throughout his oeuvre.

In his academy-derived early work entitled *A Sorceress* of 1879 (fig. 30), Dewing showed his affinity with the theatrical qualities in European classicist painting, but he had already demonstrated a different sensibility toward theater as well. What we see in this Orientalist picture is a nude sorceress sitting alone in repose in front of a gilded folding screen with her magic gadgets scattered on the floor. Stretching across the canvas, the screen completely blocks our view beyond its surface. If, as Hobbs suggests, Dewing knew Japanese folding screens by this time (which is quite possible, as I will discuss later),[73] then the painting shows us the screen's verso, so that the sorceress is, in fact, not in front of the screen but behind it. Thus the shallow space she occupies is a private one: the hidden world of magic, behind her stage. To view this picture is thus a voyeuristic experience,

which itself is a feature of the theater. We now may be able to see another early painting, *A Musician* of 1877 (fig. 10), as the depiction of a theater of private moment and space, where musician's notes and thoughts fill the air as well as the decorative hanging, which, like the sorceress's screen, confines our sight and perception.

Dewing's interest in representations of 'theater' could have also derived from the popular theater that he enjoyed with his wife and friends. According to Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs: "the popular nineteenth-century stage was intimately concerned with the metaphor of the stage picture, to the point of conceiving of plays as a series of pictorially representable moments."[74] Dewing's paintings as 'actual' representations of "pictorially representable moments" is exemplified in the *tableau vivant* representing Dewing's *The Days* of 1886, which was performed at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in 1979 (fig. 31).[75] One significant stylistic quality of *The Days* that might have inspired this *tableau vivant* was what could be termed the 'screen effect': the elimination of spatial perspective in a painting by screening background with variable props to

create a theatrical field, a stage setting. We have already seen this effect in his early academic paintings. The 'screen effect' became a dominant quality of his aesthetic paintings of the 1880s as seen in the endlessly horizontal bench of *A Garden* (fig. 3), foliage-and-flower-filled backgrounds of the *Hymen* (1886; fig. 32) and *The Days*. The stage-like quality in Dewing's paintings is enhanced by the placement of figure(s) in a shallow foreground against each 'screen'.

Representation of 'theater' is frequently seen also in his Tonalist paintings such as the *Summer* of 1890 (fig. 17), which represents the figures against hazily defined landscape. In Gilder's above-quoted poem illustrating this painting, the poet saw the "emerald screen" before which the "maidens" move "like broidered figures dimly seen." According to Susan Hobbs, the "anomaly of dress" that Dewing painted in the *Summer* and other Cornish landscapes such as *The Hermit Thrush* and *The Recitation* was, "a means of heightening the dramatic aspects of his work."[76] We now have to realize that Dewing's 'theater' was not a story-telling play but the one reciprocal to 'music' and

'poetry', the idea realized in the Symbolist theater of the 1890s as we will see in the last chapter.

The theater of the private sphere is also depicted in his women in interiors such as the *Comedia* (c. 1892-94; fig. 33) which represents a rehearsal of an actress. The theme would continue into his later works. In each painting of the pair *The Lute* (1900-4; fig. 34) and *La Pêche* (1901-4; fig. 35), which are "the most overtly Symbolist of all Dewing's paintings,"[77] the representation of 'theater' is clearly marked by the depiction of both a performer and audiences of her private theater. As the same model is used for multiple figures in each painting, the performer and audiences become interchangeable. Thus the public sphere and the private one, which are clearly differentiated by the placement of figures, become unified. Those spheres are further harmonized through the greenish tonality pervading the entirety of each image. In Symbolist theater, as Frantisek Deak puts it, "The voice reaches the audience in the privacy of the darkened theater so that the experience is both intimate and collective, private and public, at the same time."[78]

For a production of theater in general, which usually requires the collaboration of writer(s), director(s), and actors, collectivity is hardly avoidable unlike with music and poetry. Dewing, in fact, employed this aspect of theater for the creation of his art as well. He often joined projects to decorate public and private buildings with paintings, though his idea of collaboration was not limited to those projects. In a number of his own works, he collaborated with other artists. The picture frames that the architect Stanford White frequently designed for Dewing's paintings were integral parts of his works. His painting *Summer* of 1893 formed *The Seasons Triptych* with Dwight William Tryon's landscapes *Spring* and *Autumn* (figs. 36). But the most notable is his collaboration with his wife Maria Oakey Dewing, as we have seen in their joint work of an illustrated poem. The poet of "Summer," however, more often collaborated with her husband as a still-life painter. The exquisite depictions of poetic flowers and spirited foliage in such works as his *The Days* and the *Hymen* could have been done by no one but his wife, the renowned portraitist of living plants.[79]

*

In 1901, Dewing became disappointed with the public's misunderstanding of his Cornish landscapes--the most exquisite in style and profound in aesthetics among his canvases--and he declined an offer to exhibit his mature works to the Pan-American Exposition held in Baffalo, New York. As he wrote to Freer:

> My pictures of this class are not understood by the great public who go to an exhibition like the Pan-American. They are above the heads of the public. . . . My decorations belong to the poetic & imaginative world where a few choice spirits live.[80]

Although scholars seem to agree that this last line most fully represents Dewing's aesthetics among his restrained remarks on his art, interpretation of this statement is varied.

According to Susan Hobbs, Dewing created "decorations" with abstract qualities in mind and for inclusion in an architectural setting."[81] It seems that Dewing had been conscious of the creativity of decorative elements in painting throughout his career. Discussing Dewing's *Decorative Panel* of 1882 (fig. 37), Maria's brother Alexander F. Oakey wrote in his "A Trial Balance of

Decoration" that the panel suggested "a scheme of recurrence" and the work was "a particularly strong instance of the tendency . . . to obliterate the line between fine art and decorative art."[82] Thirty-two years later Ezra Tharp commented that Dewing's art represented "something as new bits of music, combined out of the same old notes" and surprised us with its "miracle of repetition."[83]

After reviewing Dewing's art in the light of representations of 'music', 'poetry', and 'theater', it seems now that Dewing's "choice spirits" refers not to the female figures representing variety of womanhood, nor to Lee Grazer's "circle of choice spirits" (his selected patrons and dealers),[84] but to the spirits of the 'high arts': the idea which certainly indicates his elitist and evolutionist point of view. Here I am not trying to clarify the social and ideological context of such a view but rather suggesting the artist's own specific and complex aesthetics. His persistent elitism, however, would eventually be dismissed by the public in his last years and overshadowed by the new tides of modernism derived from

popular culture across the Atlantic (even though Dewing's art was, in fact, not unrelated to popular entertainment as I will argue later on). As John Loughery points out, "Young Modernists like Charles Sheeler derided him . . . with the nickname 'Nothing Dewing.'"[85]

Although it seems that Dewing had abandoned classicism in his mature works, representations of the 'high arts' he learned from classicism had recurred in Cornish landscapes and paintings of women in interiors. For Dewing, classicism was an agent to evoke and correlate 'music', 'poetry', and 'theater'. For the sake of elimination of narrative and historicism and more florescent evocation of synaesthesia, he was certainly aware of another agent, which was *japonisme*.

Dewing's theme in his art was always 'music' as the communion of the 'high arts'. But his reference to music, poetry, and theater in his paintings was often more specific than "abstract affinities of the sister arts" pursued by Aestheticism.[86] In his works, the brush of line, color, tone, texture, pattern, and composition together play music, recite poetry, and perform theater. Initiated

by a Romantic sentiment, his aesthetics soon shifted to the Symbolist analyses of intellect via Aestheticism with discerning and incisive senses of his own: the senses that had perplexed many of his associates who knew his appearance and temperament. In the next chapter, we will now examine his series of folding screens as a zenith of his transformations.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1] Dewing's remark recalled by Royal Cortissoz in his "Some Imaginative Types in American Art," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 91 (July 1895), 166.

[2] In the post-Civil War American cities, there was a "riot of eclecticism ... waves of imitative 'revivals'," T.J. Jackson Lears, No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 33; and the Japanese "ornamentation and aesthetic fantasies fit well the eclectic taste of Victorian America," Neil Harris, "All the World a Melting Pot?: Japan at American Fairs, 1876-1904," in his *Cultural Excursions: Making Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 48. See also *The American Renaissance, 1876-1917* (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1979). Recently, the term, "Victorian America" is often used by social historians and historians of material culture of the late-nineteenth-century United States; see Daniel Walker Howe, ed., *Victorian America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976).

[3] This photo is, in a sense, ironical as those Cornish artists eventually established their own 'high' material culture in the village rather than simply living in nature. Also interesting in this photo is the juxtaposition of Greek column and Mt. Ascutney which was compared with Mt. Fuji by those artists.

[4] Thomas Wilmer Dewing to Charles Lang Freer, February 16 [1901], letter 110, Charles Lang Freer Papers, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C. (hereafter FGAA); this passage is cited by several scholars as the central concept of Dewing's art.

[5] *A Loan Exhibition: Thomas W. Dewing,* no page number.

[6] Ezra Tharp, "T. W. Dewing," *Art and Progress* 5 (March

1914), 160.

[7] Quoted in Hobbs, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing: The Early Years," 6.

[8] Pyne, "Evolutionary Typology," 13.

[9] See Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 95-113.

[10] H. Barbara Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris: Nineteenth-Century American Painters and Their French Teachers* (New York: Abbeville, 1991), 234.

[11] Ibid.

[12] See Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 3, 30, 34-5.

[13] Comparing Lefebvre's *Truth* of 1870 (fig. 4) and Dewing's *Morning* (1879; fig. 5) and *A Garden*, Weinberg states: "Even though these paintings [of Dewing's] most often depict draped rather than nude female figures, they recall the nudes of Lefebvre. Like them, they usually pretend to little meaning beyond the display of the female form . . . " However, the "meaning beyond the display of the female form" is, as I will argue, quite significant in Dewing's art. Lefebvre's robust and voluptuous nude seductively dominates the canvas of the *Truth*, while Dewing's thin, draped figures play parts of decorative elements filled his canvases that evoke music and poetry. The difference is far more evident than similarity, and, in this comparison, I would rather see Dewing's conscious attempt to eliminate physicality of his figures and go beyond the academic tradition.

[14] Cortissoz, "Some Imaginative Types in American Art," 165-66.

[15] Ibid., 166.

[16] Ibid.

[17] See *Lost Paradise: Symbolist Europe* (Montreal: The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1995).

[18] Tharp, "T. W. Dewing," 160.

[19] See Virginia Mae Allen, "The Femme Fatale: A Study of the Early Development of the Concept in Mid-Nineteenth Century Poetry and Painting" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1979) and Nancy M. Mathews, "Mary Cassatt and the 'Modern Madonna' of the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1980).

[20] See Abraham A. Davidson, "The Visionary Eccentrics II: Visionaries of 'the Normal'," in his *The Eccentrics and Other American Visionary painters* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978), 97-129.

[21] *A Loan Exhibition: Thomas W. Dewing,* introductory page.

[22] Davidson, *The Eccentrics and Other American Visionary painters,* 128.

[23] Cortissoz, "Some Imaginative Types in American Art," 167.

[24] Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing,* 12.

[25] See William H. Gerdts, "American Tonalism: An Artistic Overview," in *Tonalism: An American Experience* (New York: Grand Central Art Galleries Art Education Association, 1982), 17-28.

[26] Ibid., 18.

[27] Ibid., 19, 26.

[28] Ibid., 21.

[29] See William H. Gerdts, et al., *Ten American Painters* (New York: Spanierman Gallery, 1990).

[30] Further paradox of his art is that those women in interiors are not unrelated to modernist movements, as Judith Elizabeth Lyczko discusses in her article on Dewing. Lyczko's emphasis on the "alienation" of Dewing's figures, however, needs further examination. The sense of detachment in Dewing's women is different from the alienation seen in such paintings as Degas' *Bellelli Family*, to which Lyczko refers. While being detached, Dewing's women in fact communicate with one another because of deep tonalities covering all over his pictures. See Judith Elizabeth Lyczko, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing's Sources: Women in Interiors," *Arts Magazine* 54 (November 1979), 152-57.

[31] Susan A. Hobbs and Barbara Dayer Gallati, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing, an Artist against the Grain," *The Magazine Antique* CXLIX (March 1996), 417.

[32] Burns, "The Poetic Mode in American painting," 236.

[33] *A Loan Exhibition: Thomas W. Dewing,* no page number.

[34] See Hobbs, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing: The Early Years," 20-21.

[35] See ibid., 88.

[36] H.C. Brunner, "The Society of American Artists," *Puck* 3 (27 March 1878), 3; quoted in Hobbs, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing: The Early Years," 19.

[37] While leaders of British Aestheticism of the 1870s were Pre-Raphaelites during the previous decades, some later Pre-Raphaelites kept their "true to nature" aesthetics rather than "art for art's sake." Also several artists joined the Aestheticism without going through the Pre-Raphaelite period.

[38] George Fuller to Agnes Fuller, March 15, 1878. Fuller Papers, roll 607, frame 291; quoted in Burns, "The Poetic Mode in American Painting," 199 and Hobbs, "Thomas Wilmer

Dewing: The Early Years," 20.

[39] Hobbs, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing: The Early Years," 23.

[40] Greta, "Boston Correspondence," *Art Amateur* 2 (March 1880), 75; quoted in Hobbs, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing: The Early Years," 23.

[41] Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, edited by Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 86.

[42] Richard Watson Gilder, "The Dancers: On a Picture Entitled "Summer," by T.W. Dewing," in *The Poems of Richard Watson Gilder* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1908), 156-57.

[43] George Parsons Lathrop, "The Progress of Art in New York," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 86 (April 1893), 745.

[44] Tharp, "T. W. Dewing," 155.

[45] For a detailed discussion of this painting, see Glazer, "A Modern Instance," 240-300.

[46] James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* (London: William Heinemann, 1892), 127.

[47] F. Schuyler Mathews, *Field Book of Wild Birds and Their Music* (1904; Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 2001), 235.

[48] Pater, *The Renaissance*, 85-6.

[49] See Fuller's above-quoted letter to his wife.

[50] Within a few days of his arrival in New York, he visited Maria Oakey and announced their engagement on Christmas Day of the same year; see Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 5-6.

[51] See, William H. Gerdts, *Down Garden Paths: The Floral Environment in American Art* (London and Toronto: Associated

University Press, 1983), 73-76; see also two articles by Jennifer Martin, "The Rediscovery of Maria Oakey Dewing," *Feminist Art Journal* 5 (Summer 1976), 24-27, 44, and "Portrait of Flowers: The Out-of-Door Still-Life Paintings of Maria Oakey Dewing," *American Art Review* 4 (December 1977), 48-55, 114-18.

[52] Maria Oakey Dewing to Nelson C. White, August 30, 1927; quoted in Martin, "Portrait of Flowers," 52.

[53] For the list of her writings, see Martin, "The Rediscovery of Maria Oakey Dewing," 24.

[54] On December 29, 1880, in her letter to Helena de Kay Gilder, Emma Lazarus wrote: "Of course you have heard surprising news of Maria's engagement... I think he [Thomas Dewing] is very attractive - handsome, young & with an air of refinement & intelligence"; Bette Roth Young, *Emma Lazarus in Her World: Life and Letters* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1995), 80; see also ibid., 112, 114; Lazarus is included in Paul Kane, ed., *Poetry of the American Renaissance: A Diverse Anthology from the Romantic Period* (New York: George Braziller, 1995).

[55] For more details of the Gilder circle, see Young, *Emma Lazarus in Her World*, and Rosamond Gilder, ed., *Letters of Richard Watson Gilder* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1916).

[56] Mrs. T. W. Dewing, "Summer," *Century Magazine* 26 (July 1883), 360.

[57] Burns, "The Poetic Mode in American Painting," 202.

[58] Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 106.

[59] "Days," in Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Poems* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1884), 196.

[60] Emma Lazarus, "Emerson's personality," *Century Magazine* 24 (July 1882), 456.

[61] Charles de Kay, "The Ceiling of a Café," *Harper's Weekly* 36 (12 March 1892), 257.

[62] "Emma's relationship with . . . deKay [*sic*] was more than platonic" but "It has been suggested [they] did not marry because Emma's father would have disapproved of deKay, who was a Christian," Young, *Emma Lazarus in Her World*, 8, 27. Lazarus knew Emerson since she was nineteen, see ibid., 24.

[63] *Letters of Richard Watson Gilder*, 413.

[64] Emerson, *Poems*, 283.

[65] See Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 2.

[66] *A Loan Exhibition: Thomas W. Dewing*, no page number.

[67] Paul R. Baker, *The Stanny: The Gilded Life of Stanford White* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 135.

[68] Patricia Jobe Pierce, *The Ten* (Concord, NH: Rumford Press, 1976), 81.

[69] Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 78.

[70] Ibid., 79, 107.

[71] Charlotte Adams, "Jean Louis Hamon," *American Art Review* 2 (September 1881), 201.

[72] Ibid., 205.

[73] Hobbs, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing: The Early Years," 21.

[74] Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs, *Theatre to Cinema: Stage Pictorialism and the Early Feature Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), vi.

[75] See Jennifer Fisher, "Interperformance: The Live Tableaux

of Suzanne Lacy, Janine Antoni, and Marina Abramovic," *Art Journal* 56 (Winter 1997), 29.

[76] Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 128.

[77] Ibid., 143.

[78] Frantisek Deak, *Symbolist Theater: The Formation of An Avant-Garde* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 178.

[79] See Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 100, 108; William H. Gerdts, *Painters of the Humble Truth: Masterpieces of American Still Life, 1801-1939* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1981), 146-47.

[80] Dewing to Freer, February 16 [1901], letter 110, FGAA.

[81] Hobbs, "Thomas Dewing in Cornish," 9.

[82] Alexander F. Oakey, "A Trial Balance of Decoration," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 64 (April 1882), 740.

[83] Tharp, "T. W. Dewing," 161.

[84] Glazer, "A Modern Instance," 39. In her dissertation, Grazer frequently associates the "choice spirits" with Dewing's selected patrons and dealers. I would rather see Dewing's "choice spirits" within those "decorations" themselves than regarding the Montross Gallery or where Freer and Gellatly (another major patron) live as the "poetic and imaginative world."

[85] John Loughery, "Woman as Other," *Hudson Review* 49 (Autumn 1996), 451.

[86] Robyn Asleson, *Albert Moore* (London: Phaidon, 2000), 100.

CHAPTER TWO

ENIGMATIC CORRESPONDENCES: STYLE, AESTHETICS, AND CONTEXT OF THE FOLDING SCREENS BY THOMAS WIMER DEWING

The height of Thomas Dewing's exploration of the "decoration"--painting of the "choice spirits"--came in the 1890s. Interestingly, similar aesthetics were simultaneously being explored in France by the artists in and around a Symbolist group called the Nabis. A key member of the group, the painter Jan Verkade, remembered the "war cry rang from one studio to another" at the beginning of the 1890s: "Away with easel-pictures! Away with that unnecessary piece of furniture! . . . The work of the painter begins where that of the architect is finished. Hence let us have walls, that we may paint them over. . . . There are no paintings, but only decorations."[1]

Between 1896 and 1900, Dewing created at least seven folding screens: one pair of two-paneled screens, two pairs of three-paneled screens, and one additional two-paneled folding screen. The seemingly modest number of Dewing's screens is in fact enough for Michael Komanecky to call the

artist "America's most prolific screenmaker of the period"[2] in his comprehensive study of Western folding screens.

The pair of two-paneled folding screens called *The Four Sylvan Sounds* (figs. 38-40) was created between 1896 and 1897 for the house of the Detroit industrialist Charles Lang Freer. The two pairs of three-paneled folding screens, *Classical Figures/Three Figures* (figs. 41, 42) of 1897-98 and *Morning Glories* (fig. 43)*/Cherry Blossoms* (unlocated) of 1898-1900, were for the house of Colonel Frank J. Hecker who was Freer's business partner. The *Folding Screen: Two Panels with Figures* of 1896-99 (fig. 44), which is now divided into two panel paintings entitled the *Music* and the *Dance*, was purchased by Freer for his business friend E. B. Thomas. These screens were created to fit well into their specifically intended environments and patrons' tastes. At the same time, however, they allowed Dewing to explore the aesthetics he had been developing during the two decades since his training in Paris.

The Freer House and the Format of *The Four Sylvan Sounds*

That the screen was first invented in China is known from documents of the third century B.C. (the late Zhou Dynasty) and from the folding screens depicted in the tomb paintings and stone reliefs from the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). Early Chinese screens still survive in the Shôsô-in repository in Nara, Japan, whose inventory of the year 756 lists over one hundred screens. The inventory indicates that numerous Chinese screens were exported to Japan by this time. After approximately the thirteenth century, Chinese folding screens lost their aesthetic appeal and were considered to be minor decorative objects. In Japan, however, the folding screens, called *byôbu* there, would be developed into the most important medium for both traditional and progressive artists by the late sixteenth century (fig. 45).[3]

Folding screens became popular in Europe in the age of Rococo during the eighteenth century after numerous decorative arts were imported from China (fig. 46).[4] Chinese design was then appropriated by Europeans into their own decorative arts, resulting in a particular style which became known as *chinoiserie*. Within the

Rococo/*chinoiserie* movement, European artists and artisans started to create their own versions of folding screens (fig. 47), the function of which was primarily to divide and embellish already flamboyant interiors.[5]

By 1800, due largely to the rejection of the Rococo, screen-making in Europe diminished. It was revived in the late nineteenth century, when progressive artists rediscovered folding screens under the influence of *japonisme*.[6] Among American artists, however, only James McNeill Whistler and Albert Pinkham Ryder are known to have created folding screens--one each--prior to Dewing's. Undertaking his series of at least seven, his screens were distinguished in style and aesthetics.

Dewing's first pair of screens, *The Four Sylvan Sounds*, was created for Freer's house in Detroit (figs. 48, 49). Known as one of the most successful railroad car manufacturers and a renowned collector of Asian art, Charles Lang Freer was brought up among a rather impoverished family in Kingston, New York. His subsequent hard work and keen sense of business, however, gained the attention of Frank J. Hecker, a supervisor of railroad

construction, who would eventually establish the Peninsular Car Company in Detroit in 1884 with Freer as its vice president.[7]

By the time Freer decided to build his house, he had sufficient fortune to begin his quest for art objects which would be integral parts of his house. Unlike the majority of millionaires of Victorian America including his mentor and partner Frank Hecker, Freer preferred a private and unassuming house. In 1890, he commissioned Wilson Eyre Jr. of Philadelphia to design a shingle style house, which, as Kathleen Pyne observes, "blended and harmonized with the colors, textures, and lines of its natural surroundings" like a "Japanese teahouse."[8] Until he began residing there in late November of 1892, Freer worked with Eyre "to ensure that each detail contributed to the overall aesthetic effect."[9] Freer found and was attracted by Eyre's architecture when he was traveling through Germantown in Philadelphia.

During the late nineteenth century, Eyre was the architectural leader of the Philadelphia Arts and Crafts movement. Initially inspired by the British precedents of

John Ruskin and William Morris, the Arts and Crafts movement in the United States was influenced by the overwhelming display of Japanese arts, crafts, and architecture at the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876.[10] As Richard Guy Wilson claims, "for American-oriented Arts and Crafts architects Japan offered the example of an indigenous culture that embodied the organic quality they found in the middle ages,"[11] the period that British Arts and Crafts artists tried to realize in their works. While Eyre's architecture is, as Betsy Fahlman points out, rather "personal" and "imaginative" in the age of eclecticism, Vincent J. Scully Jr. suggests that it was influenced by Japanese aesthetics.[12] Indeed, the points Fahlman makes as attributes of Eyre's creativity in the Freer house--"expressive qualities and textural possibilities of various materials" yet "remarkably planar and compact in its simple, broad massing and its horizontal lines" in the exterior, "unity through the use of asymmetrical elements," "broad, deep roof" as well as the "flowing internal spaces," "built-in furniture," and "decorative details"--

are all commonly discussed characteristics of Japanese architecture.[13]

By 1890, a number of artists and critics had already written about the arts of Japan on both sides of the Atlantic, but a knowledge of Japanese domestic houses was particularly stimulated by Edward Sylvester Morse's *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings*, published in Boston in 1886.[14] This book influenced numerous American architects, most notably Frank Lloyd Wright.[15] Morse is well-known in Japan as the first scientific excavator of prehistoric shell mounds called the Ômori kaizuka. While living in Japan (1877-79 and 1882-83) as the instructor of Darwinian theory at Tokyo University, however, he became much obsessed with Japanese ceramics. Upon his return to the United States, he sold more than five thousand pieces of the Japanese ceramics in his collection to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and other artifacts showing Japanese daily life were given to the Peabody Museum at Salem, Massachusetts.[16]

In his book on Japanese houses, Morse remarked: "it is mainly to the roof that the Japanese house owes its

picturesque appearance."[17] Morse continued to discuss the shingled roof as the first among such "picturesque" Japanese roofs. Freer definitively wanted his house in shingle style. In 1904 when additional buildings were needed for his growing collection, Freer wrote to Eyre:

> I very much fear the present very stringent rules of the Fire Department will prevent the use of shingles on the roofs of the proposed additions. At the time of the building of my house, I had considerable difficulty to get the commissioners to permit the use of shingles, but as my location was then just within the fire limits, and as all of the members of the commission were warm personal friends of mine, I managed to get a permit, but I greatly fear it will be impossible to repeat my success. . . . I extremely regret even a consideration of a substitute for wooden shingles.[18]

The original Freer house was roofed in cypress shingles. The cypress, or *hinoki*, is considered the most divine tree in Japan and was discussed in Morse's book. Freer's obsession with shingles was most likely because the "shingle style," as W. Hawkins Ferry puts it, "was an answer to the intensified yearning for a more bucolic life"[19] that Morse and Freer found in Japanese culture.

The basic structure and framing of *The Four Sylvan Sounds* is clearly intended to harmonize with the Japanese taste of the Freer house. Each screen, identical in size

(69 1/4" x 60 1/4"), is framed by plain, gilded strips painted along the outer edges of the two panels which are joined by two hinges. Without supporting legs to raise the bottom of panels, each screen is reduced to simple geometry: a straight-edged fine rectangle, which is the persistent characteristic of Japanese *byôbu*, distinctive from the ornate framing of Chinese and Rococo screens. Also, without framing elements where two panels meet, two vertical panels provide a single plane for a continuous image. Thin, disk-shaped cushion bases are in fact attached below the corners of each panel, hardly deforming the fine rectangle of each screen. Instead, those bases effectively create a shallow space at the bottom of each panel, so as to provide a light and floating appearance to the screens, which are extremely heavy in reality.[20] This floating effect helps these screens look closer to *byôbu* which is structured to be very light and easily movable.

"The *biyô-bu* [*sic*], or folding screens, are too well known," Morse put in his book on Japanese houses, "to require more than a passing allusion." As he maintained: "Many of the great artists of Japan have embodied some of

their best works on screens of this kind."[21] As we will discuss in the next chapter, Dewing knew the format and artistic possibility of *byôbu*. Dewing was certainly conscious of the significance of framing as integral part of the folding screens. "Simply a plain gold surface"[22] of the verso of each Freer screen also indicates Dewing's *byôbu* emulation.

The most significant fact concerning the Japanese taste of *The Four Sylvan Sounds*, in format, is, as Linda Merrill points out, that the work "assumes an authentic Japanese form--a pair of two-fold screens."[23] 'Pairing' is, indeed, a unique feature of Japanese folding screens. The history of *byôbu* began in the year 686 when the Japanese court received a folding screen as a gift from one of the Korean kingdoms.[24] After the subsequent importation of screens from China, Japan soon developed its own tradition of folding screens. During the fourteenth century *byôbu* evolved from a single to paired format, coinciding with two other artistic and cultural transformations. One is invention of the paper-hinging system of *byôbu* (fig. 50). This system, as Miyeko Murase states, "at last made it

possible to display a continuous and unified composition in a screen painting," which had been interrupted by framing of each panel following the Chinese tradition. Coinciding with the paper-hinge invention, *byôbu* began to be paired, so that the images look "even more panoramic and compelling as they spread across the picture-plane surface of two screens."[25]

The other development is a gradual yet major shift in style of Japanese residential architecture from *shinden zukuri* to *shoin zukuri*, that is, in brief, from an open-spaced house, in which *byôbu* was the indispensable means of limiting spaces, to a house compartmentalized by sliding screens (or *fusuma*) so that a *byôbu* began to function not merely as a room divider but also as an object of visual and aesthetic pleasure.[26] From the late sixteenth century until the late nineteenth century, before Western easel painting became popular in Japan, paired folding screens provided the most important and noble means for artists to represent their skills and creativity.

We might assume that the pairing of identically sized screens would bring a rigid symmetry. The fact is that, as

two folding screens can be flexibly folded and arbitrarily placed against each other, the pairing more effectively creates asymmetry. A single screen, as long as it is in a simple rectangle, forms symmetry by itself like a Western canvas. Dewing's *The Four Sylvan Sounds* seems to have been the first paired screens in the Western tradition and remains one of very few pairs created by major artists up to the present.[27] The continuous scene spreading across two screens of *The Four Sylvan Sounds* also corresponds significantly to *byôbu* composition.

Reading *The Four Sylvan Sounds*

In *The Four Sylvan Sounds*, a pair of gold-framed rectangles are filled with lush green foliage of subtle variations in size, color, and density, effacing any sense of perspective beyond the picture plane. A nymph-like figure in white classical garment with an archaic musical instrument is depicted and illuminated in the upper part of each vertical panel. These four draped figures, in a variety of poses, are naturalistically proportioned and contoured. Yet, with their vague modeling and mist-like

tonality, these figures convey more a sense of thinness and fragility than volume. Seated ambiguously among the foliage, the figures look weightless and appear to be floating in space. Without any depiction of trees, the continuous scene invites us to the deep forest, where the sense of space is diminished and vaporized.

The basic scheme in color and composition on each two-paneled screen is nearly identical and quite simple: a gold rectangle framing a green ground on which a white inverted arch, bottomed toward the center of the screen, is roughly formed by the figures. A sense of symmetry is thus achieved within each screen and, if two screens are placed side by side, the pair creates a sense of symmetry as well. A closer look at the screens reveals that the leaves, in a variety of shapes and tones, are arranged not only to efface any sense of depth, to entangle the foreground and background of the scene, and to create an asymmetrical and organic composition across the screens.[28]

A sense of flatness and pattern is enhanced by passages of stenciled foliage, which are often seen in Japanese folding screens. More bold breakup of symmetry is

in fact achieved by a few flowers painted in the lower part of each screen: the blue irises on the one and white daphnes on the other. These flowers are placed on the screens seemingly casually yet keenly calculated to create an exquisite, asymmetric balance. Refinement of *japonisme* in this depiction of ground is such that this painting could well be claimed as a Japanese masterpiece, if those classical figures and their archaic instruments were eliminated and the painting were mounted on an actual *byôbu*.

Thus viewing *The Four Sylvan Sounds* must be a somewhat strange experience for those who are familiar with *byôbu*. The image of this painting is dazzling yet enigmatic in its conflation of naturalism and abstraction, as well as its juxtaposition of symmetry and asymmetry. Definitive classical figures float in the distinctly Japanese forest enclosed by the unmistakable *byôbu* structure, while the gilded wood panels with icon-like figures inevitably remind us of medieval and Renaissance altarpieces.

The title of the Freer screens is not the original one. In his letter to Freer, Dewing described the theme of

the screens: "the four forest notes = the Hermit thrush, the sound of running water, the Woodpecker & the wind through the pine trees."[29] Four figures personify those four natural sounds, playing or simply holding musical instruments. They cause our eyes to move from right to left, which corresponds to the order that Dewing indicates in his letter: the "Hermit thrush" with a gold and ivory flute, the "sound of running water" with a xylophone, the "Woodpecker" with a small drum, and the "wind through the pine trees" with a lyre.

In the screens, the figure personifying "running water" is in action, raising her arm with her stick about to play her trembling instrument. Next to her (across the pair), the "Woodpecker" is ready and waiting for her turn to tap on her small drum, while the "Hermit" and the "wind" are in repose and meditation. Stenciled and painted leaves with subtle variations of shapes and tones, as well as fragrant flowers, now appear to be vibrating with those sylvan sounds. While these four instruments simulate natural sounds, the combination of these different types of musical instruments--the wind, keyboards, percussion, and

strings--also refers to a larger orchestra typology of classical music that Dewing once knew as a violinist in a Boston orchestra.[30] Pleasure of associating artificial sounds with natural ones had already been nurtured during his early career, as suggested by the fact that he "had rigged up a harp to play sweet melodious music as people opened and closed his studio door" in one of his earliest studios in New York.[31]

Dewing's description of the iconography of *The Four Sylvan Sounds* in his letter suggests that he also attempted to associate those natural sounds with a 'Far Eastern' culture. If we follow Dewing's ordering of "the four forest notes" in his letter, we read figures in *The Four Sylvan Sounds* from our right to left, which is the way the *byôbu* should be read.[32] In the same letter, Dewing also mentioned: "I am working now on the first = the thrush a figure with a gold and ivory flute,"[33] indicating that he began painting from the far right (from us) panel of *The Four Sylvan Sounds*. This order is visually related in the painting as the "running water" plays and the "Woodpecker" waits. Thus Dewing used the *byôbu* format not only for the

framework but also for the iconography of the screens. The style of those classical figures is also inspired by Japanese prints, as we will discuss later, but a literary source for those images is a more familiar one to us: a poem of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

As Hobbs and Burns have suggested,[34] the concept of "the four forest notes" was presumably derived from Emerson's poem the "Woodnotes."[35] Dewing's reference to Emerson is evident in his other works such as *The Days* of 1887 and *Night, Day, and Dawn* of 1892, as we have discussed in the previous chapter. The "Woodnotes" is a lengthy poem composed in two parts, in which a variety of animals, plants, and minerals, as well as natural phenomena in sublime nature are experienced by and communicate with a poet. The "woodpecker," "thrush," and "falling waters" indeed appear in the poem, but they are subsidiaries among the panoramic nature of American wilderness. "Only thy Americans; Can read thy line, can meet thy glance,"[36] declares the "pine-tree," who is given, unlike other creatures, a protagonist role in the second part of the poem. The pine-tree continues:

Come learn with me the fatal song
Which knits the world in music strong,
Come lift thine eyes to lofty rhymes,
. . . . . .
For Nature beats in perfect tune,
And rounds with rhyme her every rune,
. . . . . .[37]

Dewing's reference to this poem for the creation of *The Four Sylvan Sounds* is almost certain. However, as Burns points out, "the poem is threaded with lofty didacticism quite foreign to the intentions of the painter."[38] Emersonian hymns of God's existence in nature had been already and profusely visualized by the Hudson River School painters during the mid-nineteenth century. Their landscapes combined the meticulous rendering of the wilderness with a dramatic and cosmic vision of nature, both of which are foreign to Dewing's poetic vision. This forest of his screens is not the Emersonian wilderness.[39]

What is pivotal in this explicit Japanese format and *japoniste* style is a group of floating, classically draped figures, each of whom is given an archaic musical instrument and a specific attribute. It is a subjective scene with evocative tonality of color. If we sense the perfumes of those elegant figures and buoyant leaves and

flowers, our perception of this work moves beyond Emersonian idealism, towards Baudelairean notion of correspondences, crystallized in his verse: "*Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.*"[40] The notion was highly appreciated by *fin-de-siècle* French Symbolists.[41] The following is Henry Dorra's recent translation of the "*Correspondances*" from *Les Fleurs du Mal* of 1857 by Charles Baudelaire:

> Nature is a temple in which living pillars
> Sometimes emit confused words;
> Man crosses it through forests of symbols
> That observe him with familiar glances.
>
> Like long echoes that mingle in the distance
> In a profound tenebrous unity,
> Vast as the night and vast as light,
> Perfumes, sounds, and colors respond to one another.
>
> Some perfumes are as fresh as the flesh of children,
> Sweet as the sound of oboes, green as pastures
> --And others corrupt, rich, and triumphant,
>
> Having the expanse of things infinite,
> Such as amber, musk, benzoin, and incense,
> That sing of the flight of spirit and the senses.[42]

By 1890, it was a commonplace to link this mid-nineteenth century poem and the notion of synaesthesia.[43] In today's neuroscientific terms, synaesthesia "occur[s] when stimulation of one sensory modality automatically triggers

a perception in a second modality, in the absence of any direct stimulation to this second modality. . . . Many combinations of synaesthesia are reported to occur naturally, including sound giving rise to visual percepts ('coloured-hearing') and smell giving rise to tactile sensation."[44]

In the late nineteenth century, synaesthesia was far more seriously discussed than we might assume, not only among poets and artists but among psychologists and a variety of scientists. According to Kevin T. Dann, "the ability to 'see sounds' was esteemed as a special, 'higher' form of human vision. . . . By 1895, it was clear to most careful investigators that synaesthesia was associated with intelligence, sensitivity, and imaginativeness."[45] Dann's comment reminds us of Dewing's zest for visual representations of the 'high arts': music, poetry, and theater.

The idea of synaesthesia, beyond the pathological sense of the term, was also favored in the United States in the late nineteenth century. In the May 1891 issue of Gilder's *Century Magazine* (with which Dewing was quite

familiar}, a pair of articles entitled the "Visible Sound" appeared.[46] In the first article, the singer Margaret Watts Hughes wrote about her experiments to visualize her voices, using the apparatus she called the "eidophone," which consisted "an elastic membrane . . . tightly stretched over the mouth of a receiver of any form, into which receiver the voice is introduced by a wide-mouthed tube of convenient shape."[47] With alternating mixture of sand, powder, and liquid in the eidophone, along with her trained singing, she produced a variety of "voice-figures," all of which strikingly resembled forms in nature (fig. 51). Sophie B. Herrick then commented on Hughes' experiments and wrote about more scientific inquiry of visual expression of musical vibrations.

In the June 1894 issue of the *Century*, Ellen Knight Bradford contributed a poem, which is also entitled "Visible Sound":

> If human voice may on the plastic disk
> Breathe into being forms of beauty rare,
> And we may see the voices that we love
> Take shape and color, infinitely fair,
>
> May not the lofty mountains and the hills
> Be voice of God; his song, the gentle flowers;
> His chant, the stars' procession, and alas!

His only sigh, these human hearts of ours?[48]

Although the aesthetic of this poem is apparently grounded upon Emersonian Transcendentalism, it also reveals something unknown to the mid-century poet. The "plastic disk" that Bradford referred here was most likely a disk record for the gramophone invented by Emile Berliner around 1888 (fig. 52). The machine to record sounds (more specifically human voices at the beginning) was first invented by Thomas Edison in 1877. It was called the phonograph, which used cylinders for its recording device rather than discs. By the early 1890s, both phonographs and gramophones were commercialized (figs. 53, 54) and they must have inspired musicians like Hughes, poets like Bradford, and incisive painters like Dewing.[49]

The visual representation of synaesthesia was introduced to Americans by the Austrian painter Hans Makart's *The Five Senses* at the Chicago Fair of 1893 (fig. 55). What this painting reminds us is that smelling, tasting, and feeling (or touching) are significant parts of our senses as much as seeing and hearing. Among these senses, tasting is hardly seen in Dewing's works. The

edibles are almost never depicted there. The other four senses are copiously represented in his oeuvre, enough to nourish those elegantly thin and floating female figures.

Painting is by definition about seeing. The sense of hearing is particularly profound in Dewing's art as we have seen in the previous chapter and this sense is clearly thematized in *The Four Sylvan Sounds*. Feeling, or tactile sensation is evoked in his Tonalist paintings, in which the presence of artist's hands (and body) are indicated by the lush and fluid brushstrokes. His figures also more often 'touch' the musical instruments than play them as seen in many of his paintings including *The Four Sylvan Sounds*.

Smelling, which is hardly discussed in art historical discourse, seems also crucial in Dewing's art. This sense was already depicted in *A Sorceress*'s flaming lamp but seems to have become more refined after Dewing's marriage to the renowned flower painter and expert botanist. The above-cited poem "Summer" of 1883 by Maria Oakey Dewing depicted "bright garden's fragrant" and "perfume-burdened air," which are in turn reflected in Thomas's poetic illustration. Smelling powerfully evokes memory as much as

tasting (and both senses are often reciprocal as illustrated in the well-known "petites madeleines" episode in Marcel Proust's novel *A la recherche du temps perdu* of 1913).[50] In the "*Correspondances*," Baudelaire placed smelling as the primary memory trigger over other sensations when he wrote: "Some perfumes [smelling] are as fresh as the flesh of children [touching], Sweet [tasting] as the sound of oboes [hearing], green as pastures [seeing]." The "memory evocation" was, in fact, the emphasis in American Tonalist paintings in general[51] and Dewing, more than others, exquisitely used representation of smelling for evocation.

Interestingly, the sense of smell is also associated with music as the three layers of smell in a perfume is called the top note, middle note, and bottom note. As we have seen, the Freer screens represent the "four forest notes." Those four figures are at the same time music notes and scents, which communicate with fragrant foliage and with perfume of irises and daphnes.

In *The Four Sylvan Sounds*, we have seen how 'music' and 'poetry' were depicted through interplay of *japonisme*

and classicism that invalidates the specific attributes of time and place. Although theatricality is already clear in this otherworldly vision of sensory correspondences, we can also see a unique representation of 'theater' in this work, which is to be discussed in the last chapter.

The Hecker House and the *Classical Figures/Three Figures* Screens

In June 1897 *The Four Sylvan Sounds* was finally uncovered at the Freer house with Dewing present. When Freer's neighbor and business partner Frank Hecker saw the intriguing screens, he immediately commissioned the artist to create a work in the same medium for his mansion. Four years earlier, Dewing had decorated the Hecker house with his painting called *Summer*, which formed the *Seasons Triptych* along with Dwight W. Tryon's *Spring* and *Autumn* (fig. 36).

The pair of folding screens that Dewing created for the house of Hecker during 1897-98 is now separated: the one entitled the *Classical Figures* (fig. 41) is at the Detroit Institute of Arts and the other, the *Three Figures* (fig. 42) is at the Berry-Hill Galleries in New York. The

difference in title is not simply because the Berry-Hill screen had been unlocated until recently, but, as Kathleen Pyne reports, there is no documented title for the pair.[52] Neither can we find any documented original title for *The Four Sylvan Sounds* except for Dewing's description of its theme in his above-quoted letter to Freer. It is most likely that Dewing did not designate any titles for both pairs because they were exclusively for private houses and never intended for any public exhibition.

A successful industrialist as well as a veteran of the Civil War and the Spanish American War, Colonel Hecker--with his features of Napoleon III--loved to show off his wealth and power.[53] He built his permanent residence between 1889 and 1892 on the conspicuous Woodward Avenue at the corner of the rather private Ferry Avenue, along which Freer was about to reside. The Hecker house (figs. 56, 57) was in French Renaissance style, modeled after Château de Chenonceaux near Tours. The mansion was designed by the architectural firm of Louis Kamper, who was trained in the office of the McKim, Mead and White in New York, the dominant firm of the American Renaissance.

The façade of the Hecker house (fig. 58) shows a massive tower at each end forcefully enhancing a rigid symmetry composed by columns and other classical elements of the two-storied central façade. On the roof rising above the second story, two chimneys are erected to further add symmetrical balance as well as strong verticality, which compensates with horizontality of the stylobate and entablatures. In almost the exact center of this façade complex, we find a composite frame with classical order and triple-arched openings for balcony doorway and windows (fig. 59). With two smaller arches at each side and a much larger one in the center, the composite apparently imitates the Arch of Constantine in Rome (312-15; fig. 60), while a broken pediment on the top (which is absent from the Roman triumphal arch) alludes both ancient Greek temples and Renaissance architecture. Interestingly, the form of this composite also corresponds to the *Seasons Triptych* by Dewing and Tryon as Dewing's *Summer* in the center stands ten inches higher than Tryon's landscapes.[54]

Although the exterior is marked by the classical balance of Renaissance architecture, reference to French

royalty certainly inspired Kamper in the Baroque flavor of the flamboyant interior, which was eventually filled with the eclectic décor of Victorian America. W. Hawkins Ferry provides us a fine summary of the original interior:

> At the center was a colonnaded reception hall from which a grand staircase rose to a stained glass window at the landing. . . . The hall was paneled in white oak, the oval dining room in mahogany, and the library in English oak with matched graining. In cheerful contrast the adjoining parlor and music room were finished in white and gold. The fireplaces were done in Egyptian Nubian marble and onyx, while the vestibule was wainscoted in Italian Siena marble.[55]

Adding to this list of rich, natural variations of color and texture, the exterior was constructed of Indiana limestone and the steep roof was covered by gray slates.[56] The interior was also decorated with gilded garlands and Louis XVI furniture.[57] Dewing's pair of screens was intended for the adjoining drawing and music rooms in "white and gold."

As if to comply with the patron's taste, Dewing made several bold shifts from the Freer pair to the Hecker one. First of all, 'frames' were not painted on the panels of the Hecker screens. In each screen, a separate framework was constructed to unite and support three panels without

hinges. Furthermore, the pair of gilded frames was designed by a different artist, even though a framing of folding screen is, by definition, an integral part of the furniture. The artist who designed the framework was Stanford White. One of the most important aspects of American Renaissance--a major movement of late-nineteenth American Art with which White design is commonly classified--was Renaissance-inspired collaboration between architects, sculptors, and painters in order to create an integrated 'high art' mostly for the gilded-age millionaires, who often considered themselves embodying the ideals of Renaissance patronage.[58] The Dewing-White collaboration was thus highly appropriate as a part of the Hecker mansion project.

An abundant use of classical idioms and imagery is of course another major aspect of American Renaissance. White's frame for each Hecker screen mimics a temple front of Hellenistic Greece with fluted Corinthian columns at both sides connected by the two horizontal bands: a molded entablature on the top and stylobate at the bottom. The entire screen is raised up by the four round, decorative

bases, which are far more conspicuous than the disk-bases of the Freer screens. The Hecker screens were clearly intended to harmonize with the Hecker mansion classically oriented not only in exterior but also in interior. As Michael Komanecky points out, "White's frames correspond closely, in fact, to the columns in Hecker's drawing room" as seen in the 1891 photograph of the interior (fig. 61).[59]

Dewing also transformed the two-paneled format of the Freer pair into the three-paneled which is not seen in Japanese folding screens. Even numbers--two, four, six, or eight--have been regularly chosen for the number of *byôbu* panels for practical reasons,[60] even though odd numbers have been regarded as more fortuitous and favored in Japanese culture in general. The three-paneled screens, on the other hand, were quite popular among European and American folding screens.[61] Also, the three-paneling corresponds in style to the Dewing-Tryon triptych, as well as to the triple-arched composite frame at the façade of the Hecker house.

Finally, the painting on the Hecker screens is more emphatically classical than that of *The Four Sylvan Sounds*.

Each panel of the Hecker pair similarly shows a classically draped female figure dominating in an indeterminate landscape of bright light and darkness conflated by deeply misted air. No foliage or flowers are depicted to suggest *japonisme* or to break the symmetry formed by the classical framework and three identically sized panels.

In the Detroit screen, symmetrical balance is further articulated by the upright stance and gazes of the three figures: the central one toward the viewer, while the figures at each side face one another. The symmetry of this screen is yet slightly broken by the hand-on-hip pose of figures. According to Kathleen Pyne, this pose of three classical figures in the Detroit screen suggests Dewing's reference to the Tanagura figurines (fig. 62).[62] These small terracotta figures from Hellenistic Greece were discovered through the archaeological excavations in the Greek city Tanagura during the early 1870s. Intimate and elegant Tanaguras soon became popular among European collectors, and reached museums and wealthy households in the United States by the late 1880s. Hecker indeed owned several Tanaguras, which had been already placed in the

interior of his mansion including the drawing room, before Dewing's screens were installed.[63] The Hellenistic figures in the Detroit screen fit well into the space created by White's Corinthian framework. A sense of permanence is evoked by those classical attributes and the refined balance of the Hecker screens.

The recently located Berry-Hill screen certainly has the above attributes of classicism and multiple associations with its original residence. However, a closer look at this screen, together with the Detroit one, leads us to a somewhat different yet intriguing perspective toward the Hecker pair, which has been discussed solely in terms of the Detroit's *Classical Figures* in the published accounts on the pair.

Buoyant white garments of the Detroit figures are repeated on two panels of the Berry-Hill screen, but the figure on the left (from us) wears a heavy, dark bluish, and coat-like costume covering her body, though its drapery folds recall classical sculpture. The symmetry jeopardized by her clothing is further broken by the variant poses of three figures as well as their gazes. The central figure,

with both hands on her shoulder, faces diagonally outside of the screen, as if to avoid the viewer's gaze. Both right and left figures face toward the center, but they do not appear to be facing each other. While the right one (from us) extends her arms toward the center, the left one is pulling her arms, one on her chest and the other over her shoulder. The gazes of these three figures are all vague and unsettled, unlike the determined gazes of the Detroit figures.

The difference in personality and current state of mind among the three figures of the Berry-Hill screen is revealed by their distinct poses and by subtle differentiation of their facial features. Contrasted further through depth of shading, those faces even suggest the age distinction between the three. These tactics are not seen in the Detroit figures, all of whom look calm, bright, and mature, each standing with one hand on her hip. As in many of Dewing's paintings, the Detroit screen shows us the decorative and enigmatic repetition of identical women derived from the same model.[64] A sense of permanence attributed to classicism[65] is stronger in the Detroit

screen, while a sense of transience, one of the most significant aesthetics found in Japanese art, is indicated in the Berry-Hill screen.

Still, the sense of time is not totally absent from Tonalist landscape of the Detroit screen. This abstract landscape was created through a wax medium and, according to Susan Hobbs, Dewing's selective rubbing "allowed the rich ground of deep russet to bleed through upper layers of emerald, suggesting vibrant clouds and greenery behind the figures."[66] A sense of transience or impermanence is evoked by the Tonalist mist of orange and green, beyond which the sun may be rising or setting. The most enigmatic aspect of this landscape is that orange mist on the right and left panels does not flow into the central panel, though orange is certainly painted below the dark-green-filled ground. This sense of transience and discrepancy among three panels inspired Pyne to compare the Detroit screen with the *Seasons Triptych* by Dewing and Tryon. Pyne suggests the theme of the screen as "Spring, Summer, and Autumn" or "Sunset, Night, and Sunrise."[67] Adding to this impermanent quality of the Detroit screen, figures appear to be

floating because of the large void below their feet which are totally covered by their garments.

A sense of transience in landscape is also seen in the Berry-Hill screen. In this screen, dark bluish mist covers the entire screen, instead of the orange and green mist of the Detroit screen. But with a closer look, we also realize that this dark blue was brushed over the already orange-hued ground. The tiny moon seen above the shoulder of the central figure--the only tangible element in both screens besides the figures--clearly indicates the time of the day different from the one indicated in the Detroit screen.

In contrast to *The Four Sylvan Sounds*, the first Hecker pair does not represent a continuous scene across the two screens. They are in fact rather contrasting, particularly in time. Although Pyne's association of the Detroit screen with the *Seasons Triptych* is still relevant because of its original location and basic format, it seems now that the Hecker screens as a pair are more comparable to a pair of easel paintings that Dewing had created

previously for Freer: the *After Sunset* of 1892 (fig. 2) and *Before Sunrise* of 1895 (fig. 63).

This association is further supported by the details of White's frames for the Hecker pair, which have been discussed as mere accessories of the paintings on panels. The details reveal that White's framing is, in fact, an integral part of the screen work not only structurally but also iconographically. The frames of the Hecker pair are almost identical but a crucial difference is seen in their capitals of elongated Corinthian columns. On the first look, the difference in capitals might be mistaken as the one between the simplified Corinthian and the Composite, as the Detroit capitals show the large volutes (fig. 64) lacking in the Berry-Hill acanthuses (fig. 65). With a closer look, however, the Detroit volutes appear to be the organic parts of the acanthuses, the standard feature of the Corinthian capital. The crucial difference between the Detroit acanthuses and the Berry-Hill ones lies in their degrees of efflorescence. The Detroit acanthuses are blooming, while the Berry-Hill ones are waning. This contrast in efflorescence is articulated by series of wavy

lines carved across the 'friezes' of both screens. On each panel section of the Detroit frieze, the waves move upward around the central garland, while in the Berry-Hill, they go downward. Thus the Detroit screen would be the 'before sunrise' or 'dawn', whereas the Berry-Hill screen would be the 'after sunset' or 'night'.

The Hecker screens certainly show more overt classicism than *The Four Sylvan Sounds*. But the sense of transience we have seen in the pair indicates *japonisme* as well. In fact, *japonisme* is already apparent in its structure. The pairing of folding screens is a distinct feature of *byôbu* scarcely seen outside of Japan except for in those works created under the very influence of *byôbu*. The decorative elements of White's frames are certainly classical but with elongated columns and straight outline, the basic shape of the frames is the rigid rectangle derived form *byôbu* that White was quite familiar with. Furthermore, the verso of each Hecker screen is again gilded exactly like *byôbu*. Without framing each panel, even without hinges to join panels directly, a continuous field for painting is created in each Hecker screen, even

though the image does not continue across the screens as in the Freer one. Strong tonality evoking transience is often seen in Japanese painting, and Dewing's elegant female figures seem largely inspired by those of Utamoro, as we will see in the next chapter.

Permanence and transience are enigmatically correlated in the Hecker pair. The transformation from *The Four Sylvan Sounds* to the Hecker screens is thus not the one from *japonisme* to classicism as scholars tend to characterize that. The interplay of *japonisme* and classicism is seen in both pairs.

The *Morning Glories/Cherry Blossoms* Screens and the *Music/Dance* Screen

The Hecker screens were highly praised by both Hecker and Freer. It was Dewing himself, however, who was worried about the final result. He wrote to Freer: "I am very anxious that [the Hecker screens] look well in the [drawing] room. In my studio they are all right. Of course there is a big light there. But in the [dimly lit] parlor where they are going perhaps they will look dark."[68] For him, folding screens are not completed until they fit

well into a setting for which they are destined. He eventually decided to create another pair of screens, "for [his] own sake--[his] own reputation,"[69] and they were indeed executed between 1898 and 1900. This time he placed classical figures against morning glories in one screen and against cherry blossoms in the other, thus they are now called the *Morning Glories* (fig. 43) and the *Cherry Blossoms*.[70]

Given the aesthetic significance of pairing in Dewing's *byôbu*, we confront a critical limitation in exploring the meanings of the second Hecker pair because of the absence of the *Cherry Blossoms*. Still, the *Morning Glories* alone eloquently tells us the scheme for the new screens and considerably enhances our understanding of Dewing's entire *byôbu* project. The *Morning Glories* is a three-paneled screen, and the frame, designed again by White, is identical to the first Hecker screens. There is, however, one crucial difference in format, which is that Dewing mounted canvas over three panels of the *Morning Glories*. His intention is clear: a white canvas is more

apt to create a brighter image than the wooden surface of a panel.

Like the first Hecker pair, three classical figures are depicted, one on each panel of the *Morning Glories*. Their clothes are, however, much looser and their poses are relaxed in a moment of motion. These three figures are placed on a higher level than the ones in the first Hecker pair so that, without showing their feet, they look even more deliberately floating in the air. The 'floating effect', or sense of wightlessness, that we have seen throughout Dewing's screens is a subject of further analysis in the last chapter.

In the first Hecker pair, we have seen the interplay of *japonisme* and classicism both in painting and in framing, but *japonisme* was rather obscure in the painted image of the screens in contrast to the explicit reference to ancient Greece in classical figures. The cross-cultural scheme--clearly defined in framing by *byôbu* format and the elements of classical architecture in both Hecker pairs--is now the apparent and dominant feature in the image of the *Morning Glories*. While the mate of this screen is

unlocated, its title, the *Cherry Blossoms*, further indicates explicit *japonisme* in iconography and pictorial design of the second Hecker screens. Moreover, the *japoniste* landscape of the *Morning Glories*, where the classical figures emanate, shows exquisite synthesis of the Freer pair and the first Hecker pair: the flowers-and-foliage-filled upper part of the screen and the loosely painted void in the lower part. In both fields, however, hues are much brighter than in earlier screens. More flowers are blooming around the figures and a single bunch of blooming morning glories cuts across the lower void of the three panels, articulating continuity of the image. This superb depiction of lively plants, both in style and concept, is no doubt aided (if not done) by Maria Oakey Dewing.

At some point between 1896 and 1899, during his creations of the paired folding screens for Freer and Hecker, Dewing seems to have experimented with a single screen work (fig. 44). Still, it was a folding screen with two panels presumably representing "music" in one and "dance" in the other, reflecting the idea of pairing that

was, as we have seen, significant for his screen works.[71] The image was painted on canvas mounted on panels, indicating that the screen was possibly an experiment between the first and second Hecker screens. If we see the combination of the *Music* and *Dance* as a single image, however, it looks somewhat awkward compositionally because of the placement of figures. This might also suggest that Dewing was experimenting, in this case, with alteration of the image by folding.

We now have to realize the crucial fact about Dewing's series of folding screens. They are meant to be folded for display, thus a continuous scene of each screen is not to be seen as a simple, flat picture. What happens to the images when the screens are folded? This is a question we will investigate further in later chapters. In the first chapter, we have discussed the background and meaning of Dewing's classicism. His *japonisme*--another outstanding quality of Dewing's screens--has been discussed primarily through visual evidence so far. In the next chapter, I will trace the history of *japonisme* in Victorian America and Dewing's awareness of the movement booming around him,

as well as Freer's collection and the availability of Japanese art to Dewing himself.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

[1] Quoted in Gloria Groom, *Beyond the Easel: Decorative Painting by Bonnard, Vuillard, Denis, and Roussel, 1890-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 1.

[2] Komanecky, Michael, and Virginia Fabbri Butera, *The Folding Image: Screens by Western Artists of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1984), p. 159. This exhibition catalog is still the most comprehensive and detailed study on the history of Western folding screens, though largely indebted to Janet Woodbury Adams's *Decorative Folding Screens* (New York: Viking Press, 1982). Adams in fact contributed an essay to the catalog.

[3] See Adams, *Decorative Folding Screens*, 15-21; see also Ryoichi Hayashi, *The Silk Road and the Shoso-in*, translated by Robert Ricketts (New York: Weatherhill, 1975).

[4] The ornate images of this seventeenth-century Coromandel screen were executed with black incised lacquer decorated with colors and gilt. Chinese decorative arts by this time was under strong influence of Japanese decorative arts particularly lacquer works. According to Oliver Impey, "The 'pictorial' style of Japanese lacquer was much imitated in Europe from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards. It was also much imitated in China; many of the lacquer cabinets, now raised on elaborate gilt-wood stands, of great European houses, are Chinese imitations of Japanese models"; Oliver Impey, "Japanese Export Art of the Edo Period and its Influence on European Art," *Asian Studies* 18 (1984), 687. In the mean time, however, Chinese 'high' art, namely hanging-scroll painting, kept influencing Japanese painters in both *byôbu* and hanging scroll.

[5] See Janet W. Adams, "The Ornamental Background," in Komanecky and Butera, *The Folding Image*, 15-39; see also Oliver Impey, Chinoiserie: *The Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration* (New York: charles Scribner's

Sons, 1977) and Dawn Jacobson, *Chinoiserie* (London: Phaidon, 1993).

[6] See Michael Komanecky, "'A Perfect Gem of Art'," in Komanecky and Butera, *The Folding Image*, 41-119.

[7] See Thomas Lawton and Linda Merrill, *Freer: A Legacy of Art* (Washington: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1993), 13-14.

[8] Kathleen Pyne, "Classical Figures, A Folding Screen by Thomas Dewing," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 59 (Spring 1981), 6.

[9] Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 22.

[10] See Richard Guy Wilson, "American Arts and Crafts Architecture: Radical though Dedicated to the Cause conservative," in Wendy Kaplan, et al. *"The Art that is Life": The Arts & Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1987), 109.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Betsy Fahlman, "Wilson Eyre in Detroit: The Charles Lang Free House," *Winterthur Portfolio* 15 (Autumn 1980), 259, 270; Vincent J. Scully Jr., *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style: architectural Theory and Design from Downing to the Origins of Wright, Revised Edition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 121.

[13] Fahlman, "Wilson Eyre in Detroit," 260, 270; for the discussion of the Freer house, see also W. Hawkins Ferry, *The Buildings of Detroit: A History*, Revised edition (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980), 143-44.

[14] Edward S. Morse, *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings* (Boston: Ticknor and Co., 1886).

[15] See Kevin Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan: The Role of Traditional Japanese Art and Architecture in the Work of*

Frank Lloyd Wright (New York: Van Norstrand Reinhold, 1993); see also Julia Meech, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan: The Architect's Other Passion* (New York: Abrams, 2001).

[16] See Julia Meech and Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Japonisme Comes to America: The Japanese Impact on the Graphic Arts, 1876-1925* (New York: Abrams, 1990), 45-47; see also Hazel B. Durnell, *Japanese Cultural Influences on American Poetry and Drama* (Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1983), 30-32.

[17] Morse, *Japanese Homes*, 77.

[18] Freer to Wilson Eyre, August 10, 1904, Charles Lang Freer Papers, FGAA, 14: 378-79; quoted in Fahlman, "Wilson Eyre in Detroit," 268.

[19] Ferry, The Buildings of Detroit, 139.

[20] I have found the following note (dated October 31, 1975) from a conservator at the Freer Gallery of Art in the curatorial file of *The Four Sylvan Sounds*: "Panel-screens are very heavy and require 2 men to move into stone lab for examination. Will have to proceed one at a time. Ask Susan Hobbs if she really wants both [*sic*] exhibited!"

[21] Morse, *Japanese Homes*, 177.

[22] Ibid., 178.

[23] Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 174.

[24] See Miyeko Murase, *Masterpieces of Japanese Screen Painting: The American Collections* (New York: George Braziller, 1990), 8.

[25] Ibid., 9.

[26] See Tsuneo Takeda, "Byôbu-e ni okeru isso hoshiki no seiritsu [creation of pairing formula in Japanese screen painting]," in vol. 1 of Tsuneo Takeda, et al., *Nihon*

Byôbu-e Shusei [comprehensive studies of Japanese screen painting], 17 vols. plus supplement (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977-81), 107-13. For more information on shinden zukuri and shoin zukuri, see Penelope Mason, *History of Japanese Art* (New York: Abrams, 1993), 117-18, 214-15.

[27] See Komanecky and Butera, *The Folding Image*, 103.

[28] The original condition of the Freer screens must have had more variety of foliage, as a note from the curatorial file tells us that "the large area of damage to F06.73 [see fig. 39] suggests that he [Dewing] either scraped the work down for repainting at a later date or that early conservation efforts were faulty"; page 4 of the curatorial report from *The Four Sylvan Sounds* file at the Freer Gallery of Art.

[29] Dewing to Freer, August 12 [1896], letter 74, FGAA.

[30] See Hobbs, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing: The Early Years," 7.

[31] Pierce, *The Ten*, 78.

[32] See Murase, *Masterpieces of Japanese Screen Painting*, 10.

[33] Dewing to Freer, August 12 [1896], letter 74, FGAA.

[34] See Hobbs, "Thomas Dewing in Cornish," 21, and Burns, "The Poetic Mode in American Painting," 278.

[35] Emerson, *Poems*, 43-57.

[36] Ibid., 52.

[37] Ibid., 53.

[38] Burns, "The Poetic Mode in American Painting," 297.

[39] In 1919, while spending summer in Maine, Dewing wrote: "I can't paint up here--it is all utterly outside of my art. . . . The woods are beautiful but savage . . ."; Thomas

Dewing to Royal Cortissoz, July 28, 1919, quoted in Burns, "The Poetic Mode in American Painting," 300.

[40] A verse in Charles Baudelaire's sonnet *Correspondances* in *his Les Fleurs du mal* (first published in 1857); Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 1 (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1975), 11.

[41] See Dorra, ed., *Symbolist Art Theories*, 8-11, 139-40.

[42] Ibid., 11.

[43] See Kevin T. Dann, *Bright Colors Falsely Seen: Synaesthesia and the Search for Transcendental Knowledge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 35.

[44] Simon Baron-Cohen and John E. Harrison, eds., *Synaesthesia: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 3.

[45] Ibid., 17 and 35.

[46] Margaret Watts Hughes and Sophie B. Herrick "Visible Sound," *Century Magazine* 42 (May 1891), 37-44.

[47] Ibid., 37.

[48] Ellen Knight Bradford, "Visible Sound," *Century Magazine* 48 (June 1894), 217.

[49] See Andre Millard, *American on Record: A History of Recorded Sound* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 17-64.

[50] See Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way* (first volume of *In Search of Lost Time*), translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff (1913; New York: Henry Holt, 1922; Dover, 2002), 37-42, 165.

[51] Gerdts, "American Tonalism," 21.

[52] See Pyne, "Classical Figures," 5.

[53] See Ferry, *The Building of Detroit*, 227.

[54] My discussion of this paragraph is basically visual, as no one in my knowledge, including Ferry, has not written about the details of the Hecker house exterior much beyond the fact that it is Chateauesque. But the façade is certainly the most conspicuous aspect of the Hecker house and Dewing must have discussed its details with his patrons and fellow artists, given his aesthetics of the "decorations" as well as his strong connection with Stanford White.

[55] Ferry, *The Building of Detroit*, 227.

[56] See the first page of "The Historic Hecker-Smiley Mansion," the brochure provided by the current owner Charfoos & Christensen, P.C.

[57] *American Paintings and Sculpture to 1945 in the Carnegie Museum of Art* (New York: Hudson Hills, 1992), 166.

[58] See *The American Renaissance*, 12.

[59] Komanecky and Butera, *The Folding Image*, 159.

[60] In Japan, as Elisa Grilli nicely summarizes, "the folding screens were so light and flexible, they were moved about the house a great deal. To keep the painted surface protected as far as possible, it was found best to fold the painting in upon itself and to end up with the unpainted back surface at both ends. For this purpose, and also for better balance when the screen was standing on the floor, an even number of panels was used, . . ." Elise Grilli, *The Art of the Japanese Screen* (New York: Weatherhill, 1970), 138.

[61] See illustrations in Komanecky and Butera, *The Folding Image*.

[62] Pyne, "Classical Figures," 9-11.

[63] Ibid., 10.

[64] Mollie Chatfield was the sole model at least for the Detroit screen; see Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 141.

[65] Dewing's friend and major American classicist Kenyon Cox stated: "The Classic Spirit . . . is above all, the love of permanence and of continuity"; Kenyon Cox, *The Classic Point of View* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911; New York: Norton, 1980), 3-4.

[66] Hobbs, The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing, 138.

[67] Pyne, "Classical Figures," 12.

[68] Dewing to Freer, August 8, 1898, letter 89, FGAA; see for more details of the reception of the Hecker screens, Pyne, "Classical Figures," 7-8, and Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 141.

[69] Dewing to Freer, August 7, 1898, letter 88, FGAA.

[70] See Hobbs, "Thomas Dewing in Cornish," 24.

[71] In the 1923 catalog of the exhibition of American paintings held at the Montross (Dewing's favorite dealer) while he is still active, this last screen was entitled *Folding Screen: Two Panels with Figures*. However, in the catalog of a loan exhibition of Dewing held at the Durlacher, New York in 1963, this screen is listed as two different panels both entitled *Music* and both dated c. 1890-95. They are currently so dated at The Brooklyn Museum of Art and The Cleveland Museum of Art where each panel is located, yet the Cleveland panel is now called *Dance*. A letter from Dewing to Freer suggests that the screen was actually executed sometime between 1896 and 99. See *Illustrated Catalogue of An Important Collection of American Paintings* (New York: Montross, 1923), catalog number 63; *A Loan Exhibition: Thomas W. Dewing*, catalog

numbers 8 and 9; Dewing to Freer [1899], letter 149, FGAA, reel 4721, frames 843-46, Archives of American Art.

CHAPTER THREE

"WHERE . . . THE REAL AND THE IMAGINARY MELT": DEWING, FREER, AND THE CULT OF JAPAN IN VICTORIAN AMERICA

Japonisme as Primitivism and Archaism

Japan is in the Far East. It is certainly located in the eastern end of the world map (fig. 66). But, for people in this nation, the Far East is the East Coast of the United States, as shown in a standard world map produced in Japan (fig. 67). In a typical American world map, Japan is in the west and Europe is in the east (fig. 68). For Australians, the west is the east and the east is the west, and Japan is down below (fig. 69).[1] What these series of world maps suggest is that we have a desire to regard where we are as the center of the world, and, when we call Japan the Far East, we take Europe's centrality for granted.

Japonisme, or the impact of Japanese art and culture in the West during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, cannot be dissociated from late-nineteenth-century colonialists' confirmation of their geographical centrality and justification of colonialism by regarding

all non-Western cultures as the "primitive" to be enlightened. What the colonialists saw in non-Western cultures was, however, not something new or alien for them but rather something lost in their own over-sophisticated society so that the "primitive" should be regained, appropriated, and preserved by them. In their desire for the distant paradise, the geographical distances such as Tahiti and Japan and the historical distances such as Ancient Greece and Gothic France (or Italy, for Ruskinians) were confused and conflated.

In art historical discourse, however, the stylistic innovation of *japonisme* has been invariably emphasized, often in contrast to the spirituality in Zen-derived abstraction of contemporary American and European art. In *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art* of 1989, Michael Sullivan states: "if Far Eastern influence had been decisive for the Impressionists in the limited area of the solution of purely formal and visual problems, how much more so must it be for the movements in contemporary art of which not only the methods but the very philosophical basis often seem to be thoroughly Oriental."[2] In the recent

exhibition catalog, *The Transparent Thread: Asian Philosophy in Recent American Art*, the authors claim: "the artists of the last half of the twentieth century . . . sought to go beyond the surface of the forms to understand the power that conceived the aesthetics."[3] In the latest book on the postwar Zenism, Helen Westgeest states: "Japonisme, which had already emerged in the eighteen-sixties, initially derived only from the formal characteristics of Japanese woodcuts."[4]

This common view of *japonisme* as a "purely" stylistic innovation is supported by the recent writings on *japonisme* themselves. At the beginning of the *Japonismus: Ostasien und Europa, Begegnungen in der Kunst des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* of 1980, whose 1981 English edition was reprinted in 1999 as a definitive study on the topic, Siegfried Wichmann states:

> The most convincing method of presenting a case in the study of the fine arts is through a series of pictorial examples, constructed according to a genetic principle. Such a series can illustrate the way in which any number of variants can branch off from a basic primary type, as the examples in the present volume will show. It is an adaptable system, and can be used for comparing thematic as well as technical matters, such as colour, form, line, depth, light and shade.[5]

Criticizing the formalist bent in *japonisme* studies, Elisa Evett has written in her perceptive yet laregely overlooked book of 1982, *The Critical Reception of Japanese Art in Late Nineteenth Century Europe*, that:

> Whereas scholars have persuasively demonstrated the existence and effects of [Japanese] influence, . . . [their] explanations are based on a simple vision of a cause-and-effect relationship and can be summarized thus: because Japanese art was there, artists noticed it; and since it just so happened that they needed something new, they borrowed from it. This does not explain what they saw in it, why they liked it, or why they chose some aspects of it and not others.[6]

With in-depth research and reading of late-nineteenth-century Western writings on Japanese art, Evett articulates her point that "Japonism [*sic*][7] can be seen as an important phase in, rather than a prelude to, the primitivist strain in modern art."[8]

According to Evett, while late-nineteenth-century writers on Japanese art were varied in their professional backgrounds so that they represented various aesthetic positions, "these writers selected the same aspects of Japanese art for discussion," "whether to admire or to disparage."[9] Those aspects are the lack of three-dimensionality based on the linear perspective and

modeling; the lack of anatomical accuracy; bold compositions; energetic lines; the significance of plants and animals as subjects; decorative qualities, and so forth.

In order to explain the difference between Western art and that of Japan, some critics referred to the "physiological aspects of human perception and their effects on artistic expression."[10] Some thought that "the Japanese depicted the world as they did because they actually saw it differently, and that they saw it differently because their eyes had a distinctive shape." One critic even compared Western eyes to the camera and Japanese eyes to opera glasses.[11]

The critic Théodore Duret claimed that Japanese had more capability to see local colors. But for him, "it was not that the European artist could not see local color, it was 'as though he had forgotten' it." The Japanese artist's eye "has been affected by the quality of the light and atmosphere 'of an extraordinary limpidness and transparency.' The pure bright light of Japan dissolves shadows and vivifies color."[12]

Duret's account reminds us, as did Evett, of the fact that Vincent van Gogh went to the south of France in order to find a Japanese light.[13] Japan was for van Gogh the light-filled land of the rising sun, the image created by the Goncourts' *Manette Salomon* and *La Maison d'un ariste*.[14] As his financial situation never allowed him to go to Japan, van Gogh seriously regarded Arles as Japan. He wrote to Émile Bernard in March 1888: "this country seems to me as beautiful as Japan as far as the limpidity of the atmosphere and the gay color effects are concerned."[15] In June 1888, from the little port of Les-Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo: "In time, your outlook changes, you look on things with a more Japanese eye, you experience colours differently."[16] The south for van Gogh was "the equivalent of Japan," as he also wrote to his brother.[17] It seems, however, that van Gogh had already known that equivalence, probably from critics' and artists' accounts, before his journey to the south, as he wrote to Paul Gauguin: "There is still present to my mind the emotion produced by my own journey from Paris to Arles last

winter. How I peered out to see whether it was like Japan yet! Childish, wasn't it?"[18]

Was van Gogh "childish"? For many critics, it was rather the Japanese who were childish. The Symbolist art critic Teodor de Wyzewa estimated that it was a childlike mentality that "[made] the Japanese see the world simply, unreflectively, and without the interference of thought."[19] Evett relates the critics' view of the Japanese as possessing a childlike mentality to primitivism, for there was the "prevalent belief that the characteristics of the child's mentality were interchangeable with those of primitive man."[20] While Japanese art was indeed largely admired by late-nineteenth-century Europeans and Americans, Evett maintains: "their admiration was contingent upon an unshakable assumption of the ultimate superiority of Western civilization."[21]

Referring to Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* and Raymond Schwab's *The Oriental Renaissance*, Joe Earle remarks: "as one of last advanced Asian societies to be exposed to European gaze . . . Japan almost escaped incredulous amazement and entered immediately upon the phase of

condescending veneration."[22] According to Earle, the tone of many of the earlier writings on Japanese art is essentially condescending: "it is the stressing of such qualities as singularity, unoriginality, decorative sense, cunning, exquisite workmanship and the beauty of everyday objects, qualities which can be made to reveal in the last analysis a lack of serious cultural worth, and even a certain moral depravity."[23]

The arts of Japan that captivated the West's imagination were, as Jean-Pierre Lehmann rightly points out, "the relics of the Edo era." In those relics, Lehmann continues: "Japan was portrayed as a pre-industrial earthly paradise, whose inhabitants knew no shame, hence their artistic talent and sensitivity."[24] The "earthly paradise" was related by Evett to the Golden Age:

> Many thought that the Japanese culture and mode of living had much in common with life in the Golden Age . . . despite their knowledge of events in contemporary Japan, [they] preferred to preserve an image of a civilization cast forever in its Golden Age. . . . They believed that the Japanese civilization had been permanently arrested at an infantile or primitive stage of development.[25]

Klaus Berger further associates *japonisme* with primitivism and archaism:

> how can the Japanese element have been responsible, when a similar transformation was evident in literature, the theatre and other fields? . . . This is not a matter of adopting and copying the motifs, the content or the final forms of Japanese art, but of interpreting and sometimes misinterpreting them with a view to their integration in European art. . . . If a common basis for them has to be defined, then it will be found in the terms 'Primitivism' and 'Archaism'. . . . The recourse to the East, in the crisis of Western art, sprang from a desire to return to source, to rediscover a primal spontaneity. The ukiyo-e prints satisfied that desire, because they were considered 'primitive', whether they actually were or not. There is abundant evidence for this.[26]

Japonisme was thus deeply related to primitivism and archaism, hence to classicism as an alternative of "return to source." *Japonisme* was indeed far more complex than stylistic appropriation, and its synthesis with various styles and movements as well as its assimilation into often conflicting ideas and aesthetics were the very nature of *japonisme*. It was particularly so in eclectic Victorian America.

Dewing and the Cult of Japan in Victorian America

In 1853, a United States naval squadron under the command of Commodore Matthew C. Perry arrived at Edo Bay, Japan. The following year, Perry convinced Japan to sign

diplomatic agreements with the United States. Within four years, after being threatened by foreign powers, Japan officially opened some of its ports not only to the United States but also to several European nations. Thus ended Japan's isolation which lasted over two centuries. After the opening, Japanese arts and crafts flowed into Europe and to the United States. Particularly after the Meiji Revolution of 1868, Japan's Westernization, industrialization, and participation in the universal expositions held in Western countries facilitated the exportation of Japanese objects into the West. As William Hosley keenly observes: "Part of what made Japan's modernization possible was its success in catering to the West's desire for art, consumer goods, and symbols of its premodern culture."[27] Those Japanese objects exported to the West not only attracted collectors but also inspired the artists to innovate their art.

Japonisme is most frequently associated with the stylistic appropriation of Japanese woodcut prints of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painters of the late nineteenth

century. However, as recent investigations of *japonisme* have clarified, the influence of Japanese art widely spread not only in France but in other European nations as well as in the United States. Nor were the availability and appreciation of Japanese art limited to the woodcut prints. Numerous other arts and artifacts including folding screens were exported to the West and had strong impact. Not only painters, but architects as well as graphic and decorative artists were influenced by Japanese objects, enough to affect the public's tastes for the everyday accoutrements and interior decorations of private houses. The literature, music, and theater of Japan also had considerable impact on the Western culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[28] There were also numerous writings on Japanese art by major art critics, scholars of various fields, diplomats, and travelers to Japan. Many of these writers had large Japanese art collections and had close associations with artists, who themselves often owned Japanese objects and wrote about them.

Although European *japonisme* had exerted certain impact on American artists, *japonisme* in Victorian America is not a mere offshoot of European counterpart. Numerous Japanese objects were already brought into the United States through Perry's expedition of 1853-54.[29] In 1860, more than 170 samurai arrived in Washington as "the first official mission sent abroad by the government of Japan since seclusion began" and Japanese goods had already appeared in stores in New York (fig. 70).[30] Although the exchange between Japan and the United States was largely interrupted by the Civil War, several monographs on Japanese art would soon be written by such major art critics as Russell Sturgis, James Jackson Jarves, and John La Farge, who was a major *japoniste* artist as well. Those were among the earliest monographs on Japanese art written simultaneously across the Atlantic.[31]

Since the early 1870s, stores specializing in Japanese goods successively opened in major cities in the United States. By 1891, when a poem entitled "The Japanese Novelty Store" appeared in *Munsey's*, those stores were "very much a part of the American scene."[32] It was at the

Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, however, that the huge collection of Japanese arts and crafts was shown to the American public for the first time (fig. 71). The Centennial marks the grand basis of what William Hosley calls "the Japan idea" or Jane Converse Brown's "Japanese Taste"--the Japan craze in American material culture.[33] In her dissertation of 1987 entitled "The 'Japanese Taste': Its Role in the Mission of the American Home and in the Family's Presentation of Itself to the Public as Expressed in Published Sources--1876-1916," Brown remarks:

> The Japanese Taste also had strong moral and educational elements, which allowed Americans to associate it with their own values. Thus writers of the period justified the style not only as artistic, decorative, tasteful, and a good source for design ideas, but also as reinforcing many important middle-class values embodied in the home and ideas about its role.[34]

Numerous artists in the United States responded to the revealing Japan exhibit at the Centennial as well. Maria's brother Alexander Oakey suggested in his above-cited article on decoration, which discussed Thomas Dewing's panel painting, that the Japan craze in material culture facilitated by the Centennial had made "the artist's pot boil" and "assimilation and adaptation" of Japanese art

eventually brought in "the expectation of some distinctly national achievement."[35] One of the artists' responses to the Centennial was an initiation of a social gathering among progressive artists and writers in New York City, who called their circle the Tile Club.

In the early autumn of 1877, While Dewing was still in Paris, those New York artists and writers had a casual meeting and one of them proposed: "This is a decorative age . . . we should do something decorative, if we would not be behind the times"[36]--the idea corresponding to the one to be proclaimed by the Nabis painters in France over a decade later.[37] After a witty argument, another one of those New York fellows, "a disciple of Mr. William Morris and Mr. Alma Tadema," remarked "with great emphasis": "Wall-paper! That's where the whole country is astray to-day."[38] Their avant-garde bent, however, led them to differentiate themselves from the British current, eventually choosing the tile instead, because "the element of color and variety is lost in the decorative details of our structures. There is no object that so readily supplies this deficiency, or that tells so on all its surroundings as the tile."[39]

Subsequently they began to meet once a week to design eight-inch-square tiles. As William H. Gerdts points out, their "basic conceptions involved an aesthetic that was flat and decorative, relating both to William Morris' Arts and Crafts movement and to the growing influence of Oriental design."[40] Most of the tiles that the members designed were lost or destroyed by themselves, for designing tiles was a playful experiment for them. Nevertheless, it was a fruitful experiment for their *japonisme* as the "same aesthetic was soon to be translated into the area of oil painting."[41]

The most significant fact concerning the Tile Club for us is that this group of Arts-and-Crafts and *japoniste* artists had included such future masters as J. Alden Weir, John H. Twachtman, William Merritt Chase, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and Stanford White, all of whom would become close friends of Dewing's and influential figures for the development of his art.[42] For Weir and Twachtman, *japonisme* inspired by the Tile Club experience would be "most evident in their work from 1893 to 1896,"[43] as they became master Impressionists (figs. 72, 73). Their high *japoniste* years

would be followed by their formation of the Ten American Painters with Dewing and other modernists, coinciding with the creation of *japoniste* folding screens by the only Tonalist member of "the Ten." *Japoniste* aesthetics explored in composition and color in Weir's and Twachtman's paintings are also seen in the works by William Merritt Chase, who would become a member of "the Ten" when Twachtman died in 1902. Chase also created, during the 1880s and the 90s, a number of paintings showing more explicit Japanese taste in their depictions of exotic objects such as kimono, fans, and folding screens that he had been collecting (fig. 74).[44]

Stanford White designed numerous frames for Dewing's paintings including the folding screens as we have seen in the previous chapter. Besides collecting Japanese art himself, White must have been fully aware that some of the classical interiors that he designed for his rich patrons were to be profusely decorated with Japanese *objets d'art*. Not well-known is the fact that the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, another significant member of the Tile Club and the one who invited Dewing to Cornish to establish an

art colony together, also collected an amazing quantity of various Japanese objects including prints, ceramics, lacquered furniture, painted silks, and other textiles. His Japanese taste even led him to cover entire walls of the interior of his house in Cornish with *tatami* mats.[45]

The early Japanese taste of Weir, Twachtman, Chase, White, Saint-Gaudens, and other members of the Tile Club is indicated by the fact that there was "a big Japanese screen" in the studio of the Tile Club.[46] The Japanese screen was probably provided by a Japanese member of the Tile Club, Hiromichi Shugio, who was, according to Julia Meech: "the distinguished Oxford-educated director of the First Japan Manufacturing and Trading Company, purveyors of Japanese porcelain and parasols on Broadway" as well as "a knowledgeable print collector who introduced New Yorkers to the beauties of Japanese woodblock prints and illustrated books."[47] Later, at the Grolier Club, he organized the first major exhibition of Japanese prints in New York in 1889. He also organized another *ukiyo-e* exhibition there in 1896 (fig. 75) when Dewing was working on *The Four Sylvan Sounds*.

Even more significantly, Shugio's Grolier Club activities were shared with fellow members and major *japoniste* tastemakers: Charles Lang Freer, Howard Mansfield, Louisine W. Havemeyer, Louis Comfort Tiffany, and John La Farge among others. Mansfield began collecting Japanese art through his admiration for the works of James McNeill Whistler: the path that Freer directly followed.[48] Havemeyer, who is well-known as Mary Cassatt's companion and a key figure for the development of French Impressionist collection in the United States, also shared the pleasure of collecting Japanese art with Freer.[49]

Tiffany was a leading director-artist of aesthetic projects for interior design, whose Japanese-inspired decorative arts were admired as masterpieces of Art Nouveau across the Atlantic.[50] He also created a folding screen filled with stained glass, showing an exquisite conflation of *japonisme* and medievalism (fig. 76). La Farge, one of the earliest and most creative *japoniste* painters in the West,[51] was a mentor of Maria Oakey Dewing. Maria once remarked that she and her fellow students "owed an unpayable debt" to the master.[52] Her brother Alexander saw

the "originality" in Tiffany's and La Farge's "assimilation and adaptation" of Japanese art which had not seemed "such advantage as when collected."[53]

The Japan craze in New York would soon be surpassed by the one in Boston where Dewing was born and to which he occasionally returned. There, large amounts of Japanese arts were acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts whose Japanese collection is now claimed to be the best outside Japan. The contemporary critic Paul Chalfin proudly assessed: "The Collection in Boston has served as perhaps none, except in Tokio, to define the figures and the movements that have so far been signalled in the history of Japanese art."[54]

Two figures stand out in the story of Boston's Japanese collection: Edward Sylvester Morse and Ernest Francisco Fenollosa. Both of them were Harvard-graduate-scholars who taught at Tokyo University. Like Morse, who has been mentioned in the previous chapter, Fenollosa collected vast quantities of indigenous arts and crafts in high quality during his stay in Japan. After they returned to the United States they became the evangelic figures for

the Japan craze of the 1880s and 1890s. They gave official and unofficial lectures on Japanese art and culture, published writings on the theme and participated in museum activities to promote public exhibitions of Japanese art.[55]

Morse and Fenollosa were close friends of Freer and his consultants for his purchasing of Japanese art. Morse's protégé, Bunkio Matsuki, who began residing in Salem, Massachusetts in 1888 became one of the major dealers associated with Freer's early collection of Japanese art. According to Hina Hirayama, Matsuki sold various Japanese objects in large quantity as the head of the Japanese section of the Almy, Bigelow & Washburn department store in Salem between 1890 and 1897, followed by the shift in his business toward the "auctioning of more expensive fine arts objects in other cities" such as Boston and New York.[56] The formative years of the activities of Morse, Fenollosa, and Matsuki in Boston and Salem were the 1890s. In this decade, while creating Tonalist-*japoniste* landscapes and screens, Dewing was working for Freer as his agent for purchasing Japanese art.[57] Dewing's connections

with Morse, Fenollosa, and particularly Matsuki are thus undeniable.

Between the mid-1880s and mid-90s, while those three figures were forming Japanese collection in Boston and Salem, a number of American painters, with many of whom Dewing was acquainted, had visited Japan.[58] Among them, the most notable is, once again, La Farge, who 'found' Japanese prints as early as the late 1850s, collected them, wrote about them, and creatively assimilated them into his own paintings such as the *Water Lilies with Moth* of c. 1879 (fig. 77). In 1886, La Farge finally visited Japan with the historian Henry Adams. Adams had tragically lost his wife in December of the previous year, which was the direct cause for him making a trip to a country "as picturesque and profoundly religious as Japan."[59]

La Farge and Adams were accompanied by William Sturgis Bigelow, Earnest Fenollosa and his former student and fellow imperial Commissioner of Fine Arts, Kakuzo Okakura: three prominent and instrumental figures for, among other things, the development of the outstanding collection of Japanese art at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts.[60] La Farge

later recalls his spiritual experience in Japan: "during that summer my friend Okakura spent a great deal of his time with me and I could paint, then, in the intervals, we could talk about spiritual manifestations and all that beautiful wonderland . . . where again the spiritual bodies take form and disappear again and the edges of the real and the imaginary melt."[61] His spiritual experience was transformed into several of his paintings such as the *Kwannon Meditating on Human Life* (c. 1887-95; fig. 78).

After their return home, Henry Adams commissioned Augustus Saint-Gaudens to create a memorial for his wife, which is now called the *Adams Memorial* (fig. 79). In his creation of this sculpture, as James Yarnall documents, Saint-Gaudens referred to the images of Buddhas and Bosatsu (or Bodhisattvas) that Adams and La Farge prepared for him.[62] Among them, there must have been the renowned Miroku (Japanese term for Maitreya, the Buddha of the future) image of the Chûgûji convent (fig. 80), which possesses, as Adams wrote: "the face of a sweet loving spirit, pathetic and tender, with the eyes closed in inner contemplation."[63]

La Farge's travelogue was to be published with his own illustrations as a series of articles entitled "An Artist's Letters from Japan" in *Century Magazine* between February 1890 and October 1893, and subsequently as a book in 1897.[64] Coinciding with the La Farge articles were two series of articles on Japan for the *Scribner's Magazine*: one was Sir Edwin Arnold's "Japonica" illustrated by the notable American painter Robert Frederick Blum and the other was Blum's own travelogue in Japan.[65] During his stay there between 1890 and 1892, Blum was accompanied by above-mentioned Hiromichi Shugio and visited Fenollosa as well.[66]

In 1893, while La Farge and Blum were contributing their experiences in Japan to the American public, the World's Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago, to which Japan sent an exhibit three times larger than the one at the great Philadelphia Centennial.[67] "For the second time," Neil Harris maintains, "Japan had succeeded in making an enormous impact on the visitors. Everything Japanese excited interest."[68] At the American Art section of the Fine Arts Building of the Fair, where Japan had its own section as well,[69] at least seven of Dewing's paintings were

exhibited, three of which were from Freer's collection.[70] Dewing and Freer visited the Fair where they could renew their mutual admiration for Whistler and their shared taste for Japanese art.[71]

Ideology and Aesthetics in American *Japonisme*

The cult of Japan thus helped to structure various aspects of art and material culture as well as spiritual life of Victorian America. "Victorian culture in America," according to Daniel Walker Howe, was one of a number of cultures and subcultures which co-existed in the United States between mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. This particular culture, however, "exercised a kind of hegemony . . . particularly over the printed word."[72] Victorian America is generally characterized by the new urban middle class primarily constituted by Anglo-Saxons and Protestants.[73] The spread of the cult of Japan in Victorian America was not unrelated to the basic values and ideological climate of this particular culture.

Interestingly, in Victorian America, many intellectuals turned to Buddhist spirituality, as Thomas

Tweed documents in his 1992 book entitled *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844-1912.* According to Tweed: "in each year at the peak of American interest (1893 to 1907) there were probably two or three thousand Euro-Americans who thought of themselves primarily or secondarily as Buddhists and tens of thousands more who had some sympathy for the tradition."[74] In this book, Tweed discusses how those Victorian Buddhists' ideal was related to the intellectual and cultural sources such as Neoplatonism, Theosophy, Mesmerism, Spiritualism, Swedenborgianism, "The Skeptical enlightenment," Deism, the Rationalist stream in British and American Unitarianism, Auguste Comte's positivism, and Herbert Spencer's evolutionism.

Kathleen Pyne argues that in Victorian America, Spencer's social evolutionism was welcomed as a rejection of Darwinism, which threatened the Anglo-Americans' notion of a Christian afterlife. In her *Art and Higher Life,* Pyne states: "For those whose view of the world was darkened by Darwin, Spencer's theories provided the lens through which the world could again be viewed brightly."[75] According to

Pyne, American artists such as La Farge, James McNeill Whistler, Thomas Wilmer Dewing as well as Impressionists incorporated Japanese elements and aesthetics into their art, because the synthesis of Eastern mysticism and Western humanism was the way in which *fin-de-siècle* American intellectuals and artists supported their Transcendentalist tradition as well as Spencerian social evolutionism. Although Pyne's exclusive focus on Darwinism and anti-Darwinism in her reading of those American paintings needs further examination, there is one interesting document to support her argument.

Between August and December, 1893, in *The Japan Weekly Mail*, the major English newspaper published in the Yokohama Foreign Settlement in late nineteenth century and widely circulated both in Japan and the West, a series of articles on the Japanese exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair appeared.[76] On September 16 of the same year, while British and American writers were busy praising Japan's exhibit at the Fair, two sequential articles were written for the newspaper by the same anonymous author: "Racial Predominance and the Future of Civilization" and "The

Darwinian Theory."[77] In the first article, the author stated:

> It would be a wild dream to imagine the white race to cover the planet and drive out the coloured races, as the Western man has nearly done in Northern America. ... Europeans and North Americans are (for the most part) considerably in advance of any coloured race in very many essential points.[78]

Yet the author's ambivalent attitude toward Darwinism is expressed in the following article, in which the author claims the synthesis of the East and West:

> We may venture to hope, for instance, that much of the material progress which constitutes the "Grandeur of Nineteenth Century Civilization," and which, under our very eyes is introducing many of its ugliest features into the mediaeval paradise of Japan, will in the coming ages evolve into quieter and less unlovely forms.[79]

The "mediaeval paradise of Japan" was what a number of late-nineteenth-century art critics and artists dreamed of through their appreciation and assimilation of Japanese art. In 1896, the British illustrator Walter Crane claimed: "Japan is . . . a country very much . . . in the condition of a European country in the Middle Ages."[80] Two decades earlier, in 1876, the American architect-critic Russell Sturgis had stated:

> If one could have slept and waked up in Italy or in France in the fourteenth century, he would have found himself living among designers in whose hands art was much as it was found among the Japanese.[81]

In his ambitious volumes of 1909 entitled *A History of Architecture*, Sturgis maintained: "in many of these peculiarities of Japanese decorative building the resemblance to the ways of the Gothic work is curiously close."[82] Sturgis's spiritual inquiry into Japanese art had in fact already begun during 1860s when he was well-known as the architect of Victorian Gothic in the United States. In his series of five 1868 articles in *The Nation* entitled "The Fine Arts of Japan," Sturgis stated after careful observation of Japanese arts and crafts:

> . . . here and there is a hint of Christianity, or at least of such Roman Catholic externals of Christianity as a Japanese of the eighteenth century might remember to have heard of in his youth.[83]

During the 1860s, Russell Sturgis was one of the American apostles of the British art critic John Ruskin. Ruskin's aesthetics, the "fidelity to natural fact" was invariably supported by American artists and critics during the 1850s and 60s, yet strongly denied later in that century.[84]

One possible motive for Sturgis to write his extensive articles on Japanese art, even before any significant monograph on the subject appeared in the West, was to respond to Ruskin's remark on Japanese art in his *Time and Tide* published in 1867. In this book, Ruskin claimed in his typically conflicting voice:

> There has been an increasing interest in Japanese art, which has been harmful to many of our own painters, and I greatly desired to see what these people were, and what they did.[85]

In the next year, the Ruskinian Sturgis wrote on Japanese art as if to respond to his mentor's request. Yet, rather than finding harmfulness, he perceived Ruskinian truth in Japanese art. He remarked:

> those things which the Japanese artists best understand, as flowers and leaves, birds, insects and reptiles, are drawn without formality, with absolute freedom, and with almost absolute truth. . . . this strange development in the farthest East of a school of drawing founded firmly upon observation of nature--is new.[86]

John La Farge and another influential art critic James Jackson Jarves also responded to Ruskin's remark, yet unlike Sturgis, their responses were overtly anti-Ruskinian. In the beginning of "An Essay on Japanese Art" for Raphael Pumpelly's book called *Across America and Asia*

of 1870, La Farge mentioned Ruskin, clearly responding to Ruskin's passage in *Time and Tide*:

> Interest in Japanese art must have much increased, to have made Mr. Ruskin fear some malign influence upon his artists coming from this heathen source; and it is true that many artists are in the habit of looking to it for advice and confirmation of their previous tendencies and efforts in art.[87]

Jarves also attacked Ruskin in his 1876 book on Japanese art:

> Ruskin's axiom, that no art is vital and beautiful which does not represent the "facts of things" (a vague phrase, but meaning, I suppose, their literal likeness), is often confuted by the Japanese; for they do produce much that is vitally beautiful without being an exact fact in nature.[88]

For both La Farge and Jarves, Japanese art was the clue to breaking the Ruskinian spell. In other words, they suggested replacing Ruskin with Japanese art. But for Sturgis, Japanese art was instrumental to justify his Ruskinian aesthetics. Their dissonance was a reflection of the conflict between the Gothic (and more broadly, medieval) revival and antiquity-and-Renaissance-inspired classicism in Victorian America. Interestingly, *japonisme* was incorporated by both movements, as they in fact shared a quality: a return to the origin, or an "evolved" race's

longing for a distant past, which, though in a different way in each movement, was reflected in the art of a distant site, Japan.

While Crane, Sturgis, and many others associated Japan with the medieval, La Farge and Jarves saw ancient Greece in Japanese art: "Here the Japanese have obtained as decisive a mastery as the Greeks in treating the human form."[89] This Japan/Greece association is also seen in numerous writings on Japanese art by other Americans and Europeans of the late nineteenth century, as Elisa Evett cites throughout her book on late-nineteenth-century *japoniste* writings.[90] According to David C. Huntington, during the years between the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 and the Chicago Fair of 1893, "A fascinating kinship between the aesthetics of Greece and Japan was becoming increasingly apparent to those with eyes keen enough to recognize essentials."[91] Subsequently, a number of American artists of this age painted in the "Greco-Japanese mode" that "typified aestheticism."[92]

Alexander Oakey asserted in his 1882 article on decoration: "There is something encouraging in the

instinctive adoption of Oriental conventionality while adhere in realism to the Greek and Italian ideal, at least so far as the portrayal of humanity is concerned."[93] In 1895, praising Albert Herter's "Greco-Japanese" paintings, George Parsons Lathrop claimed that "It is this fusion of the two elements, of more or less oriental material with an occidental point of view, blended with a sentiment of the far East, that seems to me so suggestive of a new development in art."[94] In 1908, writing an intuitive monograph on Dewing, Charles Caffin perceived that the ancient Greek ideal itself was originated in "the Oriental conception of the abstract and universal."[95]

Medievalist *japonisme* and classicist *japonisme* would be subsumed into the larger Symbolist movement of the late nineteenth century. Despite Charles Eldredge's painstaking study *American Imagination and Symbolist Painting* of 1979,[96] late-nineteenth-century American art is still largely associated with Realism. But a number of major artists were, in fact, working in the Symbolist mode and they were mostly *japonistes*, or at least attentive to the current.

Japoniste Symbolism in America, as exemplified in the works by La Farge, Saint-Gaudens, Dewing, and others I have introduced so far, also involved such major artists as Elihu Vedder, Albert Pinkham Ryder, Henry Siddons Mowbray, John White Alexander, and Robert Frederick Blum. Vedder was another Tile Club member and his brother Dr. Alexander Madison Vedder sailed to and stayed in Japan as early as 1863-70 "at a crucial moment in Japanese history."[97] Even the Realist Winslow Homer, who was also a Tile Club member, created a number of Symbolist flavored paintings in his later life under the very influence of Japanese art as seen in his *Fox Hunt* of 1893 (Museum of American Art of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia) and *Early Evening* of 1881-1907 (fig. 81). As Albert Ten Eyck Gardner puts it, "the Japanese mode of design" is "conspicuous" in the "mysterious" *Fox Hunt*, which "can easily be transformed into a perfect Japanese screen by dividing the composition into three vertical panels."[98] The spiritual *Early Evening* was owned by Dewing's patron, Charles Lang Freer. According to Linda Merrill, figures in this painting show "domesticated supernaturalism" and

"their striking silhouettes against the evening sky" resemble "elements of Japanese design" that Freer was familiar with.[99]

The philosophical and spiritual inquiry into Japanese art and culture had already begun in America with Commodore Perry's 1853-4 expedition, which uncovered the last virgin "Orient." Though often defined as Impressionists' stylistic appropriation of Japanese prints, *japonisme* was, in fact, more akin to Symbolists' desire for Arcadia. Elisa Evett has examined, as we have seen, how numerous late-nineteenth-century writings on Japanese art regarded the Japanese as primitive. In visual art, *japonisme* and primitivism were clearly related in their evocation of exoticism/eroticism. *Japonisme* had further interacted with medievalism and classicism as suggested by the writings of Sturgis, Jarves, and others, and exemplified in the *japoniste*-Symbolist arts of the late nineteenth century. In Victorian America, the ambivalence of Ruskinian Gothicism and that of social-evolutionist classicism were justified largely through the condescending appreciation of

Japanese art and culture, which concurred with Transcendentalism and Spiritualism.

Return to the Freer House

When Charles Land Freer made his first trip to Japan in 1895 as the final destination of his first Asian tour beginning in late September of the previous year, he carried an informative handbook on Japan "with copious notes and underlining that demonstrate the meticulous way in which Freer went about his tour."[100] One of the highlights during his stay in Japan was Byôdôin at Uji, the magnificent Buddhist temple of the eleventh century, whose Hôô-dô (Phoenix Hall) was replicated by a troop of Japanese craftsmen on the Wooded Island in the Lagoon surrounded by the buildings of "overpowering classicism" at the Chicago Fair (fig. 82).[101] The Chicago version was called the Ho-o-den (Phoenix Villa). According to the architectural historian Clay Lancaster: "The Hôô-den [*sic*] remained standing after the fair for half a century, and during this interim exerted an influence upon several generations of American architects and designers."[102]

After his Asian tour, Freer kept collecting Asian arts with more perception and enthusiasm. By 1911, Freer made four more trips to Asia and was internationally recognized as a collector-connoisseur of Asian art. Although his Chinese collection eventually became even more magnificent than that of Japan, it was only after his second Asian tour of 1906-7 that he found more pleasure in collecting Chinese arts than those of Japanese works.[103] In the 1890s, the first decade of his activity as a collector of Asian art and the decade in which Dewing created his screens, Freer's Asian collection was focused on Japanese art.

Freer's serious activity of collecting the arts of the "farthest East" was largely urged by James McNeill Whistler himself, when they met in London in 1890. In those days, Whistler was already famous for his Japanese collection as well as his *japonisme*. Freer's admiration for Whistler's works was fired by lawyer Howard Mansfield, another major *japonophile* who was "de facto curator of Asian art" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.[104] One day in winter 1887-8, when Freer had a chance to see Mansfield's entire collection of Whistler etchings, he declared: "I have no

words to express my admiration for the genius of this man." His purchasing of Whistler's art "began the day thereafter" and his enthusiasm for it would never fade.[105]

In the same year that Freer visited Whistler in London, he met Dewing in New York, while his shingle-style house in Detroit was built. Around then, Freer began patronizing two other American painters, Dwight W. Tryon and Abbott Handerson Thayer. Works of four American artists--Whistler, Dewing, Tryon, and Thayer--represent the core of Freer's Western art collection. In 1893, "after careful study [of American and European fine arts] at the [Chicago] Fair," Freer wrote to Dewing: "I am more thoroughly impressed than ever that the art of yourself, Tryon, Thayer and Whistler is the most refined in spirit, poetical in design and deepest in artistic truth of this century."[106] Concerning the "union of Oriental and Occidental art" in Freer's collection, Charles Caffin reasoned that Freer was "conscious of a kinship of point of view that unites them as members of one spiritual family."[107]

Although Whistler was unrivaled, Freer highly supported three other American painters and commissioned

them to decorate his newly built house with their paintings. Dewing had his own room to decorate at the Freer House and he even helped Freer to plan its landscaping.[108] Maria Oakey Dewing, who had published books on interior decoration,[109] also joined the project to decorate the Freer House. She once suggested that the border above the picture molding in Tryon's room should be painted peacock blue (the famous Whistlerian color) and it was indeed painted as such.[110] To further decorate the Freer House, Dewing would execute *The Four Sylvan Sounds*.

By 1894, Dewing had occasion to work as Freer's agent to purchase the arts of Japan which were to decorate the Freer House as well. In his letter of June the 8th of that year, Dewing wrote to Freer: "The Utamaros came yesterday, 3 of them. They are indeed great." Three weeks later, he wrote: "My paintings look fine to me. One of them astonishingly like a Utamaro. I might call it 'dedicated to Utamaro'."[111]

This late-eighteenth-century *ukiyo-e* master of *bijinga* (pictures of beauties), had been popular enough that the first monograph on him by Edmond de Goncourt was published

in Paris in 1891.[112] In the same year, the Galeries Durand-Ruel, the famous avant-garde art dealer, held an exhibition of prints by Utamaro and Hiroshige that was organized by the influential *japonophile*, Siegfreid Bing.[113]

Dewing in fact bought some Utamaro prints for himself as well. Among his existing collection of fifteen Japanese prints are two by Utamaro (1753-1806), two Toyokuni (1769-1825), one Shunchô (active, ca. 1781-1801), one Shunsen (?-?), one Eisen (1791-1848), *seven* Eizan (1787-1867), and one additional print whose portion of signature is missing (figs. 83, 84).[114] Although there are only two works by Utamaro, the other thirteen prints are from the same period (between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) and they are all *bijinga*, the female-figure-centered images (with some theatrical or genre flavors).[115] Dewing might have compromised by acquiring prints by other Japanese artists that represented similar images as the Utamaro prints which, by the 1890s, must have become fairly expensive (though far more affordable than folding screens). The Eizan's *bijinga*, which outnumbers all the others in the Dewing collection (fig. 85), became most

fashionable in Edo after the sudden death of Utamaro in 1806 when the public still desired more Utamaros.[116] Even though he could not afford more Utamaros for himself, they were always available through his activity as an agent for Freer and at his patron's house as well. Strongly impressed by some Japanese prints, most likely Utamaro's, Dewing once asked Freer to hang them "in 'my' little downstairs room with my pictures."[117]

Also available at Freer's home and at the art-dealers were various other arts of Japan. Suggesting Dewing's knowledge of Japanese art beyond *ukiyo-e*, Mary Ellen Hayward remarks: "[Dewing's] tonal color schemes have been compared with the old Oriental pottery glazes," and his "fine tonal modulations . . . have much in common with the delicate coloring of old Chinese and Japanese paintings."[118] The idea of a folding screen by Dewing for the Freer House was thus clearly derived from their mutual enthusiasm for Japanese art. The most fascinating fact concerning Dewing's screen project for Freer is that "in the two years it took Dewing to compose *The Four Sylvan Sounds*, Freer acquired twelve Japanese folding screens," as noted in the

most comprehensive volume on Freer and his collection.[119] Though fascinating, one must be careful about the direct association of those twelve Japanese screens with *The Four Sylvan Sounds*.

A closer reading of the inventory of Freer's Japanese screens reveals that he purchased at least sixteen Japanese folding screens (five pairs and six singles) in 1896 and 97, of which four were given away in the early twentieth century (which results in the "twelve" in the Freer book).[120] Two of the sixteen were purchased within or earlier than December 1896 (no dates of purchase) and the other fourteen (of which twelve are referred to in the Freer book) were purchased between *December* 1896 and *December* 1897. Actually, the precise number of the screens and the length of the period of purchase (approximately one year rather than two years) do not really matter here, as long as we realize that it was extremely unusual for any individual to purchase such a large number of Japanese master folding screens in roughly one year.

What matters is that Dewing had already been working on *The Four Sylvan Sounds* with the precise theme and image

in mind several months before December 1896 and that he completed one of the two screens and nearly finished the other by May 19, 1897.[121] By this date Freer had purchased *seven* Japanese screens rather than "twelve." Therefore, in order to see the impact of Freer's *byôbu* on *The Four Sylvan Sounds*, we have to limit our analysis to those seven screens and to the later process in Dewing's execution of *The Four Sylvan Sounds*.

Those first seven folding screens entered in the Freer collection already included works by such well-known masters as Kanô Eitoku (1543-1590), Tawaraya Sôtatsu (active 1600-1640), and Ogata Kôrin (1658-1716). Those three masters occasionally painted Chinese themes in ink painting, but they are better known for their brilliantly colored paintings with bold asymmetrical compositions representing Japanese seasonal themes with birds and flowers (although of course each master painted in distinctive style). This decorative style is pervasive in Freer's *byôbu* collection. Between 1898 and 1899, Freer added at least twenty-seven screens to his *byôbu* collection. Thus by the beginning of Dewing's creation of

his last screens, Freer had purchased, via Dewing, over forty folding screens mostly by prominent masters of *yamato-e* (Japanese-style painting) tradition, which reflected the taste of Fenollosa, who neglected the Japanese *bunjinga* (literati painting) tradition and who was by this time a close friend and consultant to Freer.[122]

Among this amazing collection of Japanese screens--which included a number of works by canonical masters from Tosa school, Kanô school, Rimpa (Rin school, or school of Kôrin), and Maruyama-Shijô school--the Rimpa paintings particularly those by Sôtatsu are outnumbered (fig. 86). The whole inventory of Japanese screens purchased by Freer indicates that he was indeed interested in screens by the Rimpa masters more than those by other schools.[123] One of Freer's earliest purchases of Japanese objects was a fan with a spurious signature and seal of Kôrin.[124] Freer's early collection of ceramics also suggests his obsession with the Rimpa school.[125] Furthermore, his taste for the Rimpa was shared with Maria Dewing who deeply admired the paintings by another Rimpa master, Sôtatsu and wrote about his art in her article on flower painting.[126]

It was, however, Fenollosa who passionately advocated and wrote extensively about the Rimpa (fig. 87) in his *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*.[127] The ideas explored in this study was certainly shared with Freer, hence with Dewing. Fenollosa even credited Freer for the revival of Rimpa across the world:

> The national significance of this school as a whole has only been recently understood, since indeed Mr. Freer, of Detroit, has brought together so many of its striking pieces, . . . Masterpieces of this school have always been highly prized by Japanese collectors, especially men of the Kugè class [aristocracy]; but they had become so scattered by the nineteenth century, and almost forgotten, . . .[128]

According to Fenollosa, the Rimpa style was "specifically grounded in a study of Japanese forms, . . . neither realism nor idealism, . . . overmastering impression, a feeling vague and peculiarly Japanese."[129] His subsequent discussion of the detailed characteristics of Rimpa art would turn into a close-approximation of the contemporary accounts on European Symbolism:

> [In the Rimpa art] line played a part, but line as far removed from Chinese . . . always a wavy curve, often soft, even lighter in tone that the mass it bounded, line often executed in colour rather than ink. Then came colour, as the great body of the impression; rocky trees, clouds, figures, . . . as if they were the panes of a stained-glass window. . . . a purely

> artistic school of impressionism [rather Symbolism, in his context] adapted to great mural decoration, . . . Magnificent orchestrations of line and colour, which only suck up as much of natural suggestion as they care to hold, here show for the first time what art of the future must become.[130]

The abundant Japanese elements that we have seen in Dewing's screens in the previous chapter came directly from the amazing *byôbu* collection at the Freer house, as well as Japanese prints, particularly those of Utamaro that Dewing purchased for Freer and for himself. He had also been aware of the "Japanese taste" and the idea of *japonisme* developing around him since his early career. The significance of those Japanese objects seems to be, as Fenollosa suggested, their Symbolist quality: not only the aspects of "decoration" but also the theatricality evoked by the format of folding screens, as well as the iconography of *ukiyo-e* prints. What Fenollosa expected from expanding the knowledge of Rimpa school was the "art of the future," which was quite possibly derived from Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*--one of significant aesthetics Dewing seemed to have explored in his folding screens through the interplay of *japonisme* and classicism. In order to make this point clear, we will go back to the

summer of 1894, just before Freer's first trip to Asia and Dewing's significant trip back to Europe, followed by his creation of screens, the summer when his Symbolist theater was produced.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

[1] See *Standard Time Zones of the World 2001* in *UT Library Online, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection: World Maps,* University of Texas at Austin, 6 Jan. 2004 <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/world_maps/timezones_2001.jpg>; *Gurôbaru Akusesu: Sekai Nihon Chizuchô [global access: maps of the world and Japan]* (Tokyo: Shobunsha, 1998), frontispiece; *Student's Notebook Atlas* (New York: American Map, 1997), 2-3; *Chizu no Tanoshii Yomikata [amusing ways of reading world maps]* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 1998), 48.

[2] Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art,* Revised and Expanded Edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 244.

[3] Gail Gelburd and Geri De Paoli, *The Transparent Thread: Asian Philosophy in Recent American Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pensylvania Press, 1990), 9.

[4] Helen Westgeest, *Zen in the Fifties: Interaction in Art between East and West* (Zwolle, The Netherlands: Waanders Publishers, 1996), 7.

[5] Siegfried Wichmann, *Japonisme: The Japanese Influence on Western Art since 1858,* translated by Mary Whittall, et al. (original in German, 1980; London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1981, 1999), 6.

[6] Elisa Evett, *The Critical Reception of Japanese Art in Late Nineteenth Century Europe* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1982), viii.

[7] "meaning broadly, admiration for Japanese art," ibid., xv.

[8] Ibid., xvi.

[9] Elisa Evett, "The Late Nineteenth-Century European Critical Response to Japanese Art: Primitivist Leanings," *Art History* 6 (March 1983), 83.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., 84.

[12] Ibid., 85.

[13] See ibid., 86.

[14] See Tsukasa Kodera, "Japan as primitivist utopia: van Gogh's *japonisme* portraits," *Simiolus* 14 (1984), 191-3.

[15] Vincent van Gogh to Émile Bernard, March 1888, quoted in Akiko Mabuchi, "Van Gogh and Japan," *Vincent van Gogh Exhibition* (Tokyo: the National Museum of Western Art, 1985), 170.

[16] Ronald de Leeuw, ed., *The Letters of Vincent van Gogh*, translated by Arnold Pomerans (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 356.

[17] Vincent van Gogh to Theo van Gogh, June 1888, quoted in Mabuchi, "van Gogh and Japan," 171.

[18] Vincent van Gogh to Paul Gauguin, October 1888, quoted in ibid.

[19] Evett, "The Late Nineteenth-Century European Critical Response to Japanese Art," 87.

[20] Ibid., 90. The critics associated those childlike and primitive mentality not only to Japanese but also to the Impressionists. However, as Evett puts it, "no one went so far as to proclaim that the Impressionists thought like children or that they were limited to the mental capacity of primitives," the notion of which was applied to the Japanese.

[21] Evett, *The Critical Reception of Japanese Art in Late Nineteenth Century Europe*, xv.

[22] Joe Earle, "The Taxonomic obsession: British Collectors and Japanese Objects, 1852-1986," *The Burlington Magazine* 128 (December 1986), 864; see also Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978).

[23] Ibid.

[24] Jean-Pierre Lehmann, "Old and New Japonisme: The Tokugawa Legacy and Modern European Images of Japan," *Modern Asian Studies* 18 (1984), 762. As a social historian, Lehmann examines *japonisme* in larger context than any other scholars. He defines his own term "New Japonisme" as the economic and industrial influence of Japan to the West after 1970 and the West's adoption of Japanese way of business. He then associates this "New Japonisme" with "Old Japonisme" which for him is the late nineteenth century influence of Japan on the Western art, music, theater, and literature. Lehmann's brief summary of Orientalism and its association with Japan is also significant: "Orientalism, namely the quality of being Oriental, in the European perception was, at least so far as industrial or commercial activities were concerned, a cultural (possibly racial) disease. The nations of the East, it was held, were backward because they were decadent: Orientals were unduly bound by traditionalism and excessively given to laziness and sensuality. . . . As Japan embarked on her ambitious programme of modernization, reaction in the West initially tended towards scepticism, even ridicule, mainly because in the prevailing European conception of the 'Orient', and consequently Japan, the requisite powers not only of industry but also of perseverance were lacking"; ibid., 761.

[25] Evett, "The Late Nineteenth-Century European Critical Response to Japanese Art," 90-1.

[26] Klaus Berger, *Japonisme in Western Painting from Whistler to Matisse*, translated by David Britt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 168-9.

[27] William Hosley, *The Japan Idea: Art and Life in Victorian*

America (Hartford, CT: Wordsworth Atheneum, 1990), 28. The promotion of Japan craze in the United States by Japan itself is further examined in Eunyoung Cho, "The Selling of Japan: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics in the American Art World, 1876-1915" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Delaware, 1998). There are numerous references to the significance of the universal expositions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for the spreading of Japanese objects in the West. One of the most outstanding studies on Japanese exhibits at the universal expositions held in the United States is the above-noted essay by Harris, "All the World a Melting Pot?," in his *Cultural Excursions*, 29-55. For a comprehensive account of the spread and a Japanese reasoning for it, see Shinichi Segi, *Nihon Bijutsu no Ryushutsu (Out Flow of Japanese Art)* (Tokyo: Shinshindo, 1985).

[28] For further reference, see Gabriel P. Weisberg and Yvonne M. L. Weisberg, *Japonisme: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York & London: Garland, 1990).

[29] See Robert Tomes, *The Americans in Japan: An Abridgment of the Government Narrative of the U. S. Expedition to Japan, Under Commodore Perry* (New York: D. Appleton, 1857); *The Japan Expedition of Commodore M. C. Perry*. Yokohama: Yokohama Archives of History, 1982; Chang-su Houchins, *Artifacts of Diplomacy: Smithsonian Collections from Commodore Matthew Perry's Japan Expedition (1853-1854)* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).

[30] John Hunter Boyle, *Modern Japan: The American Nexus* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovish, 1993), 70; see also *Nichibeikôrû no akebono--Kurofune kitaru (Worlds Revealed: The Dawn of Japanese and American Exchange)* (Tokyo: Edo-Tokyo Museum, 1999), 141-52.

[31] See Russell Sturgis, "The Fine Arts of Japan," *The Nation* 22 (July 2, 16, 23, 30, September 10, 1868), 16-7, 56-7, 76-7, 96-7, 215-6; James Jackson Jarves, "Japanese Art" *The Art Journal* (London) 8 (June 1869), 182-3; John La Farge, "An Essay on Japanese Art," in Raphael Pumpelly, *Across*

America and Asia (New York: Leypoldt & Holt, 1870), 195-202; see also Christine Wallac Laidlaw, "The American Reaction to Japanese Art, 1853-1876" (Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1996).

[32] Cynthia A. Brandimarte, "Japanese Novelty Stores," *Winterthur Portfolio* 26 (Spring 1991), 1, 6.

[33] See Hosley, *The Japan Idea*; Jane Converse Brown, "The 'Japanese Taste:' Its Role in the Mission of the American Home and in the Family's Presentation of Itself to the Public as Expressed in Published Sources -- 1876-1916" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1987).

[34] Brown, "The 'Japanese Taste'," x-xi.

[35] Oakey, "A Trial Balance of Decoration," 734.

[36] W. Murray Laffan, "The Tile Club at Work," *Scribner's Monthly* 17 (January 1879), pp. 401-2. See also W. Murray Laffan and Edward Strahan, "The Tile Club at Play," *Scribner's Monthly* 17 (February 1879), 457-78, and "The Tile Club Afloat," *Scribner's Monthly* (March 1880), 641-671; Mahonri Sharp Young, "The Tile Club Revisited," *American Art Journal* 2 (Fall 1970), 81-91; Constance Elea Koppelman, "Nature in Art and Culture: The Tile Club Artists, 1870-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1985); Ronald G. Pisano, *The Tile Club and the Aesthetic Movement in America* (New York: Abrams, 1999). The significance of the Tile Club for *American Japonisme* is discussed in Sally Mills, *Japanese Influences in American Art, 1853-1900* (Williamstown: Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, 1981), 18, among others.

[37] See Verkade's remark on the first page of chapter two.

[38] Laffan, "The Tile Club at Work," 402.

[39] Ibid.

[40] William H. Gerdts, "The Square Format and Proto-Modernism in American Painting," *Arts Magazine* 50 (June 1976), 72.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Winslow Homer was also active member of the Tile Club. Although he might not have been as close to Dewing as other members mentioned here, Homer was certainly well-known figure in late-nineteenth-century American art world, whose *japonisme* was noticed by contemporary writers. I have examined the importance of the Tile Club experience for Homer's *japonisme*, in my "On the Origin of Homer's *Japonisme*: Significance of the Late 1870s," independent study paper for Mrs. Abigail Booth Gerdts, Graduate Center, City University of New York (Fall 1994).

[43] Doreen Bolger, "American Artists and the Japanese Print: J. Alden Weir, Theodore Robinson, and John H. Twatchtman," *Studies in the History of Art* 37 (1990), 15.

[44] See Barbara Gallati, *William Merritt Chase* (New York: Abrams, 1995).

[45] I greatly appreciate Dr. Henry J. Duffy, Curator at the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, who provided me a list of objects in their collection, each of which is either made in Japan or in Japanese style. The list includes eighty-one objects. Dr. Duffy also showed me some of those storage objects as well as tatami-mat walls when I visited there on December 3, 1999.

[46] Laffan, "The Tile Club at Work," 407.

[47] Julia Meech, "Collecting Japanese Art in America," in Julia Meech and Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Japonisme Comes to America: The Japanese Impact on the Graphic Arts, 1876-1925* (New York: Abrams, 1990), 44.

[48] See Ibid. Freer's direct relationship with Mansfield as well as with Whistler will be discussed later.

[49] See Louisine W. Havemeyer, *Sixteen to Sixty: Memoirs of a Collector* (revised edition, New York: Ursus Press, 1993).

[50] See Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Art Nouveau Bing: Paris Style 1900* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1986).

[51] See Henry Adams, "John La Farge's Discovery of Japanese Art: A New Perspective on the Origins of *Japonisme*," *Art Bulletin* 67 (September 1985), 449-85.

[52] Maria Oakey Dewing, "Abbott Thayer--A Portrait and an Appreciation," *International Studio* 74 (august 1921), VII.

[53] Oakey, "A Trial Balance of Decoration," 735; see also 736-38.

[54] Paul Chalfin, "Japanese Art in Boston," *Burlington Magazine* 8 (October 1905), 221. For further details of the Boston collection of Japanese art, see "Dai-tokushu, Boston Bijutsu-kan no Nihon [Special Issue, Japan at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston]," *Geijutsu Shincho* (January 1992) and Hina Hirayama, "'A True Japanese Taste': Construction of Knowledge about Japan in Boston, 1880-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1999).

[55] See Meech, "Collecting Japanese Art In America," 45-51.

[56] Hina Hirayama, "Curious Merchandise: Bunkio Matsuki's Japnaese Department," in *"A Pleasing Novelty": Bunkio Matsuki and The Japan Crase in Victorian Salem* (Salem, Mass.: Peabody & Essex Museum, 1993), 88, 101.

[57] See Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 174.

[58] See William H. Gerdts, *American Artists in Japan* (New York: Hollis Taggart Galleries, 1996).

[59] James L. Yarnall, "John La Farge and Henry Adams in Japan," *The American Art Journal* 21, No. 1 (1989), 42.

[60] See *Okakura Tenshin to Bosuton Bijutsukan (Okarura Tenshin and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)* (Nagoya: Nagoya/Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1999).

[61] Royal Cortissoz, *John La Farge: A Memoir and a Study* (New York, 1911), 166; cited by Yarnall, "John La Farge and Henry Adams in Japan," 48.

[62] Yarnall, "John La Farge and Henry Adams in Japan," 69.

[63] Quoted in Lincoln Kirstein, *Memorial to a Marriage: An Album on the Saint-Gaudens Memorial in Rock Creek Cemetery Commissioned by Henry Adams in Honor of His Wife, Marian Hooper Adams* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989), 82.

[64] John La Farge, "An Artist's Letter from Japan," *Century Magazine* 39 (February, March, April 1890), 483-91, 712-20, 859-69; 40 (May, August, September, October 1890), 195-203, 566-74, 751-59, 866-77; 42 (July 1891), pp. 442-48; 46 (July, October 1893), 419-29, 571-76; *An Artist's Letter from Japan* (New York: Century Co., 1897).

[65] Sir Edwin Arnold, "Japonica," *Scribner's Magazine* 8 (December 1890), 662-82; 9 (January, February, March 1891), 17-30, 165-76, 321-40; also published as a book, *Japonica* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891); Robert Blum, "An Artist in Japan," *Scribner's Magazine* 13 (April, May, June 1893), 399-414, 624-36, 729-49.

[66] For further information on Blum in Japan, see Bruce Weber, "Robert Frederick Blum (1857-1903) and His Milieu" (Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 1985) 334-65.

[67] See Harris, "All the World a Melting Pot?," 42.

[68] Ibid., 46.

[69] Japan had its central display at the "40,000 square foot site on the Wooded Island, a small piece of land located

near the Illinois Building and a superb spot for visual relief from the overpowering classicism of the exposition." In addition Japan had "sections in the Palace of Manufactures and Liberal Arts (40,000 square feet), in the Fine Arts Palace (2,850 square feet), in Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Mines, and Fisheries, and a large spot on the Midway Plaisance, where the amusement and refreshment concessions were located, for a tea house and bazaar." Ibid., 42.

[70] See *Revisiting the White City: American Art at the 1893 World's Fair* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1993), 234-5.

[71] See Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 54, 153.

[72] Daniel Walker Howe, ed., *Victorian America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 6.

[73] See ibid., 9-10.

[74] Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844-1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 46.

[75] Pyne, *Art and Higher Life*, 17.

[76] "The Japanese Exhibit at the World's Fair I," "The Japanese Exhibit at the World's Fair No. II," "The Japanese Exhibit at the World's Fair (No. III)," "The Japanese Exhibit at Chicago--IV," "The Japanese Exhibit at the World's Fair (No. V)," *The Japan Weekly Mail: A Review of Japanese Commerce, Politics, Literature, and Art*, Vol. XX (Aug. 26, Sept. 16, Oct. 7, Dec. 2, 23, 1893), 251, 330, 420, 662-3, 763-4; see also "A Japanese Prince at the World's Fair," "The World's Fair," "Letter from Chicago," "Close of the World's Fair," *The Japan Weekly Mail* Vol. XX (Oct. 7, Nov. 11, Dec. 16, 1893), 427-8, 569, 569-570, 733.

[77] "Racial Predominance and the Future of Civilization,"

"The Darwinian Theory,"*The Japan Weekly Mail*, 20 (Sept. 16, 1893), 325-28.

[78] "Racial Predominance and the Future of Civilization," 326.

[79] "The Darwinian Theory," 327.

[80] Walter Crane, *Of the Decorative Illustration of books Old and New* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1896), 132.

[81] Sturgis, "*Glimpse at the Art of Japan*. By James Jackson Jarves," *The Nation* 22 (1876), 68.

[82] Russell Sturgis, *A History of Architecture*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1909), 52.

[83] Sturgis, "The Fine Arts of Japan," 97.

[84] See Roger B. Stein, *John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America, 1840-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).

[85] E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn eds., *Library Edition, The Works of John Ruskin*, vol. XVII (London: George Allen, 1905), 340.

[86] Sturgis, "The Fine Arts of Japan," 57.

[87] La Farge, "An Essay on Japanese Art," 195.

[88] James Jackson Jarves, *A Glimpse at the Art of Japan* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1876; reprinted by the Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc. of Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan, 1984), 156.

[89] Ibid., 107.

[90] See Evett, *The Critical Reception of Japanese Art in Late Nineteenth Century Europe*, 52-54, 62, 79, 80, 89.

[91] David C. Huntington, et al., *The Quest for Unity: American Art Between World's fairs 1876-1893* (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1983), 23.

[92] Ibid., 26.

[93] Oakey, "A trial Balance of Decoration," 740.

[94] George Parsons Lathrop, "Japan in American Art," *Monthly Illustrator* 5 (July 1895), 5.

[95] Caffin, "The Art of Thomas W. Dewing," 720-1.

[96] Charles Eldredge, *American Imagination and Symbolist Painting* (New York: Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, 1979).

[97] "An American in Japan, 1863-1870," *Journal of the Archives of American Art* 6 (January 1966), 11; in this article, an anonymous author compiled the selected letters from Alexander Vedder to his family during his seven year residence in Japan.

[98] Albert Ten Eyck Gardner, *Winslow Homer, American Artist: His World and His Work* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1961), 206.

[99] Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 193.

[100] Ibid., 63.

[101] Harris, "All the World a Melting Pot?," 42.

[102] Clay Lancaster, *The Japanese Influence in America* (New York: Walton H. Rawls, 1963), 83; see also "The Ho-o-den: the temple and the villa married in south Chicago," chapter three of Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, 47-72.

[103] While he had still considered Japan as the primary aim of the second tour, he was decisively disappointed with nefarious Japanese art dealers as well as with the Japan's

radical change in which "its traditions and authentic ideals are being tramped in a mire hideous beyond description." In 1909 in China during his fourth Asian tour, he could even write: "The glimpse I am getting of old China during this hurried trip conform the impression I have received from various sources during recent years. In comparison, Japan seems only an imitative doll!" These later remarks of his disappointment with Japan in fact reveal his earlier focus on Japanese art. Freer to Hecker, 4 May 1907, 18 December 1909, Freer Gallery of Art; cited in Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 74, 86-87.

[104] Julia Meech and Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Japonisme Comes to America: The Japanese Impact on the Graphic Arts, 1876-1925* (New York: Abrams, 1990), 44.

[105] Freer to Hecker, 30 March and 20 April 1895; cited in Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 18.

[106] Freer to Dewing, 19 July 1893, Freer Gallery of Art; cited in Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 153-54.

[107] Caffin, "The Art of Thomas W. Dewing," 716.

[108] See Hobbs, "Thomas Dewing in Cornish," 15.

[109] See Martin, "The Rediscovery of Maria Oakey Dewing," 24.

[110] See Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 25.

[111] Dewing to Freer, June 8 and 29 [1894], letters 56 and 57, FGAA.

[112] Edmond de Goncourt, *Outamaro, le peintre des maisons vertes. L'Art japonais au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1891).

[113] See Weisberg, *Art Nouveau Bing*, p. 32. The first name of Bing has been erroneously called Samuel; see ibid., 9.

[114] See Thomas Wilmer Dewing and Maria Oakey Dewing Papers,

Archives of American Art, reel 2077, frames 681-98.

[115] My simplification here may be argued by some *ukiyo-e* connoisseurs who care more about differences. Two works by Utamaro are indeed outstanding in technique and concept such as the bold close-up in one, and the shadow trick in the other. And yet, these fifteen popular prints were for the same public who expected similarities and something fashionable. The something fashionable in *bijinga* in the age was Utamaro.

[116] See Shinichi Inagaki, ed., *Zusetsu Ukiyo-e Nyûmon [Illustrated Introduction to Ukiyo-e]* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 1990), 90.

[117] Dewing to Freer, October 19 [undated], letter 145, FGAA.

[118] Mary Ellen Hayward, "The Influence of the Classical Oriental Tradition on American Painting," *Winterthur Portfolio* 14 (Summer 1979), 128.

[119] Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 174.

[120] See "Art Inventories (American, European, Asian and Eastern Art), 1896-1921," and "Catalogue of Paintings on Screens and Panels by Japanese and Chinese Artists," Charles Lang Freer Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 4746, frames 1230-43, 1270-81, 1322-98, 1492-96.

[121] See Dewing to Freer, June 4 [1896], August 12 [1896], May 19 [1897], letters 73, 74, 82 respectively, FGAA.

[122] See Lawrence W. Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East and American Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 51, 208.

[123] See "List of Screens: Japanese," Charles Lang Freer Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 4746, frames 1492-95.

[124] See Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 59-60.

[125] This was suggested in a conversation with Dr. Louise Allison Cort, Curator of Ceramics at the Freer Gallery of Art, who has written a book on Freer's Japanese ceramics collection, *Seto and Mino Ceramics* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1992).

[126] See Maria Oakey Dewing, "Flower Painters and What the Flower Offers to Art," *Art and Progress* 6 (June 1915), 258.

[127] Ernest Francisco Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, two volumes (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1912; ICG Muse, 2000).

[128] Ibid., vol. II, 126.

[129] Ibid., 127-8.

[130] Ibid., 128.

CHAPTER FOUR

FOLDING THEATER: CULTURAL READING OF THE SYMBOLIST SCHEME IN THE FOLDING SCREENS BY THOMAS WILMER DEWING

"The Diplomat: A [Jav(/p)anese] Masque"

"Together we shall conquer all the world," declares the diplomat, the "modern fin-du-siècle [*sic*] man ... Representing nothing but modernity." His mate is his daughter, an exquisite and pristine dancer, "a girl of pride," who has just refused ardent proposals by struggling rulers: the King of Arcadia and the King of Hades (figs. 88-91).[1]

The scene was the finale of "The Diplomat: A Masque," a Symbolist play written by Maria Oakey Dewing and directed by her husband. The masque was performed on September 3, 1894 at the High Court near the Dewings' summer house in Cornish, New Hampshire, in honor of a visit by Thomas Dewing's greatest patron Charles Lang Freer. By the end of the same month, Freer would embark for his first grand tour of Asia, the Arcadian paradise for such a *fin-de-siècle japonophile*. Within a year after Freer's return home from Japan, the final destination of his tour, Dewing began

creating for him a *byôbu*--the pair of folding screens *The Four Sylvan Sounds*--in which Grecian figures and *japoniste* plane were finely synthesized, creating a Symbolist *mise-en-scène*.

The "masque" as a form of play with masked actors was, by the late nineteenth century, associated with ancient and primitive rituals or folk ceremonies on the one hand and with the court masque of English royalty of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on the other. The "masquers" of the latter, as Kristin Rygg puts it, "were the ladies and gentlemen of the court, frequently including members of the royal families themselves."[2] According to Trudy Baltz, the term "masque" became interchangeable with the "pageant" when "Americans everywhere participated in pageants of all kinds" in the early twentieth century.[3] Given the growing popularity of the pageantry, along with the confusion of its style, the contemporary drama critic Thomas Dickinson cautiously remarked that "a pageant is not a masque. . . . The masque is a form of art that deals in a symbolic way with abstractions, social and ethical, cast in the form of a plot, after the manner of a play, and expressed through

lyrical, pictorial, and plastic aids."[4] Indeed, "The Diplomat," Maria and Thomas Dewing's multicultural masque, was different in aesthetic concept from the early-twentieth-century pageants which were community presentations "meant to be seen by great numbers of people from far away." As Balts suggests in her article on American pageantry, those popular pageants almost invariably employed the ancient Greek costumes and headdresses derived from late-nineteenth-century allegorical, and essentially classical, mural paintings. As the mask was seldom depicted in those murals, it was rather insignificant prop in the pageants as well (no mask is seen in the photographs of typical American pageants of the early twentieth century, reproduced in Balts' article).

The High Court, where "The Diplomat" was performed, was the summer residence of Annie Lazarus, a patron of the arts from a Jewish banking family in New York City.[5] She was younger sister of the poet Emma Lazarus whose death in 1887 at the age of 38 was lamented by many including the Dewings, two of her closest friends.[6] Annie Lazarus was thus already intimate with Maria and Thomas Dewing when she

started spending her summers in Cornish in 1890.[7] After her arrival, Lazarus became a charismatic figure of the colony with her Renaissance villa designed by Charles A. Platt and built high upon a hill, which "immediately became a landmark of the area."[8] Thomas Dewing once joked that Lazarus "must take great pleasure in looking down from her palace on the artists working in the ghetto below."[9] Her strong taste for classicism and Renaissance went along with Pratt, who wrote to Stanford White about the High Court: "What I want to build is an Italian villa three sides of a court with a collonade [*sic*] in the middle."[10] Between the archaic Greek columns of the colonnade, "The Diplomat" was played.

Theatricals and other daily activities of Cornish artists were recorded in the "Reminiscences" by Frances Grimes, who lived in Cornish art colony as an assistant to the sculptor Herbert Adams from 1894 to 1900 preceding her career under Augustus Saint-Gaudens.[11] According to Grimes, Annie Lazarus often gave parties at the High Court for Cornish artists, and Thomas Dewing "helped her plan them and make them good to look at." Dewing, as Grimes has put

it, "liked theatricals, and the artists gave short plays or skits which he composed and directed."[12] Dewing and fellow Cornish artists also enjoyed "tableau, living pictures":

> A large picture frame was set up at one end of a room, covered with black gauze stretched tightly and so lighted as to flatten the appearance of the figures seen through it in the frame. Old masterpieces were imitated, the sitters selected because of their resemblance to the figures in the paintings. Costumes were carefully copied. These tableaux were many of them very successful, they were discussed critically, improved and felt to be worthy of the time spent on them."[13]

As the "tableaux" became popular in the colony, rich and hospitable non-artist residents (called "Philistines" by Cornish artists) held parties featuring the "living pictures." But Dewing was quite disgusted with those hosts' misunderstanding of the "tableaux," which, for him, were "seriously studied compositions."[14]

Like his "tableaux" and other theatricals, "The Diplomat" was a serious theater production. Grimes recalled the rehearsals for the play that she saw during her first visit to Cornish in June and early July of 1894, over two months before the actual performance for Freer. According to Grimes, the rehearsals went like this:

> The lines were in verse written by Mrs. Dewing and read behind the scenes by Mrs. Adams. The actors wore Javanese masks. The play was in pantomime, archaistic rather than oriental [*sic*]. Mrs. Dewing was to dance what she called an Erotic dance. . . . To Mr. Adams and me who were taking turns at a peek hole in the studio it looked odd to see this dignified woman going through these extraordinary movements and gestures, . . .[15]

Grimes's comment, "archaistic rather than oriental" is significant because their appearances and the "Erotic dance" are apparently "Oriental." In this theater, the archaic and the Oriental are intentionally conflated.

According to Grimes, "The Diplomat" was also called the "Javanese Masque."[16] Although the complete identification of the masks worn by the five characters on the stage is difficult from this old photo of "The Diplomat" (fig. 88), at least two of them can be identified as Javanese: one is a mask worn by the Daughter of the Diplomat in the center, which represents the refined character; the other is a dark mask worn by the winged figure on the left side of the stage, which represents the robust character. Two other masks worn by the standing figures on the right side of the stage are either Javanese or Balinese.[17] However, the last mask, worn by the single

seated figure, is clearly a Japanese Noh mask rather than from the Indonesian islands (fig. 92). This attribution is supported by the figure's kimono, a Japanese fan in her right hand, a Japanese hair-style, as well as her posture and gesture in Japanese manner. This last character, who does not appear in Maria Dewing's manuscript, was most likely the narrator performed by Mrs. Adams, who at the rehearsals wore her every day clothes.[18]

As Maria Dewing's manuscript for the archaic "The Diplomat" does not specifically require Javanese or Japanese masks, inclusion of those exotic masks from Asian theaters was probably the idea of her husband, who was collecting exotic objects (and often borrowed antiques from White for his paintings) and who certainly had a keen sense of cross-cultural representation. This Javanese/Japanese play on words is also seen in Dewing's later painting *Lady with a Mask* of 1911 (fig. 93), in which a Javanese mask held by a female figures is juxtaposed with a Japanese hanging scroll depicted at the edge of the picture, which forms a bold asymmetry with a large area of void. The archaic and ritualistic mask from Java can be linked to

ancient Greek theater, while the Zen-inspired painting evokes medieval (or simply something "long time age") and the woman's dress indicates the West and the modern. With enigmatic tonality, specific sense of time and space is effaced and the reality of woman in the interior is replaced by theatricality.

A year before the performance of "The Diplomat," Javanese music and theater excited the "exotic"-craving visitors at the Chicago Fair.[19] Stanford White, a social and artistic comrade of Dewing, even purchased the Javanese Commissioner's house from the fair and "had it taken apart and shipped to Box Hill for reassembly on the grounds as a summer house."[20]

A Javanese dance performed at the 1889 Paris Exposition inspired a number of artists and writers as well. John Singer Sargent had painted Javanese dancers who performed at the 1889 Paris Exposition (fig. 94).[21] Strongly inspired by the Javanese Gamelan music at the Paris Fair, the composer Claude Debussy wrote: "Do you not remember the Javanese music, able to express every shade of meaning, even unmentionable shades, and which makes our

tonic and dominant seem like ghosts?"[22] Affiliated with Symbolist poets and artists in the 1890s, Debussy would intermingle the ideas derived from Javanese music and the ones inspired by Japanese prints. He eventually celebrated his synaesthetic masterpiece, *La Mer* (1903-5) by reproducing, on the front cover of its first edition, Hokusai's canonical *The Great Wave at Kanagawa*, which was hung on his study wall.[23]

In his Journal, Edmond de Goncourt wrote about Auguste Rodin's reaction to Javanese dance at the 1889 Paris Fair, which the Symbolist sculptor, like Debussy, had associated with Japanese theater:

> While we were walking before dinner, Rodin spoke to me about his admiration for the Javanese dancers and of the sketches he made of them, quick sketches which did not adequately convey their exoticism. He also talked about similar studies of a Japanese village transplanted to London, where there were also Japanese dancers.[24]

As this account indicates, Japanese theatrical performances, in varied forms, were also held in Europe and in the United States throughout the late nineteenth century.

During the 1860s, Japanese juggler troops had already traveled overseas and fascinated many Americans and Europeans (fig. 95).[25] The fascination was largely because of the "primitive" evoked by Japanese acrobatic jugglery and the masks worn by them. Being excited and disgusted with the Japanese juggler show that he attended in London in 1867, John Ruskin wrote about his experience in his usual ambivalent terms:

> . . . never yet anything that surprised me so much as one of these men's exercises on a suspended pole. Its special character was a close approximation to the action and power of the monkey; . . . the Japanese masks [in a dance performance in the show] . . . were inventively frightful, like fearful dreams; and whatever power it is that acts on human minds, enabling them to invent such, appears to me . . . "demoniacal," . . . The impression, therefore, produced upon me by the whole scene, was that of being in the presence of human creatures of a partially inferior race, but not without great human gentleness, domestic affection, and ingenious intellect; who were nevertheless, as a nation, afflicted by an evil spirit.[26]

Around 1885 in the United States, a theater entitled *Japanese Village* was performed at Madison Square Garden (fig. 96). The booklet of the theater explains it as the "realistic drama of Japanese home-life."[27] The characters of the theater were variety of craftsmen including the

screen makers with ladies of the tea house. The booklet also describes the theater as if it were one of the anthropological and primitivist displays of non-Western people and their lives as seen at natural history museums today, which were, indeed, largely derived from late-nineteenth-century universal expositions. One of the booklet descriptions reads: "Here is a peep into a carpenter shop. but lo and behold! the workmen do all their work sitting upon the floor. Of course! this is the way they do everything."[28]

Christopher Innes in his book *Avant Garde Theatre, 1892-1992* argues that, although there have been various manifestoes claimed by different groups of avant garde theater between the late nineteenth century and the present, what those groups share and "what defines this avant garde movement [in theater] is not overtly modern qualities . . . but primitivism."[29] In the theatrical primitivism of the West, Asian sources, particularly the Balinese and Japanese theaters, had a strong impact.[30] Among the major references here are W.B. Yeats's borrowing from Noh theater[31] and Antonin Artaud's discussion of

Balinese theater in his *The Theater and Its Double* of 1938.[32] Bali is the island next to Java and their music and performance tradition are closely related.

Klaus Berger has mentioned that "when a similar transformation [as seen in *japonisme* in the visual arts] was evident in literature, the theatre and other fields," the "common basis" should be found in primitivism and archaism.[33] We have also seen Elisa Evett's definition of *japonisme* as "an important phase in" primitivism. And *japonisme*, primitivism, and archaism were all important phases in *fin-de-siècle* Symbolism, which had spread in Europe and the United States.

"The Diplomat" as Symbolist Theater

As Kristin Rygg elucidates from her research, "The verbal texts of the masques were written by leading poets" and the "masque" as a theatrical genre was "quintessentially music theater, in which the various forms of music were . . . integral and indispensable parts of its form."[34] According to Maria Dewing's manuscript of "The Diplomat," music for the masque was that of Antonín Dvořák.

The eminent Czech composer, Dvořák was invited by the National Conservatory of Music in New York and stayed in the United States between 1892 and 1895. His famous Symphony in E minor *From the New World* was composed during this period and first performed at Carnegie Music Hall on December 16, 1893.[35] Dvořák also composed a smaller piece, similarly directed toward both nationalistic Americans and "exotic"-craving Europeans: the String Quartet n. 12 in F major, entitled *American*. The quartet *American* was first performed in Boston on New Year's Day of 1894 by the renowned Kneisel Quartette. Quite significantly, Frances Grimes recorded the visit of this quartette to the Cornish art colony in the same year of the Boston inauguration of the *American*, as well as the year of the "The Diplomat" production.[36] Dvořák's music for "The Diplomat" was thus, presumably, this cheerful and witty, yet deeply symbolic and sylvan quartet by the Czech composer.

Dvořák's American compositions were highly appreciated in contemporary newspapers and periodicals, not only because of the cutting edge European Romantic qualities, but also in their appropriation of the African-American

folk music as well as Native American music.[37] In short, for contemporary Americans, Dvořák's music sounded archaic and primitive, and at the same time modern and American. His Quartet in F major was thus quite appropriate for Maria and Thomas Dewing's theater.

Besides his musical instruction of cultural nationalism, what appealed to the American audiences in Dvořák's music was its Wagnerian quality.[38] Dvořák's major compositions both from his American career and the earlier one were conducted by Anton Seidl, a pivotal figure in popularization of Wagner's operas in the United States in the 1890s, as Joseph Horwitz explores in his *Wagner Nights: An American History* of 1994.[39] Dvořák also wrote articles on composers in American periodicals in which he highly regarded Wagner's music.[40]

The German composer, Richard Wagner, had become better-known in the United States since over a million Germans immigrated to this shore as the result of the 1848 Revolution. In 1875, a selection of Wagner's writings was published in New York and after a number of articles were written by American reporters on the 1876 inauguration of

the Beyreuth festival, his popularity went beyond the German immigrant communities.[41] The first American biography of Wagner was written in 1893, the year before Dvořák's *American* was played, "The Diplomat" was performed, and Seidl wrote an article entitled "Wagner's influence on Present-Day Composers."[42]

Most Americans, however, knew Wagner largely through gossip and comments on his music and prolific writings, rather than through the experience of his music itself. According to John Dizikes: "Wagner's name was associated with a philosophical debate about ideas. Confused and puzzling and ignorant as that discussion often was, Wagner was identified with something *profound.*"[43] In order to experience "something *Profound,*" Thomas and Maria Dewing went to Bayreuth to see Wagner's last opera *Parsifal,* which was performed to commemorate the composer's death in 1883.[44]

Both theater scholars and art historians generally agree that Wagner's operas and his aesthetics of *Gesamtkunstwerk,* or the total artwork, had strong impact on the formation of Symbolism as a movement in poetry and theater as well as the visual arts. For Wagner, the

anecdotal and melodramatic opera had become "the mutual compact of the egoism of the three related arts": music, dance, and poetry.[45] He thus sought to transform opera into mythic and abstract "music drama," in which all the arts were to be united by the "artist of the future." "*Who*, then, will be the *Artist of the Future?*," asked Wagner, and answered:

> Without a doubt, the Poet.
> But *who* will be the Poet?
> Indisputably the *Performer.*
> Yet *who*, again, will be the Performer?
> Necessarily the *Fellowship of all the Artists.*[46]

"*One definite aim*" of the "union of every artist" is, Wagner continued,

> the *Drama*, for which they all unite in order by their participation therein to unfold their own peculiar art to the acme of its being; in this unfoldment to permeate each other's essence, and as fruit thereof to generate the living, breathing, moving drama."[47]

In order to realize his ambition for the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, Wagner referred to ancient Greek theater. As Dizikes points out: "Greek drama, Wagner believed, gained its power from the fact that it was religious art, drawing on myth while celebrating human life." Furthermore, Dizikes continues, Greek drama "combined

several of the arts--poetry, music, dance, song--in such a way that the entire community took part."[48] According to E.T. Kirby, in the age of Wagner, the Greek theater (or more vaguely ancient drama) was considered to have assumed "a form of total theatre, with an integration of music, voice, dance-like movement, masks, accentuated costumes, and spectacular stage machinery."[49]

Now, the Wagnerian quality in "The Diplomat" seems clear. The basic plot of "The Diplomat" in Maria Dewing's manuscript is apparently derived from ancient Greek theater, and Thomas Dewing's application of exotic masks adds further to the mythic and ritualistic qualities. Asian theaters were, indeed, living realizations of Greek theater for those who have witnessed them at the universal expositions. Besides archaism and primitivism in "The Diplomat," the dance and pantomime, with narration behind rather than within the actors' dialogs, corresponds to the contemporary idea of Symbolist theater derived from Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The Symbolists saw Wagner's music drama--particularly his last work *Parcifal*, which the

Dewings attended--as "a theatrical work in which language and spectacle function only as a commentary on music."[50]

According to Christopher Innes, the aim of Symbolist theater was "to reach a deeper level of reality than deceptive surface appearances--to embody the inner nature of archetypal man in concrete symbols, in contrast to the naturalistic depiction of socially defined individuals."[51] The Belgian poet and dramatist Maurice Maeterlinck, the "key figure" of the Symbolist theater of the late nineteenth century, claimed the "musically structured gesture and movement, intuitively [expressed] the nuances of internal states in plastic form." His ideal, according to Innes, influenced "the high development of mime in French theatre."[52]

As Frantisek Deak observes, in modernist theater initiated by the Symbolists: "the director becomes an artist, and in some cases the author of the production--a master artist in the Wagnerian sense who brings together all of the elements entering the theatrical structure, including the dramatic text."[53] The author and director of "The Diplomat" were different, but, as we all know, they

were the one "master artist" possessing the creativity of composers and poets. Deak further assures us of the Symbolist nature of "The Diplomat": the "symbolist theater was invented by poets in collaboration with painters and not by theatrical directors."[54]

Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* was, by the Symbolists, invariably compared with Baudelaire's correspondences. It was Baudelaire himself who advocated the significance of Wagner's music, in which he saw the structure of poetry.[55] However, the aesthetics of those mid-century giants of epistemology for the unification of arts and senses, in fact, were conflicted and the discrepancy was felt by the late-nineteenth-century Symbolists. Baudelaire read poetry in Wagner's music and composed music with his poetry. For him, each art could express the synaesthetic sensations by itself. For Wagner, however, each art was not sufficient, by itself, as a means to create *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Music, poetry, and dance had to be collaborated and united.[56] This discrepancy was what the Symbolists tried to resolve in their own ways.

The playwright Edouard Dujardin, who founded the Symbolist periodical *La Revue wagnérienne* in 1885, wrote in his article that if the Wagnerian "artist of the future" had not emerged yet:

> painters, musicians, poets, each in their art, still separated, will make Wagnerian works of art, because they can accomplish in them, separately, this essential Wagnerian idea: union of all artistic forms.[57]

Subsequently, in the next year, the Symbolist critic Teodor de Wyzewa would publish a series of theoretical articles for the same periodical: "Notes on Wagnerian Painting," "Notes on Wagnerian Literature," and "Notes on Wagnerian Music." These articles did not really discuss specific ideas of Wagner, but rather the Symbolist reinterpretation of "total artwork" to be practiced by each individual art form.[58] Being aware of the Symbolist current, Dewing also experimented with Wagnerian theater with his wife in "The Diplomat" and this practice would be transformed into the realization of the "total theater" in his own medium: the folding screens, which simultaneously incorporated Baudelairian and Wagnerian notions of interaction of the arts.

We have discussed Baudelairian synaesthesia in Dewing's screens. In order to further elucidate the Wagnerian quality in those screens, Jonathan Crary provides us an intriguing perspective. In his *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* of 1999, Crary designates Wagner's "operatic work" as the "most significant cultural phenomenon in the second half of the nineteenth century where problems of theater, spectacle, and techniques of psychological control come together."[59] According to Crary, Wagner controlled the spectator's attention toward his music drama at Bayreuth through such devices as "frontal engagement with the stage for every spectator," "near-complete darkness as a way to heightening the intensity of lighting effects on stage," "lowering the orchestra out of sight" in order to make the "source of the music unidentifiable and hence mystified," "calculated confusing of the distance" by "breakdown of standard perspectival expectations so that there is no rationalizable or metric relation between the position of a spectator and the events on stage."[60]

Crary then argues that Georges Seurat sought to emulate Wagnerian theatrical effects into "a radically different medium, by producing a related impression with the painted framing on the borders of his large canvases" such as the *Parade de cirque* of 1887-1888 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).[61] Crary maintains that, although neither Seurat's own experience of Bayreuth nor his accounts of Wagner's music drama existed, the impact of "indirect verbal accounts of the experience of Bayreuth" was strong enough for Seurat to "find models for his own practice . . . in the visual and theatrical dimensions of Wagner's operas."[62] If Crary's assessment is valuable, we can easily assume Wagner's impact on the art of Dewing who did experience the height of Bayreuth and recreated it in his theater.

Dewing was certainly aware of the significance of framing for the creation of Wagnerian painting, as shown in the plain yet gilded frames of *The Four Sylvan Sounds*, designed by himself, and White's classical frames for the Hecker screens. Each of those frames encloses a field of ritual and myth as an integral part of each self-standing

screen (Seurat's painted frame was, after all, to be hang on an arbitrary decorated wall beyond the artist's will). The "frontal engagement" of the images on Dewing's screens is achieved by the gate-like framework, symmetrical placement of figures floating on the surface of the screens, as well as the elimination of spatial illusionism and "calculated confusing of the distance" between figures, foregrounds, and backgrounds.

The "intensity of lighting effects" is seen particularly in *The Four Sylvan Sounds*, in which figures are illuminated in a deep forest without any indication of the source of light. The depiction of musical instruments, as well as the title of this pair, suggests the strong presence of music and natural sounds, but we do not hear the actual sounds: hence 'music' is mystified in different way from Wagner's orchastra "out of sight." The 'music' is also visualized in the first Hecker pair through the convergence of varied tonality. The *Morning Glories* represents dancing figures--hence, 'music'--but the orchestra is absent and the source of the music is even more unidentifiable than Wagner's music drama. Probably,

we should put it this way: Wagner concealed his orchestra to achieve an entirely mythic vision comparable to what Dewing depicted on his screens. In other words, Wagner's desire for the mythic unification of music with other arts was partially realized in Dewing's screens, which, in fact, evoke the unification of poetry, music, and theater beyond Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* precisely because of the very absence of those in reality. It was the age of Symbolism.

Dewing and Symbolism

We do not know whether the idea of creating a pair of folding screens came from Freer or from Dewing. It was more likely their mutual idea: "Together we shall," as stated by the modern *fin-de-siècle* man. And in that "we," Maria Dewing's presence can not be overlooked. As we have seen, she had participated in her husband's artistic creation, both technically and conceptually, since their marriage in 1881.[63] She once wrote that his art was "more mine in spirit than my own can ever be."[64] As his art was hers, Barbara Gallati puts it: "the readings of more scholarly Maria prompted her to recommend certain ideas to

her husband."[65] So did her prolific writings. Maria Dewing's creation of the Diplomat's declaration for his conquest of the world, as well as his statement that he represents "nothing but modernity," therefore, could reflect Thomas Dewing's concern for modernity in his art.

Indeed, only seven months before the masque performance for Freer, Dewing wrote to his patron: "I am willing to compete with Whistler and Sargent."[66] During the 1880s, Dewing had closely followed Whistler's style in his portraits, such as the *Portrait of Harriette Louise Warren Goelet* of 1885 (fig. 97). He also emulated Sargent's provocative characterization of *Madame X* (1883-4; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) in his *Mrs. DeLancey Astor Kane* of 1888 (Museum of the City of New York).[67] By the end of the decade, however, Dewing ceased portrait painting (which for him was "not art"),[68] as he found an original visual expression to compete with those leading modernists.

The Diplomat's idea of modernity is reflected in Dewing's *japoniste* screens. Klaus Berger maintains in his theoretical volume on *japonisme*: "The influence of Japanese

art undermined all illusionistic representation and opened up entirely new prospects for the creation of a new visual reality, a modern style."[69] That corresponds to Merrill's description: "*The Four Sylvan Sounds* ... employs elements of style that counter Western tradition, such as the suspension of figures in fields of foliage without regard for the conventions of linear perspective."[70] Berger also analyzes the significance of *japonisme* for the Symbolist subjective view. Many Symbolist artists such as Van Gogh, Gauguin, and members of the Nabis were strongly influenced by Japanese art.[71] Fernand Khnopff, the "perfect symbolist,"[72] used a Japanese object both as a motif and to create a Symbolist space in his *Roses et éventail japonais* (fig. 98).[73]

Dewing's art was nurtured by academic classicism when he studied at the Académie Julian in Paris from 1876 to 1877. However, his classicism soon leaned toward that of British Aestheticism, which became the dominant style of his works during the 1880s. In contrast to the historicism of French academic classicism, the British-aesthete ideal of "art for art's sake" allowed artists such as Whistler

and Moore to freely conflate classicism with *japonisme*, or vice versa (figs. 99, 100).[74] Their emphasis on color harmony and flatness corresponds to Maurice Denis' Symbolist statement: "a picture ... is essentially a plane surface covered with colors assembled in a certain order."[75] Robin Spencer points out that "*Japonisme* in England was rarely allied with Realism," unlike French *japonisme* which was initially associated with Impressionism.[76] The Symbolist tendency of British-aesthete *japonisme*, inherited from the Pre-Raphaelites' Romantic sentiment, surely entered into Dewing's art of the 1880s. It bloomed fully in his Tonalist landscapes and folding screens of the 1890s, as he encountered European Symbolism.

We have already seen abundant evidence of Dewing as a Symbolist. According to E. T. Kirby: "The dominant characteristic of the Symbolist aesthetics was that it was based on an acceptance of the correspondences between the arts and between the information of the various senses."[77] The transient quality in Dewing's Tonalist-*japoniste* paintings, such as the *Hermit Thrush* (fig. 6), was not of an Impressionist moment, depicted by the scientific

understanding of light and color, but of a Symbolist moment, elicited by spiritual air and enigmatic tonality of a verdant field, from where the synaesthetic "choice spirits" emanate. Dewing's particular interest in Symbolist theatricality is evident in his paintings from the time of "The Diplomat," such as the *Comedia* (fig. 33). As we have seen in the first chapter, Dewing had nurtured a unique sensitivity in depicting theatrical space in his paintings since early in his career.

Dewing's interest in Symbolism was also shared with Freer as the patron sent the artist a copy of the notorious *The Yellow Book* of 1894, edited by the British illustrator and Symbolist Aubrey Beardsley.[78] In her book *Beardsley, Japonisme, and the Pervasion of the Victorian Ideal* of 1997, Linda Gertner Zatlin superbly discusses Beardsley's *japonisme* in his Symbolist illustrations, including the ones in *The Yellow Book*. One of those *japoniste* illustrations was *The Wagnerites* (fig. 101), which, though making "fun of the composer's anti-Semitism," shows his love of Wagner's music indicated by his other Wagnerian illustrations.[79] It must have been not just the sarcastic

nature of *The Yellow Book* but also the Symbolist musicality, theatricality, and *japonisme* in Beardsley's illustrations that fascinated Freer and Dewing. The publication of *The Yellow Book* coincided with the first English edition of the similarly notorious *Salome* by Oscar Wilde, which was profusely illustrated with Beardsley's *japoniste*-Symbolist images.[80] It was also the year of Dewing's commemorative Symbolist theater for his patron.

Susan Hobbs has also indicated the impact of European Symbolism on Dewing by associating one of his Cornish landscapes, *In the Garden* of c.1892-4 (fig. 7) with Khnopff's *Memories* of 1889 (fig. 102). Hobbs observes: "Elongated and indeterminately placed, the figures recall Fernand Khnopff's pictures that depict heightened states of consciousness."[81] *In the Garden* was "one of the few perfect masterpieces"[82] for Sadakichi Hartmann, the major turn-of-the-century American art critic who championed the art of Dewing. By 1896, Hartmann was recognized as "the first prophet of symbolism in America."[83] He introduced French Symbolist art and poetry to the American public as early as 1887 and vigorously wrote on the subject in his own

ambitious journal, *The Art Critic*, published in Boston between November 1893 and March 1894. During the previous winter, Hartmann had stayed in Paris, where he was welcomed into the circle of Stéphane Mallarmé and the Symbolists.[84] In the first issue of *The Art Critic*, Hartmann wrote an article on his enchanting experience at one of famous Symbolist Tuesdays at Mallarmé's, to which both Dujardin and Wyzewa (above-mentioned Wagnerian Symbolists) were regular visitors.[85] There, the poet spoke "as the other Symbolists [wrote]." Hartmann also describes how Mallarmé "directed the attention of the Symbolists to the Pre-Raphaelite movement" as well as to Baudelaire.[86]

In the January 1894 issue of *The Art Critic*, Hartmann published an article devoted to Dewing. There he wrote: "[Dewing's] instinct of beauty, poetic expression and mystic grace satisfy my desire to forget every-day life completely."[87] In the same year as the appearance of Hartmann's article on Dewing, as well as his accounts on French Symbolism, "The Diplomat" was written, directed, and performed. The masque production was followed by Dewing's awaited trip to the Symbolist metropolis.

In early October, 1894, a month after the performance of "The Diplomat," Dewing left for England with Freer's financial support, following his patron's departure for Asian countries via Europe. In November, they met in Paris and visited Whistler's studio. The meeting of these three aesthetes seems to have been fruitful, as Freer soon wrote to Whistler from his hotel: "Let me thank you most heartily for your many kindnesses to Mr. Dewing and myself," and Whistler replied on the same day: "I like Dewing too very much, and shall miss you both--yesterday afternoon is not readily forgotten in the studio!"[88] In the expatriate's studio, Freer and Dewing could see the *Blue and Silver: Screen with Old Battersea Bridge* of 1872, the only folding screen of the master's creation (figs. 103. 104).[89] Back in London, Dewing was allowed to paint with Whistler from December 1894 through March 1895.

Whistler's refined, *Japoniste* folding screen, with its two Japanese paintings of flowers and birds in verso (fig. 105), had undeniable impact on Dewing and his subsequent screen-making. However, the difference between Whistler's screen and *The Four Sylvan Sounds* is noticeable, and

reveals Dewing's challenge to his mentor, as he had previously declared to Freer. Whistler's screen depicts a nocturnal landscape with bridge in the Realist mode of *japonisme* that was surely current among French avant-gardes around 1872, while Dewing's pair of screens represents an otherworldly Symbolist vision. Realism and Symbolism were two poles of "*la modernité* in painting" for Sadakichi Hartmann, as he discussed in his article of 1898.[90] His description of Symbolism is clearly more sympathetic than that of Realism, and almost identical with his frequent accounts of Dewing's Symbolism in various publications. In that article, Hartmann stated: "the Symbolists, who, listening to their 'inner voice,' try to fix the emotions which tremble through their bodies, or the phantoms which rise mist-like in their minds by musical color dots or other deliriums of odd variegation."[91]

Quite significantly, by the time of Dewing's visit to the expatriate, Whistler himself was leaning toward Symbolism. He was a great friend of Mallarmé, whose *Vers et prose* of 1893 was illustrated with a frontispiece-portrait of the poet by the painter.[92] Their intimate

relationship began in 1888, when Mallarmé immediately translated the London publication of Whistler's "Ten O'Clock Lecture."[93] This influential lecture--a "*succès de scandale*" as Alfred Werner puts it--was delivered at 10 P.M. at Prince's Hall in London on February 20, 1885 and repeated at Oxford and Cambridge.[94] Soon after the French translation, Whistler became a regular visitor to Mallarmé's Tuesdays.[95]

At the end of "Ten O'Clock Lecture," Whistler proclaimed: "the story of the beautiful is already complete--hewn in the marbles of the Parthenon--and broidered, with the birds, upon the fan of Hokusai--at the Foot of Fujiyama."[96] The "Greco-Japonisme" described in his lecture would be readily assimilated into French and Belgian Symbolist movements via Mallarmé. Charles Caffin suggested that Japanese art inspired "extreme advocate of art for art's sake" such as Whistler and Dewing, and directed them toward Symbolism. For Caffin, as for Hartmann and others, this *fin-de-siècle* movement represented modernity in art:

> [Japanese art] offered a new possibility of spiritual and intellectual appeal; founded, not on the character

> of the subject or any literary association, but upon the symbolic suggestion of abstract truth and beauty.
>
> It is by virtue of this quality of symbolism that the work of Whistler, of Dewing, and some others represents the most modern note in art. For this quality of symbolism itself is new to the Western world, derived, consciously or unconsciously, from the example of the Orient.[97]

In April 1895, Dewing returned to Paris. He stayed there through early July. During his earlier stay in the city in November of the previous year, Dewing and his patron were joined by the American sculptor Frederick MacMonnies and they "went on 'sprees'," enjoying greatly the bohemian life in Paris.[98] Their night life must have included visits to the theaters and music halls such as the famous Folies-Bergère, which had, by the time of their visit, been transformed from a regular café-concert into "a grand vaudeville theater that offered a great variety of acts."[99] Dewing had been enjoying theatricals at the Players Club and participating in secret activities, mostly "sexual liaisons," at New York's "Sewer Club" just around this time.[100] It is thus doubtful that the eccentric Dewing did not explore further the bohemian life after his return to Paris, even though his patron had already proceeded to his Asian tour.

In that metropolis, being inspired by Whistler, Hartmann, and his own activity as a theater director, Dewing must have noticed the vigorous activity of the Nabis, a group of outspokenly *japoniste*-Symbolist painters formed in 1888. Besides painting canvases, they engaged in the 90s in various decorative projects, particularly the designs for the Parisian Symbolist theater as well as Japanese-inspired screen-making (figs. 106, 107).[101] One reviewer of Dujardin's Symbolist theater wrote that Maurice Denis's picture for the theater set was "the Greek landscape painted in Japanese style."[102] According to Frantisek Deak:

> The symbolist iconography was not used simply as decoration, but influenced the composition of the visual mise-en-scène. The compositional principles of nonperspective, flat landscape with flat human figures that one finds in many symbolist paintings . . . were applied to the visual mise-en-scène.[103]

After his significant trip to Europe, Dewing would explore the "visual mise-en-scène" in his own folding screens of the late 1890s.

There was another, well-publicized and copiously visualized "Symbolist" entertainment happening in Paris when Dewing returned there from Whistler's London. That

was the *Salomé*--"a lyric pantomime in one act and five tableaux--at the Comédie-Parisienne, one of the dance-theaters performed by Loie Fuller, the American "artist" (as French critics, indeed, called the dancer from Illinois).[104] Back in winter of 1892-93, Loie had made a colossal success at the Folies-Bergère, performing her signature "Serpentine Dance" and series of other dynamic and sensuous dances in buoyant dress with symbolic and spectacular use of electric lights (fig. 108). To this music hall she attracted "unheard-of crowds" that included a number of writers and artists, "giving it a new respectability."[105]

The posters for Loie's performance, designed by major lithographers, were everywhere in the city. One of them read: "'Serpentine'! ah! what a poor word to describe the impalpable, intangible, ethereal, supernatural essence that arises from the floating of the soft material, from the quick glimpses of pink flesh, from the dazzling magic of the colored lights--a voluptuous poetry!"[106] So inspired were Symbolist and Art Nouveau artists that they created images of dancing and floating Loie in variety of mediums

(fig. 109). Whistler, attending one of her first performances, sketched flamboyant Loie in her "Butterfly Dance," as it recalled his own signature/symbol in the form of a stylized butterfly that the painter habitually added to his works as imitation of seals on Japanese paintings.[107] According to David Park Curry, Whistler "combined his observations of Fuller with his Venus figures of the 1860s and 1870s" in his pastel *Venus Astarte* (1890s; fig. 110), whose background, Curry puts it, abstractly suggests "a theater interior."[108]

The Symbolist composers and poets responded to Loie's dance as well. The Loïe [*sic*] Fuller Gavotte" was written and composed by A. Hamburg, while Mallarmé "praised her as a kindred spirit"[109] and considered her dances as a "theatrical form of poetry par excellence."[110] The Symbolist critic Roger Marx invariably championed Loie and became one of her closest friends. Among his appraisals of Loie in his writings, there was one intriguing comment, which brought her choreography into artistic and historical context: "One is tempted to imagine that she found her inspiration and her model in ancient Greece, since she so

much reminds one of a Tanagra figurine."[111] Marx's comment, in turn, reminds us the fact that Dewing emulated the classical figurine in his folding screens for the Hecker house.

Much encouraged and inspired by Marx, Loie seriously studied the history of dancing. Subsequently, she realized: "I have only revived a forgotten art, for I have been able to trace some of my dances back to four thousand years ago."[112] Her devoted study of dance history resulted in her original production of *Salomé* between March 4 and April 27, 1895, which was Wagnerian Symbolist theater filled with pantomimes and newly choreographed series of dances as well as music and a spectacle of lights. The "Fire Dance," among the *Salomé* dances that Dewing must have witnessed, was featured when Loie reappeared at the Folies-Bergère in 1897 (fig. 111).

The buoyancy in Loie's Symbolist theater was somewhat diminished in Whistler's *Venus Astarte* for the sake of his allusion to the standing Venus (after all, he could not utterly depart from Realism).[113] The buoyancy, or the sense of floating, however, was to be realized in Dewing's

Symbolist folding screens, which would paradoxically embrace Whistlerian classicism and restrain the Romantic dynamism of Loie's dancing.

Eclectic Symbolism and Folding Theater

In his Symbolist manifestation of 1890, Maurice Maeterlinck proposed, though rather vainly, to "eliminate the living being from the stage." He then questioned:

> Will the human being be replaced by a shadow? a reflection? a projection of symbolic forms, or a being who would appear to live without being alive? I do not know; but absence of man seems essential to me.[114]

His desire for dehumanization in theater was, as Henri Dorra points out, "to preserve the full mystery and complexity of the play of emotions."[115] If we replace the "living being" with the realistic, life-like acting that Maeterlinck disdained, his desire could be met, to a certain extent, in Loie Fuller's archaic and exotic dance-theater as well as the Dewings' "The Diplomat." By the time of Loie's success at the Folies-Bergère in the winter of 1892-93, Maeterlinck was well-known figure among Parisian Symbolists. The similarlity between Loie's theater and "The Diplomat" of 1894 might not have been

coincidental as Maria Dewing's "Erotic dance" could have been inspired by Loie's performance, which was applauded in New York in 1893 shortly after her Paris triumph.

It was Thomas Dewing, however, who virtually "eliminated the living being" and replaced it with the floating figures reflecting one another in his folding screens: sonorously illuminated in one (*The Four Sylvan Sounds*; figs. 38-40), shadowy yet spiritual in another (the first Hecker pair; figs. 41, 42), and blooming and flowing in the last pair (fig. 43). These floating "choice spirits" are synaesthetic beings: sights, sounds, scents, and touch. As we walk along and around the screens of flattened pictures with no vantage points and as we rearrange the screens in folding and setting, those airy figures are constantly floating around, infinitely deforming like a Symbolist theater. Even though they are rather naturalistically contoured and balanced, unlike the radically distorted figures in Gauguin's, Munch's, and other European Symbolist paintings, Dewing's screen nymphs are flat like *ukiyo-e* beauties and floating like Javanese (and Balinese) shadow puppets.[116]

The sense of floating in those figures, which is articulated by bases of screens subtly raising up the panels, can be drawn from other sources as well. Dewing's favorite classicist Hamon created several "floating" figures, one of which Dewing himself reproduced in a magazine article (fig. 29).[117] A critic already mentioned the "floating" quality of Dewing's figures, discussing the *Morning* of 1879 (fig. 5), even though the marble base on which they are seated is visible in the picture.[118] In the *Summer* of 1890 (fig. 17), Richard Watson Gilder saw the "maidens . . . float" like "living note[s]," moving "before the emerald screen."[119] Also floating are the butterflies and birds' nests, with both of which Dewing was much obsessed as an amateur collector and "ornithologist."[120]

As Kathleen Pyne points out, not only figures but grounds in Dewing's paintings, such as in *The Hermit Thrush*, float as well: "As in other Dewing paintings of this type, the earth [in *The Hermit Thrush*] seems released from the weight of gravity so that it floats up around the women, merging with the atmosphere. . . . The looping, rhythmic contours of the tree synaesthetically mimic the

elaborate trills in the cadenza of the bird's song."[121] As in his Tonalist canvases, the grounds in the paintings of his screens (foregrounds and backgrounds which are inseparable as we have discussed earlier) are buoyant: foliage, irises, and daphnes in *The Four Sylvan Sounds*; abstract convergence of air, light, and green in the *Classical Figures*; and the morning glories dancing across the panels of the last screen. Just like irises and daphnes are deeply related to Greek and Japanese myths and symbolism, the whole floating effect is yielded by the interplay of *japonisme* and classicism.

Finally, in the 1893 production of Maeterlinck's *Pelléas and Mélisande*:

> One had an impression of watching a succession of images projected by a magic lantern, in faded colors, subdued tones like that of old Flemish tapestries. No visual focus, scenes are blurred, the characters appear anemic, the dialogue is completely nebulous. All this is fogged over, obscure, vague, floating, . . .[122]

The *Pelléas and Mélisande* was to be translated and published in New York in the following year, the year of "The Diplomat."[123] The reflecting, vibrating, and alternating images--both figures and grounds in Dewing's

screens--even remind us of a series of film strips, the technology for which was just about emerging. Thus Jonathan Crary's definition of Seurat's painting *Cirque* (1891; Musée du Louvre, Paris) seems applicable, even more closely, to Dewing's screen project: "the product of a historical moment when many forms of projected images were widely available."[124]

*

In chapter two, we have seen how *The Four Sylvan Sounds* harmonized with Freer's *japoniste* shingle house. The house is, however, as Kathleen Pyne observes: "a variant of the shingle style, with Romanesque Revival stonework on the first floor and shingles on the floors above."[125] Indeed, the massive Romanesque arches are visible in the hallway connecting the Freer house and its stable to each other (fig. 48). According to Vincent Scully, the "powerful gable end" itself, which dominates Eyre's architecture, simultaneously recalls "late medieval town house and Japanese farmhouse prototypes."[126] Like its exterior, the interior of Freer house also exquisitely

integrates Romanesque arches and piers with Japanese simplicity and textural qualities (fig. 112).

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Japan was often associated with the medieval as much as with ancient Greece. Although there were some controversies between medievalists and classicists, they shared a common idea of archaism, which was equivalent to and interchangeable with exoticism. Classicism in *The Four Sylvan Sounds*, therefore, did not really conflict with the medievalism of the Freer house. They were in fact well-fitted together as Romanesque arches were themselves classical.

In the first chapter, we saw the flexibility of Dewing's classicism. As long as music, poetry, and theater are evoked, his classical images can be ancient Greek, Renaissance, Baroque, as well as medieval. In *Gloria* of 1884 (fig. 13), Dewing depicted angels with halos, wings, and harps in medievalist flatness and spatial ambiguity, while the celestials are classically draped and contoured. Even modernity and American can be synthesized with classicism as seen in the *Music* of c. 1895 (fig. 113).

The flatness and mysticism of *The Four Sylvan Sounds*, with icon-like figures forming inverted arches painted on a simple and abstract series of panels, can be medieval so as to correspond to the Romanesque quality of the Freer house, even though those figures wear classical garments. The religious, historical, and geographical specificities are, in fact, temporal and ever changing through the interplay of classicism and *japonisme*, permanence and impermanence, volume and flatness, and naturalism and abstraction that extend from the image on the panels and surface of the screens to the surrounding space and to the entire room. The figures diminish and multiply as we shift the arrangement of the pair and as we walk around the screens through the synaesthetic air emanating from foliage and flowers of tonality and floating bodies of sounds and scents, as if in a ritual, in a deep forest of nowhere, but long time ago and far far away. And the ritual becomes theater in the age of Symbolism (fig. 114).

In the Hecker screens, Dewing's classicism, articulated by Stanford White's framing, specifically refers to ancient Greece and the Renaissance, being at the

same time, "Far Eastern" in format and image as we have discussed. The shift to the three-paneled format from two-paneled is significant for the interplay of *japonisme* and classicism, as the three-paneled screen can be folded in two culturally distinct ways: in the *byôbu* way, or z-shape, which makes the whole structure asymmetrical, and in the manner of the Christian folding altarpiece, or triptych, in which the central panel is framed by side panels, forming symmetry.

The cross-cultural configurations of the Hecker screens are evident in the ways in which they are displayed at museums and reproduced in catalogues. While the museum displays of the *Classical Figures*, the *Three Figures* (fig. 115), and the *Morning Glories* (fig. 116) usually show the altarpiece configuration, the z-shape configuration is the only way to fold these screens completely down for storage.[127] At the Dewing retrospective exhibition held at the National Museum of American Art (currently called the Smithsonian American Art Museum) in Washington, D.C. in 1996, the Detroit screen was displayed in the z-shape, or *byôbu* way (fig. 116) unlike the original museum

configuration. The *Morning Glories* has been reproduced in several articles and catalogs, standing in the *byôbu* way as well, although there are two types within the z-shape configuration (figs. 118, 119).

It seems, therefore, that the Hecker screens were intended to assume those different folding configurations to be altered in culturally-specific ways. Dewing's intention for the z-shape is apparent through our discussion of *japoniste* format, image, and context of his screens. The z-shape configuration is well-fitted as the room divider of the adjoining drawing room and music room at the Hecker house for which the screens were created. When the large open space is needed for a banquet or performance, screens would have been at the different corners, and on such an occasion, the altarpiece configuration might have been applied.

Dewing's idea of his painting as an altarpiece is evident in at least two of his mural projects. "Almost an altar painting," Richard Guy Wilson stated for Dewing's public mural the *Commerce and Agriculture Bringing Wealth to Detroit* of 1900 (fig. 120).[128] This lunette painting,

"altar to banking, capital, and commerce" in Bailey Van Hook's terms,[129] was set over the vault in the church-like interior of The State Savings Bank in Detroit designed by McKim, Mead, and White in 1898-1900 (figs. 121-23). Perhaps unsurprisingly, as this date corresponds to those of the Hecker screens, the mural's theme and color scheme closely resemble those of *Classical Figures*. In the mural, as in the Detroit screen, three female figures in classical garments--the one in the center facing us and accompanying figures facing each other--are depicted in a scene of fine tonality that is enigmatically yet exquisitely harmonized with orange and green hues. The scheme of the Detroit screen, as we recall, was abandoned by Dewing when he realized it was too dark for the intended Hecker interior, hence the creation of more bright and playful *Morning Glories and Cherry Blossoms*. As the emulation of the screen in the mural suggests, Dewing probably could not easily banish the ideas that he had painstakingly explored in the first Hecker screens.

The idea of his painting as an altarpiece had also appeared in his first public mural painting, *Night, Day,*

and Dawn of 1892, created for the café of the Hotel Imperial in New York (fig. 26). At the café, this circular mural with airy, celestial figures was set on the upper part of the classical interior, framed by Ionic columns and entablatures (fig. 124). Dewing's murals and folding screens share the same distinctive quality: they were both designed to fit into specific architectural settings. The difference is, however, significant. Murals by Dewing were installed in public settings where they were fixed, while his screens were created for private interiors, and were portable and, thus, temporal. The classical images on the Hecker screens are not religion-specific and their altarpiece quality is always mutable in playful and theatrical ways, yet they sustain a ritualistic quality of theater as found in ancient Greece, Japan, and *fin-de-siècle* Symbolist Europe.

We have discussed how the interplay of *japonisme* and classicism in the images and structures of Dewing's screens evokes music, poetry, and theater. This quality of Baudelairian synaesthesia and Wagnerian unity of the arts is enhanced by the cross-cultural configurations of framing

that expand the aesthetic field of the screens beyond their surfaces into space. It is a specific space in each patron's house whose scheme resonates with that of the screens. With the cross-cultural configurations, Dewing's Symbolist screens transform the space of daily life into that of ritual and theater. Dewing's cross-cultural idea in his screens interestingly corresponds to W. Anthony Sheppard's discussion of modernist music theater of the twentieth century:

> Of the numerous exotic models appropriated by modernist composers, playwrights, theater producers, film directors, and choreographers, three performance traditions stand out: ancient Greek drama, Japanese Noh, and medieval Christian theater. . . . Each developed from earlier genres of ritual performance and served originally as a form of religious worship. The performance style of each was antirealistic, highly formalized, and symbolic. Finally, each form represented an integration of music, stylized movement, and text. Not least, they all employed masks.[130]

Sheppard's perceptive and well-documented analysis not only allows us to consider "The Diplomat" as a precursor of twentieth-century modernist music theater but also supports our association of Dewing's two aesthetic projects in essentially different mediums: the masque performance and folding screens.

Dewing's folding screens stand "at some point between pure painting and pure furniture." They are at once two-dimensional and three-dimensional. They are Symbolist works with a refined conflation of classicism and *japonisme* that creates a theatrical space/plane. The "choice spirits" emanate from each pair of screens--the folding theater of eclectic Symbolism--and resonate to the design, decoration, and air of a specific interior, attracting the senses of selected viewers, who reside in, or are invited to, a space of synaesthetic ritual. Yet, as the senses resonate one with another, they would efface one another to the state of anaesthesia, state of meditation, and state of the screens themselves. A silence remains as the senses fade away into a void of memory where time and distance are finally dissolved.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

[1] [Maria Oakey Dewing], manuscript for "The Diplomat: A Masque," Thomas Dewing and Maria Oakey Dewing Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 2077, frames 384-405.

[2] Kristin Rygg, *Masked Mysteries Unmasked: Early Modern Music Theater and Its Pyphagorian Subtext* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2000), xvi; see also Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque: A Study in the Relationship between Poetry & the Revels* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962).

[3] Trudy Baltz, "Pageantry and Mural Painting: Community Rituals in Allegorical Form," *Winterthur Portfolio* 15 (Autumn 1980), 211, 212.

[4] Thomas H. Dickinson, *The Case of American Drama* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1915), 151.

[5] Virginia Reed Colby and James B. Atkinson, *Footprints of the Past: Images of Cornish, New Hampshire and the Cornish Colony* (Concord: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1996), 245.

[6] See "Emma Lazarus," *Century Magazine* 36 (October 1888), 875-84.

[7] See *Footprints of the Past*, 247.

[8] Keith N. Morgan, *Charles A. Platt: The Artist as Architect* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), 29.

[9] Quoted in *Footprints of the Past*, 245.

[10] Quoted in ibid.

[11] Francis Grimes, "Reminiscences," typescript, Papers of Augustus St. Gaudens, Baker Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; see also *A Circle of Friends: Art Colonies of Cornish and Dublin* (Durham: University Art Galleries, University of New Hampshire, 1985), 88-90.

[12] Grimes, "Reminiscences," 6.

[13] Ibid., 3.

[14] Ibid., 4.

[15] Ibid., 6.

[16] Ibid.

[17] I greatly apprecaite Professor Sumarsam of Javanese music at Wesleyan University who gave these attributes to me in our conversation. Dr. Sumarsam is the author of the definitive book on the topic *Gamelan: Cultural Interction and Musical Development in Central Java* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). See also David Harnish, "Balinese Performance as Festival Offering," and Edi Sedyawati, "Traditional Dramatic Performances of Indonesia," *Asian Art* 2 (Spring 1991), 9-27, 28-41.

[18] Grimes, "Reminiscences," 6.

[19] See Bruno Nettl, et al., *Excursions in World Music* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1992), pp. 134-5; Sue Carole de Vale, "A Sundanese Gamelan: A Gestalt Approach to Organology" (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1977).

[20] Paul B. Baker, *Stanny: The Gilded Life of Stanford White* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 180.

[21] See D. Dodge Thompson, "John singer Sargent's Javanese Dancers," *The Magazine Antiques* 138 (July 1990).

[22] François Lesure and Roger Nichols, eds., *Debussy Letters* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 76.

[23] Roy Hawat, "Debussy and the Orient," in Andrew Gerstle and Anthony Milner, eds., *Recovering the Orient: Artists, Scholars, Appropriations* (Poststrasse, Switzerland: Harwood

Academic Publishers, 1994), 70.

[24] Quoted in Bernard Denvir, *Post-Impressionism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 93.

[25] See Takashi Miyanaga, *Umi wo Watatta Bakumatsu no Kyokugeidan* (Tokyo: Chuokoronsha, 1999).

[26] Cook and Wedderburn eds., *Library Edition,* XVII, 341-2.

[27] Ella Sterling Cummins, *Explanation of Japanese Village and its inhabitants* (New York: Japanese Village Co., c. 1885), 3. I greatly appreciate Robert Lancefield of Wesleyan University for making this significant material available to me as well as generously sharing variety of information for his study on American Orientalism in music.

[28] Ibid., 5.

[29] Christopher Innes, *Avant Garde Theatre, 1892-1992* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 3.

[30] See ibid., 9-18.

[31] For the extensive discussion of Yeats's *Japonime*, see Yoko Chiba, "W.B. Yeats and Noh: From 'Japonisme' to Zen" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1988); Earl Miner, *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton Univewrsity Press, 1958).

[32] Antonin Artaud, *The Thater and Its Double*, Translated from the French by Mary Caroline Richards (1938; New York: Grove Press, 1958).

[33] Berger, *Japonisme in Western Painting*, 168-9.

[34] Rygg, *Masked Mysteries Unmasked*, xv.

[35] For **Dvořák**'s American years and compositions, see Joseph Horowitz, "Dvořák and the New World: A Concentrated

Moment," "Reviews and Criticism from Dvořák's American Years: Articles by Henry Krehbiel, James Huneker, H. L. Mencken, and James Creelman," and Letters from Dvořák's American Period: A Selection of Unpublished Correspondence Received by Dvořák in the United States" in Michael Beckerman, ed., *Dvořák and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 92-103, 157-191, 192-210.

[36] Grimes, "Reminiscences," 3.

[37] See Horowitz, " Dvořák and the New World"; see also Charles Hamm, " Dvořák in America: Nationalism, Racism, and National Race" in his *Putting Pupular Music in Its Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 344-353.

[38] See Anton Seidl, "Wagner's Influence on Present-Day Composers," North American Review 158 (January 1894), 86-93.

[39] Joseph Horwitz, *Wagner Nights: An American History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

[40] See for example, Antonín Dvořák, "Franz Schubert," *The Century Magazine* 48 (July 1894), 341-346.

[41] See, John Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 231-239.

[42] Anton Seidl, "Wagner's influence on Present-Day Composers," *North American Review* 158 (January 1894), 86-93.

[43] Dizikes, *Opera in America*, 236.

[44] Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 8.

[45] Richard Wagner, *The Art-Work of the Future, Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, vol. 1, translated by William Ashton Ellis (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1892), 153.

[46] Ibid., 195-96.

[47] Ibid., 196.

[48] Dizikes, *Opera in America*, 236.

[49] E. T. Kirby, *Total Theatre: A Critical Anthology* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1969), xiv.

[50] Deak, *Symbolist Theater*, 109.

[51] Innes, *Avant Garde Theatre*, 19-20.

[52] Ibid., 21.

[53] Deak, *Symbolist Theater*, 10.

[54] Ibid., 11.

[55] See Charles Baudelaire, "Wagner and Tannhäuser in Paris," in his *The Painters of Modern Life and Other Essays*, translated and edited by Jonathan Mayne (New York: Da Capo Press, 1986), 111-46.

[56] For more detailed comparison of Wagner's and Baudelaire's aesthetics, see Deak "*Gesamtkunstwerk* and the Concept of Correspondences: Two Competing Ideas concerning the Interaction of Arts," in his *Symbolist Theater*, 98-104.

[57] Edouard Dujardin, "Chronique," *La Revue Wagnérienne* (8 August 1885), 193; quoted in Deak, *Symbolist Theater*, 101.

[58] See ibid., 105-110.

[59] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 247.

[60] Ibid., 251, 254.

[61] Ibid., 255.

[62] Ibid.

[63] See also Barbara Dayer Gallati, "Beauty Unmasked: Ironic Meaning in Dewing's Art," in Hobbs, The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing, 51-82.

[64] Maria Oakey Dewing to Ella Lamb, December 1, 1888, Barea Lamb Seeley collection; quoted in Gallati, "Beauty Unmasked," 59.

[65] Ibid., 57.

[66] Dewing to Freer, February 20, 1894, letter 43, FGAA.

[67] See Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 10, 114-16.

[68] Quoted in ibid., 12.

[69] Berger, *Japonisme in Western Painting*, 1.

[70] Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 174.

[71] See Berger, *Japonisme in Western Painting*, 125-64, 166-68, 215-27, 271-73. For further discussion of Van Gogh's and Gauguin's Symbolism, see Debora Silverman, "At the Threshold of Symbolism: Van Gogh's Sower and Gauguin's Vision after the Sermon," in *Lost Paradise: Symbolist Europe* (Montreal: The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1995), 104-15.

[72] Francine-Claire Legrand, "Fernand Khnopff-Perfect Symbolist," translated by Angus Malcolm, *Apollo* 85 (April 1967), 278-287.

[73] See *Paintres de l'imaginaire: Symbolistes et Surréalistes belges* (Paris: Galeries Nationals du Grand Palais, 1972), 75.

[74] See Tomoko Sato and Toshio Watanabe, eds., *Japan and*

Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue, 1850-1930 (London: Lund Humphries, 1991), 110.

[75] Maurice Denis, "Definition of Neotraditionism," 1890, in Herschel B. Chipp, ed., *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 94.

[76] *The Aesthetic Movement and the Cult of Japan* (London: The Fine Art Society Limited, 1972), 11.

[77] Kirby, *Total Theatre*, xviii.

[78] Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 22.

[79] Linda Gertner Zatlin, *Beardsley, Japonisme, and the Pervasion of the Victorian Ideal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 79-80.

[80] See Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde, *Salome*, translated by Lord Alfred Douglas (1894; New York: Dover, 1967).

[81] Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 14.

[82] Sadakichi Hartmann, *A History of American Art*, revised edition (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1934), 307.

[83] Passage from "Celebrities of the Day: Sadakichi Hartmann, Art Critic," *Romance* (June, 1896), quoted by Harry Lawton and George Knox in their introduction to Sadakichi Hartmann, *Buddha, Confucious, Christ: Three Prophetic Plays*, edited by Lawton and Knox (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), xxiii.

[84] See Jane Calhoun Weaver ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann: Critical Modernist: Collected Art Writings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 2-3.

[85] See Sadakichi Hartmann, "A Tuesday Evening at Stéphane Mallarmé's," *The Art Critic* 1, no. 1 (November 1893), 9-11; reprinted in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 63-67.

[86] Ibid., 65.

[87] Sadakichi Hartmann, "Thomas W. dewing," *The Art Critic* 1, no. 2 (January 1894), 34; reprinted in Weaver, Ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 237.

[88] Letters from Freer to Whistler and from Whistler to Freer, 23 November 1894, in Linda Merrill, ed., *With Kindest Regards: The Correspondence of Charles lang Freer and James McNeill Whistler, 1890-1903* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 101, 103.

[89] For Dewing's meeting with Whistler, see Hobbs, "Thomas Dewing in Cornish," 19, 21; for detailed analysis of Whistler's Blue and Silver, see Komanecky, "'A Perfect Gem of Art'," 58-63.

[90] Sadakichi Hartmann, "Art Talk: La Modernité in Painting, C.W. Stetson, A Governmental Painter [Paul Jobert]," *The Criterion* (29 January 1898), 10; reprinted in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 87.

[91] Ibid; besides Hartmann's *A History of American Art* and *Sadakichi Hartmann: Critical Modernist*, his accounts on Dewing are also frequently seen in his *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre: Selected Critical Essays on Photography and Profiles of Photographic Pioneers*, edited by Harry W. Lawton and George Knox (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

[92] Stéphane Mallarmé, *Vers et prose* (Paris: Librairie Académique Didier, 1893).

[93] Mr. Whistler's "Ten O'Clock" (London: 1888) in James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* (London: William Heinemann, 1892; New York: Dover, 1967), 131-59.

[94] Alfred Werner, "Introduction to Dover Edition," in Whistler, *The Gentle art of Making Enemies*, xvii.

[95] See Dorment and MacDonald, *James McNeill Whistler*, 264-66.

[96] Whistler, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, 159.

[97] Coffin, "The Art of Thomas W. Dewing, 721.

[98] Paul R Baker, *Stanny: The Gilded Life of Stanford White* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 278; see also *With Kindest Regards*, 20.

[99] Richard Nelson Current and Marcia Ewing Current, *Loie Fuller: Goddess of Light* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 47.

[100] See Baker, *Stanny*, 275.

[101] See Komanecky, "'A Perfect Gem of Art'," 71-80; Claire Frèches-Thory and Antoine Terrasse, *The Nabis: Bonnard, Vuillard, and Their Circle*, translated from French by Mary Pardoe and Victoria Sanger (New York: Abrams, 1990), 164-73, 256-79; Ursula Perucchi-Petri, "Les Nabis et le japonisme," Geneviève Aitken, "Les Nabis, un foyer au théâtre," as well as other essays in *Nabis, 1888-1900* (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1993); see also Deak, *Symbolist Theater* and Gloria Groom, *Beyond the Easel*.

[102] Quoted in Deak, *Symbolist Theater*, 114.

[103] Ibid.

[104] See Current and Current, *Loie Fuller*, 52, 81.

[105] Ibid., 50, in the same page, authors writes, "Soon it was impossible to get any seat, or even standing room, without booking at least ten days ahead of time--'a fact without precedent at the Folies-Bergère.'"

[106] Ibid., 52.

[107] See Richard Dorment and Margaret F. MacDonald, *James McNeill Whistler* (London: Tate Gallery, 1994), 261.

[108] David Park Curry, *James McNeil Whistler at the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washigton, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1984), 278.

[109] Current and Current, *Loie Fuller*, 54.

[110] Stéphane Mallarmé, "Considerations sur l'art du ballet et la Loïe Fuller," *National Observer* (March 13, 1893), quoted in Current and Current, *Loie Fuller*, 54.

[111] Roger Marx, "Choréographie: Loïe Fuller, *Le Revue encyclopédique* (1 February 1893), quoted in Current and Current, *Loie Fuller*, 55.

[112] Quoted in ibid., 79.

[113] See Curry, *James McNeil Whistler at the Freer Gallery of Art*, 278.

[114] Maurice Maeterlinck, "Small Talk--the Theater," in Dorra, ed., *Symbolist Art Theories*, 145.

[115] Ibid., 144.

[116] Interestingly, Robert Rosemblum equates Dewing's figures in the *Summer* of 1893 (the center piece of *The Seasons Triptych*; fig. 36) to the images by Munch and European Symbolism: "Symbolist in its whispered mood and veiled atmosphere, . . . [figures in the *Summer*] project phantoms of desire, with one of the women stretching her elbows upward in a posture of sexual yearning familiar to the repertory of Munch and the 1890s"; Robert Rosemblum and H. W. Janson, *19th-Century Art* (New York: Abrams, 1984), 456.

[117] See Adams, "Jean Louis Hamon," 204-5.

[118] See Hobbs, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing," 23-4.

[119] See the full citation of Gilder's poem inspired by the painting in Chapter I.

[120] According to Nelson White, Dewing was an "excellent ornithologist, and made a remarkable collection of birds eggs," *A Loan Exhibition: Thomas W. Dewing,* no page number; Hobbs also writes, "Dewing developed a consuming interest in natural history, assembling a large collection of birds' nests and butterfly specimens," in *her The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing,* 2.

[121] Pyne, *Art and the Higher Life,* 147-8. F. Schuyler Mathews in his 1904 book on birds' music compared this "cadenza" of the Hermit Thrush with Wagner's bird song in the *Ring of the Nibelung*; see Mathews, *Field Book of Wild Birds and Their Music,* 242.

[122] An account by Francisque Sarcey in May 22, 1893, quoted in Deak, *Symbolist Theater,* 167.

[123] Maurice Maeterlinck, *Pelléas and Mélisande: A Drama in Five Acts,* translated by Erving Winslow (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1894).

[124] Crary, *Suspensions of Perception,* 274.

[125] Kathleen Pyne, "Portrait of a Collector as an Agnostic: Charles Lang Freer and Connoisseurship," *Art Bulletin* 78 (March 1996), 78, n. 18.

[126] Scully, *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style,* 127.

[127] I greatly appreciate Dr. James Tottis, Assistant Curator of American Art at the Detroit Institute of Arts, who helped me to find the storage configuration. Unfortunately, the museum installation of the *Classical Figures* that I photographed at the time of my visit there did not come out because of the malfunction of my camera.

[128] Richard Guy Wilson, *McKim, Mead, and White, Architects*

(New York: Rizzoli, 1983), 194.

[129] Bailey Van Hook, *A Mural by Thomas Wilmer Dewing: Commerce and Agriculture Bringing Wealth to Detroit* (New York: Spanierman Gallery, 1998), 13.

[130] W. Anthony Sheppard, *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 36-37.

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