



PROJECT MUSE®

Emily Dickinson's Asian Consumption

Li-Hsin Hsu

The Emily Dickinson Journal, Volume 22, Number 2, 2013, pp. 1-25 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/edj.2013.0013>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/527134>



LI-HSIN HSU

Emily Dickinson's Asian Consumption

Emily Dickinson seemed to have a special relationship with Asian goods. In an 1846 letter to her friend Abiah Root, Dickinson records paying 12.5 cents each for two pieces of calligraphy by a Chinese writing master at an exhibition, which she considered “very precious” (L13). There was also a multi-colored shawl in the Dickinson household that she might have worn, the pattern of which indicates Eastern influence (Wardrop, *Emily Dickinson and the Labor of Clothing* 37-40).¹ Later references to Asia show an adoption of Eastern imagery as a symbol of luxury: in an 1880 letter, Dickinson associates the weather with Africa and flowers with Asia (L650). In another letter, she refers to the Eastern flowers in her garden, claiming that “The Orient is in the West” (L978), and in 1882, Dickinson expected the blooming “Exuberance” of “an Eastern Creature” in her soil again (L746). As Rebecca Patterson puts it, “[i]n extravagant mood, the poet’s flowers become all ‘Asia’ (L650)” (157). In fact, the first flower Dickinson pressed in her herbarium was the *Jasminum*, or jasmine, native to tropical Asia (Farr, *The Garden of Emily Dickinson* 99).

Dickinson’s work and life have also been related to her Asian-influenced perspective and temperament. In *Fables of Identity*, Northrop Frye calls Dickinson’s “manner of existence” “Oriental” (196). Scholars such as Christopher Benfey and Hiroko Uno have noted the affinity between Dickinson’s reclusive tendency and Asian aesthetic or religious practices (“A Route of Evanescence” 82-3; “Uno” 57-61). Recently, Yanbin Kang explores the connection between her poetry and “the spirit of Daoism” in depth, such as “self-effacement” and “non-interference” (76). Levels of Dickinson’s engagement with Eastern representation have also been examined in conjunction with the issues of race and exoticism. Paula Bernat Bennett observes that Dickinson shares the racial attitude of her class (“The Negro

never knew” 53). For Vivian Pollak and Páraic Finnerty, Dickinson uses Asian images mainly for self-expression and self-definition (Pollack 86; “We think of others” 87). Dickinson’s Asian imagery is comprehensively discussed in Cristanne Miller’s *Reading in Time*, which argues that Dickinson “borrows from and rewrites the symbolic geographies of her era” (130). Building upon such work, this essay looks at Dickinson’s poetic response to the geo-political discourse of her time through her poems of Asian consumption. The term “consumption” refers to both the recurring theme of material consumption—her portrayal of Eastern imagery as curiosities and objects on display—and her appropriation of these images to problematize social and cultural issues surrounding Eastern artifacts in the West. As Helen McNeil remarks, there is “a kind of object display” in Dickinson’s “use of geographical place-names as metonyms” (28). Dickinson’s Eastern representation also shows such metonymic display of Asian commodities; such poetic tendency reveals the intricate relationship between possession and consumption, especially as seen through the European employment of Asian workers and Western consumption of Asian material and cultural goods. Dickinson’s subtle positioning of America between the old worlds of Asia and Europe, in particular, suggests her early receptiveness to the patriotic discourses of her time, and her later, more reflective stance on United States culture.

Like her contemporaries, Dickinson had great enthusiasm for exotic objects and places, referring to more than 160 places in her poems.² Her penchant for the far and foreign reflects New England in her time, which, according to Allen Tate, was filled with “knickknacks, the fine china dogs and cats, the pieces of oriental jade, the chips off the leaning tower of Pisa” (155). In particular, arts “informed by the Orient” in the nineteenth century, as Susan Nance notes, helped define the United States by celebrating “consumer subjectivities” and “national character” (12). Eastern merchandise provided American consumers, especially middle class white women, with opportunities to explore their relationship to their country and the rest of the world. According to Mari Yoshihara, “Consumption and material culture offered women a cultural, educational, and liberating experience akin to the grand tour of the world, which their wealthy male counterparts undertook.” As Yoshihara explains, middle class white women “encountered Asian objects first as public spectacles,” and some would later become “agents of the culture of Orientalism” by consuming Asian goods (17-18). Dickinson’s Chinese museum visit bespeaks a similarly constructive contact, albeit in an oblique way. In one letter, she claimed to be “highly edified” by the performance of a Chinese musician in the exhibition, despite her attempt to suppress her “risible faculty” in

order to “keep sober” (L13). For Dickinson and contemporary middle class white women, experiencing Asia through performances and exhibitions was enjoyable and mostly instructive. It even offered Dickinson a chance to turn herself into an agent of “the culture of Orientalism” by either collecting Asian goods or creating her own oriental tales.

During the 1840s and 1850s, according to Arthur Versluis, New England writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau also engaged with Asian culture “positively” by assimilating Asian teachings into Western understanding of “universal progress” (3); they looked Eastward “for confirmation and amplification of all that is best in Western civilization” (145). This New England literary interest in the East, culminating in the 1850s and 1860s, was, as Malini Johar Schueller remarks, like European Orientalism, “intimately connected with the economic, political, religious and racial discourses on the Far East” and “found expression in celebrations of the westerly vision of empire” (143).³ Despite her lack of serious engagement with Asian scripture and literature, Dickinson appeared to be intrigued by this New England frenzy for the East (Miller, *Reading in Time* 129-130). Her chance of meeting an Asian face-to-face on the East coast of the U.S. was limited; nevertheless, her contact with the Chinese began at a fairly young age.⁴ In 1846, Dickinson attended John Peters’s Chinese exhibition in Boston, and was impressed with the determination of two Chinese men to quit opium. She later visited Fairmount Park in Philadelphia, which had a Chinese pagoda as one of its major attractions. Built around 1828, the pagoda was known locally as “The Temple of Confucius” (Weir 123); as Georgiana Strickland notes, it “undoubtedly reminded Dickinson of the Chinese Museum she had enjoyed” (96).

The plethora of mid-nineteenth-century reports on Asia also provided Dickinson plenty of resources to work out her version of the East.⁵ Her community seemed to have caught this Asian trend. A “Lecture at Holyoke on Chinese Character and Life” was announced in the *Springfield Republican* in 1857 (Miller 120-21). In 1858 Dickinson sought a copy of Thomas De Quincey’s *The Confessions of an Opium Eater* and would have encountered his narcotic representation of Asia (L191).⁶ Later, two close correspondents of Dickinson, Samuel Bowles and Helen Hunt Jackson, both travelled West and visited the Chinese communities in San Francisco. Bowles’s *Our New West* (1869) offers great insight into the social conditions of Chinese immigrants on the West coast. Jackson’s *Bits of Travel at Home* (1878) (a signed copy of which was given to Dickinson) also includes a comic depiction of her two ventures into Chinatown (Capps 178). From 1877 to 1878, systematic reportage appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* on Asian artifacts

at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition. Such travelogues and reports were published contemporaneously with the ongoing national debate about the “Chinese question,” which focused on the importation of Chinese labor to the East Coast from 1865 to 1870.⁷ It was at this time, from 1866 to 1869, that the Dickinsons were confronted with the problems of steady domestic service (Murray 27-29, 81-83). They could have resorted to the Chinese laundry in town for help, or hired Chinese house-servants, which an 1869 *Atlantic Monthly* article, “China in our Kitchens,” advised.⁸

Dickinson’s poems reflect her consistent awareness of this American interest in and contact with Asia. Cristanne Miller has identified around 70 Asian poems Dickinson wrote between 1858 and 1881 (*Reading in Time* 119). In five of these poems, “Civilization - spurns - the Leopard!” (Fr276), “Removed from Accident of Loss” (Fr417), “The Malay - took the Pearl - ” (Fr451), “His Mind like Fabrics of the East - ” (Fr1471), and “His oriental heresies” (Fr1562), Dickinson associates Eastern images with the material consumption or visual display of curiosities and artifacts. Her evocation of Asian commodities informs how Dickinson might have perceived New England’s role in an era of intensified global, cultural, and economic interchange. These poems also expose the unresolvable tension and fracture within the interconnected global network of labor, value production, and consumption, especially through their reference to narcotic consumption, a crucial element of the geopolitical contestation between America and the old worlds. “Civilization - spurns - the Leopard!” demonstrates the close-knit relationship between material consumption and contemporary geopolitical discourse. In this poem, the European “keeper” does not appreciate the beauty of the Asiatic leopard, thus excluding her from Western “Civilization”:

Civilization - spurns - the Leopard!
Was the Leopard - bold?
Deserts - never rebuked her Satin -
Ethiop - her Gold -
Tawny - her Customs -
She was Conscious -
Spotted - her Dun Gown -
This was the Leopard’s nature - Signor -
Need - a keeper - frown?

Li-hsin Hsu

Pity - the Pard - that left her Asia!
Memories - of Palm -
Cannot be stifled - with Narcotic -
Nor suppressed - with Balm -

(Fr276)

Asia is located in a composite setting that combines the wilderness of safaris and the lushness of palm trees, the luxury of satin silk and the pleasure of opium ("Narcotic"). The leopard is from somewhere in the East, possibly Africa or south Asia. References to "Ethiop" and "Deserts" designate Saharan areas and the Near East. "Palm" and "Balm" conjure up tropical or Mediterranean climates and the Middle East, perhaps the biblical Balm of Gilead. Satin is an intricate fabric of silk weave of Chinese origin. By presenting mixed images of Africa and the Far, Middle, and Near East in biblical tradition and Asiatic imagination, this poem constructs a cumulative fictional Asiatic landscape in which the leopard, along with her "Satin," "Gold," and "Palm," acts out a virtuoso performance of Eastern sumptuousness.⁹

The Chinese museum Dickinson visited in 1846 is characterized by a similar emphasis on the visual representation of miscellaneous Asian materials and goods. As one of the first U.S. exhibitions about China, the museum surrounded visitors with artifacts, wax figures, and pictures of various cultural activities, captivating its viewers with its "eye education" (Haddad, "Cultural Fruits" 8).¹⁰ As Dickinson wrote in a letter, "The Chinese Museum is a great curiosity. There are an endless variety of Wax figures made to resemble the Chinese & dressed in their costume. Also articles of Chinese manufacture of an innumerable variety deck the rooms" (L13). With its replicas of shops and statues, big red lanterns and a hovering dragon, and dioramas of Chinese people from all walks of life, the museum served as an early example of Edward Culter's so-called "spectacular, metonymic world," the experience of which might resemble Walt Whitman's a few years later in the 1853 Crystal Palace exhibition in New York.¹¹ Inevitably, the spectacle of Asia is also closely linked to the Western notion of empire. Timothy Mitchell describes the 1889 Paris World Exposition as a "world-as-exhibition," a place "where the artificial, the model, and the plan were employed to generate an unprecedented effect of order and certainty"—an imperial vision of history and progress (290). This staged effect can be seen in Dickinson's Eastern representation in her leopard poem; the Western imposition of order and celebration of progress is also embodied by her frowning "keeper," who desires control over his ostentatious parade of the Asiatic leopard.

Instead of confirming the value of “Civilization,” however, the leopard poem highlights the uneasy relationship between the consumption of Eastern goods and the inability of the Westerner to comprehend their meaning within this metonymic Asia. By contrasting the colors and fabrics that symbolize Asian lavishness with dull colors such as “Tawny,” “Spotted,” and “Dun,” hues with racial connotations, Dickinson illustrates the discrepancy of perspectives between the European and the Asiatic, which in turn magnifies the contradiction between the Western notion of empire and what the Asiatic leopard stands for. This tension is further complicated by the double roles the leopard plays in the poem. Dickinson’s leopard is an object to be owned and gazed at, but she also poses as a consumer, who is familiar with Eastern luxuries such as “Satin,” “Narcotic,” and “Balm,” and with whom the speaker at least partly identifies. Such a depiction echoes Nance’s comment on the “hedonistic consumption” of Eastern characters in the *Arabian Nights*, which evokes “the romantic promise of magical self-transformation, repose, and contentment to be found in the market” (20). Despite such a rosy vision, the leopard is not so much epicurean as emotionally suppressed; as the poem states, “Memories - of Palm - / Cannot be stifled - with Narcotic - / Nor suppressed - with Balm - .” The leopard shows no signs of contentment. She is conscious of her shabby appearance under the civilizing project of her European inspector, and her potential consumption of “Narcotic” and “Balm” enforces the impression of psychological oppression.

In particular, “Narcotic[s]” in this poem point to Dickinson’s awareness of the controversy of opium consumption, a topic that had also featured prominently in Peters’s Chinese Museum. The museum was opened three years after the first Anglo-Sino Opium War (1839-1842) thanks to the diplomatic mission of the American ambassador Caleb Cushing, who signed the Sino-American Treaty of Wangsia in 1844 to secure American commercial privilege in China. One of the museum’s highlights was its inclusion of two former opium addicts. In a letter, Dickinson showed a particular interest in these Chinese scholars:

One of them is a Professor of music in China & the other is teacher of a writing school at home. They were both wealthy & not obliged to labor but they were also Opium Eaters & fearing to continue the practice lest it destroyed their lives yet unable to break the “rigid chain of habit” in their own land They left their family’s & came to this country. They have now entirely overcome the practice. There is something peculiarly interesting to me in their self *denial*. (L13)

These men were part of the anti-opium agenda in the museum, the presence of which demonstrated “the dire effects of British trade and, by contrast, of the enlightened disposition of Americans like the proprietors, who opposed the drug traffic” (Zboray and Zboray 284). The catalogue concluded on a note that placed China and, implicitly, America on a moral high-ground: “Is it strange then when [the Chinese] see the greatest European nation [England] seize upon the neighboring country of India and clandestinely flood their shores with a drug which destroys thousands, and is known to be prohibited by their laws, that they should look upon them as barbarians” (186). Anti-imperialist sentiment of the U.S. manifested in the fact that these two Chinese men chose to come to America to quit opium. As Leo Marx states, the American myth affirmed that “Europeans experience regeneration in a New World” and that “[t]hey become new, better, happier men—they are reborn”; the same ideology seemed to underlie the decision of these Chinese men who emigrated to America (228).

The exhibition’s favorable opinion of the Chinese, as well as its patriotic message, would not have been lost on a young and enthusiastic visitor like Dickinson. Critics such as Uno and Elizabeth Willis have noted Dickinson’s potential awareness of the significance of Cushing’s diplomatic exchange with China.¹² She might have appreciated the museum’s cultural and diplomatic role as the “cultural fruit” of the first Sino-American exchange. As Ronald J. and Mary Saracino Zboray note, the Marlboro chapel, the museum venue, promoted “peaceful” Sino-American exchange, “treaty making without conquest” (276). Furthermore, opium addiction was, according to the Zborays, “boldly” compared to slavery in the museum catalogue, and the Chinese emperor was portrayed as being powerless “in stopping the English from dumping Indian opium on Chinese soil” (280). Such a sympathetic attitude could find resonance in the implication of the captive state of the leopard in Dickinson’s poem.

Paradoxically, Dickinson’s leopard “that left her Asia” does not quit opium in the West. On the contrary, the leopard uses “Narcotic” or “Balm” in an attempt to “stifle” and “suppress” her “Memories - of Palm - ,” her emotional attachment to Asia. In addition, although opium is a tacit culprit that, along with “Civilization” and the “Signor,” subdues the Asiatic leopard, Dickinson does not equate slavery with opium addiction, a comparison indeed made in abolitionist discourse and in the anti-imperialist rhetoric of her time.¹³ Instead, Dickinson’s narcotic allusion suggests a more nuanced understanding of the issue of opium consumption and labor.¹⁴ As Evelyn Hu-DeHart observes, in the mid-nineteenth century opium use was encouraged, and opium was even imported by some European planters

in Peru and Cuba for their Chinese “coolies” (175-181). Opium as social control aggravated the dependent situation of these Chinese workers. Frank H. Norton, a sympathetic writer for *Scribner’s Monthly*, informs his readers in “Our Labor-System and the Chinese” that the first Chinese immigrants to San Francisco “were fugitives from their masters in Peru, who took passage at Callao on the pretense that their term of service had expired” (67), accentuating the oppression of these European planters and image of the United States as a beacon of liberty and justice. By calling the “keeper” of the leopard “Signor,” an Italian form of address, Dickinson’s poem entails her recognition of the global aspects of narcotic trade, especially its instrumental role in the international competition for and command of markets and labor.

The position of Dickinson’s speaker in the leopard poem seems deliberately ambiguous. On the one hand, the speaker is sympathetic toward the leopard to the point of imagining her thoughts: “She was Conscious - / Spotted - her Dun Gown - .” By playing on the double meaning of the word “Spotted” as both being seen and mottled in color, the focus of the poem shifts from the male master’s disapproval to the female leopard’s uneasy reflection upon her physical difference from Western norms. Dickinson seems to have identified herself frequently with such marginalized others in her letters and poems.¹⁵ On the other hand, the poem detaches the speaker, and potentially Dickinson herself, from the “Signor” by typecasting the almost despotic, albeit civilized, keeper as explicitly European. The poem may thereby subtly align the sympathy of the reader with a white middle-class, potentially American voice not far from that of Dickinson herself or her contemporaries. The speaker’s partial affinity with the Asiatic other and distance from the European keeper endow her with an intermediating role. Her arbiter position thus complicates the apparent East-West division by implicating a third perspective that underscores an Asia-America-Europe triangle.

The heated debate over Chinese immigration in the U.S. in the 1860s and 1870s may also have influenced Dickinson’s representation of the Asiatic leopard. As Roger Daniels observes, in the 1850s low-paid Chinese workers caused the reduction of wages for American miners in California; in the 1860s San Francisco labor politicians began to organize “Anti-Coolie Clubs” and meetings to protest against the Chinese (33-38). Such a racial confrontation was dramatized in Bret Harte’s satirical poem “Plain Language from Truthful James” (also published as “The Heathen Chinese”), an overnight sensation after its 1870 publication in *Overland Monthly* (Sharnhorst, “Ways That Are Dark” 377; Nissen 111).¹⁶ The poem’s Irish worker exclaims, “We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor,” a

statement later adopted against Harte's original intention that incensed anti-Chinese sentiment in America (Scharnhorst, "'Ways That Are Dark'" 379-80). The ambivalence of American intellectuals toward the Chinese could also be seen in Bowles's *The Pacific Railroad—Open. How to Go: What to See* (1869), published serially in the *Atlantic Monthly*, in which Bowles compares the Chinese workers to "merchandise" imported in "a system only half removed from slavery itself" (72).¹⁷ In *Our New West*, Bowles observes the maltreatment of the Chinese in America, which "has driven them back upon their naturally self-contained natures and habits"; however, Bowles also notes that they "look down even with contempt upon our newer and rougher civilization, regarding us barbaric in fact" (405-06). Pro-Chinese writers such as Frank Norton would vindicate the Chinese unwillingness to assimilate, attributing it to their love for the homeland and hope to "return in better condition" (65).

Dickinson's sympathetic portrayal of the Asiatic leopard, written around 1862, coincided with the national debate over Chinese labor and in some ways anticipated the comments of both Bowles and Norton. Like imported "merchandise," the leopard that "left her Asia" is an object on display. Like Chinese immigrants, she is home-sick and does not assimilate. In particular, the first two lines indicate Dickinson's recognition of intensified racial confrontations in the 1860s. Although "Civilization" "spurns" the leopard, the word "bold" in the second line ("Was the Leopard - bold?") shifts the stress from "Civilization" to "the Leopard," hinting that it is her boldness that induces civilization's rejection. Because of its two dashes and the capitalization of both "Civilization" and "Leopard," the first line presents a visual divide, suggesting an equal and oppositional relationship but also a potential inversion of meaning, such that either "Civilization" or "the Leopard" might be the subject that "spurns." The dash in the second line draws further attention to the adjective "bold," encouraging ideas of the leopard's agency. In other words, the "bold" leopard may herself spurn civilization. The reference to Asiatic "boldness," along with the leopard's nostalgia, reverberates with the entwined issues of Chinese homesickness and non-assimilation. With the portrayal of a rebellious and repressed leopard, the poem recalls the difficult situation of Chinese workers. By pleading "Pity - the Pard - that left her Asia!," her poem seems to participate in the social debate of its time.

Two poems, also dated around the 1860s, similarly focus on the consumption of Eastern products, exploring a multilayered relationship between the East and the West. In "Removed from Accident of Loss" (Fr417) and "The Malay - took the Pearl - " (Fr451), Eastern pearls, symbols of riches, are employed to extrapolate

the ostensibly antithetical and potentially interconnected relationship between the “Brown Malay” and the white speaker. In the first poem, the speaker compares her days of simplicity to the unconsciousness of the “Brown Malay”:

Removed from Accident of Loss
By Accident of Gain
Befalling not my simple Days -
Myself had just to earn -

Of Riches - as unconscious
As is the Brown Malay
Of Pearls in Eastern Waters -
Marked His - What Holiday

Would stir his slow conception -
Had he the power to dream
That but the Dower's fraction -
Awaited even - Him -

(Fr417)

This analogy between the unthinking nature of the Malay and the “simple Days” of the speaker illustrates what Aife Murray calls the “class racialized images” that would appear often in her poems of the 1860s (162).¹⁸ Although “the Brown Malay” is geographically closer to “Pearls in Eastern Waters,” the white speaker emerges as the arbiter of their values. Paradoxically, her accidental “Gain” is predicated upon her recognition of her previous state of unconsciousness, like that of the Malay’s. While the speaker seems to have owned the “Gain” that “Befalls” her now, her comparison with the Malay throughout the poem reveals their similarities, which threaten to undermine the hierarchical structure of the speaker’s racialized analogy. After all, the Malay’s lack of self-awareness, as Miller points out, was shared by the speaker in her “simple Days” (*Reading in Time* 134). Furthermore, the riches that the speaker “had just to earn”—the “Accident of Gain”—are far from being a windfall. It is corollary to a prolonged process resembling the formation of pearls. While contrasting the inaction and passivity of the Malay with the active and “stirring” power of the speaker’s ability to dream, the poem also accentuates this procedure of “earning” from “Accident of Loss” to “Accident of Gain” as a gradual process of germination. The word “Holiday” embodies this paradox by indicating both idleness and the “power to dream.” It reveals a fundamental link between restfulness and mental creativity, inertia and

productivity, thus disclosing the laboring nature of this apparent stasis of “slow conception.” The “Accident of Gain” is actually preceded by a long development of impregnation and formation before its delivery.

Dickinson’s emphasis on the suddenness of “Loss” and “Gain” with words such as “Removed,” “Accident,” and “stir” also implies that the dormant power of the Malay to “dream” can be “stirred” and awakened, thus making Eastern riches more accessible to him. “Pearls in Eastern Waters” reify what is considered precious, attesting to the shared human interest between the Malay and the speaker. The last stanza complicates this equation by making this obtaining of Eastern pearls not only a spiritual commitment like marriage, but also a potential competition between the Malay and the speaker. As the concluding stanza suggests, with the “power to dream,” both the Malay and the speaker could be rewarded with “the Dower’s fraction”—the possession of Eastern “Riches.” By following the word “even” with a dash, Dickinson may suggest that gaining these Eastern pearls is an “even” game for the Malay and the speaker, but the dash also more obviously connotes that the Malay is less deserving: gain may come “even” to “Him.” Either the speaker feels that the Malay does not deserve “even” a fraction of the reward or she deserves more for her superior ability to “comprehend” the worth. By playing on the word “even” to emphasize the question of fairness, the last stanza points to a disputable racial equation and latent competition between the speaker and the Malay.

This notion of equality in Dickinson’s East-West analogy is also addressed in “The Malay - took the Pearl - .” Predicated upon a recognizable binary structure, the poem utilizes a dramatic monologue to contrast two types of consumers of Eastern goods—the refined European speaker and the primitive Asiatic diver:

The Malay - took the Pearl -
Not - I - the Earl -
I - feared the Sea - too much
Unsanctified - to touch -

Praying that I might be
Worthy - the Destiny -
The Swarthy fellow swam -
And bore my Jewel - Home -

Home to the Hut! What lot
Had I - the Jewel - got -
Borne on a Dusky Breast -
I had not deemed a Vest
Of Amber - fit -

The Negro never knew
I - wooed it - too -
To gain, or be undone -
Alike to Him - One -

(Fr451)

The jealous European speaker, "the Earl," fears the sea; his Asiatic counterpart, the Malay, obtains the pearl from the sea and bears it "on a Dusky Breast." In contrast to the slow Malay in the previous poem, the Malay here is masculine and physically active. Alternatively, this Earl is timid and effeminate; he is, according to Finnerty, "a gender-blurring speaker rather than a silent authoritative male" ("We think of others'" 82). While arguing for his worthiness, the speaker risks emasculation, of being "undone" for his lack of the ability to "woo" and "gain" the desired object; his lack of initiative decreases his competitiveness in a free marketplace, symbolized by the sea. While the first Malay poem stresses the acquisition of Eastern pearls as largely a matter of the "power to dream," the second Malay poem accentuates a more tangible and materialistic aspect of this East-West competition between a European connoisseur of the Eastern pearl and the Asiatic laborer, the Malay pearl diver, who is bodily capable but deemed intellectually unfit for the priceless piece of jewellery by the Earl.

In these two poems, the equality between the white speaker and the brown Malay remains unsettled. The "even" share of "the Dower's fraction" in the first poem and the remark on the "Alike[ness]" in the second conclude the racial competition in an emphatic but disquieting manner. This reiteration of sameness or similarities in the last lines of both poems seems to be a retrospective stance regarding the inconclusive analogy between the Malay and the speaker. Although the speakers in both poems venture to vindicate the superiority of mental growth and intellectual worth, they also risk being outdone by the Malay, which is insinuated in the first poem and suggested unequivocally in the second. While the speaker appears to be the one who can truly appreciate the value of Eastern pearls, the Malay diver has the dreaming potential, physical strength, and geographical advantage to obtain them. The Malay is not only a potential equal

or comrade in the common interest of humanity in the exotic and the rare, but also an intimidating player in the procurement of valuable goods. Peculiarly, both poems show an affinity between the pearl and the speaker. The first parallels the conception of pearls with that of the speaker's imagination (her ability to dream); the second magnifies the powerlessness of the Earl (his being "undone" resembles the pearl's lack of agency). For feminist critics such as Mary Loeffelholz, nineteenth-century middle-class women are not only "consumers" of the world, but they are also "what they buy" (20-21). The reference to "the Dower's fraction" in the first poem, and the rhyming of "Pearl" with "Earl" in the second poem, reveal a deeper connection or equivalence between the Eastern object and the effeminate speakers, gesturing toward the metaphoric potentiality of the pearl's consumers turning into the pearl itself in the process of "gaining."

By foregrounding the East-West comparison, Dickinson's two Malay poems, like "Civilization - spurns - the Leopard!," can be read in a broader geographical and historical context. They reflect what Daneen Wardrop and Paul Giles call Dickinson's "global consciousness" ("That Minute Domingo" 84; Giles 11). In "Removed from Accident of Loss," the repetition of "Accident" in the "Loss" and "Gain" of "Pearls in Eastern Waters" recalls the accidental so-called discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in his search for India. For the Malay, however, "Eastern Waters" might suggest the Pacific Ocean, or even the United States, since for Asian immigrants, the historical association of the United States with the California Gold Rush makes the American West the true East both geographically and metaphorically. In this way, "the power to dream" and the "Dower's fraction" not only indicate inner growth, but also refer to the global movements across time and space, from Columbus's transatlantic voyages in the fifteenth century to the quest for gold and "the American dream" in the 1840s and 1850s undertaken by "Argonauts," or gold-miners, including Asian immigrants and Americans from the East.¹⁹ Dickinson frequently alludes to Washington Irving's *Columbus: His Life and Voyages* in her poems and letters (Hallen 171-174). Her poems about treasure hunts and oceanic expeditions, such as "Trust in the Unexpected - " (Fr561), "I never told the buried gold" (Fr38), and "Finding is the first Act" (Fr910) show her exploration of the national myth of America, especially the West, as the land of gold. These geo-political allusions resurface in "The Malay - took the Pearl - ," in which the Earl's longing for his "Destiny," the Eastern pearl, evokes the myth of Manifest Destiny in the history of United States expansionism, which remained popular through the 1860s.

During Dickinson's time, America was often seen as centered geographically and culturally between Asia and Europe. Walt Whitman, for example, commented

on the 1860 parade of the samurai, “the swart-cheek’d princes” of Asia, in Manhattan during the Japanese mission to consolidate Japanese-American relations after the Treaty of Amity (2). While Whitman uses mostly words of European origin such as “Libertad,” “Americanos,” and “Cantabile” in the poem, he also celebrates the strategically central role of America as a “Mistress” to both the East and the West. As Benfey remarks, for Whitman, the United States “was now ‘the space between,’ where ‘vulnerable Asia’ and European civilization encountered each other” (*The Great Wave* 38). This central positioning of the United States can be seen in another 1869 poem by Susan J. Adams, written after the Burlingame Treaty of 1868 advanced Sino-American relations and approved Chinese immigration. In her poem “Occident and Orient” (*Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*), America reaches out to China in the name of sisterhood, pleading her to open up “thine inner glory” and receive “the light of Freedom” that is “flashing from shore to shore” (792). By employing a teleological discourse of illumination to account for American civilization, Adams’s poem expresses a national confidence that parallels American progress with the circular rotation of the sunlight, thereby emphasizing its inevitability, in contrast to the “Ancient,” stagnant, and “vulnerable” Asia.

Such poems show how American belief in a mythical destiny was relevant to its longing for direct access to the East. As David Palumbo-Liu argues, Manifest Destiny, “the defining mythos of America,” “form[ed] a bridge westward from the Old World, not just to the western coast of the North American continent, but from there to the trans-Pacific regions of Asia” (2). This American ambition to reach or even incorporate the East into the American empire might have some bearing on Dickinson’s Malay and leopard poems. “The Malay - took the Pearl - ” has been considered a parody on the timidity of the entitled “Earl” and a celebration of the Malay’s sexual prowess or social ascendancy.²⁰ The Earl’s fear of the sea—a level field for the acquisition or possession of desirable goods—may also suggest Dickinson’s social and racial conservatism.²¹ However, the evocation of “Destiny” in the poem, a word heavily charged with political connotations in an era of European colonialism and American expansionism, renders it more challenging to determine Dickinson’s position. Similarly, the speaker’s identification with the Brown Malay in “Removed from Accident of Loss” and the Asiatic leopard in “Civilization - spurns - the Leopard!” remains partial and ambiguous. In these poems, Dickinson seems to separate herself from the outmoded European thinking of the “Signor” and “Earl” that privileges cultural sophistication, social hierarchy, and racial superiority rather than equality and individual efforts. By concluding both Malay poems with words such as “even” and “Alike,” her poems intimate

that it is the disturbing equality between the Malay and the speaker, particularly their joint passion for Asian commodities, that triggers the East-West tension. As an American poet, Dickinson may be placing the "Destiny" of her country between the Asiatic other and the European in a transglobal marketplace of profit and gain.

As a middle-class white woman consumer, Dickinson might also have enjoyed creating her own oriental fantasy by reversing the stereotypical contrast between the feminine East and the masculine West, making the Asiatic primitive, muscular, and unmanageable, and the European refined but squeamish and effete. In particular, her Malay and leopard poems present a wide range of polarized and conflicted representations of Asia and Europe. Her Asiatic leopard is distinctly different from the "unconscious" Malay diver; she is acutely aware of the complexity of her situation. The "Earl" is threatened by the Malay and thus unlike the condescending "Signor," who "frowns" upon the leopard. Akira Iriye observes that the nineteenth-century "internationalist doctrine was embraced as a hopeful view of world history and of foreign affairs in which the United States would play a leading and inspirational role," although "individual Americans may have retained race prejudice as they came into contact with foreigners or as they pondered the future of their country" (40). Dickinson's leopard and Malay poems negotiate such a vacillation between patriotism and internationalism. Her later poems, while evoking the material culture of Asian consumption, seem more philosophical and pensive. Poems such as "His Mind like Fabrics of the East - " (Fr1471) and "His oriental heresies" (Fr1562A) still center on Eastern consumption, but her images are more concentrated, impersonal, and symbolic. In "His Mind like Fabrics of the East - ," Eastern tapestry is turned into a mythical symbol that defies interpretation:

His Mind like Fabrics of the East -
Displayed to the despair
Of everyone but here and there
An humble Purchaser -
For though his price was not of Gold -
More arduous there is -
That one should comprehend the worth,
Was all the price there was -

(Fr1471)

Like "Pearls in Eastern Waters" in her Malay poems and "Gold" and "Satin" in her leopard poem, "the East" with its "Fabric" and "Gold" conjures up the

imagery of Asian wealth and comfort. The alliteration of “display” and “despair,” “purchaser” and “price,” similarly opposes desirous consumers of the West to Eastern spectacles. The “humble Purchaser - ” resembles the praying “Earl” and the knowing speaker in the Malay poems, both of whom are able to “comprehend the worth” of what they desire. However, this poem has a meditative, if not elegiac, tone, since “the Destiny” of the Earl becomes “the despair” of the purchaser. These paired juxtapositions underline the distance between Western expectations toward the East, and the values these viewers actually acquire. Instead of displaying “unthreatening objects for collection and consumption,” or promising “magical self-transformation,” this poem reflects upon a romanticized Eastern vision that is ironically incomprehensible and unobtainable to most Western viewers (Yoshihara 18, Nance 20).

“His Mind like Fabrics of the East - ” is dated about 1878, two years after Philadelphia’s 1876 Centennial Exhibition. Dickinson would have had plenty of opportunities to learn about Asian artifacts exhibited during the exposition. From 1877-1878 in the *Atlantic Monthly*, for example, Edward H. Knight provided a series of reports on various topics concerning the Centennial Exhibition. In early 1878, he wrote two articles about “Cotton, Silk, and Spinning” and “Weaving” showcased in the exhibition, delineating the history of fabrics from the East and introducing all kinds of manufactures along with illustrations such as prints of roller cotton-gins, looms, and silk-making from various Asian exhibits. As Haddad points out, the 1870s saw “a curious resurgence in the myth of Cathay” in the United States, when “Americans expressed a profound ambivalence about industrialization, harboring both unbridled exuberance for technological progress and wistful nostalgia for a bygone era that, in retrospect, seemed simple and pure” (“Traditional China” 1). Eastern fabrics, symbols of an agricultural and manual society, would have attracted nostalgic Americans who sought escape from a rapidly modernizing world after the Civil War. Helen Hunt Jackson was both awed and terrified by her encounter with Asian commodities in San Francisco’s Chinatown. Published in 1878, Jackson’s travel account describes how her amusement turned into disturbance by the outlandish display of Eastern goods in a grocery store: “It sounds like an absurd exaggeration, but it is literally true, that the only articles in this shop which I ever saw before are bottles . . . but the purpose, use, or meaning of every other article is utterly unknown to me. There are things that look like games, like toys, like lamps, like idols, like utensils of lost trades, like relics of lost tribes, like—well, like a pawnbroker’s stock, just brought from some other world!” (63). Jackson was later “seized by horror” when she touched an artifact

hanging outside the shop and imagined that it might be “a piece of an ancestor of Moo’s, doing ghostly duty at his shop-door” (67). Jackson’s conjectures range from the ancient and the primitive to the alien, or even the spectral and the haunted, a response that is only slightly more light-hearted than the “despair” experienced by Dickinson’s spiritual purchaser in “His Mind like Fabrics of the East - .”

The association of the East with spiritualism also made Asia appealing to New England intellectuals. Asian religion and culture served as an alternative to an increasingly materialistic and commercialized United States. As Benfey notes, the Protestant elite were “deeply disaffected by the vulgarity and superficiality of American culture during the decades immediately following the Civil War,” and some Boston “Brahmins” travelled to the East looking “for a social order more attuned to their temperament” (*The Great Wave* xii). “His Mind like Fabrics of the East - ” may respond to the postbellum New England trend of Eastward pilgrimage. If, as Uno points out, the Eastern tapestry in the poem indicates the incomprehensible mind of God, then the poem reveals a reversal of power structure (62). Instead of projecting an Eastern utopia of spiritual realization, Dickinson makes Christianity the inexplicable other that confounds and dazzles its viewers. Versluis points out that “[v]irtually all popular depictions of Asian religions” in liberal nineteenth-century American magazines made “Asian religions into an object for consumption, subsuming them into an ideology of progress, be it by transforming Asian religions into a kind of nihilist virus destroying ‘Western civilization’ or by subsuming them into a Unitarian view of universal progress” (165). Corresponding to Versluis’s Western “consumption” of Asian religions is Dickinson’s metaphoric use of Eastern fabrics in her poem. Like Eastern pearls that stand for the Earl’s “Destiny” in the Malay poem, Eastern fabrics also induce a spiritual pilgrimage from their viewers. The ideology of “progress” requires the “arduous” effort believers have to make; nevertheless, it is an effort that also discloses spiritual connoisseurship in the West gone awry.

“His oriental heresies” exemplifies another type of consumerism that fits familiarly into both material and spiritual consumption. This poem features an Asiatic bee that enables an almost pantheistic scene of ecstasy in nature:

His oriental heresies
Exhilarate the Bee,
And filling all the Earth and Air
With gay apostasy

Fatigued at last, a Clover plain
Allures his jaded Eye
That lowly Breast where Butterflies
Have felt it meet to die -

(Fr1562)

As an Eastern consumer, the bee is immersed in “oriental heresies” and “gay apostasy” that decisively oppose Western values, especially Christian connotation of bees with diligence, productivity, and industry. The verbs “Exhilarate” and “Allures” also invoke a hedonistic, anti-puritan lifestyle. Pollak thus notes that the poem is “a reminder of an exotic world elsewhere” that would “indulge the heretical sexual and political hungers of a woman like herself” (“The Poetics of Whiteness” 86). The Asiatic bee here might refer to the honey-bee, which, according to John Burroughs in 1870, is an importation from Asia, unlike the bumble bee—the “truly native honey-maker” of America (45). Interestingly, an 1881 poem “De Yaller Chinee,” published in the *Century* and *Scribner’s*, compares the Chinese to the bumble-bee that “crawls in de dirt-dobbers hole / To warm up his fingers an git out de cole,” touching upon the “yaller” color of the Chinese (158).²² In a manner similar to Harte’s “The Heathen Chinee,” the poem mocks an increasing anti-Chinese sentiment from an African American’s perspective, with the black speaker asserting that “Dis country was made for de whites an de blacks,” and “Dat de orf-cullud furriner nebber will do.”²³ Written in the same year, Dickinson’s poem also thematizes the “oriental” and “heretical” aspects of the bee; intentionally or not, her “oriental” bee resounds the heightened racial quarrel that would amount to the exclusion of the Chinese in 1882.

Although Dickinson often uses “bee” imagery to depict the intoxication of alcohol, the bee’s “oriental heresies” might more obviously refer to Chinese opium-smoking, the practice of which, according to Peters’s Chinese museum, brought “the most delightful dreams.”²⁴ Toward the second half of the nineteenth century, reportage on opium was increasingly sensationalized and vilified.²⁵ In *Our New West*, for example, Bowles portrayed a Chinese opium smoker in a “tense” and “excited” state, with his “wildly brilliant eye,” “thin, haggard face,” and “broken nervous system.” As Bowles notes, the smoker was “a frightful object” lying “in the midst of his fatal enjoyment” (408). Opium-smokers were not only bodily exhausted through their addiction, but also visually “consumed” by the American public as curiosities. George Parson Lathrop, the son-in-law of Nathaniel Hawthorne, also describes his venture into an opium den in 1880, in which he called an opium-smoker an “opium devil”; “though human blood

runs in his veins," Lathrop observes, "it is little better than poppy-juice . . . All are seeking oblivion" (417).²⁶ Opium-smoking gradually became a national scandal, the public aversion toward which played a significant role in American legislation against Chinese immigration.²⁷ Dickinson would have been familiar with popular representations of the Chinese consumption of "poppy-juice" and the Eastern experience of "oblivion." She had two poppy samples, California poppy and common poppy, in her herbarium, made when she was a teenager (*Herbarium* 46, 51). She also employed the image of the poppy flower in "It was a quiet seeming Day - " (Fr1442), in which an apocalyptic vision is encoded in "The Poppy in the Cloud - ," a sight that reminds one of the mesmerizing experience of narcotic consumption typical of opium users.²⁸ Dickinson's "oriental" bee, in particular, resembles these opium-smokers in dissipation with his "jaded Eye," who meets "that lowly Breast" of "a Clover Plain" "to die." In a manner similar to another nonconformist, the leopard, the Asiatic bee is also staged as an apostate, an alternative to Western conventions.

These poems of Asian consumption inform Dickinson's perception of how material and spiritual consumption might be inseparable from its geo-political, and physical ramifications. They offer a glimpse of a poet who is worldlier and more socially sensitive than frequently considered. By juxtaposing the European with the Asiatic, her early poems about the Malay and the leopard reveal her receptiveness to the prevailing belief of her time that the United States was a more hopeful, if no more advanced, country than either Britain or China. However, as Nance notes, the transformative concept of the "Oriental tale" was used as a metaphor of "American capitalism" throughout the nineteenth century, because both "seemed to promise great riches and happiness but so often supplied panic, disappointment, and personal obscurity" (21). Dickinson's later poems about Eastern fabrics and the "oriental" bee tell this American-Oriental tale from a distance, revealing the promises of Asian consumption with a shadowy side. Dickinson's Malay and leopard poems, written in the 1860s, show a more personal and immediate response to the physical aspect of the racial other, while her poems of the 1880s are more abstract and contemplative.²⁹ All five poems indicate Dickinson's consistent poetic engagement with an emerging consumer society in America that involved a transglobal circle of production and consumption; they also expose its problematic process: this circle promoted international exchange but did not necessarily guarantee equality, progress, or liberation, qualities that were conventionally associated with Western modernity. Dickinson's "consumption" of Asia in all of these poems, particularly her association of Asia with consumerism and narcotic consumption, simultaneously evokes and unsettles the intended

control of Orientalist discourses over the racial other. They show her nuanced response to the geo-political discourses of her time, and her endeavour to position herself, and America, in her poetic mapping of the world.

Notes

1. Hiroko Uno observes that Dickinson was most likely to have been in contact with Eastern fabrics and artifacts during her stay in Boston with the Norcross family, who dealt with dry goods and ran a crockery ware business (45-47).
2. Rebecca Patterson's *Emily Dickinson's Imagery* offers a detailed study of Dickinson's geographical images and place names. See also Cynthia L. Hallen and Malina M. Nielson's "Emily Dickinson's Place Names" for the list of place names Dickinson used in her work.
3. Scholars have recognized the prevalence of the imagery of the East in American literature throughout the nineteenth century. Jim Egan, for example, argues that "authors at the epicenter of American literary history," from Anne Bradstreet to Edgar Allan Poe, have turned to the East "as a way to demonstrate America's civilized status" (13-14, 97). In *The Great Wave*, Benfey provides an insightful discussion about how Meiji Japan served as an alternative ideal social model for postbellum New England writers.
4. According to Najia Aarim-Heriot, Asians were relatively rare on the East coast of the U.S., with only 305 Chinese in 1870, when "[t]he foreign-born population for the whole area was more than 5,250,000—including 67.5 percent from Ireland and Germany" (134). In particular, the arrival of Japanese and Chinese students in the mid-nineteenth century was treated with diplomatic significance, as evidenced in Charles F. Thwing's July 1880 article for *Scribner's Monthly*, "Japanese and Chinese Students in America," which recorded around 70-100 Japanese students and 120 Chinese students in the Connecticut Valley in the 1860s and 1870s (451).
5. As Stuart Creighton Miller observes, American interest in China intensified after the Opium War (83). Works such as American missionary Samuel Wells Williams's *The Middle Kingdom* (1848) and Bayard Taylor's *A Visit to India, China, and Japan* (1853) provided antebellum American readers plenty of chances to grasp a glimpse of the veiled countries in Asia. Cristanne Miller also notes that the Dickinson family library had a selection of Orientalist literature (*Reading in Time* 119-120).
6. Judith Farr sees De Quincey's depiction of a mysterious Malay visitor as a helpful resource for Dickinson's Malay poems (*Passion of Emily Dickinson* 147-79).
7. Bret Harte's 1866 to 1867 articles about the life of San Francisco Chinese immigrants and their maltreatment, for example, were published in the *Springfield Republican*, which Dickinson might have read. See Gary Scharnhorst's *Bret Harte's California: Letters to the Springfield Republican and Christian Register, 1866-67*. On the reception of Chinese labor in New England from 1865 to 1870, see Aarim-Heriot (126-139).
8. According to Daniel Lombardo, Sing Lee's Chinese laundry was located on Palmer's Block, along with "the most important buildings in town," including the District Court, with Austin Dickinson's law office on the second floor (214-15).
9. Critics have pointed out Dickinson's compilation of Asian images in this poem from various cultural and biblical sources. See, for example, Patterson's discussion of Dickinson's geography (152-56). See also Robin Peel's *Hill of Science* (194, 224) and Alfred Habegger on the biblical reference of the poem in *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books* (412).
10. The museum's visual impact on its visitors could be glimpsed in the reportage on its transporting effects: one reporter claimed to "have been in China," and another

- compared the experience to one's metamorphosis "in Aladdin's time" (Haddad, "Cultural Fruits" 11).
11. Cutler associates Whitman's moment of spiritual doubt in his "Song of Myself" with the 1853 Crystal Palace exhibition in New York; as "a spectacular, metonymic world to the gaze," as Culter explains, its "significance and promise" remains unclear (156).
 12. On Dickinson's father and Cushing, see Uno (48-50). In "Dickinson's Species of Narrative," Willis associates narcotic imagery in "This World is not conclusion" (Fr373) with the American opium trade with China; she argues for Dickinson's recognition of the ironies of the Wangsia Treaty as a peace treaty between China and America (28-29). Dickinson's leopard and Malay poems, however, seem to show her receptiveness to John Peters's moral messages.
 13. Scholars such as Wardrop and Finnerty and poet Christopher Nield have touched upon Dickinson's imagery of African slavery in the poem ("That Minute Domingo" 80-81; *Emily Dickinson's Shakespeare* 170; "A Reading of 'Civilization - spurns - the Leopard'").
 14. The American condemnation of British imperialism was complicated by the heated debate about the practice of slavery in the American South. For example, an 1852 article in *The Living Age*, "The Opium Trade," compares the opium trade to slavery; however, instead of condemning Southern slave-holders, the article focuses on the British institutionalization of slavery through its imperial exploitation of the African and the Chinese alike (547, 546). A few years later, when the Second Anglo-Sino Opium War (1856-1860) took place, the same patriotic, anti-imperialist sentiment would resurface in the American press, as Miller demonstrates by reference to an 1857 article, "The Chinese—Shall we help fight them?," in the *Springfield Republican* (*Reading in Time* 123). By that time, Dickinson would have been familiar with the entangled rhetorical critique of the opium trade, the practice of slavery, and European tyranny from the side of American media.
 15. The leopard is often associated with Dickinson's self-expression or her portrayal of otherness. Both Patterson and McNeil consider the tawny and spotted leopard as resembling Dickinson (*Dickinson's Imagery* 151; *Emily Dickinson* 43). Bennett and Finnerty regard the leopard as the symbol of an exotic, Asiatic, female other that Dickinson could relate to ("The Orient is in the West" 115; *Dickinson's Shakespeare* 174).
 16. Harte meant to criticize the use of violence and the hypocrisy of the Irish workers, who were also discriminated against by Protestant Americans for their association with physical violence, excessive drinking practice, and Catholic beliefs (Dowd 12-14). However, as Scharnhorst notes, "the poem was read by many a xenophobic reader as satire not of the Irish hardships but of Ah Sin and the 'yellow peril' he seemed to represent" (*Bret Harte* 54).
 17. Bowles's attitude would foresee the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 that associated Chinese labor with slavery, regarding the Chinese as a formidable threat to the construction of a modern America as a democratic country. See, for example, Moon-Ho Jung's "Outlawing 'Coolies': Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation."
 18. Critics such as Pollak and Bennett have noted Dickinson's receptiveness of the stereotypical portrayal of the Malay in the poem ("Dickinson and the Poetics of Whiteness" 90, 92; "The Negro never knew" 56).
 19. Dickinson might have read Harte's tales of these "Argonauts" and news about foreign immigrants in California in the *Springfield Republican* and the *Atlantic Monthly*. Harte had been to Amherst and was entertained by Susan Dickinson in the Evergreens (Habegger 372).
 20. Finnerty and Pollak have explored the sexualized depiction of the Malay and the Earl in the poem, which challenges Western norms of femininity ("No Matter - now - Sweet - But when I'm Earl" 82; Pollak 90). Alternatively, Murray reads the poem as a social account of "the rightful ascendancy of the poor and the demise of the rich" (162, 163).

21. Betsy Erkkila has argued for Dickinson's social conservatism (*Wicked Sisters* 73; "Dickinson and the Art of Politics" 142-43). Bennett further suggests that Dickinson shared her class's racial attitudes ("The Negro never knew" 53).
22. The poem was reprinted in *Southland Times* the next year and titled "The Chinese Question from A Negro Point of View" (3).
23. One month later, Dickinson employed the image of a tropical bee again in a letter to Elizabeth Holland with a poem, responding to the December issue of the *Century* and *Scribner's* in memory of her husband Josiah Gilbert Holland (L738): "No Autumn's intercepting Chill / Appalls that Tropic Breast - / But African Exuberance / And Asiatic Rest." An alternative version of the first two lines of the poem, "No autumn's interceptive chills, / Appalls that Tripoli," was copied by Mabel Loomis Todd on the same transcript as "His oriental heresies." As R. W. Franklin suggests, these two lines might have been on the same paper as the manuscript of "His oriental heresies" (1364-1365).
24. Despite its anti-opium campaign, the Chinese exhibition catalogue called opium the most "seductive luxury" (66-67). The museum also had one case of wax figures displaying an upper-middle class gentleman with his wife smoking opium in his comfortable home, with furniture of delicate bamboo work and "door screen embroidered with gold," visually contradicting the statement of the catalogue about the devastating effect opium was supposed to have on its user (61-63). On Dickinson's bee poems in relation to the temperance movement, see Domhnall Mitchell's "Ardent Spirits."
25. Scholars have pointed out the common use of opium for medicinal or recreational purposes in the first half of the nineteenth century and later vilification of its representation in the West. See, for example, Alethea Hayter's *Opium and the Romantic Imagination* (29-35) and Keith McMahon's *The Fall of the God of Money*.
26. Although it is not certain if Dickinson had ever read Lathrop's article, she referred to one of his poems in a letter to the Norcross cousins in 1881 (L737).
27. During the 1870s, as Stuart Creighton Miller observes, Chinese opium smoking took the place of Irish whiskey drinking as the disturbing social and political issue in the United States (199). See also Dinan L. Ahmad's *The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion Laws in the Nineteenth-Century American West* (51-76).
28. Dickinson's poems about the sunset and the window views are, according to Peel, "visionary" and "dreamlike," resembling drug-induced poetry (217). George Mamunes suggests that Dickinson might have taken laudanum for her lung problem, when she was forced to leave school in 1845-46 due to poor health (30-32).
29. I generally agree with Miller's observation that Dickinson's references to the East after 1865 become "more conventional" without involving much "political allusion" or "implied cultural critique of Western rigidities, artificiality, and pretension" (*Reading in Time* 144); however, these two later poems seem to retain to some extent Dickinson's acuteness as a social observer.

Works Cited

The following abbreviations are used to refer to the writings of Emily Dickinson:

- Fr *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Ed. R. W. Franklin. 3 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1998. Citation by poem number.
- L *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Eds. Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora Ward. 3 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1958. Citation by letter number.
- Aarim-Heriot, Najia. *Chinese Immigrants, African Americans, and Racial Anxiety in the United States, 1848-82*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2003.

- Adams, Susan J. "Occident and Orient." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 39.234 (Nov. 1869): 792.
- Ahmad, Dinan L. *The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion Laws in the Nineteenth-Century American West*. Reno: U of Nevada P, 2007.
- Benfey, Christopher. *The Great Wave: Gilded Age Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics, and the Opening of Old Japan*. New York: Random House, 2004.
- _____. "A Route of Evanescence: Emily Dickinson and Japan." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 16.2 (2007): 81-93.
- Bennett, Paula Bernat. "'The Negro never knew': Emily Dickinson and Racial Typology in the Nineteenth Century." *Legacy* 19.1 (2002): 53-61.
- _____. "'The Orient is in the West': Emily Dickinson's Reading of *Anthony and Cleopatra*." *Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare: On the Responses of Dickinson, Woolf, Rich, H.D., George Eliot, and Others*. Champaign: U of Illinois P, 1990: 108-122.
- Bowles, Samuel. *The Pacific Railroad—Open. How to Go, What to See. A Guide for Travel to and through Western America*. Boston: Fields, Osgood, & Co., 1869.
- _____. *Our New West*. Hartford, CT: Hartford Publishing Company, 1869.
- Burroughs, John. "Wild Bees." *Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art* 16.31 (1870): 41-48.
- Capps, Jack L. *Emily Dickinson's Reading: 1836-1886*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1966.
- "China in our Kitchens." *Atlantic Monthly* 23.140 (June 1869): 747-52.
- Cutler, Edward S. *Recovering the New: Transatlantic Roots of Modernism*. Lebanon, NH: UP of New England, 2002.
- Daniels, Roger. *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850*. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1995.
- De Quincey, Thomas. *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater and Related Writings*. Ed. Joel Faflak. Peterborough, ON: Broadview P, 2009.
- Dickinson, Emily. *Emily Dickinson's Herbarium: A Facsimile Edition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2006.
- Dowd, Christopher. *The Construction of Irish Identity in American Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Egan, Jim. *Oriental Shadows: The Presence of the East in Early American Literature*. Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 2011.
- Erkkila, Betsy. "Dickinson and the Art of Politics." *A Historical Guide to Emily Dickinson*. Ed. Vivian Pollak. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004: 133-174.
- _____. *The Wicked Sisters: Woman Poets, Literary History, and Discord*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.
- Farr, Judith. *The Passion of Emily Dickinson*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1994.
- _____. *The Garden of Emily Dickinson*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2004.
- Finnerty, Páraic. "'No Matter - now - Sweet - But when I'm Earl': Dickinson's Shakespearean Cross-Dressing." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 7.2 (Fall 1998): 65-94.
- _____. *Emily Dickinson's Shakespeare*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2006.
- _____. "'We think of others possessing you with the throes of Othello': Dickinson Playing Othello, Race, and Tommaso Salvini." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 11.1 (2002): 81-90.
- Frye, Northrop. *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology*. Chicago: Harcourt, 1963.
- Giles, Paul. "'The Earth reversed her Hemispheres': Dickinson's Global Antipodality." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 20.1 (Spring 2011): 1-21.
- Habegger, Alfred. *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books: The Life of Emily Dickinson*. New York: The Modern Library, 2001.
- Haddad, John Rogers. "The Cultural Fruits of Diplomacy: A Chinese Museum and Panorama." *The Romance of China: Excursions to China in U.S. Culture, 1776-1876*. New York: Columbia UP, 2008.
- _____. "Traditional China and Chinese Yankees: The Centennial Exposition of 1876." *The Romance of China: Excursions to China in U.S. Culture, 1776-1876*. New York: Columbia UP, 2008.

- Hallen, Cynthia L. "Brave Columbus, Brave Columba: Emily Dickinson's Search for Land." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 5.2 (1996): 169-175.
- Hallen, Cynthia L. and Malina M. Nielson. "Emily Dickinson's Place Names." *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* 54.1 (Mar. 2006): 5-21.
- Harte, Bret. *Bret Harte's California: Letters to the Springfield Republican and Christian Register, 1866-67*. Ed. Gary Scharnhorst. Albuquerque: U of Mexico P, 1990.
- Hayter, Alethea. *Opium and the Romantic Imagination*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1968.
- Hu-DeHart, Evelyn. "Opium and Social Control: Coolies on the Plantations of Peru and Cuba." *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 1.2 (Nov. 2005): 169-183.
- Iriye, Akira. *From Nationalism to Internationalism: U.S. Foreign Policy to 1914*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Jackson, Helen Hunt. *Bits of Travel at Home*. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1890.
- Jung, Moon-Ho. "Outlawing 'Coolies': Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation." *American Quarterly* 57.3 (2005): 677-701.
- Kang, Yanbin. "Dickinson's Hummingbirds, Circumference, and Chinese Poetics." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 20.2 (Fall 2011): 57-82.
- Knight, Edward H. "Crude and Curious Inventions at the Centennial Exhibition IX." *Atlantic Monthly* 41.243 (Jan. 1878): 19-30.
- _____. "Crude and Curious Inventions at the Centennial Exhibition X." *Atlantic Monthly* 41.244 (Feb. 1878): 224-35.
- Lathrop, George Parson. "The Sorcery of Madjoon." *Scribner's Monthly* 20.3 (July 1880): 416-422.
- Loeffelholz, Mary. *Dickinson and the Boundaries of Feminist Theory*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1991.
- Lombardo, Daniel. *A Hedge Away: The Other Side of Emily Dickinson's Amherst*. Northampton, MA: Daily Hampshire Gazette, 1997.
- Macon, J. A. "De Yaller Chinees." *The Century* 23.1 (Nov. 1881): 158-159.
- Mamunes, George. "So has a Daisy vanished": *Emily Dickinson and Tuberculosis*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008.
- Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
- McMahon, Keith. *The Fall of the God of Money: Opium Smoking in Nineteenth-Century China*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002.
- McNeil, Helen. *Emily Dickinson*. London: Virago Press, 1986.
- McSweeney, Kerry and Peter Sabor, eds. *Thomas Carlyle: Sartor Resartus*. Oxford & New York: Oxford UP, 1987.
- Miller, Cristanne. *Emily Dickinson: A Poet's Grammar*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1987.
- _____. *Reading in Time: Emily Dickinson in the Nineteenth Century*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2012.
- Miller, Stuart Creighton. *The Unwelcome Immigrant: The American Image of the Chinese, 1785-1882*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1969.
- Mitchell, Domhnall. "Ardent Spirits: Temperance in Emily Dickinson's Writing." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 15.2 (Fall 2006): 95-112.
- Mitchell, Timothy. "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order." *Colonialism and Culture*. Ed. Nicolas B. Dirks. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992.
- Murray, Aife. *Maid as Muse: How Servants Changed Emily Dickinson's Life and Language*. Lebanon: U of New Hampshire P, 2010.
- Nance, Susan. *How the Arabian Nights Inspired the American Dream*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2009.
- Nield, Christopher. "A Reading of 'Civilization - Spurns the Leopard' by Emily Dickinson." *The Epoch Times* (28 June 2009): np.
- Nissen, Axel. *Bret Harte: Prince and Pauper*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2000.

- Norton, Frank H. "Our Labor-System and the Chinese." *Scribner's Monthly* 2.1 (May 1871): 61-71.
- Palumbo-Liu, David. *Asian-American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1999.
- Patterson, Rebecca. *Emily Dickinson's Imagery*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1979.
- Peel, Robin. *Emily Dickinson and the Hill of Science*. Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2010.
- Peters, John R. *Miscellaneous Remarks Upon the Government, History, Religions, Literature, Agriculture, Arts, Trades, Manners, and Customs of the Chinese: As Suggested by an Examination of the Articles Comprising the Chinese Museum*. Boston: Eastburn's P, 1845.
- Pollak, Vivian R. "Dickinson and the Poetics of Whiteness." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 9.2 (Fall 2000): 84-95.
- Scharnhorst, Gary. "'Ways That Are Dark': Appropriations of Bret Harte's 'Plain Language from Truthful James.'" *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 51.3 (Dec. 1996): 377-399.
- _____. *Bret Harte: Opening the American Literary West*. Oklahoma City: U of Oklahoma P, 2000.
- Schuessler, Malini Johar. *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790-1890*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1998.
- Strickland, Georgiana. "Emily Dickinson's Philadelphia." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 13.2 (Fall 2004): 79-115.
- Tate, Allen. "New England Culture and Emily Dickinson." *The Recognition of Emily Dickinson: Selected Criticism Since 1890*. Ed. Caesar R. Blake and Carlton F. Wells. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1965.
- "The Chinese Question from A Negro Point of View." *Southland Times* 4254.25 (Feb. 1882): 3.
- "The Opium Trade." *The Living Age* 35.448 (18 Dec. 1852): 546-552.
- Thwing, Charles F. "Japanese and Chinese students in America." *Scribner's Monthly* 20.3 (July 1880): 450-462.
- Uno, Hiroko. "Emily Dickinson's Encounter with the East: Chinese Museum in Boston." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 17.1 (Spring 2008): 43-67.
- Versluis, Arthur. *American Transcendentalism and Asian Religions*. New York: Oxford UP, 1993.
- Wardrop, Daneen. *Emily Dickinson and the Labor of Clothing*. Lebanon: U of New Hampshire P, 2009.
- _____. "'That Minute Domingo': Dickinson's Cooptation of Abolitionist Diction and Franklin's Variorum Edition." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 8.2 (Fall 1999): 72-86.
- Weir, David. *American Orient: Imagining the East from the Colonial Era through the Twentieth Century*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2011.
- Whitman, Walt. "The Errand-Bearers." *The New-York Times* 27 (June 1860): 2.
- Willis, Elizabeth. "Dickinson's Species of Narrative." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 18.1 (Spring 2009): 22-31.
- Yoshihara, Mari. *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism*. New York: Oxford UP, 2003.
- Zboray, Ronald J. and Mary Saracino Zboray. "Between 'Crockery-dom' and Barnum: Boston's Chinese Museum, 1845-47." *American Quarterly* 56.2 (2004): 271-307.