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“The Power of Suggestiveness:”
Sadakichi Hartmann, Thomas Wilmer Dewing, and American Modernism

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History

by

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June 2011

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Introduction

Sadakichi Hartmann, playwright, poet, and art critic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, wrote in 1932, "Despite the big strides which American art has made in its development, and the recognition which its foremost representatives have found, it probably never passed through a phase of sterner struggle than it did during the last decades."¹ For Hartmann, this struggle was characterized by the efforts to develop a national American art tradition that could provide an indigenous modernism capable of supporting the diversity of American culture.

As early as 1893, Hartmann recognized the necessity of plurality in American art as it progressed into the twentieth century, along with the United States itself, as a national character of world-class caliber. "Let each individual cultivate his dominating qualities," Hartmann declared in a lecture he wrote for the Boston Art Club and delivered at the Kit Kat Club in New York and the Sketch Club in Philadelphia before publishing it in his periodical, *The Art Critic*, "Let him strive for that most suitable to his abilities, let him employ his aptitude and activity in those directions for which they were designed, and we will soon have a national American Art."² Hartmann, in the decades following this

¹ Sadakichi Hartmann, *History of American Art, Vol. II*, (L.C. Page & Co.: New York, 1932), 223.

² Sadakichi Hartmann, "A Lecture on American Art," *The Art Critic*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Mar., 1894), pp. 41-49. Unless otherwise noted, all Hartmann essays, articles, poems, plays, and other writing can

lecture, those which he identified as a period of struggle for American art, would write about a variety of the European-influenced formal modernisms which came to dominate art in the early twentieth century. The most potent potential for indigenous modernism, however, he felt was being overlooked. In a 1910 article, Hartmann wrote,

“And yet it is to men like [Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Dwight Tryon, Abbott Thayer, A.P. Ryder, Winslow Homer] that we must look for further developments. They represent a living force that steadily grows. Their paintings breathe the true spirit, and their work alone could place American Art on its proper pedestal. A representative collection of the masterpieces of these men would triumph over all the shows and shams of the present picture world, and we should in the future see more clearly in which way lie truth and purity in the Art of America.”³

Yet, in the discourses of Modern art, these artists are generally considered decidedly nineteenth-century in their subjects and methods. Those of them who continued painting in the twentieth century were not associated with American modernism, but with the old guard. What did Hartmann recognize in these artists that could be useful to understanding American modernism? Art

historian Jane Calhoun Weaver, in the introduction to her anthology of

be found in the Sadakichi Hartmann Papers, Special Collections, University of California, Riverside.

³ Sadakichi Hartmann, “The American Picture World: Its Shows and Shams,” *The Forum* 14, no. 9 (September 1910): pp. 295 – 304. Reprinted in Jane Calhoun Weaver, *Sadakichi Hartmann: Critical Modernist*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 199 – 208. Weaver’s anthology is the most comprehensive work on Hartmann’s art criticism to date. In addition to a critical biography and a collection of his most important essays, she also includes a full bibliography of Hartmann’s writing and a checklist of artists named in his essays. Many of the Hartmann essays cited in this thesis are reprinted in Weaver’s anthology, and will be so noted.

Hartmann's art criticism, wrote, "Hartmann's criticism offers a view of indigenous modernist origins which tends to be ignored today because the aesthetic of the style is little understood and generally denigrated for its sentimentality."⁴ This suggests that the historiography of Modern art has not developed in a way that could include artists such as Dewing, Tryon, Thayer, Ryder, or Homer, but that through Hartmann's writing, methods of understanding Modern art could be expanded to include these alternative modernisms.

My interest in this topic was formed out of a dichotomy I perceived which seemed to put art into categories of modern and intellectually rigorous or anti-modern, genteel and, as Weaver points out, sentimental.⁵ What is the intellectual rationale of aesthetic art in the discourse of early-twentieth-century art? Can this intellectual point of view be worthwhile for contemporary scholars to

⁴ Weaver, 33.

⁵By "intellectually rigorous," I mean that which self-consciously applies a set of methods, theories, and philosophies to painting that engage with the social and cultural conditions of modernism and that have been defined by the discourses of Modern art. The historiography of Modernism is a very multi-dimensional topic, the full breadth of which is outside the scope of my thesis. I use the term "genteel" after George Santayana's theory of the genteel tradition, which he used to describe American literature, writing, "It was simple, sweet, humane, Protestant literature, grandmotherly in that sedate spectacled wonder with which it gazed at this terrible world and said how beautiful and how interesting it was." From, "Genteel American Poetry," *New Republic*, Vol. 3, No. 30 (May 29, 1915), 94. Reprinted in Douglas L. Wilson, *The Genteel Tradition: Nine Essays by George Santayana*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 14. Additionally, for an analysis of the supposed anti-intellectualism of non- or anti-modern art at the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981).

incorporate into methodologies of modernism? Is there room alongside modernist theories and narratives for alternative points of view that are constructive to a national modernist tradition? To rephrase and summarize these questions, compare two paintings from around 1912 – Marcel Duchamp’s *Nude Descending A Staircase (No. 2)*, and Thomas Wilmer Dewing’s *Lady in Gold* (Figs. 1 & 2).

Both paintings are dominated by tones of brown. Both contain a single figure. Both imply a thick ambiance, however the Duchamp is thick with motion, while the Dewing is thick with stillness. *Nude Descending A Staircase, No. 2*, which depicts a figure’s descent down a staircase in multiple and abstracted forms, reflects the formal interests of the avant-garde of the time, including Cubist fracture of form, Futurist simultaneity, and influences of cinema, photography, and industrial technology. Art historian Wanda Corn noted that the painting was one of the most famous pieces (or infamous, depending on the source) in the 1913 Armory Show.⁶ Dewing scholar Susan Hobbs wrote that it was in fact this exhibition which triggered a decline in Dewing’s reputation, casting his quiet and dreamlike scenes of elegant, reposing women in an old-fashioned light when compared to the stunning array of avant-garde

⁶ Wanda Corn, *The Great American Thing*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 50, *American Art News*, vol. 11, no. 21 (March 1, 1913), p. 3, and vol. 11, no. 22 (March 8, 1913), p. 3.

techniques.⁷ In *Lady in Gold*, a woman sits in profile wearing a gold, beaded evening gown and holding a fan limply in her lap. Her left arm dangles at her side and although her head is erect, her eyes appear closed as though deep in thought. She sits in a brown interior, completely bare but for a rectilinear side table behind her. On the table is a closed box with a strand of pearls spilling out under its lid. The drape of the pearls mimics the draped posture of the figure and the folds of her gown, and contrast the angular box and table. A small, pale vase sits atop the box along with a violet bit of fabric or flower, the single touch of color in the brown toned palette. The brushwork implies a thickness of the air, as though giving weight to the intangible. This palpable atmosphere is typical of Dewing's work.

Lady in Gold is, of course, not engaging in the same sort of formal modernism as *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*. The figure is painted in a fairly realistic, decidedly recognizable manner, and although it is not strictly a portrait, it is an identifiable person (Gertrude McNeill) who sits in her fashionable attire, posing in a setting which recalls Dutch interiors.⁸ And yet, Dewing's monochromatic and spare composition is clearly engaging in *some kind* of formal study that, while not as modern or avant-garde as Duchamp's painting, is not

⁷ Susan Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing: Beauty Reconfigured*, (New York and Washington: The Brooklyn Museum and Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), p. 40.

⁸ Hobbs, 186.

easily posited as anti-modern either. The painting is not formed along the same lines as a traditional, academic figure painting, the subject is as much in the color, composition, and construction of the painting as it is in the woman it depicts. One task of my thesis is to explore what kind of grey area of modernism is present in Dewing's paintings, but this begat a more important task, of understanding it through the criticism Hartmann, for whom the creation of American modernism was of vital concern. Hartmann's writing enables us to understand Dewing as modern.

In my initial research, my intention was to approach a broadened conception of modernism through what I saw as a common root between the branches of traditional modernity and the alternative branches I saw in painters such as Dewing. The common root is the influence of Asian art in Western modernism. I was struck by the parallels I perceived in Dewing's work and in the paintings of classical China (Figs. 3 & 4). In what is likely an unintended similitude, the idealized beauties of Chinese paintings carry a similar symbolic meaning their own culture, and are presented in similar costume, activity, and surroundings as Dewing's. In *Ladies Preparing Newly Woven Silk*, an early-twelfth-century handscroll attributed to Emperor Huizong, court beauties engage in serigraphy. The women are depicted wearing their finest robes, their hair and make-up carefully done. Why would elegantly dressed court ladies engage in manual labor? Their actions seem impossible to be taken literally, and

in fact they are intended to be performing ritual, or symbolic, serigraphy. They float in negative space, as is not uncommon in this type of Chinese painting, with a few props to indicate their activity and surroundings. This is very similar to the sparse settings of Dewing's paintings, which also feature well dressed women performing odd, symbolic behaviors.

In Dewing's 1890 painting *Summer*, two women wearing fashionable ball gowns stand in the center of a churning meadow of green. The landscape is not bare, as in *Ladies Preparing Newly Woven Silk*, but it is painted in such a way as to eschew traditional Western perspective and detail in landscape. The women, who are unidentifiable as particular individuals, seem to be fishing. The right hand woman in a low-necked gown of shimmering purple-blue – which strikes a harmonious chord with the purple and blue of the sky – holds out her pole while the woman on the left looks on in a golden off-the-shoulder dress. Why would two women clad in evening gowns fish in a meadow? Like the Song court ladies, who would never perform real labor, especially while wearing their fine robes and accessories, the act depicted is culturally symbolic. Gilded Age women would never go into a lush meadow wearing ball gowns to fish, as painted in *Summer*, however communing with nature was a very fashionable occupation of the mind for the stressed upper classes in an industrial society. Because of Dewing's close relationship with his patron, and collector of Asian art, Charles

Lang Freer, this connection between Dewing's paintings and Chinese paintings seemed possible.

My research revealed that I was not alone in my query, and kept directing me back to Sadakichi Hartmann.⁹ With a reputation that casts him as everything from sidekick to Alfred Stieglitz and important writer on the advent of modernist photography, to a good-for-nothing charlatan who would write, say, or do anything for a handout (Hartmann was a down on his luck alcoholic in his later years), I found an unexpected ally in my attempt to understand a more nuanced American modernism that incorporated more traditionally beautiful art. Although Hartmann is most commonly cited for his work on photography, he published widely on American and Japanese art topics as well. He was a dedicated Symbolist and the philosophies of that movement influenced the way he thought about, and wrote about, other cultural topics including Modern art. Often in his writing, he discussed issues and artists in terms of their ability to engage with a suggestive style, referencing Symbolist ideals and painters implicitly or occasionally outright. Hartmann wrote high praise equally for all

⁹ The Sadakichi Hartmann Papers in Special Collections at the University of California, Riverside contains eighty-one linear feet of published and unpublished manuscripts, essays, plays, poems, and biographical sketches as well as correspondence and a collection of scrapbooks and articles about Hartmann and his activities. The archive also includes photographs and Hartmann's own artwork. The breadth of Hartmann's work is vast, and I was able to use the detailed, annotated finding aid and the critical analysis in Weaver's introductory essay to focus my archival research to that which most pertained to my topic. I also felt that it was important to limit the texts used in my thesis to Hartmann's published material, which better supports my argument that his writing contributes to the discourse of American Modernism.

artists possessing this suggestive quality, from society painters to Cubists. He also relied on his Japanese heritage in his writing, particularly in the wake of the Japonisme trend in Western art. Rather than praising it, Hartmann was highly critical of the practice and in his writing offers a unique analysis that provides an alternative method of using Asian influence in creating American modernism. Hartmann identifies important philosophical similarities between Symbolist and Japanese painting that he writes in many contexts as being adaptable in a universal way, specifically to American modernism. In other areas of his writing, he praises Dewing for these very practices, and this is one reason why I selected Dewing as a case study for exploring what Hartmann describes as a suggestive style, or what I will refer to as “suggestivism.”

“Suggestivism,” I will argue, converges the aspects of Chinese, Japanese, and Symbolist arts which Hartmann most prizes, and he was able to extract very similar things from these styles. These influences call for suggestiveness in subject and in form, and what is more they call for the form to work in conjunction with subject to interpret and communicate, or again, to translate, sensory experiences which can encourage psychological ones. In chapter one, I will explore the main sources of Hartmann’s ideas on suggestive art, and discuss the methods through which I will use them to shape a working definition. Significant archival research was a key component of this project. Although most of the main texts I draw from are published works, the Hartmann archive at

UC Riverside was integral for filling out the context of Hartmann's life, work, and artistic philosophies. Complementing his published work, these countless poems, lecture notes, sketches, and letters reveal the personality of a man who was intensely passionate about forming a national American art of spectacular proportions. He envisioned it as a series of concentric circles, each using the past and traditions which came before it to make modernity relevant and timeless at the same time. Sifting through the archive, I was able to use the material to help me translate his disparate ideas into a useful and working definition of suggestive art as a strand of Modern art. In this chapter I will also present a survey of the current literature that is necessary for understanding the context of my thesis' contribution to the field. Establishing the present scholarship on Dewing and Hartmann will demonstrate that, while my work does not reinvent modernism, it adds another spoke to the wheel.

Chapter two will focus on Hartmann's Symbolist influence. I will use his essays on Mallarmé and Puvis de Chavannes to determine what about Symbolism Hartmann knew and felt was important. I will support my study with the analysis of some of Hartmann's essays on more general topics of art theory and aesthetics, as well as some of his particularly important creative writing, namely his series of Symbolist plays on the lives of religious figures. Chapter three will consider Hartmann's Japanese art influence with a close reading of his book *Japanese Art*. Again, my analysis will be supported by

additional essays and creative writing. To conclude both chapters, I will present Hartmann's writing on Dewing in his *History of American Art* (both the 1901 and 1932 volumes). It is my intention that, having translated Hartmann's terms into a working definition of suggestivism, his criticism of Dewing will offer a historically contemporaneous way of looking at the painter's work that allows it a more complex philosophical and technical point of view.

Chapter One

"Not so much things as feelings..." Sadakichi Hartmann's Suggestivism

Carl Sadakichi Hartmann (1867 - 1944) was born in Nagasaki, Japan. His Japanese mother died just a few months after his birth and his father, Carl Herman Oscar Hartmann, took the young Hartmann and his brother to Hamburg, in 1871.¹⁰ The boys lived with their wealthy grandmother and uncle in Germany until 1881, at which time Hartmann was sent to boarding school

¹⁰ The following biographical information comes from George Knox, ed., *The Life and Times of Sadakichi Hartmann* (Riverside, Ca: Rubidoux Printing Co., 1970), Weaver's introduction to *Sadakichi Hartmann: Critical Modernist*, pp 1-48, and Hartmann's unpublished autobiography in Box 1 of the Sadakichi Hartmann Papers, Rivera Special Collections, University of California, Riverside.

with the intention that he should enter the naval academy the following year.

Hartmann ran away to Paris and soon found himself disinherited and sent to live with another uncle in the United States in 1882. His luxurious upbringing in Germany had afforded Hartmann the privilege of a rigorous education (supposedly reading all of Goethe and Schiller by age nine), and although he was required to work in America, he did not let his job at a Philadelphia printing and engraving shop keep him from furthering his education. Hartmann spent the nights of his adolescence at the Philadelphia Mercantile library, studying the arts. In 1884 he managed to secure an allowance from his grandmother, enabling him to concentrate on his studies full-time, and the next year he returned to Germany to apprentice in the royal theatre of Munich, where he studied stage machinery.

Hartmann spent the next several years traveling back and forth between Europe and the United States, immersing himself in the arts. In 1887 he went to Boston and began freelance writing for newspapers and literary magazines as well as lecturing on art. He recalled rubbing elbows with scholars such as George Santayana and Charles Eliot Norton.¹¹ His most influential and valued contact at this time was the poet Walt Whitman.¹² Ultimately, Hartmann found Boston's staid sensibilities too constricting and left for New York in 1889. He was hired by the McClure syndicate and sent to Paris on special assignment in

¹¹ Weaver, 12, 51.

¹² Ibid, 6 - 8.

1892. Hartmann's productivity as a writer increased, and during this trip he became acquainted with Stéphane Mallarmé and the Symbolists, attending some of Mallarmé's famous Salons.

In 1893 Hartmann left McClure and returned to Boston. He attempted to publish his own journal, *The Art Critic*, which he sold to subscribers in the Northeast, but it went bankrupt after three issues. Undaunted, Hartmann moved to New York where he became active in the theater. He wrote several plays, Symbolist in nature, and articles for small publications. In 1897 he attempted another self-published journal, *Art News*, which survived for four issues. Around 1899-1901, Hartmann was invited by Stieglitz to write for *Camera Notes*, and in 1903, for *Camera Work*. During this time, Hartmann published his first volume of *History of American Art* as well as *Japanese Art*.

Hartmann produced such a vast and diverse body of work in his lifetime that it can be described as a whole in only the broadest sense. He passionately believed that the arts were essential to the elevation of humanity, and was particularly preoccupied with its place in the United States. In an essay entitled "A National American Art," Hartmann reminded his readers of the sacrifices Americans made during the Civil War "to deliver another despised, humiliated, denigrated race from bondage, to elevate humanity."¹³ [Emphasis Hartmann's]

¹³ Hartmann, "A National American Art," *The Art Critic* 1, no. 3 (March 1894), 45 - 49. Reprinted in Weaver, 74.

He went on to entreat Americans to “do the same now,” and fulfill their patriotic duty by encouraging the arts and art education in the United States in order to “elevate humanity!”¹⁴ Prescriptions for the integration of art into American culture can be found in great detail among his writings. For example, in his first issue of *The Art Critic*, a short-lived, self-published journal, Hartmann wrote a detailed plan, with bullet-points, for “How an American Art Could Be Developed.” In this essay he calls for the organization of an art guild and three great art institutions consisting of a National Gallery, a National Academy, and a Museum of Fine Arts dedicated to masterpieces and antiquities for study.¹⁵

Hartmann also expressed concern over the preference in the late nineteenth century of many American painters for Europe as a source of subjects and inspiration. He asked, “Have we no flowers in America? Are not our women beautiful? And are not the sorrows and joys of human life very much the same o’er the world?”¹⁶ However, he had no objection to American artists studying abroad or assimilating foreign techniques to be applied to the construction of an American art. Additionally, he advocated for tolerance among

¹⁴ Hartmann, “A National American Art,” *The Art Critic* 1, no. 3 (March 1894), 45 – 49. Reprinted in Weaver, 74.

¹⁵ Hartmann, “How an American Art Could Be Developed,” *The Art Critic* 1, no. 1 (November 1893): 3 – 4. Reprinted in Weaver, 58. Weaver notes that Hartmann intended to become the first Minister of Art in the United States, an office he envisioned based on his study of national art traditions in Europe.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 68.

competing schools and styles, declaring, "Hold together! Untie your strength! Put an end to professional rivalries which you practise [sic] at present. At present you work in cliques...all jealous of each other, wasting their energies in running down their brother artists, fighting for themselves and not for arts."¹⁷

Hartmann felt strongly that there was plenty in America to inspire and nurture a national artistic tradition, and that not only was there was enough room for different styles and points of view within that tradition, but that plurality was important to its creation because America itself was so diverse.

Perhaps his dedication to the arts as a whole enabled Hartmann to take up his pen for various and at times competing art movements, philosophies, and artists in American art. In addition to several books, including his two volume survey *History of American Art*, published in 1901 and again in 1932, Hartmann published essays in Boston and New York periodicals, including his self-published journals and those of Alfred Stieglitz, ranging in topic from the Tarbellites to the Ash Can school, to photography and larger issues of modern aesthetics.¹⁸ Of these publications, the latter seem to have received the most attention and Hartmann is generally considered to be a writer of note in the

¹⁷ Hartmann, reprinted in Weaver., 75.

¹⁸ Hartmann. *History of American Art, Vol. I.* Boston: L.C. Page & Co., 1901. pp. 55 – 56. Quoted in Weaver, 28.

development of modern American photography.¹⁹ This is likely due to both the credibility Hartmann gained through his alliance with such an integral modernist as Stieglitz and the significant scholarly interest in the formal, European-influenced modernism which developed in early-twentieth-century American art.²⁰

Yet, a significant portion of Hartmann's writing concerns artists and topics of the late nineteenth century. These books and essays are no less insightful, useful, or relevant than those which have received more scholarly attention. Furthermore, his allegiance to this cohort of artists endured well into the twentieth century, even as he became associated with the formal modernism of the Stieglitz Circle. "I now notice with a slight tinge of regret," he added in an epilogue, entitled "An Art-Wrangler's Aftermath," to the two volume *History* in 1932, "that I can not find among my contemporaries an equal number that I could pronounce artists of the first rank as in the Nineties."²¹ Hartmann described an essential component of the American art he advocated as a "suggestive style," which he located in the work of "thinking painters" such as George Inness, Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent, Abbott Thayer, James

¹⁹ Weaver, 3.

²⁰Weaver, 1.

²¹ Hartmann, *History of American Art, Vol. II*, Boston: L.C. Page & Co., 1932. pp. 282.

Whistler, and Thomas Wilmer Dewing.²² Bemoaning the tendency he perceived in young artists of the day to poorly execute good ideas, Hartmann credits these artists of the older generation with achieving the potential of their ideas in their finished pictures and thus contributing to “a proud and self-reliant native art.”²³ In addition to his discussions of art and nationhood, Hartmann also writes of these artists in the context of the burgeoning critical tradition in the early twentieth century which eschewed topics of nationhood or moral ideals for an interest in formal art theory and philosophical topics in the creation of art.²⁴

Taking into consideration his apparent fondness for artists who were not expressly working in the modernist styles of the twentieth century with which Hartmann is often aligned, what is significant about his pronouncements of them? What can Hartmann’s modernist criticism mean for our understanding of a fin-de-siècle artist such as Thomas Wilmer Dewing (1851 - 1938)? What did Hartmann mean by a “suggestive style?” He applies the term, and other references to suggestiveness, excessively in his writing, not only throughout many articles and essays but in his books, such as *The Whistler Book*, *Japanese Art*,

²² Ibid., 280 - 281.

²³ Hartmann, *History of American Art*, Vol. II, 280 - 281.

²⁴ Weaver, 16-18.

and in both volumes of *History of American Art*.²⁵ Early in the first volume of *History of American Art*, for example, Hartmann writes that American landscape painters John F. Kensett (1816 – 1872) and Sanford R. Gifford (1823 – 1880) painted with “tenderness and suggestivism rare at that period of our art.”²⁶ He expands on this characterization, praising their “pleasing color harmonies” and that “it was not so much things as feelings that they tried to suggest.”²⁷

In her introduction to an anthology of Hartmann’s key essays, Weaver offers some preliminary analysis of the critic’s “suggestive style.” She notes that, “Hartmann does not articulate a particular entity that is labeled a ‘suggestive style,’ but he alludes to ‘suggestiveness’ again and again in his description of certain painters in the 1890s.”²⁸ Weaver’s understanding of Hartmann’s use of the term is that his intention was not necessarily to coin an –ism and that he “edged closer to modernist terminology here than he probably intended or, indeed, would have been comfortable with.”²⁹ Rather, she posits his “suggestivism” and “suggestive style” as a way he could describe art which

²⁵ Hartmann, *The Whistler Book*, Boston: L.C. Page & Co., 1910, and *Japanese Art*, Boston: L.C. Page & Co., 1903.

²⁶ Weaver, 28. *History I*, 55-56.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid, 27.

²⁹ Ibid, 29.

contrasted vigorous realism or traditional illusionist art.³⁰ Setting up “suggestive” art in this dichotomy with realism, however, implies its importance as a qualifiable term for use in discussing American art around the turn of the twentieth century. The traits Hartmann ascribes to art of a “suggestive style” become integral to his conception of a modern American art tradition capable of elevating humanity. “To Hartmann and the American milieu,” writes Weaver, “this suggestive ideal was the way of modernism.”³¹ Furthermore, the consistency with which Hartmann uses the term allows for a fairly clear definition of it and implies a specific meaning of the term for Hartmann.

Following Weaver’s example in her discussion of Hartmann’s “suggestive style,” in my thesis I will use the term “suggestivism” to refer to this specific style and philosophy my thesis is going to define, and “suggestivist” to refer to the artists who practice it. To re-introduce this overlooked aspect of Hartmann’s criticism into the larger discourse of the development of Modern art in the Gilded Age, suggestivism can complicate the scholarship on Dewing, which

³⁰ Ibid. Weaver also points out the plethora of terms art history has to describe this style of painting, which can be found in: E.P. Richardson, *Painting in America* (New York: T.Y. Cromwell, 1956); John Wilmerding, *American Art* (Harmondsworth, England: New York: Penguin Books, 1976); William Gerdtz, Diana O. Sweet, and Robert R. Preato, *Tonalism: An American Experience* (New York: Grand Central Art Galleries Art Education Association, 1982); Wanda M. Corn, *The Color of Mood: American Tonalism 1880 - 1910* (San Francisco: M.H. DeYoung Memorial Museum, 1972); Charles Eldredge, *American Imagination and Symbolist Painting* (New York: Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, 1978); Henry Adams, *American Drawings and Watercolors* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Institute, 1985), and Marc Simpson, et al, *Like Breath on Glass: Whistler, Inness, and the Art of Painting Softly*, (Williamstown, Massachusetts: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2008).

³¹ Weaver, 29.

positions him in a often *retardataire* relationship to major currents in twentieth century American art. Such a reading of Dewing comes from early-twentieth-century critics who, when comparing Dewing to Ash Can school or Stieglitz Circle artists, found his quiet, dreamlike pictures of gorgeous Gilded Age women somewhat conventional.³² The beautiful ideal, represented in a poetic and intellectually or psychologically complex way, is a cornerstone of Hartmann's "suggestive style," and in my thesis suggestivism provides a historical precedent for approaching Dewing's work differently. It serves as a potential challenge to the idea that the figurative, aesthetic, or beautiful was anachronistic to modernism, and gives a broader picture of American art's complex engagement with numerous, often competing, modernisms.

Hartmann's appraisal of Dewing in the first volume of his *History* is one of deep esteem, "His pictures leave an afterglow, and that is a decided merit. In this world, with its thousands of interests, a man's works must be quite powerful in order to become so important to us as to form a part, however small it may be, of our intellectual life."³³ However, for supporters of Dewing such as Charles de Kay and Royal Cortissoz, the afterglow was all but burnt out by the 1910s, when Matisse was showing at the Montross Gallery and the European avant-garde had

³² Hobbs, 40. Hobbs notes in particular Dewing's former supporters Charles Caffin and Royal Cortissoz.

³³Hartmann, *History of American Art*, Vol. I, 300.

infiltrated American art. Dewing no longer counted even at the margins of intellectual and artistic life, but when he was considered at all, he was disparaged for his “old fin-de-siècle exquisiteness.”³⁴ His approach seemed too gentle, too subtle, and too poetic to dialogue with urban realism, experiments in formalism, and the infamous artists shown at the Armory Show. However, through Hartmann’s suggestivism the style and content of Dewing’s work becomes more germane to the intellectualism required of modernism than “old fin-de-siècle exquisiteness” might suggest. This is not to argue that Dewing’s work is modern in the same way the term has traditionally been understood, rather it is to say that modernism should be understood more broadly, and in fact can be broadened through Hartmann’s writing on the subject of suggestive art, of which Dewing is a useful example.

Suggestivism combines elements of Chinese and Japanese classical aesthetic principles, Symbolist ideologies, and a more ambiguous quality of “beauty, poetic expression, and mystic grace,” which, for Hartmann, can “satisfy my desire to forget every-day life completely.”³⁵ According to Hartmann, creating and understanding art that expressed “beauty, poetic expression, and mystic grace” required intellectualism and interior vision which belied rote

³⁴ Charles Caffin, “Tender Grace of a Day That Is Dead,” *New York American*, March 13, 1916, 12. Quoted in Hobbs, *Beauty Reconfigured: The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing*, 40.

³⁵ Hartmann, *History of American Art*, Vol. I, 300.

representation of observable forms, pure abstraction, or relentless originality in painting.³⁶ With suggestivism, Hartmann allowed for the expression of abstract ideas in a non-narrative format that relies on, rather than ignores or outright rejects, the use of idealized recognizable subjects. The principles of genteel beauty and traditional aesthetics are engaged to enable mnemonic or psychological experiences with the artwork, because the memory or thinking supposed to be triggered by the artwork is presumably something poetic or ennobling. Weaver notes, “that the ideal could be embodied *within* the technique was perceived only by those whom Hartmann described as the most intellectual.”³⁷ Rather than intellectualizing formal principles, privileging vision, as many modernist movements were doing, these paintings privilege holistic sensorial and psychological experiences. Furthermore, suggestivism positioned artists and, fortunately for Hartmann, art critics in a very important position as translators or creators of the sensorial knowledge of abstract or intangible experiences.

Translation is a fundamental concept for suggestivism, and present in many layers. First, it is necessary to translate Hartmann’s meaning when he references suggestiveness into a workable and defined concept of suggestivism.

³⁶ This preference also has its roots in classical Oriental painting. Weaver, 29-31.

³⁷ Ibid, 28-29.

Walter Benjamin writes, “The task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original.”³⁸ If Hartmann’s references to suggestiveness are the “originals,” then my task is to translate them into suggestivism through finding his intended effect when he employs the term, not merely elucidating what he means by describing a specific artist or painting as suggestive, but also what the classification means as a philosophical topic in art. According to Benjamin, there are two criteria a work must meet for it to be translatable. First, there must be a suitable translator. Second, translation must be called for, which I will address later in this introduction.³⁹

In order to be a suitable translator for suggestivism, one must first understand how Hartmann came to understand the concept of suggestiveness in art and in particular its importance for American art, a task accomplished by analysis of his books, essays, poetry, and plays. I will narrow my focus to the two volume *History of American Art*, where Hartmann’s conception of American art’s past, present, and future are laid out in a cohesive narrative and where his significant criticism of Dewing appears, his 1903 book *Japanese Art*, in which he discusses at length the importance of suggestiveness to Japanese art, how this

³⁸ Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” reproduced in Susan Manning and Andrew Taylor, eds., *Transatlantic Literary Studies: A Reader*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 177.

³⁹Ibid, 173.

concept came to Japanese art from the art of classical China, and the way in which Japanese art influences that of the West, essays on French Symbolist writer Stéphane Mallarmé, published in 1893, and artist Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, published in 1898.

If part of my task is to translate the way in which Hartmann uses Chinese and Japanese art canons, as well as Symbolist ideology, for American suggestivism, it is necessary to understand Hartmann's task as a translator. He meets Benjamin's criteria in very several ways. His role as an appropriate translator of these specific concepts is essential to his own self-identity as a Symbolist writer and as a person of Japanese descent. In a more general sense, the persistence with which he pursues his writing, creative and critical, the way he constantly casts himself in central roles within the art community, such as a likely Minister of Arts if such a post existed in the United States, and integrating himself with cultural leaders like Walt Whitman and Alfred Stieglitz, speak to the sense of self he cultivated.

Hartmann was very keen to be perceived as an integral member of the artistic upper crust. If he could not be a powerful patron of the arts through prodigious wealth or an important artist through superior painting talent, he worked tirelessly to make himself indispensable to both of those positions in American art as a writer. The very nature of an art critic is such that he is able to understand both the art and the interested public, and in so doing can act as a

bridge, or translator, between them. Hartmann is also well-suited for the task of translating foreign art ideas into a usable artistic language for American modernists because it allows him to fulfill the role he so often worked to perform. He was well practiced in attempting to decide what is worthy of translation, thereby shaping the American modernism he found so important. It played to his self-conception as a member of the American literati, and in his writing he is very specific about what is, and is not, useful or important about Symbolism or Chinese and Japanese classical art for the suggestive style.

Hartmann wrote of translation in *Japanese Art*. His meaning of the term seems somewhat different from the way I use it, or the way Benjamin posits it when laying out the task of the translator. Hartman writes, "I prefer, at any time, an Okyo marine to Whistler's 'The Ocean,' or a Hiroshige bridge scene to the 'Fragment of Old Battersea Bridge' by the same painter. They are perfect translations, but, after all, mere translations."⁴⁰ He goes on to say, "[An artist] might enrich his own style by borrowing certain qualities, but he will waste his faculties in trying to adopt it, for adoption is utterly impossible."⁴¹ Hartmann's discussion of translation and adoption seems to imply that some degree of interpretation is necessary in order to make use of Japanese and Chinese or

⁴⁰ Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 172.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 173.

Symbolist art techniques. As a translator, Hartmann can provide that interpretation.

In her 1979 article "The Influence of the Classical Oriental Tradition on American Painting," art historian Mary Ellen Hayward argues that the Japanese influence on artists Dwight Tryon, Abbott Thayer, and Dewing was not the same as the Japonisme influencing other nineteenth-century artists, and has been somewhat misunderstood. She argues that understanding this influence will give their work a different relationship to the modernism of their contemporaries. Hayward concludes, "We have focused readily enough in the past on the philosophical interests of the social realists...or on the intellectualism of the first American modernists. We should be applying the same standards of analysis to the older, ostensibly more conservative generation. To be misled by their seemingly traditional methods of representation into overlooking their profound philosophical intent is to miss an important and fascinating aspect of the history of American art."⁴² Although scholarship has certainly widened its view of modernism since this article was published, it is my intention that my thesis and its definition of suggestivism can continue to enrich the scholarship on

⁴²Mary Ellen Hayward, "The Influence of the Classical Oriental Tradition on American Painting," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 14 No. 2, (Summer 1979), pp. 141 - 142. On the issue of Asian influence in Dewing's work, and Hartmann's recognition of that influence, this article is cited in Weaver's introduction for *Sadakichi Hartmann: Critical Modernist*. Hayward's article mainly focuses on the work of Tryon, although she brings in Dewing to support her argument.

not only modernism, but on Hartmann, Dewing, and their relationship to modernism.

Dewing's painting seems to be mostly considered from the point of its iconography (the women) and of its patronage. The subject of gender in Dewing's work and Freer's collecting has been thoroughly examined by art historians such as Bailey Van Hook and Kathleen Pyne.⁴³ Pyne argues that the women in Dewing's paintings are "distillations of intellect and aesthetic sensibility."⁴⁴ They function as avatars or measures of masculine achievements, rather than as individuals or allegories of femininity. The bodies of women have often been so culturally ascribed, particularly in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁵ Hartmann wrote of the elongated forms of the women, which were supposed to indicate through their slenderness a higher echelon of sensual being than physical sexuality. Dewing himself is supposed to have remarked that his only requirement of a model is that she have brains.⁴⁶ While the women in these paintings are certainly meant to be beautiful, their physical appearance is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. It is an indicator of social and

⁴³Kathleen Pyne, "Evolutionary Typography and the American Woman in the Work of Thomas Dewing," *American Art*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Autumn, 1993), pp 12 - 29. Bailey Van Hook, "Decorative Images of American Women: The Aristocratic Aesthetic of the Late Nineteenth Century," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter, 1990), pp. 44 - 69.

⁴⁴Pyne, "Evolutionary Typography," 19.

⁴⁵ In particular, see Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899.

⁴⁶Pyne, "Evolutionary Typography," 19.

intellectual superiority which “businessmen could desire, as well as identify with...”⁴⁷ Although suggestivism is not directly concerned with the issue of gender in painting, the definition of suggestivism my thesis constructs provides a compliment to the existing scholarship on Dewing. It reinforces the necessity of communicating the psychological through sensorial means. In chapter two, I will address more specifically the way in which suggestivism fits into the rest cure use of Dewing’s work, a function which allows harried businessmen, such as Freer, respite from their relentless professional spheres.

Benjamin’s second criterion for translation is that it be called for.

Translation of Hartmann’s suggestive style into suggestivism is worthwhile for not only its definition of a descriptor used frequently by the critic throughout his array of topics, but for the way in which that definition can then be applied to enrich the way we look at those topics. In the context of both Hartmann’s and Dewing’s careers, suggestivism entangles the traditional and the modern but unravels yet another thread of complex modernity in early-twentieth-century American art.

⁴⁷Pyne, “Evolutionary Typography,” 19.

Chapter 2

“Intelligible Unintelligibility:” The Symbolist Influence on Suggestivism

Sadakichi Hartmann was one of the first Americans to publish on French Symbolist artists and poets. This is not an insignificant contribution, as *The Art Critic* counted among its subscribers a litany of the best known and most influential artists in the United States, including Thomas Dewing, George Inness, Albert Pinkham Ryder, William Merritt Chase, Albert Bierstadt, Augustus St. Gaudens, Childe Hassam, and Robert Henri.⁴⁸ In the first issue, published in November of 1893, Hartmann recounts “A Tuesday Evening at Stéphane Mallarmé’s.”⁴⁹ The following year, he published an essay on Symbolist artist Puvis de Chavannes.⁵⁰

Hartmann was acutely committed to disseminating Symbolist ideologies, which informed his poetry, playwriting, and theories of art. American Symbolist

⁴⁸ Weaver, 2. Other significant early writing on Symbolism published in the United States includes an essay by Arthur Symon on Symbolist literature appearing in *Harper’s Monthly Magazine*, and Aline Gorren’s article from the March 1893 *Scribner’s Magazine* entitled “The French Symbolists.”

⁴⁹ Hartmann, “A Tuesday Evening at Stéphane Mallarmé’s” *The Art Critic* Vol. 1, No. 1 (November, 1893), 9-11. Hartmann would correspond with Mallarmé until the poet’s death in 1898. Reprinted in Weaver, 63.

⁵⁰ Hartmann, “Puvis de Chavannes,” *The Art Critic* Vol. 1, No. 2 (January, 1894), pp 30 – 31. This essay was slightly revised as a tribute to the artist at his death, and published in *Musical America* Vol 1, No. 6 (12 November, 1898), 39. Reprinted in Weaver, 293. Weaver notes that Puvis de Chavannes was one of the most admired French artists in American art circles during the 1880s, and considered a great modern influence, 63.

poet Walt Whitman was one of Hartmann's most valued and influential contacts. The critic corresponded with Whitman, dedicated works to him, and attempted to head a Whitman Society. Hartmann's series of plays on religious figures, including *Christ, Buddha, Confucius, Baker Eddy, Moses, and Mohammed*, are considered by Jane Calhoun Weaver to be "perhaps the most direct and accomplished evidence of Hartmann's symbolist experience and involvement."⁵¹ Highly praised by Mallarmé, the final scene of *Buddha*, in which the deity enters Nirvana, is dedicated to "Students of Color Psychology" and Hartmann's ambitious intention for the setting included a fantastical pyrotechnic display and an eight hundred foot long stage to overwhelm the senses. Hartmann wrote in the stage direction that it will be "the new Optic Art, in which Color will rival Sound as a vehicle of pure emotion."⁵² The writer went to great lengths to present his artistic point of view, seemingly undeterred by setbacks. A note in the third, and final, issue of *The Art Critic* offers apologies for the delay in its publication, due to the publisher (Hartmann) having been jailed.⁵³ Hartmann had in fact been arrested and spent Christmas of 1893 in jail for his Symbolist play *Christ*, considered in Boston to be irreverent to the point of obscenity.

⁵¹Weaver, 4.

⁵²Hartmann, *Buddha*, Scene XII. New York: Author's Edition, 1897.

⁵³Hartmann, *The Art Critic*, 1894.

While Hartmann's tenacity in adhering to his artistic sensibilities in the face of adversity in the matter of his Symbolist plays is useful for giving a sense of his commitment to these ideals, for this chapter I will focus on Hartmann's critical writing on Symbolist topics, mainly the essays on Mallarmé and Puvis de Chavannes, to assemble the Symbolist lexicon from which Hartmann constructed his ideas. In these essays, his analysis of Symbolism is laid out clearly, with examples. A close reading of these essays provides building blocks that can later be assembled into a definition of his suggestive style, providing context to some of his other writing on other topics, such as modernism. The essays on Puvis and Mallarmé identify key components of Symbolism that becomes important to Hartmann in a more universal way. Among the most important of these components is the careful manipulation of form to convey an intense or deep feeling or idea, rather than broad narrative or strictly formal interests. Hartmann's praise of the Symbolists underscores his belief in pushing form to the limits of distillation, providing viewers with an unadulterated psychological experience in which meaning or content is given through the forms, and one is not privileged over the other.

Stéphane Mallarmé, a founding father of the Symbolist movement in literature and art, is considered one of the more difficult French writers to

translate.⁵⁴ This is, in no small part, due to the importance of not only the meaning of the words in his poetry, but also the way they sound when put together and even the way they appear the page. In addition to his poetry, Mallarmé wrote essays on music and painting. The latter essays mainly concern the Impressionists, fellow French artists compelled to give form to the modern age.⁵⁵ However, the seeds of Hartmann's suggestivism are not expressly buried within these essays. Rather, it is the philosophical verve of Mallarmé's poetry to which Hartmann was attuned and adapted into his own creative writing and ideas about art. Mallarmistes often note the musicality and the philosophy inherent in his work, "not as they exist in themselves but from the standpoint of a poetry that completely transforms them to its own requirements."⁵⁶ The music, a sensorial form of the poem, and the philosophy, the idea or spirit of the poem, coexist in fundamental unity, essential to the formation of the poem's meaning. Mallarmé wrote to his friend Henri Cazalis in 1866 "...that I want to gaze upon matter, fully conscious that it exists, and yet launching itself madly into

⁵⁴For a very useful translation of Mallarmé's work which includes significant critical commentary, see Henry Weinfield, *Stéphane Mallarmé: Collected Poems* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

⁵⁵See Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger, editors. *Art in Theory, 1815 – 1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998).

⁵⁶Weinfield, xi.

Dream..."⁵⁷ A poem, then, is not a textual representation of an idea, not the sign of the signified, but an amalgamation of the sensory experience of the idea and the idea itself.

Mallarmé scholar Henry Weinfield writes that, "The sacred exists for Mallarmé, but only insofar as it can be experienced phenomenologically. It exists only as an experience, through the concrete medium of language, or, in other words, as Beauty."⁵⁸ Mallarmé himself compares the poet to such otherworldly figures as the magician or the alchemist of language, using terms such as "enchantment" or "incantation."⁵⁹ These are concepts which link the physical to the spiritual or intangible, as a magician or an alchemist manipulate the physical laws of nature to achieve the whim of their imaginations. Their enchantments and incantations are words which, spoken in a particular way with a particular motivation, transcend their perimeters as words.

These terms, "magician," "enchantment," and "beauty," connote a romance that does not wholly describe Mallarmé's philosophy. Weinfield argues that Mallarmé, poet of modernity, is essentially an advocate for the real and the present. The quest for beauty and the transcendent ideal must be reconciled with sensorial experiences, in the poet's case, with language which is, after all, the

⁵⁷Quoted in Weinfield, xiii, from *Selected Letters of Stéphane Mallarmé*. Ed. Rosemary Lloyd. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, pp. 60.

⁵⁸Weinfield, xiv.

⁵⁹Ibid, xii.

vehicle of “ordinary communication.”⁶⁰ This adds another layer to the duality of Mallarmé’s poetry, instead of the physical and the spiritual it is the ordinary and the lofty. For Hartmann, the presence of both was of particular importance.

This conflation of physical sensation and mystical words is also the way Hartmann perceived Mallarmé, who known for his Tuesday evening salons. Hartmann attended one during the early 1890s and in his account, which appeared in *The Art Critic* in 1893, he described his conversations with the poet as “a chaos of beautiful words.”⁶¹ Comparing the experience of hearing Mallarmé speak to the pleasing effect of slight drunkenness, Hartmann wrote, “[Mallarmé] speaks as the other Symbolists write. He utters any amount of mysterious and harmonious words and his listeners, already a little benumbed, as it were by the hot punch with which they are served, leave him with the impression that they have received incomprehensible revelations.”⁶² Conflating an intense feeling, drunkenness, with the experience of hearing words strung together so as to create that feeling, speaks to Hartmann’s interest in synesthesia, which I will address later in the chapter. It also reiterates Weinfield’s analysis of Mallarmé’s objective to achieve the sacred phenomenologically. For Hartmann to describe the experience of hearing Mallarmé speak by comparing it to

⁶⁰Weinfield, xiv.

⁶¹Hartmann, “A Tuesday Evening at Stéphane Mallarmé’s,” 11.

⁶²Ibid, 10.

drunkenness, it indicates not only his admiration for, but assimilation of this Symbolist point of view.

In an essay published in 1912 for *Camera Work*, Hartmann related his meeting with the composer Debussy at one of Mallarmé's Tuesday Evenings.⁶³ They discussed a poem Mallarmé had published which featured type in various sizes and large gaps and blank spaces in place of punctuation. Debussy called the gaps and spaces "white interludes," and wondered if it would not be more effectively carried out in music as a silence.⁶⁴ Perhaps in answer to Debussy, Hartmann published his entire essay in the whimsical format of Mallarmé's unnamed poem in question, with "white interludes" and certain words or phrases in large type. He argued that the technique is a powerful tool for painters and writers as well as composers, writing, "The true fragmentary spirit – controlled at will – of leaving certain things unsaid, of appealing to the imagination to solve problems, is denied to the painter and sculptor as little as to the composer."⁶⁵ It seems that Hartmann was taking Mallarmé's conflation of the sensorial and psychological a step further, positing that the imagination could actually be compelled to fill in for a lack of sensory information. Essentially, Hartmann implied with the format and message of his essay that

⁶³Hartmann, "Broken Melodies," *Camera Work*, no. 33 (April 1912): 33 – 35.

⁶⁴Ibid, 33.

⁶⁵Ibid, 35.

sensory experiences could be *suggested* in their careful absence and therefore engage the psyche in their creation and experience.⁶⁶

In his essay on the Tuesday Evening, Hartmann describes a conversation with Mallarmé about *Le Pauvre Pêcheur* by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, a Symbolist artist who many considered integral to the movement.⁶⁷ (Fig. 5) “It is a picture which portrays extreme despair and deep humility in a marvelously perfect manner,” effused Mallarmé.⁶⁸ *Le Pauvre Pêcheur* is a somewhat bleak image of a poor fisherman standing in his boat near the shore, where his family waits. The tonal picture of muted blues and grays gives the impression of an overcast atmosphere despite the inclusion of a blueish sky lightly mottled with wispy, white clouds. The washed out water is a flat block of color, betraying no movement in brush stroke or shade. The barren shore juts into the water creating a bold diagonal line, pulling the figures of the fisherman and his family into the foreground. The horizon recedes far behind into a distant shore, rendered in a single horizontal line in the most vivid blue of the composition, with such lack of detail as to make its distance unknowable and therefore

⁶⁶See Chapter two for a discussion of minimalism in color, line, and composition and its basis in classical Chinese and Japanese art, as it relates to Suggestivism.

⁶⁷William H. Robinson, “Puvis de Chavannes’s ‘Summer’ and the Symbolist Avant-Garde,” *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, Vol. 78, No. 1, (Jan. 1991), pp. 2 – 27.

⁶⁸Hartmann, “A Tuesday Evening at Stéphane Mallarmé’s”, 9.

unattainable as a destination. Hartmann recorded that Mallarmé believed, “the landscape represents life itself, fading away.”⁶⁹

The fisherman stands in his boat at the crux of the shoreline and the bare mast of his little boat, empty but for him. Clothes tattered and dull, hair and beard unkempt, the fisherman hangs his head and holds his hands as if wringing them in distress. Mallarmé told Hartmann that, “the pose of the poor fisherman with his hands devoutly crossed on his breast, indicates his resignation to accept whatever fate may have in store for him. He knows that he will never catch a fish!”⁷⁰ The figure is oddly flat, the proportion of the head slightly off. A woman in a gray dress kneels on the shore over a baby, naked but for the lifeless red blanket wrapped loosely around its body. The woman looks at the baby but points at the fisherman, as if to imply an inescapable inheritance of poverty and hopelessness. The depth of such despair, a heightened psychological experience, portrayed quietly and simply through color and subtle gesture, is a hallmark of the Symbolist thought Hartmann sought in painting.

The piece Hartmann wrote for *The Art Critic* in 1894 was reprinted in *Musical America* column “Art and Artists” on the occasion of Puvis de

⁶⁹Hartmann, “A Tuesday Evening at Stéphane Mallarmé’s,” 9.

⁷⁰Ibid.

Chavannes' death in 1898.⁷¹ Hartmann praised Puvis for "using chaste, subdued and languid colors and of drawing with meager, hesitating lines, *which have something unexpressed.*"⁷² [Emphasis mine] Hartmann honed in on Puvis' idiosyncratic color and perspective which does not tell a story, but requires sensory engagement to communicate something inexpressible with narrative but acutely perceptible by the senses. He wrote, "Chavannes was a Liszt in colors, who in 'striking' a color strikes the nerves," and that the painter "did not care to tell a story, or give an impression of his thoughts, but was determined to extort reverie from the looker-on, to call forth association of thought, unavoidable at the view of certain colors."⁷³ Note the synesthetic reference to music, a metaphor Hartmann carried throughout the piece, and the emphasis on introspection rather than narrative.

Weaver comments that Puvis de Chavannes was one of the most popular French artists in America around the 1880s, "He was considered a great modern influence because of his poetic classicism and mystical symbolism, important elements in the new American modernist style that Sadakichi Hartmann called

⁷¹Hartmann, "Art and Artists," *Musical America* Vol. 1, No. 6 (12 November 1898): 39. The piece was reprinted with minor revisions. Reprinted in Weaver, 293.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid, 293-294.

'suggestivism.'"74 His work precluded and even influenced important Modern artists from Van Gogh and Gauguin to Picasso, an observation argued by art historian William H. Robinson.⁷⁵ The avant-garde admired the downplay of narrative in his work, his resistance of Naturalism, and the way in which he composed his work so that the formal qualities conveyed the psychological ones.⁷⁶ Robinson states that Puvis was able to bridge the gap between traditional and Modern art, "thereby rendering the classical tradition serviceable for modern painters."⁷⁷ This is a significant contribution to Hartmann's suggestivism. That which Hartmann valued in Puvis de Chavannes, and in suggestivist American painters, are the very qualities which Symbolist and avant-garde artists also assimilate and admire, giving suggestivism a direct relationship to modernism.

Symbolism is often a difficult movement to characterize, because it developed in so many different strains. However, with its general focus on the *idea*, translated by visual means, much of the painting stemming from a Symbolist ideology champions the subjective and is somewhat at odds with scientific methods of awareness and experience. Because of Symbolism's rejection of scientific categorization and related methods of knowledge,

⁷⁴Weaver, 63.

⁷⁵Robinson, 15 - 16.

⁷⁶Ibid, 11.

⁷⁷Ibid, 18.

nineteenth-century German scientist Max Nordau wrote that Symbolism was one symptom of the degradation of Western society. He objected to any art which could be construed as illogical, arguing that rationality was that which gave art a relevant role in society.⁷⁸

Art historian Rachael DeLue writes that it is probable Hartmann was aware of, and in all likelihood had actually read, Nordau's *Degeneration* (or *Die Entartung*, the original German text which Hartmann would have been more than capable of reading).⁷⁹ Rather than being off-put by science, or finding it in opposition to the suggestive or symbolic arts, Hartmann was intrigued by the idea that a mode of painting could be a seeable representation of the intangible and interior, much like in the way the newly-invented X-ray machine revealed diagnostic information otherwise unseeable.⁸⁰ Additionally, Hartmann's later writing about photography and optics demonstrates his interest in or openness, rather than aversion, to the convergence of science and art. Turning Nordau's diagnosis around, the idea that a suggestivist painting revealed the imperceptible through its use of color, form, and symbolic subject supports the

⁷⁸Rodolphe Rapetti, *Symbolism*. Translated by Deke Dusinberre. (Paris: Flammarion, 2006), 143 – 144.

⁷⁹The German original was published in 1892, the English translation in 1895, which was a best seller in the United States. Rachel Ziady DeLue, "Diagnosing Pictures: Sadakichi Hartmann and the Science of Seeing, circa 1900" *American Art*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Summer 2007), p. 47.

⁸⁰DeLue, 53.

cultural hegemony artists such as Dewing, and their patrons, sought to enact.⁸¹

As only a trained scientist or physician would be able to read the diagnostic information expressed by the X-ray machine, only a true Aesthete could read and understand the suggestions made by these paintings. The painter becomes a specialist, and the formal properties of suggestivist pictures take on a special meaning at a time when scientific advances such as photography become cause for growing concern that the painter may become obsolete and that art may be reduced to mass-produced fodder for the philistines.⁸²

Another important connection between Symbolism and suggestivism is that of synesthesia and the synthesis of the arts, a concept which further distanced the science of classification.⁸³ *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or comprehensive combination of the arts, was first presented in the mid-nineteenth century by composer Richard Wagner, and throughout that century into the twentieth was adapted by various groups of artists, from the Symbolists to the Bauhaus. Dewing painted scenes of women reading, handling musical instruments, and reciting, suggesting that he felt a particular attraction to the sister arts. His work is often described as poetic or musical by Hartmann and other critics. Hartmann

⁸¹Pyne, *Art and the Higher Life*, 138-140.

⁸²Frances Pohl, *Framing America: A Social History of American Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002) p. 275.

⁸³Rapetti, 175.

was particularly invested in the exploration of synesthesia. His experience as a stage machinery apprentice at the Royal Theater in Munich in 1884 perhaps introduced him to the potential of an all-encompassing sensuous art experience.

In 1902, it is possible Hartmann drew upon this early experience, staging a perfume concert entitled “A Trip to Japan in Sixteen Minutes” in New York City’s Carnegie Lyceum.⁸⁴ He rigged huge fans (advertised as the “Hartmann Perfumator”) to blow scents over the audience as he read travel monologues and performers presented traditional dances. While the concert was not a critical success, Hartmann’s attempt to distill the essence of the experience of Japanese culture into sensorial experience represents what Weaver identifies as “an obvious continuation of his immersion in symbolism.”⁸⁵

Through Hartmann’s suggestivism, which integrated his most admired aspects of Symbolism, including synesthesia and interiority expressed sensorially, certain tenets of Symbolism assert themselves in the work of Dewing. In the 1892 - 94 painting *In The Garden*, (Fig. 6) the center figure, who is slightly right of center in the canvas, anchors an asymmetrical triangle. She stands facing the viewer with her arms hanging limp at her sides and her head slightly tilted, gazing off of the canvas as though straining to hear a far off sound or lost in her

⁸⁴ A note can be found in the Sunday *New York Times* magazine of September 14, 1902, 32.

⁸⁵ Weaver, 4.

own thoughts. The subtle gesture connotes an intimate interior or intense concentration which seems to contrast with the undefined, swirling scene. The figure at the left is standing in much the same posture as the center woman, but with her back to the viewer. On the right, a figure with her hands clasped behind her back is positioned at a three quarter turn, also facing back.

None of the women interact with one another or the viewer, and it is unclear whether they are three distinct women at all. Each has the same hair color and style, the same milky complexion and long, lean neck. The one visible face is painted in such a way as to obscure identifying features, making her individuality secondary to her symbolic role in the picture. The main difference in the figures, and strangely out of place in the landscape, are the evening gowns they wear, which at once speak to the existent nature of the elegant figures and the disorienting whimsy of the painting.⁸⁶ The gowns give the image perhaps its only footing in the present and the real, something lacking from similar Dewing landscapes in which the women are in Classical dress, as in his 1899 work *The*

⁸⁶ The blue gown is quite similar to the one worn by the model in Dewing's 1892 *Lady in Blue*. It also may appear in *The Hermit Thrush*, 1890, and *The Recitation*, 1891. It was not uncommon for artists to keep a collection of costumes for their models to wear and Dewing was no exception to this practice.

Garland. (Fig. 7) In fact, Dewing used the same model to paint each of the figures for *In the Garden*, identified by Hartmann simply as Ruth.⁸⁷

Hartmann would later write a piece for *Camera Work* detailing the way in which elongated female forms, such as most of Dewing's female subjects including the model Ruth, indicated a psychological rather than physical character. The attenuated figures in the painting are repeated in the slight walking stick held by the center woman, and the slim, pale sapling partially hiding the celestial sphere peering around its foliage. There is no firm sense of narrative or reality in the painting. Why are these women in evening gowns daydreaming in a misty meadow? The narrative of the piece is entirely suggested and therefore completely speculative, which requires active participation from the viewer to complete the circuit of meaning. The fantastical setting and incongruous figures invite the viewer to meditate and wonder, as though the women in the painting prescribed the viewer's proper engagement with the piece. The use of color to extort reverie and the outward depiction of interiority are both aspects of Symbolism which Hartmann valued and considered in his conception of suggestivism.⁸⁸ While narrative was not

⁸⁷ There is a photograph of Ruth among correspondence which refers to her in the Sadakichi Hartmann Papers at UC Riverside. Correspondence suggests a lifelong love Hartmann cherished for her.

⁸⁸ Sadakichi Hartmann, "Puvis de Chavannes," 30 - 31.

necessary for suggestivist, or Symbolist, pictures, the ability to use formal elements, engaging the senses, to bring forth understanding of the idea was central. For example, a painting of Hamlet and the Ghost by Manet received Mallarmé's "great admiration" for the vague rendering of the ghost against the snow, where "there was really nothing to be seen and yet it was wrought with such deep meaning."⁸⁹ Hartmann, however, wondered whether the effect would have been so pronounced if the painting wasn't titled to include the ghost.⁹⁰

Hartmann's dedication to the sensorial, synesthesist, and literary principles of Symbolism provides a framework for understanding Hartmann's criticism and particularly his regard for certain artists, such as Dewing. While Dewing may not have professed ties to Symbolist art, Hartmann's allegiance to Symbolist ideology informed the way in which he understood Dewing's work as innovative and important in American art.

It has been often noted, in his own day and by contemporary scholars, that Hartmann's appraisal of artists and his predictions for them were largely accurate and remarkably astute. For example, Weaver writes in the introduction of an anthology of Hartmann's most important writing, that Hartmann was one of the first critics to link Winslow Homer and Thomas Eakins *together* as

⁸⁹Hartmann, "A Tuesday Evening at Stéphane Mallarmé's," 9.

⁹⁰Ibid.

developing an American Realism.⁹¹ Instead of updating the existing *History of American Art* manuscript, in 1932 Hartmann penned a second volume of his *History*. He included a section dedicated to sculpture and one to the graphic arts, as well as an appraisal of American art in Europe and two chapters reflecting on the art world since the publication of the first volume. Neither in Hartmann's own book, nor in subsequent scholarship on his criticism, does it suggest that his predictions came true because he was particularly influential in the art world. Rather, it seems simply that his judgment was considered accurate. "The task of the critic and historian called upon to appraise for permanent record the work of his contemporaries is a difficult one," reads the publisher's note for the second edition of *History of American Art* in 1932, "It is therefore quite remarkable that the appraisals of Mr. Hartmann made thirty years ago when his 'A History of American Art' was published are accurate today."⁹² Weaver also notes that "from the beginning, Hartmann demonstrated a remarkable ability to identify the artists and ideas that would become the primary forces of twentieth-century American art."⁹³

⁹¹Weaver, 23.

⁹² Publisher's Note. Hartmann, *History of American Art*.

⁹³ Weaver, 1.

Yet, Dewing, one of the painters most admired by Hartmann, did not become one of the primary forces in twentieth-century American art. Was this a case of Hartmann's accurate judgment simply missing the mark? Or, at a moment of profound change, innovation, and relentless modernization, did the shifting tides of culture sweep away the ability to understand "the quality in Dewing's work which appeals to [Hartmann] beyond every other."⁹⁴ Through an analysis of suggestivism, Dewing's work and Hartmann's esteem for it can be more clearly understood as another facet of the vital American painting tradition being shaped at the turn of the twentieth century.

⁹⁴ Hartmann, *History of American Art*, Vol. I, 307.

Chapter 3

“Mild Florescence:” The Classical Chinese and Japanese

Influence on Suggestivism

Sadakichi Hartmann was four years old when he left Japan in 1871. Yet throughout his life, Hartmann embraced his Japanese heritage through his poetry, plays, criticism, and performances. He was well educated and literate in his mother’s native culture and language, as evidenced by his body of work. In 1903 he published a survey of Japanese art history from the tenth century to modern art, entitled *Japanese Art*, in which he sought to make its history available to laypeople in the West.⁹⁵ The Hartmann archive at the University of California, Riverside contains several handmade books and collections of haiku and tanka poetry, written by Hartmann in Japanese and English. He also translated Japanese poetry into English. He sold these books to friends for a few dollars, particularly at the end of his life when his ill health prevented a more rigorous livelihood and demand for his intellectual work was waning. Hartmann wrote plays set in Japan, including one entitled *Cherry Blossoms*, about Western tourists visiting Japan. He also conducted lectures and performances, often in a multi-sensory format, which shared with audiences the experiences of Japanese art,

⁹⁵Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, Boston: L.C. Page & Co., 1903, pp v.

culture, and landscape. Occasionally Hartmann published small pieces in newspapers and magazines under the pseudonym Chrysanthemum, a culturally significant flower in Japan, particularly when those pieces touched on an Asian subject.

Hartmann's distinctly exotic visage would have made it difficult for him pass as European if he had wanted (Fig. 8), and in notes, correspondence, and mentions from his acquaintances he is referred to as Sadakichi, his middle name, rather than his father's namesake and first name, Carl. Whether this is due to the lifelong estrangement he experienced with his father or a concerted interest in presenting his Japanese half, it is clear that Hartmann capitalized on his unique bi-racial identity. His Japanese background gave him a seemingly more authentic license among the intelligentsia of his circles, actual and aspirational, to take on the role of purveyor or translator of Asian culture, thereby making him indispensable, he would have hoped, to the arts in the United States at a moment of cultural interest in and influence from the East.⁹⁶

⁹⁶Hartmann's attempts to disseminate knowledge of Asian art and culture were not quite as exclusive or successful as he'd hoped, particularly compared to Ernest Fenollosa, who, although lacking Hartmann's Japanese heritage, actually did travel to Asia as a scholar. (See Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art: Volumes 1 and 2: An Outline History of East Asiatic Design*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1912.) It isn't that Fenollosa's text is noticeably more accurate in fact or insightful in criticism than Hartmann's, but that Fenollosa enjoyed greater cultural credibility and influence.

Japonisme was a well-established phenomenon in the West by the turn of the twentieth century, when Hartmann's career as a writer began in earnest.⁹⁷ Ornamental objects such as porcelain and textiles became popular items of display in stylish American interiors which strove to incorporate these decorative elements, if overlooking the more subtle philosophies of Japanese design. These influences can be seen not only in photographs of period rooms, but in paintings which take these spaces as their setting. (Fig. 9) The visual language of Japanese prints and paintings, with their flattened and cropped perspectives, entered the work of American painters working at home and abroad, such as Whistler, Cassatt, Sargent, Prendergast, La Farge, and Chase. (Fig. 10 & 11) Like the design elements integrated into interiors of the period, these painters tended to mimic the look of the Japanese art, often going so far as to include Japanese studio props like kimonos, rather than assimilate their deeper aesthetic principles.

Japanese Art is a comprehensive overview of Hartmann's understanding of not only Japanese art history, but of how its suggestive qualities which he so valued are achieved and how he believed they were best applied in painting. The suggestiveness came from a classical Chinese art tradition and was refined,

⁹⁷A concise and accessible introduction to the history of arts in Japan and its relationship with the West, as well as an overview of Japonisme, can be found in Lionel Lambourne, *Japonisme: Cultural Crossings between Japan and the West*, London: Phaidon Press, Ltd., 2005. Much of the same information is available in Hartmann's writing on Japanese art history, as well.

through meticulous study, into something uniquely expressive for the Japanese artists. Hartmann writes that the “Japanese craze” was not serving modern Western art well and that it should be replaced with critical study of Japanese art, making two important points implicit: one, that Western artists would be capable of tapping into this suggestive quality of painting just as Japanese artists had been, and could similarly refine it into something expressive of their own ideals, and, two, that in order to achieve this ability Western artists would need to understand the classical Chinese principles upon which the Japanese repetition and variation is based.

In chapter five of *Japanese Art*, entitled, “The Influence of Japanese Art on Western Civilization,” Hartmann spoke very specifically about how a Western artist should integrate Japanese influence. “As to the adopting of their style as the ideal of our Western art, it seems to me hopelessly illogical...He might enrich his own style by borrowing certain qualities, but he will waste his faculties in trying to adopt it.”⁹⁸ Ultimately, Hartmann’s project was to establish and refine a national *American* art. I will argue in this chapter that Hartmann was able to identify in Dewing’s work certain key components of Japanese art which may not be as obvious as the ways Japonisme was used by artists, even those whom Hartmann admired and to whom scholarship has afforded more breadth as modern artists. But for Hartmann, these components Dewing manages to deploy

⁹⁸Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 173.

were more universal because of their ability to transcend a specific culture's artistic tradition, and therefore more important.

This chapter will use Hartmann's *Japanese Art* to lay out the way in which he constructed its history from classical Chinese art, highlighting and praising the suggestiveness it achieves in this tradition. In other texts, especially the *History of American Art*, Hartmann used comparisons to this trait of Japanese art to praise the suggestiveness of artists, such as Dewing, working in what this thesis defines as a suggestive style. Working backwards from Hartmann's prescription for the proper integration of Japanese art techniques (i.e. suggestiveness), which requires the painter to study the philosophical foundation of the tradition to learn its forms rather than simply to mimic them, I will argue that Hartmann was rather critical of Japonisme and offered an alternative method, which is exemplified in the work of Dewing. Reading Dewing's painting through this aspect of suggestivism, having established its philosophical underpinning in classical Chinese and Japanese art, counters the tendency art historian Mary Ellen Hayward notes, to "regard [Dewing] as merely academic, European-influenced, or genteel," which is "to underrate [his] intellectuality."⁹⁹ This chapter will present the suggestiveness of Chinese and Japanese art – a key component of suggestivism – as one facet of the

⁹⁹Hayward, 141 – 142.

intellectuality expressed in Dewing's painting which has heretofore not been studied in as much depth as other aspects of his work.

Like Hartmann, Hayward argues that many artists did not fully comprehend the meaning or philosophy of the Japanese art techniques they borrowed from the objects which came to the West in the late nineteenth century. One reason she notes is that the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Japanese prints were "but the last remnants of a great artistic tradition."¹⁰⁰ The notable printmakers, such as Hiroshige and Utamaro, were fully trained in the classical Japanese art tradition and their prints were, to use Hayward's description, "a kind of summary, a shorthand version of it."¹⁰¹ These printmakers had fully mastered the classical Japanese art tradition and were then able to consciously condense and edit it in their prints. Viewers of these prints who were uninitiated in the Japanese art traditions would presumably not be able to unpack such a cursory expression of it to gain a full understanding of Japanese art.

Hayward's assessment of late-nineteenth-century Japonisme concurs with Hartmann's consideration of it in *Japanese Art*. Simply, Western audiences were mainly looking at relatively recent Japanese prints which did not fully represent the character of Japanese art. Hartmann wrote that in the mid- seventeenth century, Japanese artists became interested in studying Western art, mainly

¹⁰⁰Hayward, 107.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

prints, brought to Japan by Dutch traders. This interest marked the beginning of a shift in Japanese art, which did not ultimately follow in the footsteps of the Dutch prints, but did alter Japanese art-making from its classical roots, which came from China.¹⁰² “[China] played the part of Greece to the Eastern world,” Hartmann wrote, “and there is no department of Japanese national life and thought, whether material civilization, religion, morals, political organization, language, literature or art, which does not bear traces of Chinese influence.”¹⁰³ In other words, in order to more fully understand the philosophical foundation of the Japanese art Western audiences admired aesthetically, they must look to the underlying principles of the Chinese art that came before and influenced it.

In chapter five of *Japanese Art*, entitled “The Influence of Japanese Art on Western Civilization,” Hartmann wrote,

“If it were simply the endeavour [sic] of our artists, by means of careful research and comparison, to grasp the fundamental laws of Japanese art, no criticism could be made. But artists apparently care for nothing less than a critical knowledge of both Eastern and Western art. They are satisfied with imitating surface qualities. It is true that these qualities are extremely interesting and have helped to make our modern art extremely interesting. But very little is gained thereby...The sooner our painters get rid of the Japanese craze, the better for them, and they would get rid of it if they would study Japanese art a little more conscientiously, and under the surface.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 104 - 105.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 15.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 171-172.

Here, Hartmann states that the “Japanese craze” is the result of uncritical mimicry of Japanese art and that to integrate a deeper knowledge of Japanese art into Western painting would yield somewhat a somewhat different picture. He makes a specific distinction between interesting surface imitation and conscientiously integrated Japanese influence. Study of Japanese art, down to its Chinese classical roots, makes evident the suggestive qualities which Hartmann so admired, wrote about, and sought in modern American painters.

Japanese Art is a basically chronological, eight chapter survey that begins in the tenth century with “Early Religious Painting” in chapter one and moving through “The Feudal Period,” “The Renaissance,” and “The Realistic Movement.” Here, Hartmann included a brief interlude to discuss, in chapter five, “The Influence of Japanese Art on Western Civilization.” Like his *History of American Art*, he discusses painting almost exclusively in these chapters, including more on calligraphy, prints, and decorative arts than in *History of American Art*, likely due to the closer relationship they share with painting in Japanese art. However, in the same way that he dedicated chapters to art forms other than painting in *History of American Art*, the last three chapters of *Japanese Art*, focus on “Japanese Architecture and Sculpture,” “The Ornamental Arts,”

and “Modern Japanese Art.”¹⁰⁵ The bibliography of *Japanese Art* includes sources in French, German, English, and Japanese on topics from art and culture to religion and geography.

From the first, Hartmann established the Chinese precedent for Japanese art. He wrote that in the eighth century, Japanese education “meant the study of the masterpieces of Chinese antiquity,” and that Chinese classics were taught at university along with history, law, and arithmetic.¹⁰⁶ The Imperial court adopted costumes, ceremonies, and architecture from China, which was “more befitting its dignity” than the temporary palaces each Mikado built in a new location upon succession.¹⁰⁷ The first painter mentioned in the oldest written texts on Japanese art, an artist called Shinki, was a Chinese artist who went to Japan in the mid-fifth century. Hartmann wrote that Shinki would not be the last Chinese painter to work in Japan during this period, and that three hundred years later, Shinki’s descendents were still painting in Japan.¹⁰⁸ It seems that Hartmann’s analogy that China “played the part of Greece to the Eastern world” was an apt one that Western readers would likely understand as he went on to discuss how the

¹⁰⁵It is interesting that for *Japanese Art*, Hartmann discusses architecture and sculpture in the same chapter, which speaks to their close relationship in that culture. In *History of American Art*, Hartmann does not include decorative arts or architecture, and instead gave sculpture and graphic arts their own chapters.

¹⁰⁶Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 12.

¹⁰⁷Ibid, 14.

¹⁰⁸Ibid, 17 - 18.

guiding aesthetic principles of classical China came to be integrated into Japanese art.

Chapter two of *Japanese Art* begins with the branch out from religious arts to a new school of painting, inspired by Chinese models and patronized by the court. In 1050 the Yamoto school was established and renamed the Tosa two hundred years later when it became the official art school. Hartmann took care to note, however, that “it *pretended* [emphasis mine] to separate Japanese art from all foreign influences.”¹⁰⁹ He wrote that, while the Japanese had steadily “created a world which was distinct from anything foreign,” citing government, architecture, clothing, and literature, he noted of the Yamoto school that, “it would be hard to find a touch of Chinese influence, as far as choice of subject is concerned.”¹¹⁰ Hartmann’s careful wording when describing the Yamoto school indicates that, while “its principal merit lay in the faithful reproduction of Japanese feudal life,” it continued to render these Japanese subjects in a Chinese inspired style and technique.¹¹¹ Indeed, Hartmann specifically draws attention to this facet of Japanese art history, which retains older, Chinese methods and develops new subjects rather than new techniques, by pointing out how it is the opposite of the development of Western art history. He cited the technical

¹⁰⁹ Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 38.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 38 – 39.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*.

changes which occurred from the ancient Greeks through the European Renaissance and points out that, “in Japan, there had been nothing analogous to this. The subjects have been changed, but the technique has always remained true to certain rules and regulations.”¹¹²

Chapter three of *Japanese Art* focuses on the Renaissance, which Hartmann identified as the Kano school, spanning 1400 – 1750. The influence of classical Chinese art continues to be a prominent theme in the discussion of the Japanese Renaissance, making Hartmann’s earlier comparison of China to ancient Greece particularly succinct. China had enjoyed a period of heightened cultural prowess during the Sung Dynasty (961 – 1280), the afterglow of which was felt across Asia. Hartmann wrote that “at the close of the fourteenth century, the Chinese were still the foremost painters of the Eastern world...No wonder that a great wave of Chinese influence passed over the Japanese islands, deeply affecting it in every conceivable way.”¹¹³ Japanese government, sciences, philosophy, literature, and arts once again “profited by Chinese teaching and example.”¹¹⁴ The Kano school was developed, inspired by the great painters in Hangchow and with the admirable aim of technically equaling them. In Hartmann’s estimation, the Kano school would become the most renown and

¹¹² Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 50.

¹¹³ Ibid, 63.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

commendable Japanese school of art.¹¹⁵ Its founding members and greatest painters had backgrounds in Chinese painting, studying with or even descendent from its masters.¹¹⁶ Students spent each day of an eight year apprenticeship studying and copying paintings by Chinese masters.¹¹⁷ Hartmann wrote that the Kano school has been criticized by opponents for what has been construed as “the almost superstitious respect its artists paid to Chinese art and Chinese civilization in general,”¹¹⁸ however Hartmann defended the school. He calls it “the purest, most classical period of Japanese art.”¹¹⁹ Noting that the Kano painters had specific ideals they intended to inscribe into Japanese art, he maintained that they achieved their ideals more fully for their use of “a code of precise rules” gleaned from the instruction and inspiration from Chinese art.¹²⁰ Hartmann’s analysis indicates he believed that the techniques the Kano painters adapted from the Chinese were universal. Despite their apparent rigid conforming to Chinese methods and ideals, Hartmann clearly believes the art the

¹¹⁵Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 63.

¹¹⁶Ibid, 65 - 69.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 79.

¹¹⁸Ibid, 71.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid.

Kano painters produced was expressly Japanese, so the things they adapted from Chinese painting were clearly not inflexibly Chinese in character.

Consistent with his appraisal of earlier schools, Hartmann was essentially saying that while Japanese *subjects* evolved separately from those of China, Japanese painters continued to use Chinese painting techniques to render these subjects. Furthermore, Japanese painters tended to use the same subjects once they became established.¹²¹ It is evident that Hartmann finds the techniques of repetition universally applicable for the successful realization of ideals in painting, for they are not only praised by him in the Japanese context, but identified as a praiseworthy aspect of suggestivist American artists. This is an important distinction from the modern Western painting ideals which, in Hartmann's view, prize innovation.¹²² Hartmann considered the principle of repetition with slight variation to be the most important quality of Japanese art because it "sets the mind to think and dream."¹²³

The subject of originality and repetition was addressed by Hartmann in an essay published in *Camera Work* in 1903, the same year Hartmann published

¹²¹Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 86.

¹²²Hartmann, "Repetition with Slight Variation," 34. Reprinted in Weaver, 147.

¹²³Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 84 - 85.

Japanese Art.¹²⁴ In fact, the passage in *Japanese Art* which names repetition as the most important facet of Japanese art is reproduced almost exactly as the introduction to this essay. However, in the essay Hartmann went on to discuss its place in modern Western art, making the essay an important consideration for suggestivism. “The craze for originality is really the curse of our art,” he wrote, “as it nearly always leads to conventionalism and mannerism.”¹²⁵ He praised artists like Puvis de Chavannes and Dwight Tryon for their formal repetition, and Thayer and Cassatt for their variations on the theme of mother and child.

It seems potentially problematic to discourage originality in art, however Hartmann was not saying that no artist can or should ever innovate, but rather quite the opposite. Again repurposing his manuscripts, Hartmann wrote both in his essay and in *Japanese Art* that, “...a beautiful idea is always a beautiful idea, and it that it takes as much creative power to lend a new charm to an old theme as to produce and create an apparently new one...”¹²⁶ He contended that only through absolute mastery of techniques and topics can an artist truly express anything worthwhile about himself, aesthetics, or the subject of his art, and that subtlety is more useful for this expression than bold novelty because subtlety

¹²⁴Hartmann, “Repetition, with Slight Variation,” *Camera Work*, no. 1 (January 1903): 30, 33-34. See Chapter One for my analysis of Hartmann’s discussion of Puvis de Chavannes repetition in composition and color.

¹²⁵Hartmann, “Repetition with Slight Variation,” 34.

¹²⁶ Ibid, also in *Japanese Art*, 87.

encourages contemplativeness.¹²⁷ What's more, training in repetition discourages mediocre artists because, as Hartmann pointed out in *Japanese Art*, "There is no doubt that such minute training lops off ruthlessly all buds of genius but the very strongest, and that the artists who survive are few and far between. But those who do survive are veritable wizards of the brush."¹²⁸

Hartmann was fairly specific about what constitutes a "wizard of the brush." During his discussion of the Renaissance in *Japanese Art*, Hartmann turned his narrative to the specifics of painting technique and how these techniques achieve the sought-after suggestiveness he found so integral to great painting. As early as his chapter on the feudal period, Hartmann declared that pictorial synecdoche was the matured attempt of Japanese artists to suggest and not imitate their observation of nature.¹²⁹ In a practical sense, this meant that a flowering branch could stand for an orchard, but it also served a more abstract purpose. Hartman wrote that, "They tried to imbue a fragment of nature, uninteresting in itself, with a poetical idea."¹³⁰ This minimalism was not limited to subject. Working in a classical Chinese tradition, the best Japanese painters, in Hartmann's estimation, sought to render their subjects with a few deft and

¹²⁷Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 33.

¹²⁸Ibid, 81.

¹²⁹Ibid, 52 - 53.

¹³⁰Ibid, 53.

expressive lines and colors. “No European master, to be sure, can vie with them in putting so much information, life, and humor into the same space of paper and with so small an expenditure of labour. [sic]”¹³¹ He described several Japanese masters with superior brushwork and coloring skills, often using the term suggestiveness to explain their line or colors.¹³² Indeed, repetition in color is singled out by Hartmann as particularly expressive and, in the hands of a capable painter, a potent means of suggestiveness.¹³³

Although Hartmann argued that Japonisme was not a good way to integrate Japanese painting techniques into Western art, it was not easy for Western artists to undertake the kind of study Hartmann felt was necessary to discern and apply the underlying principles of Japanese art. Hayward notes that the style and subject matter of Japanese prints, textiles, and china, which made their way into the West in the late nineteenth century were not good examples of the high art of Japan based on much older art forms from classical China. It was not until Ernest Fenollosa and Charles Lang Freer went to the East and brought back studies and objects, she argues, that artists and scholars could study them to the depth prescribed by Hartmann.¹³⁴ Hayward credits Whistler with

¹³¹Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 81.

¹³²Ibid, 81-83.

¹³³Ibid, 86.

¹³⁴Ibid., 112.

suspecting that the print and “blue and white” (seventeenth- and eighteenth-century porcelain) collections which he assembled in Europe and used for his art “were merely the remnants of a great artistic tradition,” and urged Freer, his patron, to travel to the East and study its arts.¹³⁵ It would be through Freer’s subsequent impressive collection that later, artists such as Dewing and Tryon were able to have access to the kind of Chinese and Japanese art which could, through careful study, reveal their superior suggestiveness.

Writing over seventy-five years later, Hayward goes into far more detail than Hartmann about the precise source of the suggestive influence from Chinese to Japanese art. The six canons of painting upon which Chinese and Japanese art is built embrace Buddhist contemplativeness and the spirituality of man and nature. They were first described by fifth-century Chinese artist Hsieh Ho.¹³⁶ No paintings by Hsieh Ho are extant, and his six canons have been interpreted and reinterpreted by scholars and artists over the centuries. Interpretations do agree on the general principle which emphasizes spiritual or psychological contemplativeness. “The purpose of old Oriental art,” Hayward

¹³⁵Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 113.

¹³⁶Hayward, 114. The principles of Hsieh Ho and their respective interpretations received a fair amount of attention by Chinese art historians during the mid-twentieth century. See James Cahill, “The Six Laws and How to Read Them,” *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 4 (1961), pp. 372 – 381, Lin Yutang, *The Chinese Theory of Art* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1967), and Lawrence Binyon, *Painting in the Far East* (1923; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1959).

writes, “was to urge the viewer to contemplate...Its aim was to stimulate.”¹³⁷

According to this philosophy of art-making, an important consideration was to create a tone and atmosphere in the art work replete with spirituality, making manifest the spiritual rhythm of the subject with “a clearer beauty and more intense power” than its material form could have communicated to the viewers.¹³⁸ To demonstrate this spirituality, classical Chinese and Japanese painters sought to “depict forms of things as they really are,” which, interpreted by Hayward, meant that the artist must capture the inner essence of the subject rather than simply render faithfully its outward appearance.¹³⁹ Painters achieved this by distilling the subject down to its purest recognizable form, a technique Hartmann highly praised in *Japanese Art*.

The spare compositions of Japanese art, therefore, serve to emphasize the focus on the “inner life” of the subject and avoid mirroring the picture in superfluous details.¹⁴⁰ This required the artist to possess an intimate knowledge of the subject and a commanding grasp of painting technique. The artist in this painting philosophy is absolved from slavish copying of nature. Instead he is

¹³⁷Hayward, 113-114.

¹³⁸Ibid, 114. It is perhaps unsurprising that Hartmann was drawn to the same concepts in French Symbolism. See Chapter 1. He was also interested in the “law of repetition, with slight variation,” which he notices both in Japanese painting and Symbolism. *Japanese Art*, 161.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

challenged to engage with the meaning of his subject, carefully selecting the elements that best express the scene, much like the synecdochic method Hartmann described. A few sketchy brushstrokes in a tonal palette depicting the outline of a tree and some mountaintops would come suggest a mountain summit, charged with atmosphere so poignant one could feel the moist chill. (Fig. 12)

Hartmann wrote about the way in which these distilled and repetitious compositions enabled spiritual contemplativeness in an essay entitled “On Pictorial and Illustrative Qualities.”¹⁴¹ Here he attempted to define the distinction between painting and illustration. He determined that, “Detail, as desirable as it is in illustration, is a rather troubling adjunct in painting.”¹⁴² Great detail in painting, Hartmann continued, creates action with the narrative it implies. It gives breadth rather than depth and a viewer may fall into contemplating what will happen next or what came before than psychologically resting the moment “in which the consciousness of the flight of time is reduced to its minimum.”¹⁴³ A painter must focus his efforts on the “sensuous qualities of forms...than the actual representation of the objects,” which will in turn

¹⁴¹Hartmann (under the pseudonym Sidney Allen), “On Pictorial and Illustrative Qualities,” *Camera Notes* 6, no. 2 (December 1902): 181 – 183. Reprinted in Weaver, 136.

¹⁴²Hartmann, “On Pictorial and Illustrative Qualities,” 181.

¹⁴³Ibid, 182.

enable the viewer to experience the same.¹⁴⁴ In another essay, “The Value of the Apparently Meaningless and Inaccurate,” Hartmann continued his thoughts on the subject of detail. “Accuracy is the bane of art,” he wrote.¹⁴⁵ Through mastery of forms, artists will achieve an eloquence which far exceeds accuracy and detail in painting as it frees them to manipulate the medium to communicate their own experience with the subject. Hartmann presented these ideas in a Western art context, citing artists such as Cecelia Beaux, Winslow Homer, and Mary Cassatt.¹⁴⁶

In the *History of American Art*, Hartmann identified suggestiveness as one of the central ideals in Japanese art, and the “one which appealed most to our Western minds and entered most our art.”¹⁴⁷ In particular, he wrote that “suggestiveness has conquered modern art.”¹⁴⁸ The Japanese suggestiveness which gives suggestivism its framework comes from the underlying principles of Chinese and Japanese painting which entreat the artist to engage in the intellectual exercise of translating the spirit of the subject into a tangible form, certainly including the way the subject looks, but certainly not limited to the

¹⁴⁴ Hartmann, “On Pictorial and Illustrative Qualities,” 181.

¹⁴⁵Hartmann, “The Value of the Apparently Meaningless and Inaccurate,” *Camera Work*, no. 3 (July, 1903): 17 - 18, 21. Reprinted in Weaver, 151.

¹⁴⁶Ibid, 18.

¹⁴⁷ Hartmann, *History of American Art*, Vol. II, 269.

¹⁴⁸Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, 160.

sense of sight. The ability to distill an object in such a way requires a holistic understanding of it, suggesting to the eyes what the sensorial and psychological experience would be. It follows that the experience of looking at these paintings also requires the intellectual exercise, in reverse. A viewer must contemplate the image and mentally elaborate, taking an active role in the creation of meaning. In this sense, suggestivist readings of paintings by Dewing (and others) can complement the use and collection of such works as a therapeutic rest-cure posited by art historian Kathleen Pyne, while imbibing them with a positive or constructive, rather than negative or passive, connotation.¹⁴⁹

Dewing's *In the Garden*, is considered by Hartmann to be "one of the few perfect masterpieces which American figure painting has produced."¹⁵⁰ (Fig. 13) Declaring it "an exquisite poem," it is the piece Hartmann chose to include as an illustration to his lengthy discussion of Dewing (more than almost any other artist) in his *History of American Art*. A triad of women rises out of a cool, misty landscape of ambiguous time, place, and perspective, they appear to float in the hazy greenery with no sense of ground. Tones of green, blue, purple, and brown repeat in swirling masses throughout the vaguely rendered meadow and loosely painted shrubbery. The gowns of the three women in the painting impart in this

¹⁴⁹Kathleen Pyne, "Portrait of a Collector as an Agnostic: Charles Lang Freer and Connoisseurship." *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (Mar., 1996), pp. 75 - 97.

¹⁵⁰ Hartmann, *History of American Art*, Vol. I, 307.

chromatic harmony. A scattering of white flowers appear around the left-side figure in blue, framing the trio in a diagonal to the white of the sun/moon in the upper right.¹⁵¹ The white flowers and the haziness of the setting vaguely recall Asian landscape paintings. Hartmann specifically noted the classical Oriental influence in Dewing's work in his *History*, writing not that visually mimicked Japanese painting but that it possessed the subtlety of a rare and costly Japanese tea, "of mild florescence, delicious in taste, and yet with some strength, by no means effeminate."¹⁵² Hartmann often used metaphors involving other senses – scent, taste, sound – to describe painting, revealing his preoccupation with synesthesia. Bestowing some very high praise on Dewing, in light of Hartmann's suggestivist sensibilities, he concludes his Dewing entry in *History of American Art* by declaring that it possesses a quality which appeals to Hartmann beyond any other in its reflection of the mind through beauty and expression achieved by rigorous training and study.¹⁵³

It is unlikely that Hartmann and Dewing ever discussed suggestivism or that Hartmann was influential on Dewing's practice. However, it does seem

¹⁵¹ This celestial sphere is noted as a moon in the Dewing catalogue *Beauty Reconfigured*, however the pale blue sky visible beyond the wisps of leaves and haze leads me to question whether it may be the sun, or if in fact the time of day is purposefully questionable.

¹⁵² Hartmann, *History of American Art, Vol. I*, 301. Noted in Hayward, 140. Charles Caffin also remarked on the Asian influence in Dewing's work, having studied and written about Japanese art and religion.

¹⁵³ Hartmann, *History of American Art, Vol. 1*, 308.

likely that the Japanese influence in Dewing's work matured thanks to his close personal and working relationship with his main patron and advocate, Freer. Evidence of Dewing's study of classical Asian painting philosophies through Freer's collection is somewhat circumstantial, but Hayward argues that it is supported by the visual evidence of Dewing's work after he becomes a close associate of Freer.¹⁵⁴ In particular, she considers the murals Dewing painted for Freer's Detroit house "more abstract in concept and more symbolic in form" than his previous work because of their distillation of the natural elements, indicative of classical Chinese influence.¹⁵⁵ (Fig. 13 & 14) *Before Sunrise* and *After Sunset* contain no recognizable flora, only churning green vapor denoting grasses and trees. Lithe women, again in ball gowns, are enveloped in the preternatural scene. The figures are completely unrecognizable. Hayward describes "the elements of nature reduced to their essentials, stripped of all extraneous details. They are both symbolic and powerful representations of the spirituality inherent in nature."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Hayward, 127. Dewing acted as Freer's agent, buying and sometimes helping to select pieces of Asian art. Hartmann, however, does not seem to have enjoyed a close personal relationship with Freer. The only correspondence from Freer in the Hartmann archive is a letter, dated July 30, 1896, in which Freer refuses to loan Hartmann \$150, nor does he agree to loan unspecified paintings for exhibition in Europe.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

In addition to their loose following of the six Chinese painting principles, including suggestiveness and repetition, Dewing's tonal chords and subtle surfaces recall the glazes of Chinese and Japanese pottery, which he would have been at liberty to study in Freer's collection. Hayward also notes the careful brushwork and compositional balance similar to Song period techniques.¹⁵⁷ Although Dewing did not paint in a style in which the kind of Japonisme was evident as was in the work of Whistler, for example, it seems evident that Dewing was deeply influenced by art from the East. The consistency with which Freer patronized Dewing while simultaneously collecting classical Chinese and Japanese art, sometimes involving Dewing in the process, indicates a feasible connection between the two.

Dewing and Freer shared what art historian Susan Hobbs calls a "particularized aesthetic sensibility."¹⁵⁸ Decidedly antipopulist, artist and collector subscribed to what Kathleen Pyne and others have described as a religion of art. Freer's collecting of Asian ceramics and paintings vis-à-vis his patronage of Dewing "emerges within this pattern of agnostic practice in which rarefied works of art were employed as totemic objects that reassured Freer of a

¹⁵⁷Hayward, 128.

¹⁵⁸Hobbs, 18.

transcendent reality.”¹⁵⁹ In other words, his seemingly eclectic collection served both his need for spirituality and for reifying his perceived status as a cultural elite. Pyne also writes of the way in which Freer employed his aesthetic realm as a rest cure for the strain affected on his nerves and intellect as a man of Capitalism and business.¹⁶⁰ The suggestivist reading of Dewing’s *In the Garden* certainly supports Pyne’s argument, with slight variation. Rather than a rest or retreat for the active self, it is simply a redirection in which the active self turns its focus inward by actively engaging with works of art capable of supporting the endeavor. The need for refreshment of the nerves or intellect, known as neurasthenia, was considered at this time to be a particular affliction of the upper classes possessed of superior intellects. Rest cures for women struck by the ailment involved seclusion and confinement, however male neurasthenics were encouraged to rehabilitate their virility with adventures out of doors to mitigate their “overcivilization.”¹⁶¹ I would argue that the suggestivist reading of Dewing’s work, which requires active engagement to create and understand the paintings’ meaning, is another facet of a masculine rest cure rather than a wholly

¹⁵⁹Pyne, “Charles Lang Freer and Connoisseurship,” 77.

¹⁶⁰Ibid, 88.

¹⁶¹Ibid, 79.

separate aesthetic one.¹⁶² Specifically, Dewing's and Tryon's paintings for Freer's Detroit house, with their repetitious, harmonious, suggestive scenes of landscape, impart the act of "regeneration of life in nature, and that nature possessed renewing and therapeutic properties."¹⁶³ However, although the figures in the paintings who are modeling this renewal are still and female, the act requires activation of the senses and the psyche to achieve the experience.

In the second volume of *History of American Art*, published in 1932, Hartmann observed that still, "The young artists of today...they have all the characteristics of Japanese landscape-painting, without owning its primal virtue, the power of suggestiveness."¹⁶⁴ He complained that these artists who did not study the Japanese art canon with its classical Chinese influence "often apply ways and methods that have no justification whatever in our civilization."¹⁶⁵ Of Dewing, Hartmann wrote only praise for not only his suggestiveness but his success as a specifically American painter.¹⁶⁶ Dewing, therefore, walked the balance of having mastered the all-important, for Hartmann, quality of suggestiveness through study of the classics and yet manages to integrate it, or to

¹⁶² More work is needed on the potential relationship between suggestivism and the rest cure use of Dewing's paintings.

¹⁶³Pyne, "Charles Lang Freer and Connoisseurship, 87.

¹⁶⁴Hartmann, *History of American Art*, Vol. II, 273.

¹⁶⁵Ibid, 274.

¹⁶⁶Hartmann, *History of American Art*, Vol. I, 304.

use Hartmann's language, to justify it as expressive of American artistic ideals. Reading Dewing through suggestivism can give the technique of an artist often considered simply genteel or aesthetic a more fully formed intellectual underpinning which comes from a similar impetus as many modernist movements – thoughtful manipulation of technique and media to achieve the communication of psychological and sensorial information.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this project, I asked, what is the intellectual rationale of beautiful, genteel art in the discourse of early twentieth century art? Can this intellectual point of view be worthwhile for contemporary scholars to incorporate into methodologies of modernism? Is there room alongside modernist theories and narratives for alternative points of view that are constructive to a national modernist tradition?

Through my analysis of Hartmann's suggestivism, I have offered a method of looking at pictures that strive to push representation, but not over its edge of recognizable symbols, simultaneously distilling it down to the sparest expressive quality and imbuing it with the richest possible sensation. This

exploration of the limits of painting is a gentle and inward-looking push, a complement to, rather than entirely unlike, the project of other early-twentieth-century modernisms exploring form, vision, dynamism, and the modern human experience. That the paintings of Dewing, for example, take for their subjects beautiful women in privileged settings is only one aspect of their cultural meaning, just as the subject of a nude in Duchamp's *Nude Descending A Staircase, No. 2* (Fig. 1) is only one aspect of that painting's cultural meaning.

Understanding Hartmann's suggestive style and what makes it important, in his estimation, for creating an American modernism gives a more holistic view of Dewing's work that broadens not only our reading of that work, but of the American modernist project in the early twentieth century.

The canon of American modernism has marched swiftly from Euro-centric to looking inward and back to vigorous abstraction. However, more recent scholarship has been able, with the advantage of distance, to expand the notion of modernism by blurring the lines delineating one movement from the next, implicitly challenging the notion that art history is, or should be, a steady march towards abstraction. For example, Wanda Corn writes that, "One amazing continuity was the persistent dream of creating art forms that were both modern and American..."¹⁶⁷ This was Hartmann's aim as well, throughout his writing from the 1890s into the 1930s, and as a German-Japanese American with a highly

¹⁶⁷ Corn, 340.

developed *fin de siècle* sensibility, his own idiosyncrasy and pliable identity are succinct metaphors for the project of creating American modernism.

The ill-fated perfume concert is a final and interesting example of Hartmann's myriad identities. An advertisement for the concert at the Carnegie Lyceum in the Hartmann archive reveals that his was one of twenty-six numbers on the bill of the vaudeville show for that night. He was billed as "Chrysanthemum," the pseudonym he used when he wanted to assume his role of Japanese cultural authority. However, the description of his act boasts the debut of a machine (the "Hartmann Perfumator") by a German inventor. A reviewer in the *New York Times* described the machine, "Two boxes about the size of beehives were placed on the stage. Behind them were powerful electric fans, and the conductor was going to put in the boxes linen saturated with perfumes, the extracts of flowers from different nations. The air currents were to drive the odors into the theatre."¹⁶⁸ Hartmann had prepared a travelogue to read as Japanese dances were performed, although as the dancers were vaudeville chorus girls dressed as geisha, their authenticity is dubious. The reviewer noted that, "Scoffers spoil it with tobacco smoke and facetious remarks - Aesthetes and deaf mutes disappointed."

The perfume concert is a remarkable metaphor for the way Hartmann performed his identity, sometimes playing up his Japanese heritage, sometimes

¹⁶⁸ "Perfume Concert Fails," *New York Times*, December 1, 1902.

playing up his European upbringing, always using those backgrounds to present what he hoped would be the next cultural sensation. Whether he attempted to stage a perfume concert or an eight hundred foot long light show, sold handmade books of haiku or wrote the history of American art, he approached each of these projects from a unique point of view that translated what he perceived to be the most useful parts of his international heritage. This is not unlike the ebb and flow of American modernism in the early twentieth century, which also drew forth or played down the various identities and international inheritances as it defined and redefined its lines. The way in which Hartmann's identity engages with American modernism in the early twentieth century is a project of deep potential, outside the scope of this thesis, but another side of this topic that could further enrich the complication of the historiography of American modernism.

Near the completion of this project, I was reminded that Dewing's reputation has no need for me to rescue it from banality at this point in time. The auction records indicate that Dewing has recovered from the blow the Armory show dealt to his status. My intention is not to rescue him, but if I can recast Dewing's role in early twentieth century American art, it can enrich the way we understand not only Dewing's painting, but how his standing came to be undermined in the first place. It is worthwhile to speculate whether Dewing himself had a hand in this. Although the critics, and even some of his former

allies such as Charles de Kay and Charles Caffin, made known their opinions that his work seemed old fashioned, Dewing seemed almost personally offended by the innovations of the Armory show and other modern artists of the 1910s.¹⁶⁹ He refused to participate in an exhibition of the Ten after Montross Gallery exhibited the American Cubists and Post-Impressionists. By the time Montross had given away the time slot reserved for the Ten to a Modernist exhibition in 1915, causing the group to move to Knoedler, Dewing had already been using other dealers for his work.¹⁷⁰ He retreated into his studio, withdrawing from an active role in the painting community by the early 1920s.

Although, in *History of American Art*, Hartmann's publisher declares that his knack for predicting the sway of the arts was accurate, Hartmann's allegiance to Dewing did not usher the painter into the pantheon of American modernists. And yet, as one passionately committed to building an American modernism, it seems worthwhile to revisit Hartmann's appraisal of Dewing at a moment in which the field of art history is expanding its notions of how modernism has progressed. Not only does this aesthetic art have an intellectual rationale within the discourse, much deeper than its iconographic and cultural history analyses alone, but it allows us to reconsider our methodologies of modernism. There is

¹⁶⁹ Hobbs, 39-40.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 40.

room for alternative and parallel points of view alongside the theories and narratives of modern American art history. They are in fact necessary for our theories and narratives to express the full plurality of what it means to be both American and modern in art.



Figure 1.
Marcel Duchamp
Nude Descending A Staircase, No. 2, 1912
Philadelphia Museum of Art



Figure 2.
Thomas Wilmer Dewing
Lady in Gold, 1912
Brooklyn Museum



Figure 3. School of Emperor Huizong of Song, after Zhang Xuan of Tang
Ladies Preparing Newly Woven Silk, Song Dynasty copy of Tang Dynasty original
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Figure 4. Thomas Wilmer Dewing
Summer, 1890
Smithsonian American Art Museum
Washington, D.C.



Figure 5.
Pierre Puvis de Chavannes
Le Pauvre Pêcheur, 1881
Musée d'Orsay, Paris

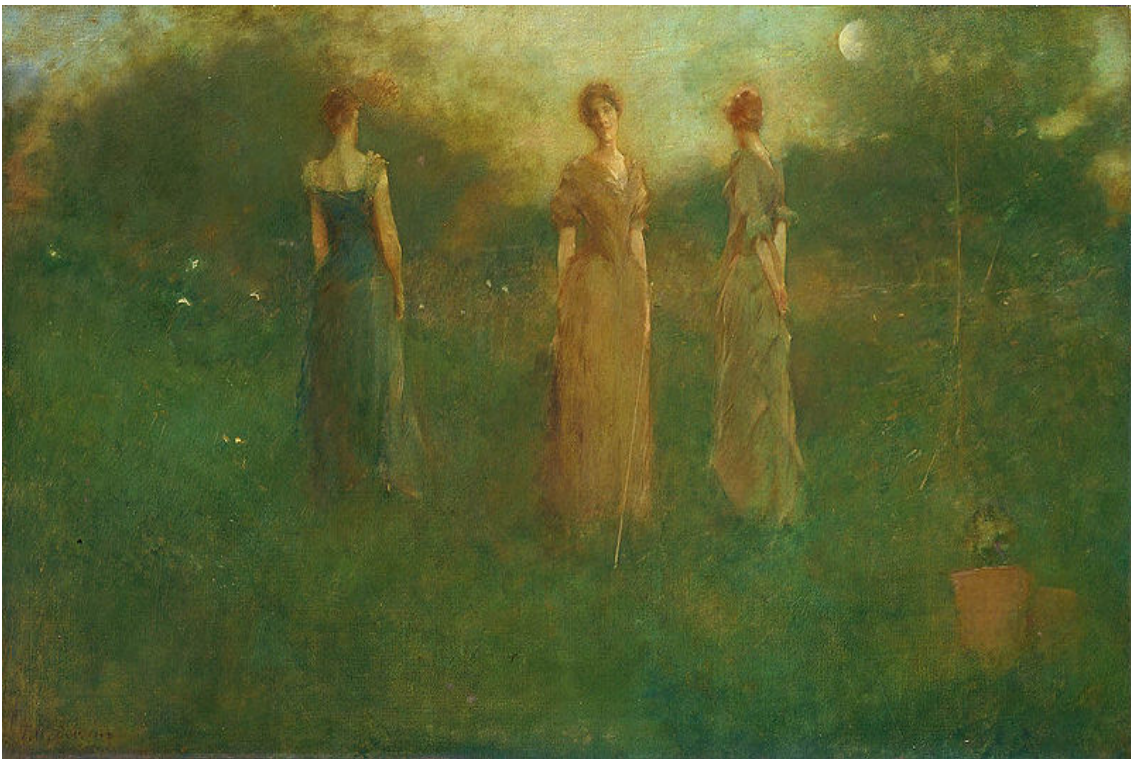


Figure 6.
Thomas Wilmer Dewing
In the Garden, 1893-94
Smithsonian American Art Museum
Washington, D.C.



Figure 7.
Thomas Wilmer Dewing
The Garland, 1899
The Terian Collection of American Art



Figure 8.
Edward Weston
Sadakichi Hartmann, 1919

Center for Creative Photography
University of Arizona



Figure 9.
Japanese Parlor at William H.
Vanderbilt House, New York
Photographed by Christian
Herter, 1883-84



Figure 10.
Utagawa Toyohiro
The Four Accomplishments,
Edo Period
Freer Gallery of Art
Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.



Figure 11.
James Abbott McNeill Whistler
Variations in Flesh Color and Green:
The Balcony, c. 1867 – 68
Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian
Institution, Washington, D.C.



Figure 12.
Watanabe Shiko
Landscape, Edo Period
Brooklyn Museum



Figure 13.
Thomas Wilmer Dewing
Before Sunrise, 1894 - 95



Figure 14.
Thomas Wilmer Dewing
After Sunset, 1894 - 95
Murals for Charles Lang Freer's
Detroit House
Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian
Institution, Washington, D.C.

Archives

The Sadakichi Hartmann papers. Special Collections. University of California, Riverside.

The Thomas Wilmer Dewing and Dewing Family papers. Archives of American Art. Smithsonian Institution.

The Charles Lang Freer papers. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

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