



This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

JAMES MC NEILL WHISTLER

THE INFLUENCE OF BLUE AND WHITE PORCELAIN

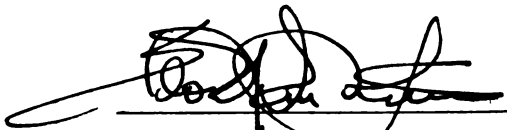
presented by

SUSAN THERESA DEL VALLE

has been accepted towards fulfillment

of the requirements for

Master degree in History of Art



Major professor

Date 11/11/91

LIBRARY
Michigan State
University

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

MSU Is An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution

c:\circ\datedue.pm3-p.1

JAMES MC NEILL WHISTLER
THE INFLUENCE OF BLUE AND WHITE PORCELAIN

By
Susan Theresa Del Valle

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of the History of Art

1991

ABSTRACT

JAMES MC NEILL WHISTLER THE INFLUENCE OF BLUE AND WHITE PORCELAIN

By

Susan Theresa Del Valle

Covering the years 1860 to 1908, this thesis examines the interest of James Mc Neill Whistler in Chinese blue and white porcelain, and the role this interest played in his artistic career. The role these objects played as motifs in his work is examined as well as the more subtle stylistic influences they exerted. Much of the design and decorative work of Whistler from 1870 to 1890 was influenced by blue and white porcelain and that filiation is traced here. The importing and exporting of porcelain from China during this period and its reception in the west is also examined.

Photographs of blue and white porcelain owned by Whistler after 1879 were provided by the Hunterian Art Museum for this study and are used for comparisons and are included for examination at the end of this study.

TO
NERI LOUIS MARTINEZ

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My sincere thanks is extended to:
Dr. Eldon Van Liere for his advice and willingness
to collaborate over a distance of 1300 miles.
My committee members, Sadayoshi Omoto and Webster
Smith, for their continued support and
patience throughout my graduate studies.
My husband, Neri Martinez, for his support and faith
in my pursuit.

TABLE OF CONTENT

DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	vi
Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. WHISTLER.....	6
3. CHINA.....	16
4. WHISTLER, PAINTING AND PORCELAIN 1860-80.....	27
5. WHISTLER THE DESIGNER AND DECORATOR.....	71
6. CONCLUSION.....	98
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	109

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ILLUSTRATIONS	PAGES
1. Murray Mark's Business Card.....	12
2. 17th century Chinese K'ang-Hsi plates.....	20
3. Chinese blue and white Hawthorn Jar.....	21
4. Photograph of the Lindsey Row Dining Room.....	25
5. James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>At the Piano</u> , 1858-1859...	28
6. James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>Harmonies in Green and Rose: The Music Room</u> , 1860.....	29
7. James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>Symphony in White No. 1: The White Girl</u> , 1862.....	31
8. James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>Rose and Silver: La Princess du pays de la Porcelaine</u> , 1864.....	33
9. 18th century Chinese blue and white cup.....	36
10. James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>Purple and Rose: The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks</u> , 1963-64.....	40
11. James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen</u> , 1864.....	47
12. James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>Symphony in White No. 2: The Little White Girl</u> , 1864.....	50
13. James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>Nocturne in Blue and Gold Valparasio</u> , 1866.....	55
14. James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>Variation in Flesh Colour and Green: The Balcony</u> , 1863-1864.....	57

15.	E. 18th century Chinese blue and white plate.....	58
16.	James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>The Artist in His Studio</u> , 1865.....	61
17.	James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>The Six Projects</u> , 1864-1868	63
18.	James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket</u> , 1874-1875	68
19.	James Mc Neill Whistler, frame for <u>Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen</u> , 1864.....	74
20.	19th century Chinese blue and white plate.....	74
21.	James Mc Neill Whistler, frame for <u>La Princess du pays de la Porcelaine</u> , 1864.....	75
22.	18th century Chinese blue and white plate with the Six Marks.....	76
23.	18th century Chinese blue and White 18th century meat plate.....	76
24.	James Mc Neill Whistler, frame for <u>Variation in Pink and Gray: Chelsea</u> , 1871-1872.....	78
25.	L. 18th or E. 19th century Chinese blue and white bowl.....	78
26.	18th century Chinese blue and white plate with butterfly boarder.....	79
27.	James Mc Neill Whistler, frame for <u>Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Old Battersea Bridge</u>	80
28.	18th century Chinese blue and white dragon plate..	81
29.	James Mc Neill Whistler, frame for <u>Arrangement in White and Black</u> , 1876.....	82
30.	James Mc Neill Whistler, frame for <u>Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Little Blue Girl</u> , 1894-1903.....	82
31.	James Mc Neill Whistler, sketches designs for blue and white porcelain.....	84

32.	James Mc Neill Whistler, designs for floor mating	84
33.	James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>Dado panel</u> for stairhall at 49' Princess Gate, 1876.....	86
34.	18th century Chinese blue and white plate with abstract flowers.....	88
35.	James Mc Neill Whistler, pattern designs for <u>The</u> <u>Peacock Room</u> , 1876.....	88
36.	James Mc Neill Whistler, <u>The Butterfly Cabinet</u> , 1876.....	89
37.	James Mc Neill Whistler, sketches for a catalogue for blue and white porcelains	91
38.	Cover for Sir Henry Thompson's catalogue for blue and white porcelain, 1878.....	93
39.	James Mc Neill Whistler, sketches of blue and white porcelain for Sir Henry Thompson's catalogue, 1878.....	93
40.	James Mc Neill Whistler, sketches of blue and white porcelain for Sir Henry Thompson's catalogue, 1878.....	94
41.	James Mc Neill Whistler, sketch design for Lady Archibald Campbell's parasol.....	97
42.	James Mc Neill Whistler's collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.....	101
43.	James Mc Neill Whistler's collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.....	102
44.	James Mc Neill Whistler's collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.....	103
45.	James Mc Neill Whistler's collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.....	104
46.	James Mc Neill Whistler's collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.....	105

- 47. James Mc Neill Whistler's collection of blue and
white porcelain after 1879.....106
- 48. James Mc Neill Whistler's collection of blue and
white porcelain after 1879.....107
- 49. James Mc Neill Whistler, collection of blue and white
porcelain after 1879.....108

INTRODUCTION

The interest of James Mc Neill Whistler in Oriental art and its influence on his oeuvre is well known, for it is manifest in most of his mature paintings and prints. His interest in and the influenced upon him of Chinese export blue and white porcelain is given surprisingly little attention. This is due in part to the fact that Whistler was also being influence, like most westerns, by the colorful and new Japanese print. And to most scholars the influence of the prints eclipsed consideration of the blue and white porcelains and it's role in the artists oeuvre. It is a valid issue because of the "craze" for Japanese items in Europe during the nineteenth century. After the signing of the trade agreement in 1854 a flood of Japanese good poured into Europe. Even an exhibition was of Japanese applied art was opened in 1854 at the Old Water Colour Society and it was the woodblock print that had the most profound effect on European art. According to Oliver Impey,

"exhibitions of Japanese prints became more common, and Japanese prints could be bought in several shops in Paris..."¹ Whistler as eager as anyone to collect Japanese prints but never at the expense of his beloved porcelains. When major paintings such as Rose and Silver: La Princess du pays de la Porcelaine and Purple and Rose: The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks make such porcelain their focus, it seems inevitable that every scholar who has studied Whistler would make much of his passion for these objects and, in particular, the fact that he built a significant collection of them. What this study seeks to reveal is what on one level is a far more subtle influence on Whistler's style from these objects and on another level a surprisingly obvious influence that is little noted. What I intend to show are Whistler's use of certain Chinese mannerisms and decorative patterns as well as the more subtle way he adopted the translucent blue glazes of porcelains to his Nocturnes.

Whistler's love for blue and white porcelain probably began in 1855 in Paris where he had gone to study painting. There he began seeking out porcelains and found many sources among the inner city tradesmen. For a time Whistler's would be one of the finest collections in England, and there is no doubt that his interest in these beautiful porcelains went

¹Oliver Impey, Chinoiserie: The Impact of Oriental Style on the Western Art and Decoration, (New York: Charles Seribner's and Sons, 1977) 188.

beyond the collector's interest.

This thesis documents his developing interest in blue and white porcelain and will also touch on Whistler's contacts with many young artists who were, like Whistler, seeking to find their personal styles while living the Bohemian life. Gustave Courbet, Fantin-Latour, Legros, and others all would share ideas that would impact Whistler. Within this communal matrix, Whistler began to discover, through the study of blue and white porcelain, possibilities that could combine with what he felt was still valid from art of the past. Studying Whistler's paintings between 1860 and 1880 and evaluating their compositions, color, and brushwork, one begins to see the influence of the Far East slowly develop. His understanding of Chinese theories of art deepens over this period of time and becomes the basic principle of his painting style.

I will also document Whistler's design interest during the 1870's wherein he turned his attention to various media and objects, such as the parasol and wallpaper. Many of these designs and decorations are derived from the Chinese patterns and composition to be found on blue and white porcelains. The influence of blue and white porcelains appears even in Whistler's lifestyle, for the interior of his home was also a reflection of the Far East. In 1876 he was commissioned to design several interiors and he persisted even in these in using Asian derived innovations.

Two of these interiors were for Frederick Leyland at his home in London; the stair-hall and the dining room which was later to be know as "The Peacock Room".

The Chinese had been exporting porcelain to the West for hundreds of years, and porcelain had become so popular in the 18th century that it gave rise to a style known as "Chinoiserie".² This fashion faded and it was not until the mid-1800's that a "craze" for blue and white porcelain was renewed. Whistler was at the heart of this renewal.

By the 1860's Whistler's paintings reveal his profound study of blue and white porcelain, consequences of years of delving into the theories that underlay the artistic vision of the Far East. His mature painting style is unique and the suggestive simplification he observed in the objects he studied led Whistler to experiment with similar ideas that resulted in his style approaching abstraction.

This daring innovation combined with Whistler's delight and skill at being a very public personality led to a famous confrontation between the artist and the most influential critic in Great Britain, John Ruskin. This resulted in the infamous trial between the two which proved disastrous to both men.³ Whistler became a laughing stock and the costs

²Huge Honour, Chinoiserie; The Vision of Cathay, (Great Britain: R. & R. Clark LTD. Edinburgh, 1961)

³Stanley Weintraub, Whistler: A Biography. (New York: Weybright and Tally, 1974) 194.

incurred ruined him financially. In 1879 he declared bankruptcy and lost his beautiful porcelain collection and a bit of his artistic credibility. Whistler soon began another collection of porcelain and would collect over four hundred pieces during the last quarter of his life.

In 1885 Whistler gave a lecture on his aesthetic theories and pointed to the Far East art for its exemplary characteristics: simplicity, harmonized coloration, two dimensionality, spontaneous brushwork, and universal clarity. Whistler reinforces these beliefs through his lecture and makes them the cornerstone for a theory of "l'art pour l'art".⁴ This thesis is a study of all aspects of his working conjunction with Chinese porcelain. Whistler once said, "Better to lose whole armies of Europeans than harm one blue pot."⁵

⁴Robin Spencer, Whistler: A Retrospective, (New York: Hugel, Lauter, Levin Associates, Inc., 1989) 228.

⁵Stanley Weintraub, Whistler: A Biography. (New York: Weybright and Tally, 1974) 101.

WHISTLER

It was during the 1850's that Whistler lived "La Vie de Boheme" in Paris. He arrived in the city in 1855 with the intention of learning his craft in this undisputed capital of the arts. The city was filled with artists and there were various schools where one could learn from the masters. The many galleries, exhibitions, and museums were constantly filled with artists during the day and at night artists met in cafes to converse about things they had seen and artistic ideas.⁶ This was the perfect atmosphere for any young artist. Whistler delighted in the devil-may-care life that surrounded the studios and found, never knowing if he could make it financially from day to day to day, adventure. During this period of artistic exploration, Whistler discovered the great aesthetic beauty of blue and white porcelain. Without the artistic values and ferment of Paris

⁶John Milner, The Studios of Paris, (New Haven: Yale, 1988).

he may well have never been introduced to these objects.

This experience was to alter, enhance, and embellish his artistic production from the late fifties up to the seventies. In Paris Whistler made the acquaintance of a young etcher named Felix Bracquemond. Both Whistler and Bracquemond were affiliated with a very well known Parisian printmaker named Auguste Delatre, and purely by accident, Bracquemond, who was having a copperplate printed by Delatre, discovered a small book bound in red in the printmaker's shop.⁷ Delatre, who supposedly had many connections in the importing trade, had just received a shipment of porcelain, and among it's wrappings was this small red book.⁸ Bracquemond apparently admired the book with such excitement that he asked Delatre to sell it to him on the spot, but Delatre refused.⁹ This small red book was filled with Japanese prints and was later found to be a volume of Mangwa by Katsushika Hokusai, a great Japanese early nineteenth century painter and printmaker of the Ukiyoye School. France knew very little at this time of Japanese colored prints because of trade restrictions in Japan, and when these finally were lifted the Ukiyoye School was already experiencing the decline of its popularity in

⁷James Laver, Whistler, (London: Faber & Faber, 1951) 95, 96.

⁸Laver 95.

⁹Laver 95.

Japan. Bracquemond's fascination with the book was understandable.¹⁰ Although Bracquemond was unable to purchase the book from Delatre, he did manage at a later date to come upon it again in the possession of another etcher named Laveille almost two years later, and made a swap.¹¹ He was to carry the book with him at all times and according to Leonce Benedite, Bracquemond, "made it his breviary. He always carried it with him and showed it to everyone at every opportunity, enjoying the surprise, admiration, and curiosity it aroused."¹²

It is not known precisely when the book was shown to Whistler by Bracquemond, whether there and then in the shop of Delatre or sometime later. Also, nobody offers any recognition of the significance of the shipment of porcelain that Delatre had received at the same time. It would seem that if Bracquemond had been so taken by the small book, he would not have waited two years before showing his delightful discovery to Whistler. Thus one would certainly have to conclude that Whistler would have had the same opportunity to have seen this shipment of porcelain as well. It would also serve here to point out that Whistler's first set of etchings, "The French Set," was printed by

¹⁰Laver 95,96.

¹¹Gordon Fleming, The Young Whistler: 1834-1866 (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1978) 199.

¹²Fleming 199.

Delatre, and Whistler, being the young perfectionist he was, would not have taken them to Delatre if he did not trust him implicitly. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that during the years between the discovery of Hokusai in 1856 and the printing of "The French Set" in 1858, Whistler and Delatre had become, if not friends, at the very least close collaborators. It is known that the latter had a great admiration for Whistler's etching, and that he taught Whistler the techniques required for printmaking.¹³

Whistler had learned the basics of printmaking when working for the U.S. Coastal Survey but Delatre no doubt taught him the fine art aspects of it. Delatre's interest in porcelain may well have been the first introduction to an appreciation of porcelain for Whistler. Besides Delatre's influence there were other events which influenced Whistler and his interest in blue and white porcelain. Due to the doors of Japan opening, mainly because of the success of a trade treaty agreement carried out by the American Commodore, Matthew Perry, around 1854, international trade had begun to increase.¹⁴ The details and particulars of the porcelain becoming available to the public in the fifties and sixties will be discussed later, but first it is necessary to establish Whistler's opportunities to view and collect

¹³Stanley Weintraub, Whistler: A Biography, (New York: Weybright and Tally, 1974) 51.

¹⁴Gordon Fleming, The Young Whistler: 1834-1866, (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1987) 199.

porcelain. Because of the growing trade, a shop called "La Porte Chinoise" was opened in 1862 on the rue de Rivoli by a couple named De Soye who had just returned from Japan.¹⁵ Items displayed in the shop included, "embroidered materials, lacquered works, porcelains, and also little albums which were used to pad them."¹⁶ This must have caused a great deal of excitement for those with an artistic interest in Oriental items; the public now had a great selection right at its fingertips. Many artists, such as Zola, Fantin-Latour, Degas, Manet, and others, found their interest in the art of the East heightened through the little shop on the Rue De Rivoli.¹⁷ Several artists frequented the shop consistently and Whistler was one of the number. According to Benedite related by E. Cary, "Whistler was of a group of fellow artists who frequented the shop and bought stuff and porcelain for his studio."¹⁸ During his years in Paris the "craze" for things oriental started, and Whistler was in it at the very beginning, in that this may well have occurred as early as 1856, and if so, this would put Whistler one step ahead of the crowd in Paris and London!

¹⁵Fleming 200.

¹⁶Fleming 200.

¹⁷Fleming 200.

¹⁸Elizabeth Cary, The Works of James Mc Neill Whistler. (New York: Books from the Libraries Press, 1907) 56.

Whistler decided to resettle in London in 1863, establishing himself at No. 7 Lindsey Row in Chelsea. The bohemian life had apparently grown wearisome and the atmosphere of the Chelsea district in London must have had a refreshing appeal with its comfortable and rural charm. This was a far cry from the artistic hubbub in Paris with its nightlife and cafe debating. Chelsea was a more formal way of life, one which Whistler was more accustomed to and may have missed, considering his proper upbringing by the bible oriented Anna Whistler. In any case Whistler brought to England his mix of American and Continental charm and wit which made him a colorful figure. Using his social and self advertising skills he helped to create the "craze" for blue and white porcelain in London. It started out as something arty and mildly ascetic and developed into the modishly emancipated and finally "millionarish".¹⁹ But if the truth be known, I would rather doubt Whistler alone, although he was constantly in the public eye due to his eccentric personality, could have influenced all of England. It is possible that Whistler did play a significant role in heightening the awareness of porcelain, but the interest in Oriental items had started in London at the same time it did in Paris. Concurrently with the opening of "La Porte Chinoise" in 1862 was the opening of "Farmer's and Roger's"

¹⁹Gerald Reitlinger, The Craze for Blue and White. (Connoisseur: vol.189, 1975) 217.

on Regent Street in London; it was managed by a man named Lazenby Liberty.²⁰ Whistler was said to have been a frequent customer of Liberty's shop, and, no doubt, it did not take him long to find the establishment given his enthusiasm for the porcelain.²¹ Due to the great success of his first shop, Liberty opened an additional one across the street.²²

Another dealer in London was Murray Marks, who, on more than one occasion, would travel to Holland where he found it easy to acquire inexpensive porcelains. Marks also owned a shop, on Oxford street, and was a primary dealer for several connoisseurs.²³ His business card alone confirms both his primary interest in the business of importing porcelain and his actual artistic interest in the Orient (fig.1).



Figure 1. Murray Marks trade card

²⁰Fleming 200.

²¹Fleming 199.

²²James Laver, Whistler, (London: Faber and Faber, 1951) 96.

²³David Curry, James Mc Neill Whistler: At the Freer Gallery of Art. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984) 60.

This card depicts a blue and white prunus blossom covered porcelain jar with two peacock feathers, one laying beside the jar and one inserted in it. Also, the patterned boarder framing the card and the patterned background represents an oriental influence. The "craze" had begun but not solely at the hands of Whistler. Marks represents another of the many outlets Whistler had to indulge his cravings for the beautiful blue and white and it does establish his presence as one among many other "crazed" connoisseurs.

Whistler's collection must have been growing since his Paris days, and by the time he reached London it may quite possibly have been well established. There is some question as to whether Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a fellow artist and collector of porcelain, influenced Whistler's interest in blue and whites when he came to London in 1863. But as I have indicated Whistler's interest was established before settling in London thus it is more then likely. James Laver has no doubt that Whistler influenced Rossetti by showing his brother William Rossetti some Japanese prints and oriental items.

"It used to be thought that Rossetti had introduced him to Japan. The very reverse is true, for it was from Whistler that the whole tide of Japanese influence flowed to modify interior decoration and colour to the Aesthetic movement. William Rossetti, in his Reminiscences, states quite clearly that when his brother took the Tudor House, the Japanese mania had not begun. "It was Mr. Whistler who first called my brother's attention to Japanese art: he possessed two or three woodcut books,

some coloured prints and screen or two"24

Although this statement does not specifically point to porcelain, it does establish that the "craze," as far as the Rossetti brothers were concerned, had not yet been brought to their attention. Thus, we may speculate that Whistler had acquired blue and white porcelain before either of the Rossetti brothers. Whistler and Dante Rossetti first met in 1860, according to Stanley Weintraub, at the home of the Wightwicks who called upon Whistler for social entertainment.²⁵ But another account by Hesketh Pearson claims that Whistler was introduced to Rossetti by Swinburne in 1863. In any case, these two artists lived one short block from each other in Chelsea and became quite taken with each other, and their primary mutual interest seems to have been Oriental objets d'art. "Whistler and Rossetti bought and talked Chinese porcelain and Japanese prints, and led the cult which was so soon to make the fortunes of innumerable dealers."²⁶

Whistler, Rossetti, and their devotees were now in full swing in their infatuation for blue and white porcelain. But Whistler's interest in the Oriental objects

²⁴James Laver, Whistler, (London: Faber and Faber, 1951) 94.

²⁵Stanley Weintraub, Whistler: A Biography, (New York: Weybright and Tally, 1974) 66.

²⁶Hesketh Pearson, The Man Whistler (New York: Harper and Brother Publishers, 1952) 39.

was quite different from that of the majority of collectors, for his collecting directly fed his painting. Here, for us then, are two questions of critical interest: What style of porcelain was Whistler particularly seeking? And what type was most available in the 1860's?

CHINA

China had been producing export porcelain for centuries, and Europe had been a prime market for it in the 17th and 18th centuries. China, while remaining something of an enigma, had maintained trading outlets while Japan had closed its ports to trade. It was not until Perry opened these ports that Japanese goods began to move with those of China. As we have seen, Whistler was attracted to these objects, finding many avenues to collect the porcelains throughout his entire life.

The Dutch had been importing porcelain through an East India company with its trading post in Formosa, since around 1602, and they were to be favored by the Chinese for hundreds of years. England also pursued trade with China, mostly by pirating, and did succeed in establishing a trade in Chinese porcelain through this East India company around 1699. But it was the Dutch who first established the East India company, and England would have to rely on the Dutch

for the majority of their imported porcelain.

Export porcelain was produced largely at a factory located in Ching-te Chen and later at the port of Canton through which the porcelain made at the Ching-te Chen factories was transported. Not only was Chinese porcelain and pottery being imported, but a vast variety of Japanese and Korean pottery as well, especially during the seventeenth century. It was during this period that, porcelain began to be produced in England, Holland and elsewhere in imitation of the Chinese originals in order to capitalize on the demand. As most of the domestic production was inferior it did not replace imports of the more delicate blue and white Chinese porcelain.

During the eighteenth century increasing pressure was placed on China to trade more with the Europeans; this resulted in increased trade with the French, Dutch, Portuguese, Americans, and British. Sixty million pieces of Chinese porcelain were exported to Europe over the course of that century.²⁷ The demand for high quality goods in the eighteenth century maintained a high level of creative excellence in much of what was produced, but by the nineteenth century, quality and originality of design was much diminished. This was partly due to the fact that the high demand resulted in ever increasing European production

²⁷Jerry Patternson, Porcelain, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution of Art, 1979) 85.

of Chinese style porcelain. Nevertheless, huge quantities were still being imported and apparently people still craved true Chinese porcelain.

The variety of porcelain coming into Europe makes it difficult to picture what exactly the connoisseurs were collecting, and what Whistler would have found available. According to Warran Cox, during 1796-1820 the Chia Ch'ing Porcelain potters tried desperately to imitate the Ch'ien Lung standards and failed miserably.²⁸ Cox claims that even during the Tao-Kuang period, from 1821-1850, porcelain continued to degenerate.²⁹

"The body is chalky and coarse grained and the glaze though oily and bubbly has the muslin-like texture like the coarser Japanese ware. Peking medallion bowls are still of fairly good quality. A thin and very lustrous greenish wash was used to depict water in the landscapes. A ware with lightly incised Imperial dragons and covered with this same light greenish wash over which are enamel decorations is of this period though it has been contended that it might be earlier. It usually bears the K'ang Hsi marks. Some other wares show weak attempts to revive Yung Cheng styles and stunts."³⁰

K'ang Hsi had been dead for one hundred and fifty years but

²⁸Warren E. Cox, Pottery and Porcelain, (New York: Crown, Publisher, 1944) 2: 65.

²⁹K'ang-Hsi was the first emperor of three in the Ch'ing Dynasty. He reigned from 1662-1722 and the second emperor Yung-Cheng reigned from 1723-1735 and the third emperor Ch'ien Lung reigned from 1736-1795.

³⁰Cox 65.

many of these old styles were still being reproduced and were marked with the K'ang Hsi insignia.³¹ Jerry Patterson stated that in "the middle of the nineteenth century they were still making porcelain in this style."³² Not that it was designed to deceive connoisseurs of porcelain; it was a common tradition for Chinese porcelain to be marked with a former Emperor's sign out of respect for him and the past.³³ Also, K'ang Hsi porcelain was considered to be the most perfected and most beautiful porcelain ever made, especially the blue and white. And it was the K'ang Hsi which was in demand in the 1860's. Supply had been severely limited due to the rebellion of T'ai P'ing in 1853 which closed down the Ching-te Chen factories. They were not rebuilt until 1864 but when they did resume production they made fairly good quality copies of both the Ming and Ching porcelains and placed those dynasties marks on the pieces.³⁴ Large quantities were being shipped to the West consistently during the whole of the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth.³⁵

Much of the porcelain collected before 1860 by Whistler

³¹Jerry Patterson, Porcelain, (Washington: Smithsonian Institute of Art, 1979) 92.

³²Patterson 92.

³³Patterson 86.

³⁴Patterson 92.

³⁵Patterson 92.

is not accounted for, and the difficulty of speculating about what he owned is compounded by our lack of knowledge of tastes current at that time. Tom Prideaux illustrates in an article a K'ang Hsi plate which he claims to have been popular in the 1860's (fig. 2).³⁶



Figure 2. 17th century Chinese blue and white K'ang-Hsi plate.

Also, David Curry relates Charles Freer's claim that "The prunus of 'Hawthorn' pattern was so popular during the 1870's that it was also chosen as the decorative motif for the Thompson Catalogue cover, and a jar like this appears on

³⁶Tom Prideaux, The World of Whistler: 1834-1903 (New York: Time Life Books, 1970) 81.

Murray Mark's trade card".(fig. 3).³⁷



Figure 3. Chinese blue and white Hawthorne Jar.

Both of these pieces are categorized as seventeenth century. It is not clear that the earlier K'ang Hsi would have been readily available, but certainly the replicas of this style, which happened to be marked with the same K'ang Hsi insignia, would have been easily obtainable. Given the large quantities imported during the 18th century, it seems likely that "original" pieces would have been available at antique shops and auctions.

³⁷David Curry, James Mc Neill Whistler: At the Freer Gallery of Art. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984) 175.

Whistler was known to have one of the most outstanding collections of blue and white in England, but, as mentioned above, his bankruptcy following the scandalous trial between himself and John Ruskin forced him to auction his entire collection in 1879. Several pieces of this collection are accounted for in photographs of his home and descriptions by family and friends. Some of the porcelain Whistler may have possessed in the 1860's appear in several of his paintings of that period.

The pieces illustrated in Whistler's paintings have been categorized as K'ang-Hsi, which has been suggested by Gerald Reitlinger's observation that Whistler and his fellow collectors had an allegiance for a particular style of porcelain from 1860 to 1920. This allegiance was never shaken; it was for the eighteenth century blue and white--which is usually assumed to have been K'ang Hsi. Which again suggests that his acquisitions were not limited to that which was contemporaneously being imported alone.

The pieces illustrated in Whistler's paintings have been categorized as K'ang Hsi, but this does not seem conclusive. The eighteenth century K'ang Hsi, named after the first Emperor of the Ch'ing Dynasty, would probably have been the most important to Whistler. K'ang Hsi, as stated above, is the most beautiful and brilliant achievement during the Ch'ing Dynasty. The most common imagery of the K'ang Hsi is flowers of the four seasons: prunus, peony,

lotus and chrysanthemum. Extensive use of panelling with ornamental borders and grounds typifies the style as well. But there are many other common motifs as well. Landscapes and mythological beasts, and of particular interest, figure scenes and episodes of legends and history were often depicted and are thought to have been derived from prints.³⁸ This fact contravenes the opinion of many historians who propound that Japanese prints were the primary influence on Whistler; they appear to be ignoring a significant additional source. If his interest in blue and white was much more extensive than his interest in Japanese prints, and I think this is clear, this argues that the visual aesthetics of Chinese prints repeated on the porcelain were brought to his attention while studying them. As beautiful as porcelains purity of form may be, it was the imagery, color, and painterly effect that would be the primary influence upon Whistler's painting methods.

Many of these blue and white porcelain pieces had several coatings. Characteristically, this resulted in a vibrating cobalt which was applied to the delineate areas in thin, overlapping strokes of wash.³⁹ There were various shades of blue and of course white on blue ground and blue on white ground. Also, an "ice crackle" ground was

³⁸Robert Charleston, The World of Ceramics, (New York: McGraw-Hill Books Company, 1968) 60.

³⁹Charleston 60.

considered very beautiful as well. But with all these varieties, what was Whistler looking for?

Whistler and his companions were not interested in porcelain as an investment and they would never have glanced at an expensive "dragon bottle".⁴⁰ They were only interested in the beauty and the artistic elements. Therefore, K'ang Hsi of the eighteenth century in all its perfection would have been an irresistible attraction. Reitlinger believes that their attitude about porcelain was that it should enhance the room and if it did not, then why own it?⁴¹ There is no question that these objects were to be lived with, and to that end Whistler decorated Lindsey Row with oriental simplicity. Which included only a few items of furniture, simple matting on the floor, and bare walls except for a few essential pieces of porcelain beautifully placed.⁴² In the dining room were only a few chairs, a table, and, most important, a china cabinet displaying wonderful blue and white plates (fig 4). Whistler was famous for his eccentric displays. He hosted elaborate breakfasts and dinner parties to display his revered blue and whites. Whistler, at one time, actually had a large blue and white bowl as the table's center piece.

⁴⁰Gerald Reitlinger, "The Craze for Blue and White", Connoisseur: vol. 189 (1975) 216.

⁴¹Reitlinger 216.

⁴²Tom Prideaux, The World of Whistler: 1834-1903, (New York: Time Life Books, 1970) 78.

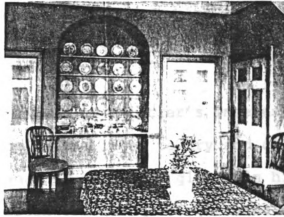


Figure 4. Whistler's dining room at Lindsey Row, London.

with floating lilies and goldfish.⁴³ Whistler's interests in simplicity of the Orient as far as interiors was quite counter to the prevailing contemporary taste for cluttered and overstuffed interiors.

Reitlinger also seems to be under the impression that Whistler never bought porcelain from any of the "junk shops," that he only bought porcelain from Lazenby Liberty and Murray Marks, who did eventually become Whistler's primary dealer. But there are accounts of Whistler's purchasing porcelain in many of the smaller shops.⁴⁴ Indeed, if he was not interested in the financial value of

⁴³Stanley Weintraub, Whistler: A Biography, (New York: Weybright and Tally, 1974) 271.

⁴⁴Elizabeth Cary, The Works of James Mc Neill Whistler, (New York: Books from the Libraries Press, 1907) 56.

the pieces, then why not buy beautiful porcelain wherever possible. Whistler was as "crazy" as everyone else for the beautiful pieces of blue and white with their marvelous long Elizas, prunus blossoms, medallions, and lion covered handle lids.

Another aspect of Whistler's interest was the blue of the piece, for he was later to try and capture something of the translucency found in the glazes in his painting. The spontaneous brushwork and quick gestures of the images would have sparked his curiosity and the conscious effort to simplify a composition. Thoughtful construction of a composition's relations became his highest challenge. The aesthetic elements of the porcelains were to Whistler an artistic accomplishment he wished to understand, and for the next several years he attempted to comprehend the principles which gave it such beauty.

WHISTLER, PAINTING AND PORCELAIN 1860-80

It is not my purpose to deny the fact that Whistler was influenced by many things but to bring focus to the role of blue and white porcelain in his art. It is then to specific works that I will now turn to see if one can discover in them the role which porcelain played in his art-making.

An excellent early example of this Eastern influence is At the Piano, 1853-59.(fig.5) This painting illustrates Whistler's sister, Debora Hayden, seated at a piano with his niece leaning on the piano contently listening to her mother play. The denial of narrative for an aesthetic formalism as well as a realist approach is a sure sign of the influence of Gustave Courbet with whom he had become close in his Paris years. Yet the obvious bourgeois setting reflects Whistler's life in London and denies Courbet's rural realist point of view. The theme, and even to some degree, the composition can be related to works by Vermeer whose works had become known in the 1850's.



Figure 5. James Mc Neill Whistler's, At the Piano, 1858-1859.

The composition here, unlike Vermeer, moves toward an emphasis on the two-dimensional picture plane. The fragmentary views of the pictures on the wall and the cutting off of the rest of the piano is a compositional device found in Japanese prints as well as in works by Vermeer. The mix of influences makes it very difficult to just single out one. Whistler was very aware of what was au courant and took to these things with fascination and sensitivity. The black and white harmony in its simplicity and silhouette effect suggests that porcelains are having their effect even if he changes black to blue. All of this reveals that Whistler is moving toward a more distilled vision and a refined detachment that will ultimately lead to denial of any influence for Courbet. There is a certain romanticism felt this subject of a mother playing a song on

the piano for her daughter which is purely Western, yet it is plausible that Whistler was striving to achieve something of the essence typical of a subject as depicted on blue and white porcelain.

Harmonies in Green and Rose: The Music Room, 1860-61, again depicts a painting of Whistler's life in London. (fig.6)



Figure 6. James Mc Neill Whistler's, Harmonies in Green and Rose: The Music Room, 1860.

Elizabeth Boott is silhouetted on the right-hand side and Whistler's niece, wearing the same dress she wears in At the Piano of the previous year, is slightly behind her seated

under a light reading quietly. On the left is a mirror above a mantle containing Debora Hayden's reflection. There is obvious evidence here of a new awareness of pattern which has an airy delicacy which begs a relationship to porcelains. The dominant form in this delicately patterned world is the elegantly elongated and slightly off balance silhouette of Elizabeth which depicts a stance much like that of the Chinese women also depicted on porcelain.

Here the compressed space and angled perspective run off the picture plane creating a tension for the space which is more complex than At the Piano, but is another experiment at integrating compositional ideas from Japan into his work. The combination of formalism and his new Eastern interests are merging into a unique and personal style. The synthesis we see starting here was to be a struggle with diverse ideas that would continue for the next twenty years. As Elizabeth Broun states;

"Between 1855-1873 from the beginning of Whistler's career to his first comments about a "theory in art"-he made steady progress toward a new formalism, but not without many difficulties and false starts."⁴⁵

In 1862 Whistler painted Jo Hiffernan, his mistress, in a white dress in front of a white curtain standing on a bear rug. He entitled the painting Symphony in White No. 1: The White Girl. (fig. 7) There is a slightly Pre-Raphaelite

⁴⁵Elizabeth Broun, "Thoughts That Began With the Gods: The Content of Whistler's Art," Art Mag 62 (1987): 36.

feeling: a beautiful woman with heavy red beautiful hair. But once again Whistler is breaking away from the narrative moralizing upon women; he declared the painting to have no real subject: ". . .the whole tendency to give a spiritual appearance without any spiritual essence...".⁴⁶



Figure 7. James Mc Neill Whistler's, Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl, 1862.

Whistler claimed, "My painting simply represents a girl dressed in white in front of a white curtain."⁴⁷ This is Whistler's first approach to the theory of l'art pour l'art; that there is no real subject but that the painting is about

⁴⁶Laver 93.

⁴⁷Broun 38.

art only, or rather that the only subject is the formal possibilities of white on white. The lack of narrative movement in the composition constitutes an exit from the generic structure of the Pre-Raphaelites. In The White Girl the lack of depth and the relatively empty whiteness with simplified patterning reveals his absorption of Oriental influences. There is also something of a soft fluidity about the treatment of this figure which--while it could be seen as related to a quality of painting found on porcelains--relates obviously to Velasquez, an artist whom Whistler admired.

The exhibition of The White Girl, created quite a stir in the art world. The painting was rejected for the 1863 Salon in Paris. Later he chose to display her in the 'Salon De Refuses,' and there it received mixed reviews. Some saw the painting as an allegory. One critic stated that it was a bride the morning after her wedding night, and that the subtle mood ensuing upon the loss of her virginity was captured in the painting.⁴⁸ There was also much disparagement from the critics as well as the public, but of course Whistler enjoyed the attention whether negative or positive.

Many have proclaimed this to be the turning point of Whistler's interest in the Far East. The break in subject

⁴⁸James Laver, Whistler, (New York: Faber and Faber, 1951) 91.

matter is one reason why so many believe this to be his critical artistic period. And indeed, it is after this painting that Whistler begins to include his prized porcelain within his paintings as if they become the allegory of viewing his paintings. As Elizabeth Cary states: "Whistler passed from the psychological mood of the first Symphony in White to the purely decorative mood appropriate to his new subject."⁴⁹ In 1863 Whistler started, Rose and Silver; La Princess du pays de la Porcelain (fig 8).



Figure 8. James Mc Neill Whistler's, Rose and Silver: La Princess du pays de la Porcelaine, 1864.

⁴⁹Elizabeth Cary, The Works of James Mc Neill Whistler (New York: Books for the Libraries Press, 1907) 57.

Here Whistler paints the lovely Christine Spartali who's father had commissioned the painting of his daughter. Whistler places Christine in a totally Oriental atmosphere dominated by a lovely Chinese screen and dresses her in a decorative Chinese kimono. Going a step further he places her on a beautiful Oriental rug with a fan in her hand. In one sense it is an exotic costume piece, but at the same time he is exhibiting principles of Oriental composition; According to James Laver,

"Whistler's backgrounds grew flatter and more two dimensional. Also here is silouhetting of figures instead of modeling, modeling being one of Gustave Courbet's influences. And the harmony of colour applied to a decorative rhythmical arabesque."⁵⁰

La Princess is the painting where the new formalism sets in and the porcelain influence becomes clearly apparent. Here to clarify some differences between the artistic characteristics of Chinese porcelain depictions and Japanese prints would support our emphasis on Whistler's artistic interests in porcelain not prints. Japanese prints have a very schematic sense of pattern dominated by line. Due to being wood cuts, painterly effects are denied it. Even though many depictions on porcelain derive from the print, the Chinese spontaneity of gestural line and brushwork is obviously more abstract. The issue of two dimensionality, for both the Japanese print and Chinese porcelain

⁵⁰James Laver, Whistler, (New York: Faber and Faber, 1951) 99.

depictions, is also of importance. Actual stacking and tightening of space is often found in a Japanese print and this is also true of the Chinese porcelain depictions but the three dimensionality of the porcelain lessens the severity. A depiction drawn on a three dimensional form takes on a slightly different vision. Because of the many layers of glaze and coatings of brushwork porcelain depictions have a visual sense of depth. There is a definite similarity in subject matter for both and in this regard it is important to remember that most of the artistic character of the Japanese print was formulated through the art of China.

The fluidity of Chinese painting is evidenced in Whistler's long strokes to forming the elegant curve of Christine's kimono. This clearly resembles the quickly brushed Lange Leizen depicted on the popular K'ang Hsi blue and white. Mc Mullen observes that in this case, "it could also have been suggested by the sway of the figure on a blue and white pot, for the robe is Chinese and "the land of porcelain" referred to in the title is of course China."⁵¹

Whistler even placed her hair high on her head to create and even closer resemblance to the Chinese Lange Leizen.(fig. 9) The elements of the composition are sensitively placed to tighten and flatten the space. And

⁵¹Roy Mc Mullen, Victorian Outsider: A Biography of J.A.M. Whistler (New York: Dutton, 1973) 126.

his decorative impulse is much stronger. Color is embroidered throughout the painting tying the composition harmoniously together, creating a visual sense of balance entirely through color. The elongated figure has a gray under-robe and red sash with lines of gold, purple drapery; the soft gray atmosphere permits the contrast of her pale skin with the graceful warm blue of the pottery.



Figure 9. Early 18th century Chinese blue and white cup.

Whistler believed that the Oriental artist strove for harmony though repetition of color:

"[I]t seems to me...that color ought to be, art as it were, embroidered on a canvas, that to say, the same color ought to appear in the picture continually here and there in the same way that a thread appears in a embroidery, and so shall all others, more or less according to their

importance; in this way the whole will form a harmony."⁵²

The "language" of art itself becomes the artist's primary interest as opposed to "subject."

This neutralizing of the subject is also reflected in Whistler's striving to detach his own personal life from the picture as well. Yet the romantic atmosphere seen in La Princess has been seen as influenced by the death of Delacroix in 1863. Elizabeth Broun states, "His deep regard for Delacroix can be found in the romantic colorism which tempers the decorative palette that Whistler had derived from Oriental screens, fans, prints and lacquers."⁵³ This is also evidenced by Whistler's placement at center stage in Fantin-Latour's Homage to Delacroix. Because Whistler was one of Delacroix's most acute admirers, in La Princess, Whistler is shifting the balance between subject matter and formal concern. Also dandyism and the exotic relate to Delacroix yet Whistler hides them in the painting methods themselves. The many influences of his past start to dissolve and he plunges into developing his own aesthetic theories.

Despite the fact that La Princess was commissioned, the work was rejected for purchase. Even though Christine and

⁵²Stanley Weintraub, Whistler: A Biography: (New York: Weybright and Tally, 1974) 139.

⁵³Elizabeth Broun, "Thoughts that Began with the Gods: The Content of Whistler's Art", Art Mag: vol. 62 (1987) 39.

others adored the mysterious oriental creator, Consul General Spartali only saw his Hellenistic beauty dressed up to look like a porcelain doll.⁵⁴ But one very interesting development which came out of the rejection was Whistler's famous ideographical signature. After Spartali refused to purchase the painting, Whistler asked Dante Rossetti to hang it in his studio to attract purchasers. One prospective client refused to buy it because Whistler had signed his name to the top portion of the painting. There are several suggestion as to how Whistler inspired by this refusal came up with his butterfly insignia. One suggestion is that Anna Whistler once began a letter to her son with "My own dear butterfly."⁵⁵ Another is that he took his initials, J.M.W., and transformed them into the butterfly. But a frequent mark used for a Chinese potter's insignia was the butterfly, and one common border characteristically found on K'ang Hsi porcelain consists of split pomegranates and butterflies with their wings spread wide; Whistler may well have been aware of this.⁵⁶ Prideaux comments that "Whistler prized the device because it resembled the

⁵⁴Tom Prideaux, The World of Whistler: 1834-1903, (New York: Life Time Books, 1970) 80.

⁵⁵Elizabeth Broun, "Thoughts that Began with the Gods: The Content of Whistler's Art", Art Mag: Vol. 62 (1987) 39.

⁵⁶R. L. Hobson, Chinese Pottery and Porcelain, (New York: Cassell and Company LTD., 1915) 292.

ideographs that often appeared on Oriental paintings..."⁵⁷
 Or that of a potter's mark! The painting was finally purchased by Frederick Leyland and served as a centerpiece for his grand collection of blue and white porcelain that Murray Marks had collected for the Frederick's dining room.⁵⁸

To be sure, Whistler is painting within the Western tradition and would not paint a full-sized portrait in blue and white only out of love of porcelains. Also, he had colorful Japanese kimonos and prints, all of which had their attractions as well, but it could be argued that porcelain was Whistler's primary interest. His paintings have an equivalent purity and smoothness, a suggestive genre-like character, harmonious coloring and translucency, simplified composition, quick overlapping brushwork and gestures, as well as the clarity of the porcelains.

At the same time he was painting La Princess he had already started another Oriental painting entitled Purple and Rose; The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks, 1863-64. (fig.10) This painting shows the magnetic pull that blue and white porcelain had on Whistler. Anna Whistler, his mother, had come to London and was residing in the

⁵⁷Tom Prideaux, The World of Whistler: 1834-1903, (New York: Time Life Books, 1970) 80.

⁵⁸Later Whistler would be commissioned to redecorate the dining room and he did so according to his own Oriental innovations. But this event does not occur until the late seventies.



Figure 10. James Mc Neill Whistler's, Purple and Rose: The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks, 1863-1864.

Chelsea home with her son, and she wrote a letter to Mr. Gamble describing the painting dated February 10, 1864.

"... are you an admirer of old China? this Artistic abode of my Son is ornamented by a very rare collection of Japanese and Chinese, he considers the painting upon them the finest specimens of Art & his companions (Artists) who resort here for an evening relaxation occasionally get enthusiastic as the[y] handle and examine the curious subjects portrayed [sic], some of the pieces more then two centuries old. He has also a Japanese book of paintings unique in their estimation. You will wonder that Jemies inspiration should be (under such influences), of the same cast he is finishing at his Studio (for when he paints from life, his models generally are hired & he has for the last fortnight had a fair damsel sitting as a Japanese study) a very

beautiful picture for which he is to be paid one hundred guineas without the frame that is always separate. I'll try to describe this inspiration to you. A girl seated as if intent upon painting a beautiful Jar which she rests on her lap, a quiet & east attitude, she sits beside a shelf which is covered with a Chinese matting a buff colour, upon which several pieces of China & a pretty fan are arranged as if for purchasers. a Scind Rug carpets the floor (Jemie has several in his rooms & none others.) upon it by her side is a large Jar & all those are fac-similes of those around me in this room--which is more than half Studio for here he has an Easel & paints generally--tho he dignifies it as our withdrawing room...."⁵⁹

The title given the painting is a clear indication that this painting was purely about porcelain alone. Lange Leizen is Dutch and means Long Eliza which refers to the "immobilized" figures painted on the porcelain. The Six Marks represent the actual potter's mark on the bottom of the porcelain which indicates the type of porcelain Whistler has represented in his painting. According to G. Reitlinger, the dish behind her head would be called "Traditional Ming."⁶⁰ Traditional Ming would mean the porcelain of the eighteenth century, not the replicas of the nineteenth century. The vase she pretends to paint is a garniture vase very popular in the 1860's as were the lid covered jars. Little space in the painting goes unadorned with a vase or covered jar and they are drawn with attentive precision.

⁵⁹Robin Spencer, Whistler: A Retrospective (New York: Hugel, Lauter, Levin Associates, Inc., 1989) 72.

⁶⁰Gerald Reitlinger, "The Craze for Blue and White", Connoisseur: vol. 189 (1975) 217.

"The superb porcelain jar by the girl's side has a brilliancy of porcelain and pattern on it reproduced. . . . The other vases and the cup and platter are drawn with equal care the pattern on each having its special character scrupulously defined."⁶¹ Whistler's study of the porcelain is expressed through the careful scrutiny of each piece. In addition, the porcelain plays an intricate part in Whistler's composition. By comparison to The White Girl and La Princess this might seem cluttered, but the placement of these objects is stunning. This tasteful sense of composition denies the painting any sense of Victorian bric-a-brac. Whistler at one point described cluttered still lifes as "Clap-Trap," but in Die Lange Leizen of the Six Marks his penchant for controlled composition, compressed space, and two dimensionality are quiet clear. Whistler's composition continues to rely on color harmony to tie all the elements together. The model in the painting is wearing a gray robe under a full dark blue skirt. The robe's decoration has wide red bands around the arms and a floral pattern in red, green, and blue all on a white background. The oriental rug is a warm reddish-brown accenting the warm blue pot. One table cloth is deep red and the other table cloth is pale-yellow; the small portion of the background showing is the same pale-yellow. Elizabeth Cary describes

⁶¹Elizabeth Cary, The Works of James Mc Neill Whistler, (New York: Books for the Libraries Press, 1907) 58.

the harmony of Whistler's coloration: "This inner harmony of design and colour penetrating the apparently diverse and separated items in the picture speaks more eloquently of Whistler's instinctive sympathy with Japanese ideals in art than any of its incidental features."⁶²

This statement points to the "Japanese ideals in art," but it is perhaps less obviously Chinese as this opposing statement indicates:

"Back to the art of Japan is the purer art of China; and to that source must we go if we seek the factors that influenced Whistler, for he loved the porcelain and pottery of China long before they were collected . . ."⁶³

The color harmony that Whistler choose in the Die Lange Leizen drew positive responses from the critics when it was hung at the Academy in 1864. In Fraser's Rossetti called it: "the most delightful piece of colour on the walls: the more you examined it, the more convinced you become that it will yield new pleasure on reinspection....Its harmonizing power is so entire that we find it a choice piece of orientalism, though conscious that there is not even a attempt at the Chinese cast of countenance."⁶⁴

In Athenaeum, Stephen's said Whistler exhibited "great force

⁶²Cary 58.

⁶³Arthur Jerome Eddy. Recollections and Impressions of James Mc Neill Whistler. (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1972) 70-71.

⁶⁴Gordon Fleming, The Young Whistler: 1834-1866, (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1978) 202.

of characterization and superb colouring in a quaint subject.... This picture is among the finest pieces of colour in the Exhibition."⁶⁵

Those opposed to Whistler's painting were mainly displeased with the subject matter but they did acknowledge Whistler's obvious infatuation with the blue and white porcelain. The Time's critic stated that; "he can draw so well if he chooses, to give us an object as much out of perspective as the great blue vase". The Art Journal declared; "...the lady might herself have sat to a painter of the celestial empire; or she looks as if she had just stepped out from a china bowl...."⁶⁶ These contemporary opinions, whether negative or positive, collectively confirm Whistler's interest in his blue and white porcelain and his growing understanding of its artistic theories.

In the Die Lange Leizen the brushstroke used to actually paint depictions of the porcelain begins to resemble a more spontaneous gesture. The flowing brush of the Chinese painter is capturing Whistler's attention. The more meticulous method learned by old influences was now being challenged. As a vehicle for the color harmony through repetition, Whistler must have seen the brushwork as a harmonizing factor as well. This business was most difficult for Whistler, for he had always considered himself

⁶⁵Fleming 203.

⁶⁶Fleming 203.

to be lacking in skill when it came to his brushwork. It caused him a great deal of turmoil as is expressed in a letter written to Fantin-Latour in 1864; "I am so discouraged--always the same thing--always such painful and uncertain work! When will I work more quickly?... I put out so little because I wipe off so much."⁶⁷

Even his mother expressed Whistler's dissatisfaction with much of his brushwork. In the continuation of the letter to Mr. Gamble she proceeds: "...no wonder Jemie is not a rapid painter, for his conceptions are so nice, he takes out and puts in over and over until his genius is satisfied."⁶⁸

Everything expressed in the Die Lange Leizen is pure Whistler. His interest in the aesthetic theories of Chinese art are apparent in this painting in both his subject matter and his methods. Again I would assert that Whistler's subject matter has become much more universal in an allegorical way. The role of the porcelain depicted in the painting is what re-defines the style of the painting. It looks like a type of bric-a-brac yet Whistler means this in a presentational manner, to present the beauty of the porcelain. When Whistler steps away from the European influences, his step is guided by the aesthetics of the

⁶⁷Fleming 208.

⁶⁸Robin Spencer. Whistler: A Retrospective. (New York: Hugel, Lauter, Levin Associates, Inc., 1989) 72.

Oriental art. In so far as these objects are painterly, and this is very far indeed, Whistler's abstract principles are in a dialogue with the objects, and the subject of the dialogue is painting. The subject of the painting is painting.

This painting no doubt contributed to the "craze" for blue and white porcelain in the mid-1860's. The idea of such a renowned artist taking such heightened interest in the Orient and displaying that interest in such a fashionable way probably became the talk of the town. After all, it was displayed at the Academy that same year and received such attention from the critics that even if one could not obtain the painting, one could at least purchase some blue and white porcelain to show off one's modern awareness. Even Whistler comments on the porcelain in his painting in a letter to Fantin-Latour of February 3, 1864: "C'est rempli de superbes porcelaines tires de ma collection, et comme arrangement et couleur est bien--Cela represente une marchande de porcelaine, une chinoise, en train de peindre un pot--Mais c'est difficile!"⁶⁹

The year 1864 saw Whistler produce an Oriental painting entitled Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen, .(fig.11) Once again Jo Heffernan served Whistler as the model around which he brought together his Oriental objects

⁶⁹Margaret Mac Donald. "Whistler's Design's for a Catalogue of Blue and White Nankin Porcelain", (Connoisseur: vol. 198 1978) 291.



Figure 11. James Mc Neill Whistler's, Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen, 1864.

to create an evocation of a distant world. Jo is seated on the floor, in the tradition of the Orient. She is wearing a purplish floral patterned Chinese kimono which is gracefully spread around her. And her red hair is knotted neatly upon her head. Jo depicts the elongated Lange Leizen which Whistler had grown to admire. She silently inspects a color print while several others are displayed before her on the floor. Behind her is a Chinese screen which serves as a back drop and in the very lower left-hand corner Whistler portrays a lovely blue and white vase decorated with a flower motif. The isolated vase is so perfectly placed as

to serve, by now, as Whistler's private insignia.

The composition is extremely flattened and the sharp bold angular lines shape the composition into a two-dimensional plane. Whistler compresses the long figure within the borders of the picture plane, and the effect angles the perspective. The screen, black chair, vase and the figure divide the space and create a balance. This parcelling off of spatial segments is strongly dependent on Oriental models and as a result empty areas are balanced against complicated ones resulting in quite a different effect than that found in the Lange Leizen of the Six Marks.

Whistler later expressed his feelings on this at the Ruskin trail in 1876.

"Art should be independent of clap-trap--should stand alone, and appeal to the artistic sense of eye or ear, without confounding this with emotions entirely foreign to it, as devotion, pity, love, patriotism, and the like."⁷⁰

While Whistler was a collector like so many in the Victorian period, he was doing battle against the resultant clutter of bric-a-brac by promoting the Oriental notion of giving an object space, allowing one to focus on its beauty without a wealth of competing objects. Whistler was not a scholar and his understanding of all these influences was more visual than cognitive. David Curry notes Fenollosa's comment that,

⁷⁰Tom Prideaux, The World of Whistler: 1834-1903, (New York: Time Life Books, 1970) 84.

"Whistler was using Oriental principle to express Occidental feeling", is quite true and the synthesis that Whistler achieved of these most varied sources is unique.⁷¹

Many historians focus on Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Gold Screen to emphasize that Whistler's infatuation was with Japanese colored prints. There are many characteristics which would bring the prints to mind when making a comparison, but when one examines Whistler's steady progress over an extended period of time, they are not by any view the major source of inspiration. Elizabeth Broun comments:

"It has become accepted wisdom that Japanese art made its strong impression in the West through Ukiyo-prints, and that the lessons learned were essentially ones of composition, yet Whistler's work of 1863-64--as well as Fantin's and Tissot's--suggest that prints were no more interesting than other Japanese decorative arts. Later, Whistler did adopt the tipped perspective, compressed space, and elongated format of the block prints, but in the early 1860's his passion for fans, screens, fabrics, and especially porcelains was greater than his interest in prints."⁷²

His paintings would retain the female figure as the main subject but he would begin to conceal/reveal more of his ideas in metaphor. In The Little White Girl, later renamed Symphony in White No. 2, 1864.(fig. 12) Jo is again the model but the number of Far East items is limited.

⁷¹David Curry, James Mc Neill Whistler: At the Freer Gallery of Art, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984) 18.

⁷²Elizabeth Broun, "Thoughts that Began with the Gods: The Content of Whistler's Art", Art Mag, 62 (1987) 39.



Figure 12. James Mc Neill Whistler's, Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl, 1864.

She stands in front of a fireplace which has a mirror above its mantelpiece. Jo is not dressed in an Oriental kimono but a white dress. Her reflection is present in the mirror as she softly balances her left arm on the mantelpiece and gazes at the lidded vase with the "Lange Leizen." The line of her lowered right arm and fan points the viewer's attention to the blossoms breaking the picture plane in the lower right hand corner. Hawthorn blossoms were one of Whistler's favorite motifs, for they commonly appeared on the beautiful K'ang Hsi porcelain, and here he injects them into the composition in a very asymmetrical way inspired by Oriental examples.

Jo who had been for some time Whistler's mistress was

pregnant at the time this was painted. On her left hand is a wedding ring and Whistler's soft poetic reflective mood can be interpreted as suggesting expectant motherhood. Whistler would break with Jo in later years, but it is recorded that in 1864 a baby boy named John was born to Whistler and Jo Heffernan. Is Whistler inviting the viewer to contemplate the vase as a metaphor of pregnancy and for the artist is not the painting an offspring? The painting methods Whistler employs are a mix of East and West, and the blue and white vase is a cornerstone that reminds the viewer of the Oriental principles involved. Much of the painting's prominent compositional line point to the vase placed in the upper right hand corner of the composition. Jo looks at the vase in a quiet reflective way not once but twice as her "real" painted presence and her reflection both focus on the vase. The vase, fan, and blossoms are all color harmonized in a brilliant blue that ties the composition together in a manner reflected in the color composition of the vase.

The vase: a container which has been used often in art of the past and in ancient religions as a representation of potential life and fertility. It is interesting that Rossetti saw woman as the other part of a man's soul (if not his soul) and that without woman man is not complete. Whistler's painting can be interpreted in this way and in a complementary way. The woman, made whole by the man, in turn, biologically gives birth. The creative power of woman

is artistic for Whistler, and that the vase could hold the double meaning is most appropriate. Whistler's thematic and principled treatment thus becomes chiasmic: vase as metaphor of pregnancy, and pregnancy as metaphor of the creative principles emblemized by the vase.⁷³

Whistler's new restrained sensitivity found in The Little White Girl was well received by many of his friends as well as critics. Swinburne was so moved by the image of the passive Jo that he wrote a poem based on the painting which was entitled "Before the Mirror," and Whistler was to attach a copy to the frame of the painting while on display at the Royal Salon in Paris in 1865. One critic commented, "Jo was not merely a "stunner", and certainly not a goddess of love; she is a very human and slightly sad domestic companion...."⁷⁴ Noted by Gordon Fleming, Kenyon Cox stated, "almost unequivocal success ... perfect in harmony of arrangement and color."⁷⁵

Bernard Sickert: "Every portion of the picture is flawless. Look at the lovely arms and head resting on the mantelpiece. How lightly it rests, and yet it is a woman's arms, round solid under soft muslin. Look at the azaleas of

⁷³I am very grateful to Dr. Eldon Van Liere to whom I accredit these ideas.

⁷⁴Roy Mc Mullen, Victorian Outsider: A Biography of J.A.M. Whistler. (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc. 1973) 128.

⁷⁵Gordon Fleming, The Young Whistler: 1834-1866, (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1978) 206.

the foreground. Do other blossoms ever seem to be growing in comparison? Was there ever such lightness of touch combined with such sureness."⁷⁶

And Pennell says the painting is "the most individual, the most complete, the most perfect he ever painted at any period."⁷⁷

Swinburne in a letter to John Ruskin remarks "...whatever merit my song may have, it is not so complete in beauty, in tenderness and significance, in exquisite execution and delicate strength as Whistler's picture..."⁷⁸

What Whistler had done was return his attention to the European tradition in a way that allowed these various critics to identify thematically and compositionally with The Little White Girl, but it is a return with a difference. Jo stands in a Victorian room and is in European dress. Even so, she is facing an Oriental vase and pointing to the Oriental motif of hawthorn blossoms, which in turn "grow" toward her abdomen. This is "growing toward" slightly Western compositional technique. Perhaps it amounts to an orientalizing of the Western use of line discussed above. Out of an Oriental imposition of two-dimensional planes (the plane of the hawthorn blossoms laid over the surface of the painting) the main branches of the hawthorn point the

⁷⁶Fleming 206.

⁷⁷Fleming 206.

⁷⁸Fleming 206.

pregnancy of Jo.

That Whistler is seeing the conventional English subject is clear and, no doubt, is the reason for the positive criticism. Whistler's other oriental paintings were not received with as much enthusiasm as The Little White Girl, but he continued to meditate, as does Jo in this picture, upon porcelains and to absorb into his art a kind of understanding that would lead to still more artistic innovations. If one can discover aspects of Courbet in this painting, Whistler's love of white and sophisticated composition was a far different enterprise from anything his realist mentor had done, and in 1866 he denounced Courbet's influence. In the late summer of that year he wrote to Fantin-Latour: "Gustave Courbet and his influence was disgusting...all that he represents was bad for me ... this damned Realism made an immediate appeal to my vanity as a painter...'Long live Nature'...that cry, mon cher, was the greatest misfortune for me...Ah!"⁷⁹ He clearly is seeking to destroy an aspect of his past, and, while the reasons are not clear, he makes still another break by leaving England and going to Chile in the midst of that country's war with Spain.

In 1866 Whistler paints the seascape of Valparasio, Nocturne in Blue and Gold, Valparasio, 1866.(fig.13)

⁷⁹Tom Prideaux, The World of Whistler: 1834-1903, (New York: Time Life Books, 1970) 82.

The seascape is barely recognizable.



Figure 13. James Mc Neill Whistler's, Nocturne in Blue and Gold, Valparasio, 1866.

He leaves it to the viewer to envision the rest of the composition. Whistler's composition is two-dimensional and the horizon line is high on the canvas. There is a suggestion of a dock in the lower foreground but the rest is

left to the viewer. Indeed, his picture is suggestive rather than descriptive or topographic. The color is predominantly translucent blue, much the same as his blue and white pots, and is so warm it creates the essence of night. A soft light shimmers throughout the shoreline as in an embroidery. To achieve the special quality of the color Whistler would mix his own special paint and what he called his "sauce." He would apply the sauce several times, and it was so thin that he would lay his canvases on the floor to prevent it from running off, often drying the canvases in the sun.⁸⁰ With this technique, he approaches the effects of the sea and landscapes depicted on many K'ang-Hsi plates and large porcelain pots, with their misted atmosphere and silent seas which were created by overlapping brushwork.

Far from home, in Chile, Whistler begins to develop the nighttime seascapes of a predominantly blue tone which he will call "Nocturnes" and for awhile become famous for.

A painting entitled Variation in Flesh Colour and Green: The Balcony, done between 1863 and 1866 reveals another strand of Oriental influence that is entwined in Whistler's development. (fig.14) What is significant about this painting is that Whistler chose to portray a group of woman in kimonos leisurely drinking tea while one plays a

⁸⁰Dennis Sutton. James Mc Neill Whistler; Painting, Etchings, Pastels and Watercolors. (London: Phaidon Press, 1966) 24.



Figure 14. James Mc Neill Whistler's, Variation in Flesh Colour and Green: The Balcony, 1863-1864.

Shamisen. The setting is a balcony overlooking the Thames. This type of imagery occurs frequently on the K'ang-Hsi blue and white porcelain. Many such scenes can be found on porcelain depicting groups of woman on balconies overlooking a landscape while taking their leisure or going about domestic chores (fig.15).

Whistler places the figures below the middle of the picture plane leaving the rest to be filled by the river scene broken only by the railing and one vertical post. This also is similar to many of the scenes found on porcelain when

figures are placed in the lower portion of an architectural



Figure 15. 18th century Chinese blue and white plate.

setting. This division of the picture plane into two parts is derived then from Whistler's vases. It has been suggested that Whistler's paintings, especially The Balcony, were mainly influenced by the Japanese wood-block prints which is very valid but many of the scenes depicted on the K'ang Hsi porcelain have similar compositions and were derived in turn from Chinese wood-block prints. There remains some question as to what degree of influence one can assign to either the Japanese wood-block prints or the porcelains. No doubt both were important, but the attention Whistler gave to collecting porcelain seem to again outweigh his interest in Japanese prints.

Another painting which Whistler may have begun before

he went to Valparasio is The Artist in His Studio, 1865. (fig.16) This painting is a study for a large work which he never carried to completion, but this one displays all of his new discovered influences from the porcelain. While the subject of the artist in his studio reveals a reverence for Velasquez, The Artist is painted to reinforce what he already knew about Far Eastern art. Whistler portrays himself in the painting along with two women. One of whom wears an Oriental kimono casually fanning herself. The same woman faces Jo who is relaxing on the couch. They seem to be unaware of Whistler and to be carrying on a tete-a-tete of their own. Meanwhile Whistler, with his back to them, looks directly towards his audience but is really looking at a vision in the mirror which he intends to paint on his canvas. In this painting all the figures appear below the middle point of the picture plane. Yet the wall on the left displays a shelves which extends above the center of the picture plane breaking this division. Whistler's treasured blue and white porcelains are displayed on these shelves and provides weight to the structure. Whistler told Fantin-Latour in a letter of August 16, 1865:

"Ca represente l'interieur de mon atelier, porcelain et tout!: with plates and pots in an enormous cabinet reaching all up the one wall."⁸¹

Next to the porcelain on the wall behind Whistler is a

⁸¹Margaret Mac Donald, "Whistler's Design's for a Catalogue of Blue and White Porcelain", Connoisseur: vol. 198, (1978) 291.

mirror with a totally unrecognizable image in it. The room's atmosphere is left to fill the canvas above.

The women, whose fluid poses reflect those to be found on porcelains, are identified as a grouping on the left side of the painting while Whistler, occupies the right half, along with a small framed picture just over his head and the large mirror. Curiously, Whistler appears to be painting the picture's frame as it were; as he did not included a canvas within the picture. He looks, yet he turns his back on reality, putting the emphasis on the artist's mind or imagination.⁸²

The color is magnificent; it resembles the wonderful greenish-blue of some of the K'ang-Hsi porcelains. The warm mixture brings a softness to the atmosphere. Whistler's attire blends right in, barely making a separation between artist and painting. The relaxed Jo is in a white dress and the woman standing is in a cool yellowish-gold kimono. The porcelain pieces consist of a darker blue brushstroke with white dashes recreating the reflection from their glazed surfaces. All these colors perfectly harmonize the painting as a whole. The melting transparency of the colors are a kind of oil painting equivalent to the glazes.

⁸²I am grateful to Dr. Eldon Van Liere to whom I accredit these ideas.



Figure 16. James Mc Neill Whistler's, The Artist in His Studio, 1865.

Viewing this painting in the Detroit Institute of Art, not only is the reflection in the mirror unrecognizable but the porcelain plates and vases are mere suggestions of fact. Realism is no longer necessary to Whistler. There is no more need to bring detail to the imagery in order to capture an abstract beauty and spirituality. Also, the two woman

are quickly brushed across the surface with a wonderful spontaneity which gives them a translucent form. Even the greenish-blue background appears translucent, being created by thinly applied layers of paint applied with overlapping brushstrokes. Again this is reminiscent of blue and white porcelain with its glazed surface and the spontaneous brushwork. These two effects are Whistler's most noteworthy stylistic characteristics gained by the study of porcelain.

Whistler is making a statement about his purpose as an artist, standing in his studio. It is as if he is saying, "I am an artist and this is my art." What we see here is a synthesis of spontaneity of brushwork, translucency of color, suggestive imagery, warm and cool harmonies, figures in groups and the essence of beauty heightened by a sense of spirituality embodied in a greater degree of abstraction. To be sure, it is a study, but clearly one that satisfied him and it points to The Six Projects of 1868. The Six Projects are a series of canvases with the four in the center being of horizontal format and depicting groups of women, parasols, and fans flanked by vertically oriented canvases at each end depicting single figures.(fig.17) Each has a different color harmony and Whistler entitles them appropriately.

The first is Venus which has a single nude figure, the

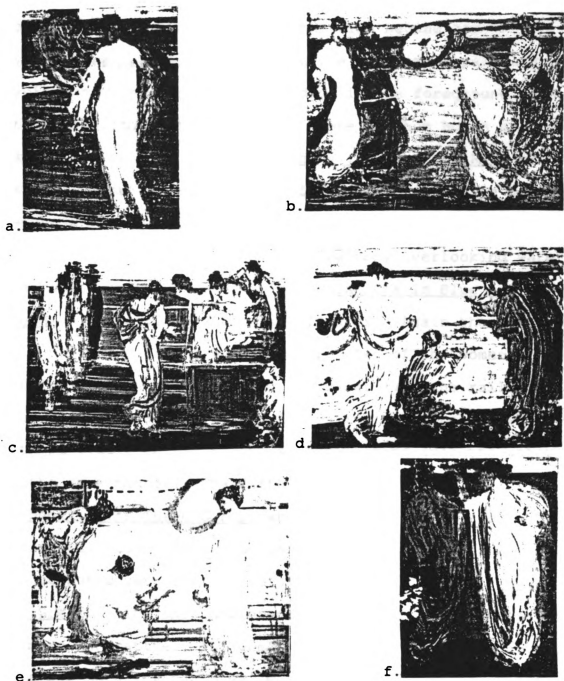


Figure 17. James Mc Neill Whistler, The Six Projects, 1868
 a) Venus, b) Symphony in Blue and Pink, c) Symphony in White and Red, d) Variations in Blue and Green, e) The White Symphony: Three Girls, f) Symphony in Green and Violet.

only nude in the series, on a vertical canvas. She is standing in the foreground at the edge of a shoreline holding a wrap which floats in the wind behind her.

Symphony in Blue and Pink is next, a horizontal painting depicting a group of women standing in the foreground, two on the left and two on the right, one of whom holds a Japanese parasol. Next is Symphony in White and Red, with a central figure standing in the foreground with three women set back on the left and three more on the right seated on a higher deck of what seems to be a balcony overlooking water. The fourth painting is entitled Variations in Blue and Green, a composition with three figures. Again the setting is a balcony overlooking the water. Two of the women are on the left, one seated watching the water over the railing and the other is standing behind her facing the water as well. A third figure on the right, stands looking over the water in the same manner. The fifth project is The White Symphony: The Three Girls, which is the last of the horizontal paintings in the series. Here the three woman are composed very similarly to those in Variation in Blue and Green. The only difference is that Whistler chooses to be more decorative. The woman kneeling is arranging flowers in a pot on a low table while another figure at the right holds a parasol while observing. The concluding and vertical canvas is Symphony in Green and Violet which presents two robed women twisting away at the waist.

Foujita explains Whistler's grounding in Oriental theory in a way apropos of The Six Projects:

"It loves abstract beauty of line and form rather than realistic portraiture. It seeks harmonious, daring combination of color rather than a slavish imitation of the colors in nature. Whistler had a similar attitude towards art."⁸³

The Six Projects were a foray into the art of abstraction for Whistler. He uses his Lange Liezen figures and groups them in genre scenes. He paints the figures standing just as the petite Chinese woman stand on the blue and white porcelain. His brushstrokes dash quickly to create the gestures of the figures. The translucency of the color variations allows their viewer to see them overlapping. Line, form, color, and brushstroke represent the scenery. All of The Six Projects are storyless; they are about painting and color. Whistler incorporates all his new methods and is heading towards complete abstraction.

During this same period, Whistler was introduced to an artist named Albert Moore. Moore's art was far more solidly conceived than Whistler's, paying a great deal of attention to sculptural form and precisely detailed drapery folds and accoutrement. The classical world was his major inspiration and many of his paintings suggest Hellenistic Tangra figures, either nude or with sheer togas. Their classical stances with hair tied upon their heads with ropes and the

⁸³Foujita, "The Japanese Influence on Whistler", The Art News: vol. (unknown) 22.

decorative and patterned details Moore used to enhance his paintings intrigued Whistler. Moore would use much of the same poetic grouping of figures as Whistler and included blossoms, pots, and flowering branches in an Oriental way. Whistler went out of his way to make Moore's acquaintance and soon they became friends. Moore would have some affect on Whistler, such as the toga-like robes on the women in The Six Projects, or the classically inspired Venus title and nude figure. But his method of painting never faltered and Moore's realism had no influence; as a result the distinction between toga and kimono becomes almost impossible to make.

One question regarding The Six Projects is common among historians, and that is "Why six canvases?" Could it be that Whistler was once again referring to the Six Marks insignia on the porcelain. Or since these canvases appear to be a series, maybe he was making reference to the captions displayed on four sided jars or six sided blue and white porcelain bowls. The paintings are labeled as being unfinished and they were never returned to. But the idea of abstraction and beauty expressed through translucent color harmonies is spectacular. John Sanberg quotes Swinburne who found much beauty in the assembled paintings:

"The delicacy and Melody of inefforable color...a more majestic and excellent beauty of form. Great artists, such as Whistler, have rare gift, one supreme quality of spirit ...the love of beauty for the very beauty's sake, the faith and trust

in it as in a god indeed."⁸⁴

The famous collector of Whistler's work, Charles Lang Freer, would in the end own all six canvases, and it was Freer and Fenollosa who would literally compare Whistler's translucent colors with those of the pottery. "If now, we examine more minutely the mysteries of light-play in the compositions of these tones (on pottery), we shall see the secret chord that pulls Whistler's painting into their harmonic scheme."⁸⁵

Whistler's understanding of abstraction through line, form and color has been reinforced by "The Six Projects," and the aesthetic theories of the Chinese artists are assimilated within his own.

From 1867-1871 Whistler produced nothing for Exhibition, but by 1870 he had reached a certain theoretical peak. Even though he is on the very edge of expressing himself as a non-representational painter, Whistler still includes visually recognizable reference as subject matter in his paintings.

Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket, 1874-75 (fig.18), is a painting of a park that was near his home

⁸⁴John Sandberg, "Whistler's Studies", The Art Bulletin: March, (1968) 77.

⁸⁵David Curry, James Mc Neill Whistler: At the Freer Gallery of Art, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984) 22.



Figure 18. James Mc Neill Whistler, Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket, 1874-1875.

called Cremorne Gardens where festive carnivals were held in the evening for entertainment. The people would dress up to see the fireworks and coloured lights.⁸⁶ Translating this image into his painting Whistler makes a sudden leap toward the abstract end of the representational spectrum;

⁸⁶Elizabeth Cary, The Works of James Mc Neill Whistler, (New York: Books from the Libraries Press, 1907) 63.

unfortunately he left his European critics a bit behind him once more. In this painting they could not see any thing that resembled the world of reality. All they saw were mixed dark masses of blackish gray foliage against a dusky blue sky creating the atmosphere of the night along with puffs of yellowish gray appear which give rise and fall of shimmering gold.⁸⁷

The Falling Rocket was shown in London at the Grosvenor Gallery in May, 1877. John Ruskin, who set the standard of English aesthetic taste at that time,, wrote in a letter to the Fors Clavigera that he had "seen and heard much of cockney impudence before now, but never expected to hear coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flying a pot of paint into the publics face."⁸⁸ Whistler took this as a personal affront in that such a widely read comment would make his work unsalable, and therefore the critic was in effect denying him his means of livelihood. With the little money he had, Whistler sued him. The resultant trial became a public spectacle and Whistler would be placed on the stand to explain his painting. Here is part of his testimony:

"I have perhaps meant rather to indicate an artist interest alone in the work, divesting the picture of any outside anecdote sort of interest which might have been otherwise attached to it. It is an arrangement of line, form, colour first: and I make use of any incident of it which shall bring

⁸⁷Cary 64.

⁸⁸Stanley Weintraub, Whistler: A Biography, (New York: Weybright and Tally, 1974) 190.

about a symmetrical result. Among my works are some night pieces, and I have chosen the word Nocturne because it generalizes and simplifies the whole set of them."⁸⁹

This statement expresses Whistler's belief in l'art pour l'art and beauty as a aesthetic element. Ruskin's main argument in the trial was that Whistler asked two hundred guineas for a painting which took one day to paint.

Whistler's response to this was, "I ask it for the knowledge of a lifetime."⁹⁰ The unfortunate outcome of the trial was that while Whistler won, he was awarded one penny in damages. Left with staggering court costs, he was obliged to declare bankruptcy and by 1879 all his beautiful blue and white porcelain was auctioned off. It had, in a way, served its purpose, for the influence it had on his art was to remain with him throughout his career and it also played a role in Whistler's interest in design and decoration.

⁸⁹Weintraub 201.

⁹⁰Weintraub 203.

WHISTLER THE DESIGNER AND DECORATOR

It was Tom Talyor who testified in court during the Ruskin - Whistler trial when he compared Whistler's Nocturne to "delicately tinted wall-paper."⁹¹ His comparison was not meant as a complement, yet it points towards a topic that has received little emphasis concerning Whistler's work. This topic is the relationship between his interest in abstraction and that of his interest in decorative arts.

The many talents of James Mc Neill Whistler's were not limited to the canvas. In his early Bohemian years Whistler would apply himself to design and decorative patterns as well and there is a connection between his design and decorative efforts and blue and white porcelains. In 1860's most of his efforts in this regard were focused on his own resident on Lindsey Row. Whistler's love for Orientalism was not just displayed but lived. His room's had the simplicity of the Orient. Rooms were very bright with

⁹¹David Curry, "Whistler and Decoration", Antiques: vol. 126, (1984) 1186.

detail and color used sparingly. Whistler placed Oriental items, such as fans and vases on specially constructed shelves so they were aesthetically pleasing while much of the rest of the room remained unadorned. When Mrs. Whistler wrote to Mr. Gamble about her son's infatuation with the East she expressed that there were several blue and white pots adorning the drawing room in which she sat.⁹² One photograph of the dining room at Lindsey Row shows a single chair on the left placed in front of shelves filled with porcelain's. The table is adorned with a floral patterned cloth and a plant as a center piece and another chair beside it. Except for the display of porcelains the room is simple and uncluttered. The second photograph of Lindsey Row is of the living room. From the angle of the photograph one can see no furnishings at all suggesting that the room is quite uncrowded. The walls are adorned with Oriental prints and a few fans here and there with an Chinese screen occupying the space below them on an Oriental rug. Only a vase and a pair of candle sticks stand on the mantelpiece. Anne Whistler described her bedroom as being decorated in Whistler's Japonisme style most likely enhanced with a porcelain plate or vase.⁹³

Frame decoration was Whistler's most significant and

⁹²Robin Spencer, Whistler: A Retrospective, (New York: Huge, Lauter, Levin Associates, Inc., 1989) 72.

⁹³Stanley Weintraub, Whistler: A Biography, (New York: Weybright and Tally, 1974) 150.

most easily documented innovation as a designer/decorator. Much of this influence was sparked by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Who were innovators of the arts and craft movement in England. No doubt Rossetti's leadership of the group had ample effect on Whistler frame work.⁹⁴ "Whistler extended the picture beyond the canvas by devising a harmonious decorated frame, the vertical and horizontal of which he considered an integral part of his composition."⁹⁵ He started designing frames in the early sixties and would produce several throughout the years. Many of the motifs Whistler used for his frame decorations came from his beloved blue and white porcelain. For example, the frame he designed for the painting Caprice in purple and gold: The Golden Screen, 1864, had motifs of bamboo, paulownia leaves, whorlly circles and a gridlike linear pattern.⁹⁶(fig.19) On this particular frame the circular imagery is like that of a nineteenth century plate owned by Whistler after 1879.(fig.20) The first inside boarder is exactly like the designed frame work. The leaf motif, grid pattern, and circular medallion motifs are also very similar

⁹⁴Raymond Watkinson, Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design, (Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1970).

⁹⁵David Curry, "Whistler and Decoration", Antiques vol. 126, (1984) 1188.

⁹⁶David Curry, James Mc Neill Whistler: At the Freer Gallery of Art, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984) 157.

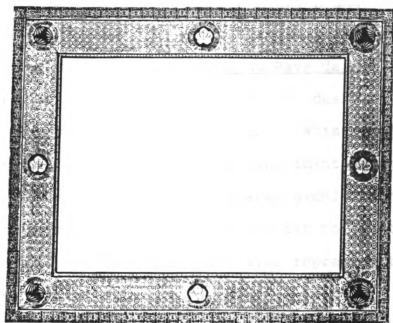


Figure 19. James Mc Neill Whistler, The frame for Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen, 1864.



Figure 20. 19th century Chinese blue and white plate.

to designs found on nineteenth century K'ang-Hsi bowls and vases. A second example of Whistler's Oriental frames is, La Princess du Pays de la Porcelain. (fig.21) When comparing its design to other pieces of blue and white porcelain in Whistler's own personal collection after 1879, many identical patterns are found. The six Chinese marks spaced evenly among the frame are the six marks used on the porcelain to identify the date and designer. (fig.22) This may also represent the type of porcelain in the painting, making the frame not only appropriate for it's picture but subject with it. The gridlike patterns on this frame are very similar to ones found on one of Whistler's eighteenth century blue and white meat plates. (fig.23)

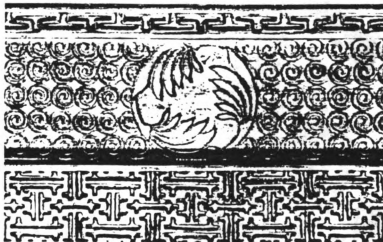


Figure 21. James Mc Neill Whistler's, frame for La Princess du pays de la Porcelaine, 1864.



Figure 22. 18th century Chinese blue and white plate with the six marks.



Figure 23. 18th century Chinese blue and white meat plate.

The circular motifs and the leaf like medallion are also very similar. Two different frames are said to have been designed for "La Princess" and both survive. Each possesses the same patterns but only one has the six marks.

Another frame Whistler designed was for the painting Variation in Pink and Gray: Chelsea, 1871.(fig.24) Here as with all of his frame designs the pattern he used had been recognized by Ira Horowitz, noted by David Curry, as deriving from porcelains, but that more than likely Whistler was not aware of the Eastern significance of them.⁹⁷ The reeding is a very popular motif for Whistler and this would develop into what becomes the typical Whistler frame. He uses the hatching technique in many of his future designs. Another example of blue and white porcelain is a bowl on tree feet made in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century and displays several of the patterns Whistler's used, especially the reeding.(fig.25) On the frame for Variation in Pink and Gray: Chelsea, the famous butterfly insignia appears periodically in the reeded pattern. Whistler's butterfly insignia took several forms, and it is obvious from this, that as well as being signatures for his paintings they also appeared on his frames. It was suggested earlier that this insignia may well have evolved from some boarder on porcelain which included the butterfly.

⁹⁷David Curry, James Mc Neill Whistler: At the Freer Gallery of Art, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984) 158.

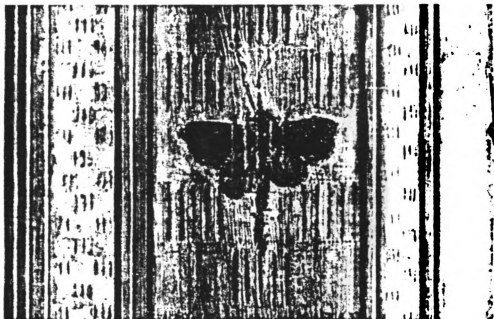


Figure 24. James Mc Neill Whistler's, frame for Variation
in Pink and Gray: Chelsea, 1871-1872.



Figure 25. L.18th or E.19th century Chinese blue and white
bowl.

An eighteenth century plate, owned by Whistler, is a fine example.(fig.26) Whistler, when ever possible, resigned many of his early painting with the butterfly insignia as well as his frames.



Figure 26. 18th century Chinese blue and white plate with the butterfly boarder.

The framing for Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Old Battersea Bridge, bears a circular emblem motif containing butterfly.(fig.27) Along with this motif is a motif of half moons which he repeated in the decoration of the Peacock Room 1876-1877. This semi circle is commonly used on the blue and white porcelain. An eighteenth century plate with a dragon whirling out of the sea spitting fire uses this pattern and it is identical to Whistler's.(fig.28)

Many other frames were created and all these patterns were repeated at one time or another.

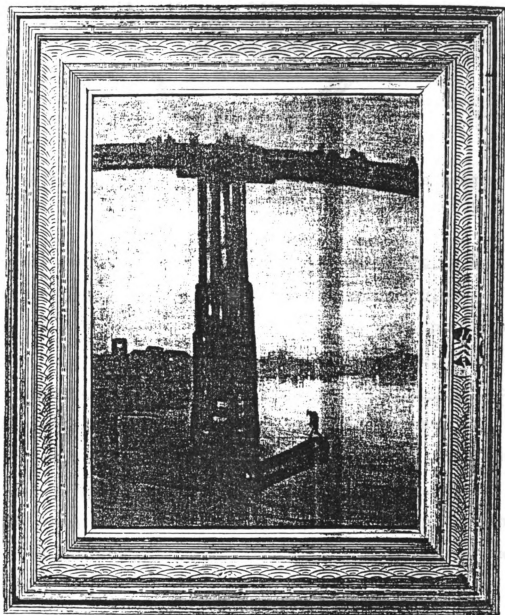


Figure 27. James Mc Neill Whistler's, frame for Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Old Battersea Bridge.



Figure 28. 18th century Chinese blue and white dragon plate.

Several example are, the frames for Arrangement in White and Black or Harmony in Blue and Gold: The little Blue Girl. (fig.29 and 30) Many of the frames carry patterns that repeat ones to be found in the painting they surround.

"Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Little Blue Girl", posses a blue and gold checkered frame which echoes the rug underneath the models feet in the painting.⁹⁸ While this design is more interrelated to the painting itself and no clear example for this design can be found on porcelain, it is from the preceding examples that the idea for decorative patterns derives from porcelain and here Whistler has absorbed this idea and invents his own.

⁹⁸Curry 159.

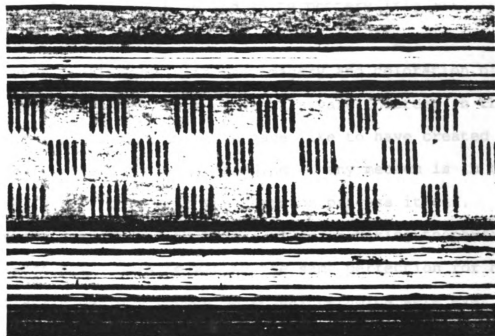


Figure 29. James Mc Neill Whistler's frame for Arrangement in White and Black, 1876.

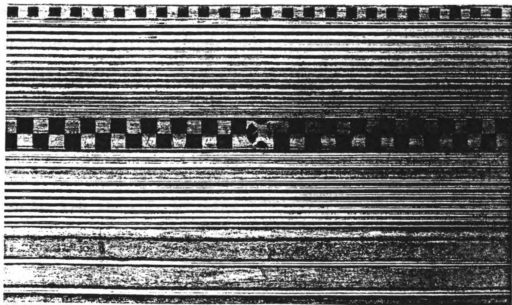


Figure 30. James Mc Neill Whistler's, frame for Harmony in Blue and Gold: the Little Blue Girl, 1894-1903.

It was around 1870 when Whistler actually began to create designs for his own blue and white pottery.(fig.31) These sketches are of great significance concerning Whistler's artistic involvement with the imagery and coloration of blue and white porcelain. It proves his vast interest in this medium and how much he would have like to have created it himself. The total understanding of any medium is in the actual participation in the creation process itself.

Whistler masters the technique of print-making to perfect his etchings. Here he wanted the same perfection for his decorative designs though no actual ceramics were ever produced.

In 1874-1875 Whistler was expanding his decorative talents to still other media. Two designs were made for floor coverings, either in a rug or matting form.(fig.32) These designs have floral patterns much like those on the eighteenth and nineteenth century porcelain plates. It was not until 1876 that Whistler was to attempt a interior decoration.

The first was for the stairhall at 49' Princess Gate commissioned by Frederick Leyland. Whistler created dado panels, six in all, to line the stair wall. He created one canvas with oriental motifs in oils and gold leaf. As David Curry stated about the stairhall, "Together the panels and drawing provide insights into Whistler's attitudes toward interior decoration, and demonstrate again that his

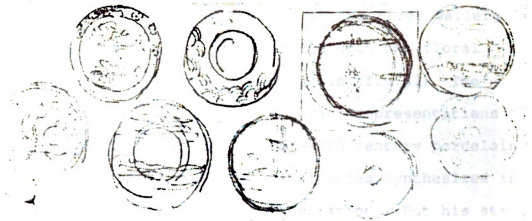


Figure 31. James Mc Neill Whistler's Sketches for blue and white porcelains, 1870's.

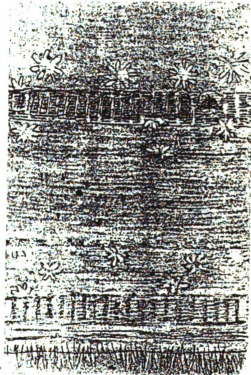
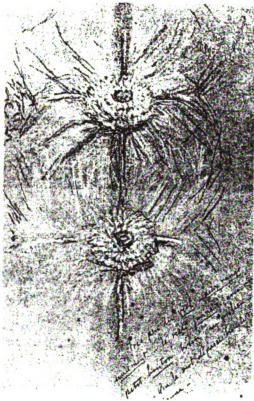


Figure 32. James Mc Neill Whistler's Designs for matings, a) Sunflower design, 1874, b) Floral design.

decorative schemes, as his easel paintings, he drew upon many sources...".⁹⁹ The dado panel at the Freer Gallery reveals once again that, Whistler fed upon the floral designs on his blue and white porcelain.(fig.33) The flowers in Whistler's oils are abstract representations just as the abstract flowers on a eighteenth century porcelain plate.(fig.34) There are other influences synthesized in Whistler's interior approach to decoration. But his strong interest in oriental patterns over takes the main composition. After the success of the dado panels Whistler was asked to collaborate with the well known architect Thomas Jeckyll on the dining room interior at Princess Gate. This interior was specifically designed to be a show case for a grand collection of blue and white porcelain collected by Murray Marks for Frederick Leyland. "The Peacock Room is a major component in a string of porcelain display rooms that began in the late seventeenth century."¹⁰⁰

While there was much turmoil between artist and patron surrounding the execution of this decoration and makes for fascinating reading it is not the point of this study. The point of mentioning it here is that the patterns Whistler chose to coordinate the entire room were derived

⁹⁹David Curry, "Whistler and Decoration", (Antiques: vol. 126 (1984) 1190.

¹⁰⁰David Curry, James Mc Neill Whistler: At the Freer Gallery of Art. (Washington: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984) 59.

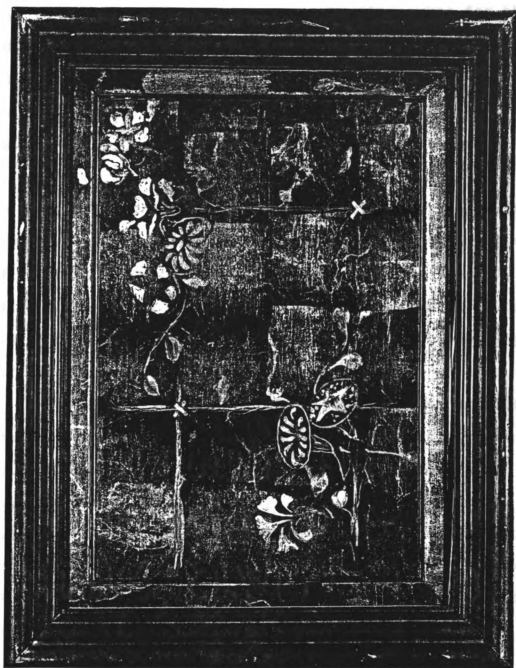


Figure 33. James Mc Neill Whistler's Dado panel for 49'
Princess Gate Stairhall, 1876.

again from porcelains. The pattern was the semi-circular pattern mentioned earlier on Whistler's frame designs. Whistler uses this in gold on a turquoise background. The eye of the peacock would appear to be the source for the pattern but Whistler was using this design long before 1876. It does under go alterations and Whistler creates several variations, one of which becomes the eye of the peacock.(fig.35) But the fact remains that the semi-circular motif was initiated by the blue and white porcelain. And it was after all a setting for a collection of these. This room is an important step to understanding Whistler's attempts towards abstraction. "As the only Whistler interior left to us, the peacock room is crucial for understanding the role of decoration in the development of his abstract painting style."¹⁰¹

Whistler uses the wall as he would a two dimensional canvas and creates a unity through his patterning. He then ties them all together through his repeated coloration and the composition comes together. As for the subject of his interior the bird and the flower are a very popular oriental subject, many times expressed on porcelain. The Peacock Room is of major significance to Whistler's career. It showed his talent as a strong decorative artist.

A year after the decoration of the Peacock Room,

¹⁰¹David Curry, James Mc Neill Whistler: At the Freer Gallery of Art, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984) 53.



Figure 34. 18th century Chinese blue and white plate with abstract flowers.

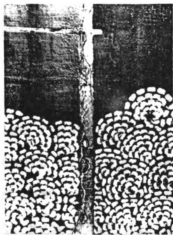


Figure 35. James Mc Neill Whistler's Decorative patterns from the Peacock Room, 1879.

Whistler was to decorate a cabinet designed by E.W. Godwin. The cabinet was known as the Butterfly Cabinet and makes use of gilding patterns found in the Peacock Room. (fig.36)

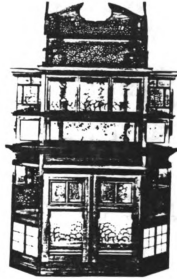


Figure 36. James Mc Neill Whistler's The Butterfly Cabinet, 1876.

Whistler includes an alternating semi-circular pattern but also creates a central panel with abstract flowers. This result is a synthesized sense of luxury. He titled the cabinet as he would a painting, Harmony in Yellow and Gold: The Butterfly Cabinet.

One of the larger events of 1878 was the Exhibition of Sir Henry Thompson's collections of blue and white porcelain

at 395 Oxford Street. Whistler was quite involved with the event for he was to supply Sir Thompson with sketches of the porcelain to be in the exhibition catalogue. The porcelain was collected by Murray Marks, possibly the reason why Whistler was chosen to do the designs since Marks was Whistler's dealer as well. The catalogue projects were started in October of 1876. Whistler sent Sir Thompson six examples of how he intended to illustrate the porcelain all sketched on one sheet of paper. What is amazing about these initial sketches was Murray Marks statement, noted by Margaret Mac Donald, that Whistler; "...started by making half a dozen sketches by memory with the help of the pieces in his own collection."¹⁰² The fact that Whistler ability to recall the patterns and designs on Sir Thompson collection, never mind Whistler own collection, highlights Whistler's intense interest in the imagery depicted on blue and white porcelain. The sketches showed four plates or bowls, two views of an oviform vase and a hawthorn ginger-jar.¹⁰³ (fig.37)

The technique Whistler choose to illustrate the porcelain was pen and ink contours graced with a an ink wash. The washes give a translucent and spontaneous affect to these giving an equivalence to the original glazes and

¹⁰²Margaret Mac Donald, "Whistler's Design's for a Catalogue of Blue and White Porcelain, Connoisseur: vol. 198 (1978) 292.

¹⁰³Mac Donald 292.



Figure 37. James Mc Neill Whistler's Sketches for a display catalogue for blue and white porcelains, 1878.

is still another way reveals Whistler's appreciation for the surface quality and brushwork displays on the porcelain itself. Margaret Mac Donald believes Whistler's intention in these is not, "to reproduce every detail in the designs on porcelain, but to indicate the essential lines of the composition, the style of brushwork and areas of pattern."¹⁰⁴

The effort to present a more abstract image coincides with his oil painting effort at this time. He does not

¹⁰⁴Mac Donald 292.

choose to portray each piece in meticulous detail but to capture the spirit of the pieces. Sometimes he even goes beyond recognition; "...painted with long angular brushstrokes and at times the actual outline of the edge of the dish and neck of the canister is totally confused."¹⁰⁵

Abstraction and blue and white porcelain are actually coupled by 1878 synthesizing his two major artistic influences in this catalogue. And Whistler is portrayed on the catalogues cover carefully scrutinizing a blue and white vase. The catalogue refers to, "a special private view of ...Blue and White Nankin porcelain".¹⁰⁶ (fig.38) The term "Nankin" meaning the late eighteenth century blue and white porcelain which was shipped to Europe and transferred to sea-going junkships.¹⁰⁷ Most of the porcelain exhibited in the show is dated to K'ang Hsi Emperor.(figs.39-40) That this collection and Whistler's were contemporary and the forming of them was aided by the same dealer makes it likely that what Whistler owned before was much like what was illustrated. The catalogue was completed and published by October of 1878. It took Whistler, along with Sir Henry Thompson, over a year to complete the catalogue.

¹⁰⁵Mac Donald 292.

¹⁰⁶David Curry, James Mc Neill Whistler: At the Freer Gallery of Art, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984) 170.

¹⁰⁷D.F. Lunsingh Scheurleer. Chinese Export Porcelain. (New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation. 1974) 77.



Figure 38. Cover for Sir Henry Thompson's catalogue to display blue and white porcelains, 1878.



Figure 39. James Mc Neill Whistler's watercolored sketches for Sir Henry Thompson Catalogue, 1878.



Figure 40. James Mc Neill Whistler's watercolored sketches
for Sir Henry Thompson's Catalogue.

In May of 1879 Whistler was declared bankrupt and his collection of blue and white porcelain was sold at an auction Sotheby's in February of 1880.¹⁰⁸

Another design Whistler was to attempt was a pattern for Lady Archibald Campbell's parasols. (fig.41) Whistler sketches a beautiful abstract flower identical to late eighteenth century cups Whistler owned after his bankruptcy. (fig.42) The designs inside the cups depict blossoms blooming off delicate branches placed in vases along with other representations of porcelain. The popular hawthorn design on the ginger-jar is also identical to Whistler's parasol.

Whistler was able to collect over four hundred pieces of porcelain after 1879 and many of these pieces were given to Birnie Philip's after his death in 1903. Birnie was Whistler's sister-in-law and it was Birnie who cared for Whistler in his later years. The porcelain left to Birnie was of great variety. Later she donated them to the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow. (fig.42-49, appendix). These porcelain pieces were used for all the comparison made in this study. The fact that Whistler was to collect over four hundred pieces of porcelain between 1879 and 1903 only strengthens the argument regarding the importance of his interest in these objects. That porcelains remained a

¹⁰⁸Margaret Mac Donald, "Whistler's Design's for a Catalogue of Blue and White Porcelain", Connoisseur: vol. 198 (1978) 295.

guiding influence is evidenced in his late lithographs where freely drawn floating suggestiveness that echoes the graceful Chinese figures on porcelains, but this takes us beyond the limits of this study.

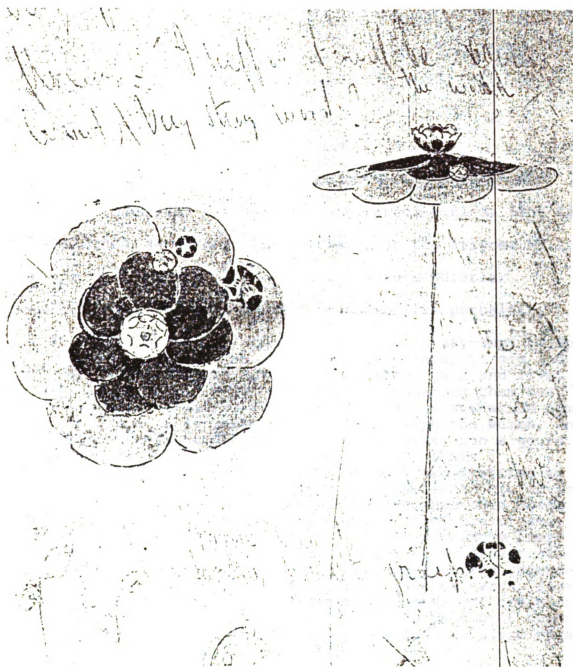


Figure 41. James Mc Neill Whistler's design for a Lady Archibald Campbell's parasol.

CONCLUSION

In 1885 Whistler decided to give a lecture on his artistic theories. He sent out invitation titled, "The Ten O'clock Lecture" and it was delivered at the Princes Hall at 10 p.m. on February 20th. In this lecture Whistler expressed his feelings towards his beautiful porcelain.

"In the beginning, man went forth each day-some to do battle ,some to the chase; others, again, to dig and delve in he field-all that they might gain and live, or lose and die. Until there was found among them one, differing from the rest, whose pursuits attracted him not, and so he stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devises with burnt stick upon a gourd. This man, who took no joy in the way of his brethren-who cared not for conquest, and fretting in the field-this designer of quaint patterns-this deviser of beautiful-who perceived in Nature about him curious curvings, as faces are seen in the fire-this dreamer apart, was the first artist.And presently there came to this man another-and, in time, others-of like nature, chosen by the gods-and so they worked together; and soon the fashioned from the moistened earth, forms resembling the gourd. And with the power of creation, the heirloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of Nature, and the first vase was born, in beautiful proportion".

Porcelain-"forms resembling the gourd"-embodied his concern for transformative power of art, for artifice rather

than nature."¹⁰⁹

Whistler's life as an artist is portrayed in this message but the emphasis on the vessel as being the beginning to artist innovation is important since it was the Chinese who discovered porcelain which then reinforces the theme of creation symbolized by the vase. The phrase, "...fashioned from the moistened earth, forms resembling the gourd" is a clear indication of what drew Whistler to porcelain symbolically and it is more than likely that the "Chinese heirloom" would be such a vessel. Whistler's lecture explained many of his artistic ideals and the reasons for them. Understanding Whistler's art through a strong study of porcelain throws a light on many of Whistler's studies and his progress towards abstraction throughout his career. The importance of porcelain is best understood through his "Ten O'clock Lecture". If the gourd was the first artistic innovation then all other artistic innovations must evolve from it. This maybe the reason for Whistler intense interest in the appearance of blue and white porcelain. Whistler's art to a large degree evolved from what he saw as a beautiful even rarefied art of blue and white porcelains. In meditating on this Whistler's own art became more and more suggestive, more and more abstract and on one level more elemental despite its elegant refinement.

¹⁰⁹Robin Spencer, Whistler: A Retrospective, (New York: Hugel, Lauter, Levin Associates, Inc., 1989) ??.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Examples from the James Mc Neill Whistler collection of Chinese porcelains in the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland.

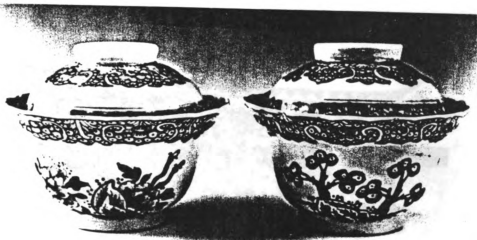


Figure 42. James Mc Neill Whistler, collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.

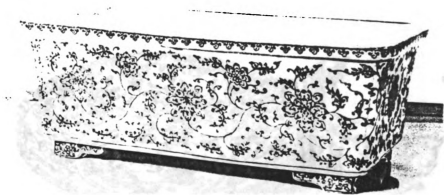


Figure 43. James Mc Neill Whistler, collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.

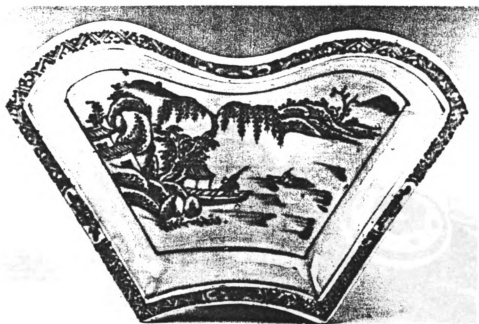


Figure 44. James Mc Neill Whistler, collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.

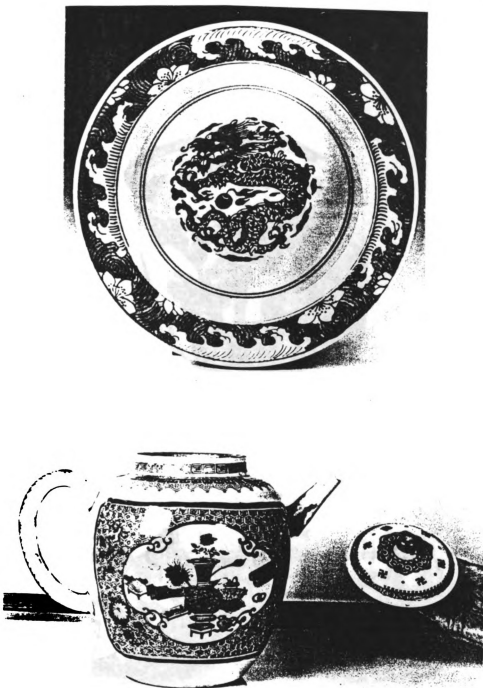


Figure 45. James Mc Neill Whistler, collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.

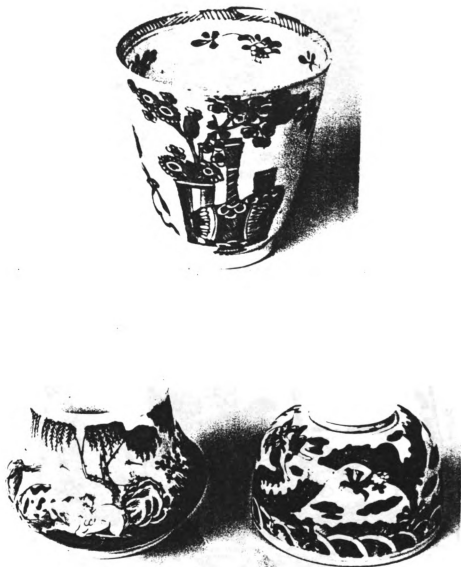


Figure 46. James Mc Neill Whistler, collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.

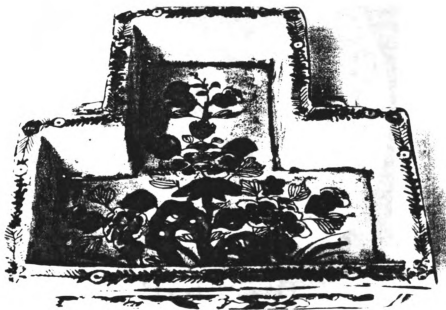
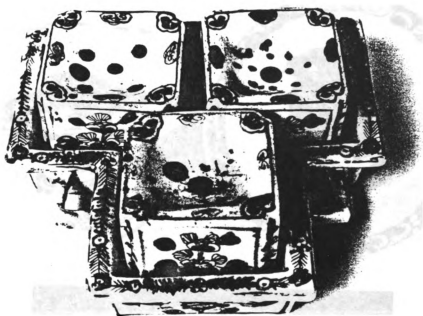


Figure 47. James Mc Neill Whistler, collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.

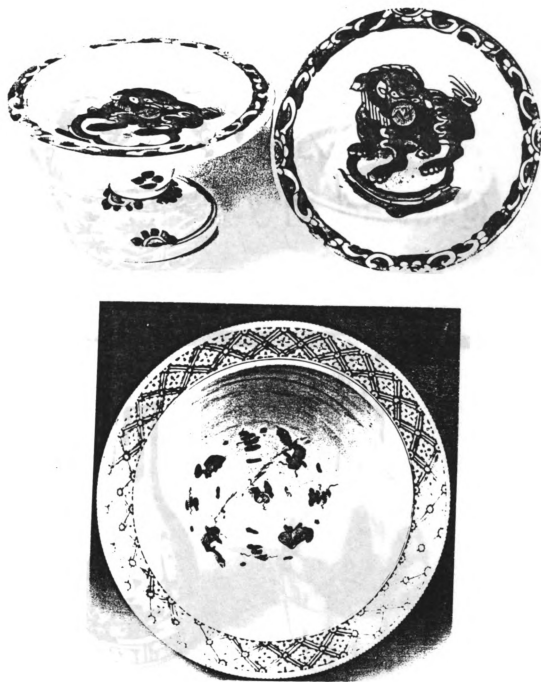


Figure 48. James Mc Neill Whistler, collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.



Figure 49. James Mc Neill Whistler, collection of blue and white porcelain after 1879.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Broun, Elizabeth. "Thoughts that Began with the Gods: The Content of Whistler's Art", Art Mag, vol. 62 O' 1987
- Cary, Elizabeth Luther. The Works of James Mc Neill Whistler, New York: Books for the Libraries Press, 1907
- Charleston, Robert J. The World of Ceramics, New York: Mc Graw-Hill Book Company, 1968
- Corbeiller, Clare Le. China Trade Porcelain: Patterns of Exchange, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1974
- Curry, David. James Mc Neill Whistler: At the Freer Gallery of Art, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984
- Curry, David. "Whistler and Decoration", Antiques: vol. 126 N' 1984
- Cox, Warren E. Pottery and Porcelain. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1970
- Duret, Siegfried. The Color Treasury of 18th Century Porcelain, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1971
- Eddy, Arthur Jerome. Recollections and Impressions of James Mc Neill Whistler, New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1972
- Fleming, Gordon. The Young Whistler 1834-1866, London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1978
- Foujita. "The Japanese Influence of Whistler", The Art News: vol. unknown
- Gerdts, William H. "The Bric-a-Brac Still Life", Antiques: vol. 100 N' 71
- Gregory, Horace. The World of James Mc Neill Whistler, New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1959
- Hedberg, Gregory. Victorian High Renaissance, Minnesota: The Minneapolis Institute of Art, 1978
- Hobson, R.L. Chinese Pottery and Porcelain, New York: Cassell and Company, LTD., vol. 2, 1915

- Honour, Hugu. Chinoiserie; The Vision of Cathay, Great Britain: R and R Clark LTD. Edinburgh, 1961
- Impey, Oliver, R. Chinoiserie: The Impact on the Western Art and Decoration, New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1977
- Laver, James. Whistler, London: Faber and Faber, 1951
- Levine, Gary, Preto, Robert, Tylor and Francine. "La Femme: The Influence of Whistler and Japanese Prints Masters on American Art. 1880-1917's", Grand Central Art Gallerier, 1983
- Mac Donald, Margaret. "Whistler's Design's for a Catalogue of Blue and White Porcelain", Connoisseur: vol. 198 Ag' 1978
- Macintosh, Duncan. Chinese Blue and White Porcelain, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1977
- Milner, Spencer. The Studios of Paris, New Haven: Yale, 1988
- Mc Mullen, Roy. Victorian Outsider: A Biography of J.A.M. Whistler, New York: E.P. Dutton and Company Inc., 1973
- Osgood, Cornelius. Blue and White Chinese Porcelain, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1974
- Patternson, Jerry E. Porcelain, Washington: Smithsonian Institution of Art. 1979
- Russell, John. "Whistler Reconsidered", Art News: Vol. 59 O' 1960
- Pearson, Hesketh. The Man Whistler, New York: Harper and Brother Publishers, 1952
- Pennell, Joseph. The Life of James Mc Neill Whistler, London: J.B. Lippincott Company, vol. 1 & 2, 1909
- Prideaux, Tom. The World of Whistler: 1834-1903, New York: Time Life Books, 1970
- Reitlinger, Gerald. "The Craze for Blue and White", Connoisseur: vol. 189 J1' 1975
- Sandberg, John. "Whistler's Studies", The Art Bulletin: M' 1968

- Savage, George. Porcelain Through the Ages, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1963
- Scheurleer, D.F. Lunsingh. Chinese Export Porcelain, New York: Pitman Publisher Corp., 1974
- Spencer, Robin. Whistler: A Retrospective, New York: Hugel Lauter, Levin Associates, Inc., 1989
- Spencer, Robin. The Aesthetic Movement, Great Britain: Studio Vista, 1972
- "Study of Blue and White Nankin Porcelain", Art News: vol. 68 Ja. 1970
- Sutton, Dennis. James Mc Neill Whistler: Painting, Etching, Pastels and Watercolors, London: Phaidon Press, 1966
- "The Chinese Screen", Antiques: vol. 126 N' 1984
- Walker, John. James Mc Neill Whistler, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1987
- "Watanabe, Toshio, Eshi Prints in Whistler's Studio? Eighteenth Century Japanese Prints in the West Before 1870", Burlington Mag: D' 1986
- Watkinson, Raymond. Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1970
- Weintraub, Stanley. Whistler: A Biography, New York: Weybright and Tally, 1974
- "Whistler's Frames", Art Journal: vol. 39 W' 1980
- "Whistler as a Decorator", Century Magazine: F' 1912

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293009028154