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ABSTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to examine Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau, seminal figures in the American Art pottery movement, and their contributions to the art education of women. The dissertation is a historical analysis of the conditions in which both developed professionally, information which is placed in two contexts: (1) the context of the British Arts and Crafts Movement, and the historical roles women have played in this field, and (2) the sociocultural milieu of 19th century America, with particular attention to the issues of the Protestant Work Ethic, the Colonial Revival, and developments in the Arts and Crafts industry.

Both McLaughlin and Robineau acknowledged the plight of the American women in the 19th century, who, after the Civil War and during a long period of westward expansion, were much more on their own, forced to fend for themselves financially in numbers higher than ever before. McLaughlin and Robineau sought, through a variety of educational means, to provide the late 19th and early 20th century woman with life options. Primarily this was achieved through education in the ceramic arts, by which a woman could make a decent wage while engaging in a respectable livelihood.
McLaughlin and Robineau presented women with the tools they needed in the form of their own hands, and bade them step foot into the world of industry and transform it by their very presence.
Dedicated to Sebastian and Sophie

"The lily is an herb with a white flower. And though the leaves of the flower be white yet within shineth the likeness of gold."

--Bartholomaeus Anglicus, 13th century
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over these years. Lastly, I must extend a very long-awaited thank you to my late grandmother, Ann, for putting out the paints and buying me second-hand art books, encouraging a young girl from the country that art was the most noble of pursuits.
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PREFACE

Justification of Methodology

The subject of my dissertation, "Out of the Hands of Orators: Mary Louise McLaughlin, Adelaide Alsop Robineau, the American Art Pottery Movement, and the Art Education of Women," draws on the tradition of historical methodology but will be viewed through the lens of feminism. When I reflect upon how this project came to be conceived I am made aware of the strength of the feminist motives which were behind it. First, the two subjects of my study, Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau, were concerned with "the domestic problem": how to reconcile the demands of home and family with psychological fulfillment and economic freedom. As a new mother, I fully realized how unsolved or unresolved the domestic problem remains in the 1990s, over one hundred years after appearing in American journals as a social issue. The similarities between the intense physical and psychological demands between women in late 19th century America and the 1990s are startling and are definitely worthy of consideration. Equally interesting is the fact that the doctrines of feminism were being
formed in late 19th century in response to prevailing societal attitudes just as they are being redefined in the late twentieth century in response to issues of the postmodern. The issues which concern both share more similarities than differences.

Second, I had always been frustrated in my research in art history with the lack of women artists when I knew, from my own family's history, that more women were artists than were being recognized. The work of feminist art historians Linda Nochlin, Roszika Parker, and Griselda Pollock inspired me to look at the methodology behind the art historical writing which was published and identify its biases and then try to analyze why women and certain types of art had been excluded. Parker and Pollock's highly influential book *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (1981) examines the biographies of women artists through history against the social systems which either fostered or suppressed their artistic achievements. Parker and Pollock's tone is strong and resonant when, in the preface of their book, they assert, "We no longer need to assert that there were great women artists in history but why they weren't visible" (Parker & Pollock, 1981, p. xvii). They go on to write, "Women's relation to artistic and social structures has been different to that of male artists" (Parker & Pollock, 1981, p. xviii). Parker and Pollock voice, again and again, the need for an almost anthropologic analysis of women in their contemporaneous social system to reveal the subtleties of their identities and their relation to the various power structures.
Nochlin (1988), in her *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays*, draws heavily on what she calls the seminal work of Parker and Pollock. The words "women, art, and power" in her title reveal that her book will look at the structures of power and authority within society and analyze the relationship of women artists to them. In short, Nochlin analyzes the formation of the art historical canon through history. Her book opens with the statement that she has read the lives of women "to question the whole art historical apparatus which has contrived to 'put them in their place,' in other words, to reveal the structures and operations that tend to marginalize certain types of artistic production while centralizing others" (Nochlin, 1988, p. xiii). To Nochlin, the analysis of the specifics of the various ideologies inherent in the sociocultural system is imperative to the study of women and their exclusion from the canon.

The work of Nochlin, Parker, and Pollock called for what seemed to be an anthropologic scrutiny of the sociohistorical record. One has to understand the subtleties of cultural processes as completely as possible before one can even begin to understand the individuals and their artistic processes. Hence the second step I took in formulating my research topic was to turn to the discipline of anthropology for direction. I first looked at the work of Margaret Mead (1949) and her book *Male and Female: A Study of the Sexes in*
a Changing World. In this book Mead writes,

In every known society, the male’s need for achievement can be recognized. Men may cook or weave, or dress dolls or hunt hummingbirds, but if such are appropriate occupations of men, then the whole society, men and women alike, votes them important. When the same occupations are performed by women, they are regarded as less important. (Mead, 1949, preface)

Louise Lamphere and Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo in Women, Culture, and Society (1974) draw on the earlier work of Mead and point out that nearly the entire existing discipline of anthropology had been written about men or from a male perspective. They write, “How, and in what kinds of situations, do women exercise power? How do women help to shape, create, and change the private and public worlds in which they live?” (Lamphere & Rosaldo, 1974, p. 2).

I realized that my own discipline, art education, suffered from the same male-dominated canon which Lamphere, Rosaldo, and earlier Mead, had pinpointed in anthropology. History of art education texts were full of Dows, Lowenfelds, and Smiths, and other high profile, powerful, policy-makers and devoid of the Marie Eggeres, Mary Ketchams, and Adelaide Alsop Robineaus, the women who happened to be the teachers, those who were actually on the front-lines of the discipline of art education, working with theories sent down from the males above, to make it effective in a learning situation. I came across the following passage in Rosaldo and Lamphere and felt it was serendipitous and I knew the form my dissertation would take: “We find in some parts of New Guinea, for
example, that women grow sweet potatoes and men grow yams, and yams are the prestige food, the food one distributes at feasts” (Lamphere & Rosaldo, 1974, p. 19). I immediately made the connection with Nochlin who called for the analysis of certain social structures which allowed for the primacy of certain activities or objects and marginalized others. The work of women in art education is like sweet potatoes, good, nutritious, and plentiful—as good, nutritious and plentiful as the yams of the likes of Dow. Sweet potatoes just taste a little different from the yams, though they are of the same family. My dissertation is about two sweet potatoes: two potters and the impact they had on the art education of women. It is not about the yams—industrial drawing, child development, or policy-making—but rather about the cultural ramifications of two practitioners of a rather unprestigious art form that would probably never even have been considered a part of the tradition of the great academies even if males were its main practitioners.

On Feminism

This project might be classified as feminist simply because it is about women, but I would like to believe that I can provide a richer philosophical justification for the application of this term which draws on the work of other practitioners of methods driven by feminism. First, I admittedly have a personal connection with this topic which is currently an accepted research motivation according to
feminist-driven methods. I come from three generations of china painters beginning with my Russian immigrant great-grandmother. I know from my aunts who still practice china painting that my great-grandmother, Anna Bezkorovna, took up china painting because she was considered a talented artist and needed to support her nine children. She was considered a rather good china painter in her region of Pennsylvania and began to teach china painting in a little studio in which my great aunt still teaches. I grew up spending summers in my great aunt's china painting studio with its porcelain blanks and botanical studies, begging to be allowed to paint myself a porcelain miniature pendant or tile. I was taught that china painting was really a very old medium, yet when I went to the university and studied art history it was never even mentioned in any class or text. Eastern porcelains were discussed, Russian Imperial porcelains were, the French porcelain houses were, but American porcelains, which I have since found out were very highly acclaimed internationally in the nineteenth century, were not.

The obvious difference in American porcelains is that they were created by women, generally middle-class women, and for women. American porcelains were not made to supply a court or aristocracy but were to beautify the middle-class home. When women found that they could not afford to buy an abundance of painted porcelain for their own home, they, themselves, turned to its production. To turn to its production they had to be taught. Hence, a study of women porcelain painters as art educators is a study not
only in the lives of these individual women but of the economics and social decorum within middle-class America and the values responsible. Also, these porcelains were the only voice to posterity that some women have left behind. By studying the art pottery movement in America in the nineteenth century and the biographies of two seminal figures in this movement, I hope to fill in some of the gaps in my own personal history as well as a canonical gap in the history of art education.

Developments in feminist-driven methods have justified personally-motivated research which is inherently subjective. Reinharz (1992) quotes Canadian political scientist Naomi Black who wrote, “feminist research insists on the value of subjectivity and personal experience” (Reinharz, 1992, p. 3). Feminism rejects canonical interpretations because they carry with them an assumed objectiveness and detachment which is seen as a foundation of the patriarchal academic tradition. Recently historians acknowledge that their histories are just that: their histories, their stories.

On History

Simon Schama, one of the most prolific and highly acclaimed historians writing in the last two decades, writes histories which are considered hallmarks of thorough research that draw on every aspect of cultural life to find meaning. Always, Schama’s readers get a sense of his profound belief in the revelatory powers of history and
his faith in historical method: until, that is, the publication of Dead Certainties (Unwarranted Speculations) in 1991. The reader is immediately made aware of a difference in this history from Schama's others by its dedication. Schama notes that the book was written in memory of John Clive, “for whom history was literature” (Schama, 1991, dedication). Dead Certainties is about the events surrounding the death of General Wolfe, a story made known by the famous Benjamin West painting The Death of General Wolfe, and a murder, years later, in a Boston Brahmin family related to Wolfe. Schama began researching the actual events surrounding Wolfe's death and West's depiction, hoping to present a clear chronology of the events surrounding this incident. Along the way he found dozens of differing accounts of Wolfe's actual death, and discovered that one of Wolfe's relatives was involved in a tragic and unsolved mystery involving Harvard, where Schama was currently a professor. Schama linked these two tales, through the blood relation (and through his immediate interest in the academic history of Harvard) and ended up with not a history, but a novel, a work of fiction. This philosophical transition is an experiment which becomes the true subject of the book rather than the proposed history or realized novel.

The afterword of Dead Certainties grapples with the great objective historical tradition which he first practiced at Oxford and attempts to justify to all those disappointed readers why he was at odds with his own historical method. Schama writes,

In its original Greek sense the word “historia” meant an inquiry, but historians ever since have differed
on the implications of the term, sometimes imagining themselves lined up behind opposing platoons commanded by Herodotus or Thucydides. In the history of the Peloponnesian War, modern historians have seen an early paragon of objectivity, of critical use of sources, of dispassionate analytical investigation. To others it is exactly the absence of these qualities which so recommends Herodotus: his relish for gossip, his intuitive understanding of the idiosyncrasies of climate and geography, his primitive ethnography, his unabashed subjectivities, the winning mish-mash of hearsay and record, real and fantastic. (Schama, 1991, p. 325)

He then goes on to define “inquiry,” the original Greek translation of “historia,” as “the telling of stories” (Schama, 1991, p. 325). He ends up justifying his own creation of history, or perhaps more aptly, his creative history through an actual historical figure. He also writes,

That is not to say, I should emphasize, that I scorn the boundary between fact and fiction. It is merely to imply that even in the most austere scholarly report from the archives, the inventive faculty—selecting, pruning, editing, commenting, interpreting, delivering judgements—is in full play. This is not a naively relativist position that insists that the lived past is nothing more than an artificially designed text . . . but it does accept the rather banal axiom that claims for historical knowledge must always be fatally circumscribed by the character and prejudices of its narrator. (Schama, 1991, p. 322)

For this reason, one of the most important living historians no longer feels he can adequately write histories but rather historical novels, echoing the distrust in the objective which so characterizes these postmodern times.

This distrust of the objective is the same distrust found in feminist methodologies. Feminists just make this distrust more
obvious. They feel that they can provide the perspective for the reader because there is no more pretending to be objective, wholly rational, and detached from one's study. Reinharz acknowledges the feminist idea that one's work will absolutely reflect "the values and assumptions of its author" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 10), which is also precisely how Schama closed his last history.

Diana Korzenik's writings on the personal as a condition gaining acceptance among women researchers, in her own case, historians, is one of the only examples of this acknowledged subjective historical method in the discipline of art education. Her article, "Women Doing Historical Research" (1990), is about her use of the personal, and her acceptance of that fact, in writing histories of art education. She writes,

By letting our own predispositions to attend to how people feel and act within an intimate scale enter our conceptualization of the field of art teaching, we change it. New questions will arise. Accepting women's strengths and using them will direct our attention, our curiosity, our caring, to different features of our history. Permitting our recognizable lives, our feelings to enter our work is a decision of a higher order of magnitude. (Korzenik, 1990, p. 54)

Korzenik also points out that women as historians will be drawn to different types of projects than men because of a need to identify with the past and most often this identification will occur through biographical methods.
Biography itself has been one of the scaffolds with which feminist history has been built. Reinharz feels that biographical work has been important to feminism “because it draws women out of obscurity, repairs the historical record, and provides an opportunity for the women reader and writer to identify with the subject” (Reinharz, 1992, p. 126). She goes on to quote the work of the historian Elizabeth Griffith who writes on the history of the connection between feminism and biography,

Initial efforts to record the lives of eminent American women were made in the 1890s as the first generation of college-educated women sought to identify women of achievement in an earlier era. [These women] established archives for research and wrote biographies of colonial and contemporary women, like Abigail Adams and Susan B. Anthony. Organizations like the Daughters of the American Revolution related their members to a past that provided proud models of accomplishment. The second surge of biographies came with the renaissance of women’s history in the late 1960s. (quoted in Reinharz, 1992, p. 126)

Biography gives a voice, perhaps for the first time, to the subject, and in doing so reclaims the subject from the margins of history. Also, by definition, all one needs is a person, no matter how traditionally notable or everyday, to justify the project. Though contemporary biographies abound on household historical figures such as Winston Churchill and Charles Dickens, there is a growing
trend in biographies of the invisible, those who have been hidden among the cracks in the boards in history, which is a direct result of feminism which exults in the life of the everyday woman. Award-winning historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich has come to the forefront of the discipline of history, as well as feminism, by writing on so-called ordinary women from history. Her 1990 book *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary 1785-1812* tells the story of Martha Ballard, an eighteenth century New England midwife, based on her own diaries which she kept for more than twenty-seven years. Until Ulrich's research, Martha Ballard's six hundred page diary had been ignored. The archivist and author Charles Elventon Nash abridged the journal but refused to publish it because he found too much of it "trivial and unimportant" (Ulrich, 1990, p. 8). Ulrich notes that Ballard's diary was overtly excluded from a feminist history of midwifery entitled *Lying-In: A History of Childbirth in America* published in the 1970s by Richard and Dorothy Wertz because "Like many diaries of farm women, it is filled with trivia about domestic chores and pastimes" (Ulrich, 1990, p. 9). Ulrich took issue with these assertions or excuses for exclusion. She writes,

> It is in the very dailiness, the exhaustive, repetitive dailiness, that the real power of Martha Ballard's book lies. To extract the river crossings without noting the cold days spent "footing" stockings, to abstract the births without recording the long autumns spent winding quills, pickling meat, and sorting cabbages, is to destroy the sinews of this earnest, steady, gentle, and courageous record. For more than twenty-seven years, 9,965 days to
be exact, she faithfully kept her record. Martha was not an introspective diarist, yet in the conscientious recording as much as her occasional confessions she revealed herself. "And now this year is come to a close," she wrote on December 31, 1800, "and happy is it if we have made a wise improvement of the time." For her, living was to be measured in doing. Nothing was trivial. (Ulrich, 1990, p.9)

To this student, Ulrich's feminist perspective, which is truly egalitarian in its focus, is much more influential than one of the seminal feminist historians in art education, Mary Ann Stankiewicz. Mary Ann Stankiewicz, along with Enid Zimmerman, edited _Women Art Educators_ in 1982. This book set out to challenge the male hegemony of the discipline of art education by making visible various and varied women art educators. This goal, in itself, was an important step for art education in catching up with other disciplines. Unfortunately, the book dealt with the professional development of these women art educators. The professional development that was outlined was identical to that set up for traditional male professional life: personal acknowledgment of the individual as a professional in the discipline, payment for one's professional services, publication, and visibility within the discipline. Therefore these women were judged on their professional impact rather than on the fact that they simply loved art and taught it and had a right to be written into the history of the discipline.

Stankiewicz's contribution to this volume, "Woman, Artist, Art Educator: Professional Image Among Women Art Educators," "present[s] historical evidence in support of the argument that many
women art educators in the past have shared certain characteristics” (Stankiewicz & Zimmerman, 1982, p. 31). From the beginning Stankiewicz is creating pigeonholes for women in history, to judge their worth as art educators according to professional standards created for men. She calls for the canonical inclusion of women “who toiled away with little recognition but who influenced generations of art teachers” (Stankiewicz & Zimmerman, 1982, p. 46). This statement is quite revealing in that she wants women to be recognized but only those who did the influencing rather than those who just taught. Stankiewicz seems to feel the need for overt professionalism to justify the inclusion of women in the history of the discipline. She does not seem to feel the need to examine those qualities which are considered professional and examine how they came about and question whether or not they came about to include a certain type of person and exclude another.

Closing Thoughts

In choosing the subjects of my dissertation I was very aware of the fact that according to Stankiewicz’s standards the women in my study would not even be considered professionals. In all instances, the individuals were much more concerned with doing, rather than publicly proclaiming that they were indeed working. It is my firm belief that one does not need to publicly acknowledge the fact that one is a professional in a particular discipline. In fact, in certain
instances, so-called professionalism could also pass for narcissism. Like Martha Ballard, these women did, and never really felt the need to say what they were doing to other professionals as long as they could teach people also interested in doing. They were not really excluded from the developing historical canon of art education as existed outside of it. Nonetheless, due to the philosophical developments in historical method and feminism, one no longer needs to justify the worth of an individual as a subject of study. History becomes more and more complete with each person who is placed in his or her place in time and analyzed accordingly. By revealing the trials and tribulations, successes and ordinary lives of women in the past one is taking control of the present. By giving these women a voice one is asserting one’s own voice. By questioning the criteria by which certain women are included or excluded from history one is challenging the formation of canons and assuring that women, any women, will no longer be, according to the words of Clara Barton, “unwritten, unrewarded, and almost unrecognized” (quoted in Pryor, 1987, p. 344).
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Art is not a thing, it is a way. Art is the beautiful way. It stands for reciprocity, mutuality, beauty, order—Human Service.”

--William Morris, 1878

The late nineteenth century in the United States was characterized by widespread growth, as well as political and social reform. It was an age when the very first seeds of a pragmatic equality for women would be sown and its products harvested. Inspired by theories of social and educational reform born in England, American women were being educated, usually by other women, in a manner so that they might throw off the shackles of paternal and familial economic dependence and make their own way in the world. Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau sought to educate women in the ceramic arts to provide them with a financial livelihood, a sense of self-worth, and a niche in life outside of the domestic sphere: in essence to bolster the idea that they were active, valuable, and productive members of society.
McLaughlin and Robineau, though very different personalities, were linked by their interest in ceramics and their unswerving devotion to the education of women in the arts. They felt that pottery or ceramics, which historically had involved women, though usually unrecognized and unnamed, and in subordinate positions to men, would be the perfect way to integrate women into "industry." They also felt that this would take steps toward changing the face of industry and its mass-produced, aesthetically inferior products.

McLaughlin spoke publicly about the economic potential in pottery decoration for women of all classes. Robineau wrote countless editorials in her magazine, Keramic Studio, on the need for women to establish a respectable field in which they could assume economic independence. Anything involving genteel, artistic pursuits was considered acceptable and hence art education turned into a form of industrial education as scores of women were trained as designers and decorators specifically for the emerging arts and crafts industries. Both were very influenced by the reformist philosophy of the English Arts and Crafts Movement, particularly the rhetoric of John Ruskin and William Morris, who spoke out for equality in education as well as the idea that art could not only "deliver" a certain social class and specific segments of society from poverty and degradation, but also could uplift people morally.
Introduction to the Arts and Crafts Movement

The theorists and, one might say, main protagonists of the Arts and Crafts Movement sought to change the face of modern industrial society through labor. They tried to bridge the gap between what would be considered “creative endeavor” and labor and bring about change in industrial society, in this case Victorian England.

Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan (1991) introduce the birth of the Arts and Crafts Movement in this way in the preface of their book The Arts and Crafts Movement.

Not only did [Arts and Crafts theorists] want to reform design but to give quality once more to the work process itself. With its division of labour, the Industrial Revolution had devalued the work of the craftsman and turned him into a mere cog on the wheel of machinery. The aim of Arts and Crafts reformers was therefore to re-establish a harmony between architect, designer and craftsman and to bring handcraftsmanship to the production of well-designed, affordable, everyday objects. (p. 6)

Further,

For a few designers Arts and Crafts was part of a wider arena of social reform. For others reform meant a change in working conditions rather than design aesthetics; belief in the restorative power of craftsmanship and the search for a “simple life” led them to establish workshops in idyllic, rural surroundings where art was promoted as a way of life. (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991, p. 7)
These short passages illustrate that the Arts and Crafts Movement was characterized by great theoretical variation yet it was brought to life by the social ramifications of the chain reactions set off by the industrialization of nineteenth century England. The Industrial Revolution ushered in an age of mass-produced, shoddily designed goods made of cheap materials which could be sold at prices much lower than that of handcrafted goods. These goods were produced at least partially by machines or by minute divisions of labor. People took on the role of nameless, faceless machine tenders who had to work for low wages because they could always be replaced in their position as unskilled worker as greater and greater numbers of people flocked to the city from rural outskirts in search of opportunity. Children were brought into the factories for the lowest wages of all, shut in windowless, unhealthy environs for twelve hours a day. Their numbers were especially high in the textiles industries because only their fingers were small enough to maneuver around the bobbins and other parts of the machine looms. No care was given to their health, childhood needs, or education. As Cumming and Kaplan state, they were mere cogs in the machinery of the Industrial Revolution.

Reformers focused on several parts of this picture: on raising the design standards of the products being produced and hence exported from England, on the squalid, inhumane working and domestic conditions of the factory workers, and on education as a way to bypass inferior design and menial, unskilled labor as a working
condition of the Industrial Revolution. It was thought that through education, the bridging of the gap between labor and creative endeavor, and pride and dignity in one’s labor, the face of modern industrialization could be changed and humanized for the betterment of the workers and the consumers.

These are the ideas which influenced the direction the work of Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau. There seems to have been a theoretical transformation from England to America because American Arts and Crafts reformers were less focused on design reform and more concerned with the social reform which could result from Arts and Crafts ideals. McLaughlin and Robineau sought to transform society through the education of women as productive, economically viable members of society. It is fitting now to give a brief introduction to the work of these two women who form the crux of this study.

Mary Louise McLaughlin

Mary Louise McLaughlin (1847-1939) had a lasting impact on women’s art education in a program which began in Cincinnati, Ohio and spread across the nation. Unhappy with the lack of art training in school and the inadequacy of her university art experiences, she founded the Cincinnati Pottery Club, which sought to provide a congenial, communal atmosphere for women to learn and experiment in the techniques of china painting and pottery. She sought to expose
Cincinnati women to the mechanisms of the art world through group exhibitions on a local and a national level and to underscore the professional opportunities available to women of all classes in the area of ceramics. She became an influential figure in the world of ceramics through her technical expertise and her own international award-winning porcelains.

She frequently wrote for art periodicals, Keramic Studio in particular, and produced several books on various technical aspects of the surface decoration of ceramics (China Painting: A Practical Manual for the Use of Amateurs in the Decoration of Hard Porcelain, Pottery Decoration Under the Glaze, and Suggestions to China Painters). Her books were professional but still aimed at the amateur, and specifically, the woman amateur. She repeatedly wrote about the practical monetary rewards that could be respectably reaped by the woman china painter. It is important to realize that McLaughlin’s books would have been the only ones of their kind in their day and hence were the only sources for technical information and general design considerations obtainable for many women.

When McLaughlin died at the age of 92 in 1939, she had several books and articles on pottery, a book on oil painting, three history books, and several generations of women potters and art students to her honor.
Adelaide Alsop Robineau

Adelaide Alsop Robineau (1865-1929) was an esteemed ceramist and an ardent feminist who was supremely unhappy with the state of education for women, especially in the arts. She felt that contemporary art education for women emphasized the finishing school aspect, wherein art was seen as a symbol of culture, refinement, and high moral standing, to be used to obtain a man from the upper social class, which valued these attainments. The lack of educational and economic opportunity for women was a problem Robineau sought to rectify in her lifetime.

She came to ceramics as an amateur, learning from mass-produced manuals (very probably at least one of them Mary Louise McLaughlin's). She soon became a prominent figure in the field and then taught art at St. Mary's Hall in Minnesota before going to New York to paint because she was frustrated by the difficulty women were having in the pottery industry. (Weiss, 1981, p. 22) In 1899, after her marriage to Samuel Robineau and together with George H. Clark, she began the publication of Keramic Studio, which quickly reached a national circulation of 6,000 readers. Adelaide Alsop Robineau edited this journal until her death in 1929. Robineau, very much like McLaughlin, sought to reach the amateur china painter, and the magazine seems, at least initially, to have been geared
toward a female readership. Robineau never let go of the idea that ceramics was the women's way into industry and to a much desired state of economic independence.

Robineau, herself, continued to gain acclaim as a ceramist of international merit. She was offered several university residencies but continued to emphasize the educational element of her work. During 1903-04 Robineau had a large house and studio built on a hill overlooking Syracuse, New York that became known as "Four Winds." After coming back to Syracuse from a trying pottery residency at University City in St. Louis, Missouri, Robineau began to develop the curriculum for what would later become the Four Winds Summer School, a six-week Arts and Crafts school, which was aimed at women. Robineau's experience at the University City Pottery had shown her that she still had to work to overcome the constraints of male-dominated industry in porcelain production, an area in which she excelled and was internationally respected. She decided to try to prepare a new generation of women for this struggle. The school lasted for three years. Plans for expansion were cancelled with the onslaught of World War I. Instead, she accepted a faculty position at Syracuse University where she taught until her death in 1929.

Throughout her career, Robineau was concerned with what she termed the "domestic problem," the fact that women could not be great because they were chained to domesticity. She sought to aid a
change in industry by helping to shape the art pottery industry from all sides because it was, ideally, a women's endeavor, from producer to consumer.

A Justification of the Study of Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau in the Context of the Discipline of Art Education

McLaughlin and Robineau had a tremendous impact on both the ceramic world and on art education in general. Both targeted their "pupils" by gender and, in a true utopian spirit derived from the philosophies of Ruskin and Morris, sought to provide people regardless of class or gender with the same educational and career opportunities.

Unfortunately, Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau have been studied very little. Mary Louise McLaughlin is the subject of a forthcoming monograph by Anita Ellis. She is given a page in Clark and Hughto's 1979 publication, A Century of Ceramics in the United States: 1878-1978. A total of three journal articles are devoted solely to McLaughlin. Two are from the Bulletin of the American Ceramic Society of March and May 1938 and discuss McLaughlin as the originator of slip underglaze decoration. The third, "Mary Louise McLaughlin and the Cincinnati Art Pottery Movement" (Levin, 1982), deals with McLaughlin in the context of the technical experimentation she fostered in the Cincinnati Art Pottery Club. McLaughlin is treated in many surveys of ceramic art but is treated rather summarily.
Adelaide Alsop Robineau is the subject of a single monograph by Peg Weiss, *Adelaide Alsop Robineau: Glory in Porcelain* (1981). She is the subject of two journal articles drawing on museum collections. These articles deal with a single example of Robineau’s work, her *Scarab Vase*, and discuss it formally and in terms of its technical virtuosity. She, like McLaughlin, is often treated summarily in surveys of ceramic art.

These two figures in the Women’s Art Pottery Movement are treated in a manner consistent with academic art history. Texts, whether books or periodicals, begin with biography and then go into the technical and stylistic aspects of the work of the chosen artists. McLaughlin is known for her underglaze techniques and Robineau for her meticulously carved porcelains. McLaughlin sought to educate women amateurs so they might earn a livelihood independent of patriarchy and Robineau sought to educate women so that they might escape the “domestic problem.” Both women developed educational programs driven by the need for social reform and the deeply held belief that women were in all ways equal to men. Both saw an allegiance to education equal to or over personal work.

Amazingly, neither McLaughlin nor Robineau is discussed in an educational context. Despite the leaps being made in the discipline of art education due to revisionist and feminist scholarship, these two women fail to appear on any roster of the development of the discipline. Despite the new interest in non-traditional art education and art educators, (Hamblen, 1984; Stankiewicz & Zimmerman, 1982)
these women have not been studied. This dissertation is an attempt
to study these subjects as art educators and, hence, carve out their
spaces in the history of the discipline of art education. Those
interested in the history-writing process would probably consider
my study a "herstory" (Soucy, 1991), a history that stresses women's
historical contributions—in this case, the impact of two women who
attempted to educate a certain gender for reformist reasons ushered
in by the influence of the British Arts and Crafts Movement.

As noted in the preface, this study is an attempt to look at art
education and art educators in a way which stresses things like
impact, dedication, and commitment more than high profile exposure
and intellectualism. Mary Louise McLaughlin probably had fewer
students than Arthur Wesley Dow (with whom she studied in various
workshops), for example, but her mode of educating was certainly as
valuable and therefore cannot be deemed insignificant. Only by a
reexamination of the existing canons can these "unsung" educators be
found and studied in relation to their own society as well as the
society of today.

Before one can undertake a detailed analysis of how the Arts
and Crafts Movement affected the American Art Pottery Movement
and subsequently art education for women, it is important to fully
understand why pottery was the logical medium in which to educate
women to propel them into the workplace. It will be shown that
women have historically been involved in some aspect of pottery
production from, in all probability, prehistory, through the Industrial
Revolution. The reformist branches of the Arts and Crafts Movement used this presence of women working in a craft, unrecognized and poorly paid, in positions overtly subordinate to men, as a starting point for educational reform in an area familiar to these women, pottery, and as an acceptable avenue of employment according to then-current theories of social decorum.
CHAPTER 2

OF PAINTRESSES AND POTTERS:
WOMEN’S INVOLVEMENT IN THE ENGLISH AND AMERICAN ART
POTTERY INDUSTRIES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND EARLIER

“There is perhaps no branch of art-work more perfectly
womanly and in every way desirable than painting on
china. The character of the designs brings them within
the reach of even moderate powers, and it must be
admitted that painting flowers and birds and pretty
landscapes, or children’s heads, is work in itself more
suitable for women than men.”

--Editorial, The Art Journal. 1872

Of all of the different branches of the arts involved in the Arts
and Crafts Movement, pottery had the greatest and most lasting
effect on women. Art pottery opened many doors for women, not
only creatively, but educationally, economically, and socially. The
production of art pottery was an avenue which allowed, even
demanded, that women acquire some sort of schooling. It provided
women an avenue of employment which was both socially acceptable
to Victorian morality as well as remunerative. It also broke down
many barriers which had been set up to keep women out of industry
and in the home as wife and mother.
One may very well ask "Why pottery?" Why not stained glass or metalwork? Why and how did pottery advance the educational, economic, and social causes of women more than any of the other branches of the Arts and Crafts Movement such as textiles, bookmaking, or metalsmithing? The answer is a complex one that involves consideration of the history of women's involvement in pottery production, the effects of the Industrial Revolution on pottery production and contemporary social decorum in general, the tenets of the Arts and Crafts Movement, and the different ways in which different classes of women were affected by all of these factors. It should be stated here that there is no hard and fast answer to the question why pottery of the Arts and Crafts Movement had the far-reaching ramifications that it did. This question is further complicated by the fact that the history of pottery and industrial production has been written by pens which were entirely closed to any gender awareness. Therefore, very limited information is available on many areas of women's actual involvement in pottery production in both the nineteenth century and in the centuries preceding. What follows, then, is one interpretation of the facts that could be gleaned from the existing historical record, and an examination of a series of causes and events which had, at least, some bearing on the direction art pottery production took as a means of advancing the rights of women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
A History of Women’s Involvement in Pottery Production

In 1901, the American china painter and author Susan Frackelton wrote the following address to the scores of women ceramists who read Keramic Studio:

Potting, as a manufacture, is flourishing. As an art it has been almost lost sight of, overshadowed by the legion of decorators and the greed of manufacturers. But the potter is no new person. She was here in her blanket and moccasins, her beads and bright colors, long before Mary Ellen [the contemporary female ceramist] was bred upon these shores. For the centuries of the past hers was the “Art of Arts,” hers, the glory and the beauty of true handicraft. She had no potter’s wheel! Later in Egypt it was used, and later in India they copied her designs in their far-famed weavings. The eyes of the serpent from the temple of Mitta they wove in their beautiful wools long centuries after she had made them in the warm-tinted red clays of the mesas. There were no men potters in those days. We are the new race, but we grow in the same soil. And we are yielding to a natural instructive influence when we give ourselves up to this old art.

(Frackelton, 1901, p. 100)

Susan Frackelton recognized the long history that women have had in the area of pottery production and used this knowledge to beseech her contemporary sisters in art pottery to create an “organized effort” to further the advancement of this branch of the Arts and Crafts. She urged her readers to “organize yourselves and ally yourselves with other organizations, as to give and gain the greatest good. Keep your identity, demand that recognition for your art of which it is worthy” (Frackelton, 1901, p. 101). Frackelton not only
urged women to acknowledge their history and the history of women in their respective craft but she used this knowledge as a form of propaganda to motivate women towards self-recognition and a sense of self-worth.

Frackelton’s example illustrates how very important a sense of history was to art pottery and the Arts and Crafts Movement in general. Though the stylistic tenets of the Arts and Crafts Movement generally called for an avoidance of historical design motifs, historical handicraft traditions were embraced. John Ruskin and William Morris held up the example of the medieval craftsman as the model for the worker in the post-industrial revolution age. The medieval craftsman became a symbol of honest work that was true to the materials, of artistic integrity, of organized brotherhoods of artisans such as guilds, and of a distinctly non-capitalistic economic sensibility. Ruskin and Morris also ushered in what the social historian Eileen Boris (1986) refers to as “the cult of the primitive” (p. 49). This cult of the primitive looked not only back in time to prehistory (which in an anthropological sense means simply pre-writing) but also to contemporary societies which were seen and labelled as “primitive” because of their lack of Western technologies and the preservation of their traditional folkways. The nineteenth century craftsman was to learn a new set of non-industrial ethics from the honest, “simple,” and purely utilitarian products of Africa, Oceania, and Native America. Very few Arts and Crafts exhibitions
were without some sort of display of the history of a certain media such as lace-making or weaving or the work of a so-called "primitive" culture.

Pottery was celebrated, in the words of Boris, as "the 'Indian' woman’s useful art" (Boris, 1986, p. 101) and was thought to exemplify Morris’s "primitive" pronouncements. Articles such as Constance Goddard DuBois’s “The Indian Woman as a Craftsman” (1904) certainly exposed the late nineteenth and early twentieth century woman ceramist to the history of her craft, all the while justifying it as a fine art form. These articles, as well as the rhetoric of Morris, also greatly romanticized this history so that one might almost believe that the Indian woman had nothing else to do, neither gather food nor plant crops for her family, neither sew clothing nor care for the sick, but simply practice her noble art form. One might hypothesize that this historical information might serve as a justification for women to practice a certain craft, in this case art pottery. As the legal world will attest, there is nothing like precedent. Unfortunately, knowledge of precedent does not imply understanding. Irene Sargent, in her 1904 article “Indian Basketry: Its Structure and Decoration,” chastised American women for extolling the stylistic virtues of and making baskets in "Amerindian" forms without any knowledge or understanding of their original social context or origins. She unfavorably compares "the woman whose every need or whim is satisfied by the products of elaborate
machine set in motion the world over to do her bidding” (Sargent, 1904, p. 321) with

the first Indian woman, who, to meet the needs of her family, invented baskets and pottery, twine, and wove fabrics; and, not content with bare utility, set to work to adorn her handicraft with decorative forms learned from no school but that of Nature. (Sargent, 1904, p. 321)

American women were in danger of sanitizing and romanticizing the lives and work of their artistic forebears just as Marie Antoinette fictionalized the lives of the French peasants. Marie Antoinette’s ignorance and refusal to even begin to truly understand the life of the peasants began with her play-acting as a peasant to try to capture certain qualities of simplicity and virtue, and ended with her decapitation.

History and awareness of folk traditions in the Arts and Crafts became so entrenched in the Arts and Crafts Movement that societies were set up to study and preserve these traditions. The Home Arts and Industries Association, founded in England in 1884, was the largest and most powerful of these groups. An Art Workers’ Quarterly article on the 1905 Home Arts and Industries Exhibition outlined the aims of the Home Arts and Industries Association, which were “to encourage the practice of handicrafts and revive old ones, more especially in villages and country places out of touch with the organisations for art and technical instruction enjoyed by large towns” (Callen, 1979, p. 143).
Aside from the romance and idealization of pottery history used by public proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement, women's pottery production did, in fact, have a lengthy and rich history. If it is difficult today to locate information on women's roles in pottery production through history, surely the nineteenth century woman must have experienced an even greater information vacuum as women's rights advocates were just beginning to question the absence of women and women's perspectives in history. Ceramic historian Emmanuel Cooper (1988) notes that excavations have shown that women may have been potters in many prehistoric societies. (p. 94) He hypothesizes that the first pots were purely accidental. Women lined their baskets with clay, which they then hardened in the sun, as a sealant. In the cooler months the baskets were used with wood on the fire and the round, clay form would fire into a hard, waterproof vessel. Women then created vessels out of clay purposely, and this became part of their division of labor, along with caring for the living area, growing and preparing food, making cloth and then clothing, and bearing and caring for children. Cooper states that with the advent of the potter's wheel, men became the potters in society. (Cooper, 1988, p. 15) Interestingly, signatures of potters begin to appear on the wares at this time, so one might assume that male, wheel-thrown pottery was seen as a sort of special skill. (Cooper, 1988, p. 95) It is interesting to note that as soon as "technology," in this case the development of a tool or machine in the
form of a potter's wheel, came into play, women were excluded or overshadowed. This problem exists even in contemporary society.

Because no signatures of women potters appear on early vessels, because there is no female Euphronios or Euthymides, one must assume that either they did not exist, which is highly unlikely, or they were not recognized as skilled artisans as men were. Women are largely absent from the historical record of pottery production until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, leaving the scholar only to hypothesize. A thirteenth century carving from Rheims Cathedral shows a woman potter at a wheel, which at least verifies the fact that she was a part of pottery production. (Figure 1)

Archaeologists Catherine Brooks and Michael McCarthy (1988) state, though do not substantiate or provide evidence for their claim, that excavations have shown that pottery production was the domain of lower class women in Eastern Europe in the medieval period. (p. 122)

In America, as noted earlier, Native American women were the producers of pottery. Despite this fact, pottery production in colonial America was the work of the male. Ceramic historian Helen E. Stiles (1941) asserts that clay was considered too bothersome to refine for utilitarian household wares in colonial America and bone, wood, and sometimes metals were used instead. (p. 33) She further asserts that the earliest potters were probably farmers. Having found clay deposits while working farm land they used these to make pottery in the winter months. There is little evidence in written records or material culture to suggest that women were involved at all in
pottery production in Colonial America despite the fact that it was women’s work in Native American culture. Colonial America looked not to the indigenous cultures for a societal model, at least not until the nineteenth century, as illustrated earlier, but rather to the traditional division of labor in England, from whence the colonists came.

Decorative Arts curator Barbara Perry (1989) notes that American women were generally excluded from pottery production until 1795-1800 when great change took place in the production of stoneware. (p. 24) The process of salt-glazing was developed so that stoneware, which required two very high firings, could be single-fired. Salt-glazing, as the name implies, consists of the elements in salt breaking down in heat and merging with the stoneware clay body to form a very tight, durable glaze, which is rather humble and unassuming in appearance. It was found that cobalt reacted favorably with the salt during firing and it became the sole element used for surface decoration. Cobalt decoration generally took the form of a simple calligraphic design. Women and children were often trained in calligraphy and so became the cobalt decorators. Little care was given to talent, as pottery producers looked for rapidity of execution. (Perry, 1989, p. 24) Interestingly, this reflects a point which will be discussed later at length—that the division of labor between the sexes deemed acceptable in Western pottery production consisted of men actually forming the actual vessel and women
decorating the surface. Hence, in the case of Colonial America, this division of labor might have come about in fairly unremarkable circumstances, as exemplified above.

The art pottery movement, which in later years did embrace whole-heartedly the work and division of labor of pre-industrial and folk cultures, at first looked only to Western Europe as a model for division of labor within pottery production. Fortunately for the nineteenth century woman, her foremothers were recognized within the skilled realms of pottery production, though infrequently, from the eighteenth century onwards in Western Europe, and their participation was constrained by existing theories of cultural decorum.

From the seventeenth century in England, women had an unspoken role in pottery production through subemployment. A potter was paid a certain lump sum to produce a given amount of ware. The potter would then “subemploy” his relations, often his wife and children, to help him produce his wares in as quickly a time as possible. (Buckley, 1990, p. 23) The wife would neither be recognized as a part of production nor would she see monetary remuneration as the money ostensibly stayed in the same household. Subemployment spread, in England, from small private potters to the actual pottery industry. Historian Cheryl Buckley (1990) writes:

From the beginning of industrial pottery manufacture in the eighteenth century, . . . [women] worked as unskilled assistants to skilled men. They carried clay, ran the moulds, and worked the treadles for the potters’ and turners’ wheels before the widespread introduction of
steam power. They fettled, towelled and sponged to clean off and smooth ware that had been thrown, cast or pressed.

In these roles women [were] sub-employed by the men they assisted, rather than being directly employed by the manufacturer. (p. 23)

Women's roles in pottery production in Western Europe were more specialized and skilled. Records from the early eighteenth century in Germany and France reveal a small number of named and recognized skilled women involved in the production of pottery. Sabina and Anna Elisabeth Auffenwerth worked with their goldsmith father, Johann Auffenwerth, in Augsberg, Germany. They painted chinoiserie and Rococo designs in gold and silver for the Meissen Porcelain Factory from 1720-1760. (Buckley, 1990, pp. 43-44)

Seraphina Schick was another eighteenth century German woman who worked at the Meissen factory with her husband, Adam Frederick von Lowenfinck, from approximately 1720-1749. (Buckley, 1990, p. 44) Both the Auffenwerths and Seraphina Schick were considered skilled workers by the managers at the Meissen factory. They were acknowledged as skilled in Meissen records as decorators. They are mentioned in conjunction with male family relations, but they are recognized, unlike their English sisters involved in sub-employment.

In France, there is only one woman of the eighteenth century who appears in the historical record of pottery production. Pierrette Caudelot Perrin ran the Marseilles faience company, "Vauve Perrin,"
after her husband's death, from 1748-1793. Buckley writes of Madame Perrin:

She was responsible for the establishment of the factory as a centre of excellence in faience production, and her designs, which exploited the era's fascination with Rococo and Orientalism are the legacy of one eighteenth century woman's imagination, resourcefulness and business acumen. (Buckley, 1990, p. 44)

England trailed in naming women involved in art pottery until the very late years of the eighteenth century. Anthea Callen (1979) writes that the state of anonymity had been an accepted fact among women in any way connected with the pottery industry, and that they were relatively little impacted by the examples of their Western European sisters. (p. 52) When recognition did occur it had little to do with the merit of the woman's work and everything to do with her social position. Wedgwood appears to have been the first large-scale art pottery works in England to recognize women's work. According to Cheryl Buckley (1990), the first women recognized and named as skilled were Wedgwood's Lady Elizabeth Templeton (d. 1829) and Lady Diana Beauclerk (1734-1808). (pp. 44-45) Both women were, as their titles indicate, members of the aristocracy. Very little is known about the lives or work of either of these women but they must have been interested in either advancing the causes of women and used themselves as examples, or, less likely, they might have fallen into financially dire straits and had no other recourse but to turn to a means of economic livelihood. It also seems likely that they were named because of the general decorum of the aristocracy,
perhaps more so than because of the quality of their work. This fact would seem to rule out the possibility that these “Ladies” turned to art pottery production because of financial necessity. They would have surely embraced the tradition of anonymity which had become so institutionalized regarding women’s work in the pottery industries.

One might very well wonder why, after centuries of anonymous or non-participation in the production of pottery, women began to be recognized, named members of the industry in eighteenth century Western Europe. Perhaps the recognition was the result of the taste of the era for Rococo design, a style characterized by an overabundance of curvilinear patterns, pastel colors, and romantic, idyllic subject matter, which is often referred to as a “feminine” style. The style of the Rococo grew out of female-dictated court salons and was a definite reaction against the rigid, controlled geometry and severe, propagandist, absolutist subject matter of the preceding style of Louis XIV. It is likely that the decision makers in the pottery business felt that since the Rococo was such a feminine style, determined by women, a woman might have a natural aptitude to reproduce this style or create works that were compatible with it. This now tenuous association of women with certain delicate, decorative aptitudes becomes a very prominent element in regard to women’s involvement in art pottery in the mid-nineteenth century onwards, where it is tied into theories of class and social decorum.
By the mid-nineteenth century, then, women did have a centuries-old history of involvement in pottery, from the pre-medieval woman seated at the wheel depicted on Rheims Cathedral, to the Navajo women potters whose virtues were embraced by the theorists of the Arts and Crafts Movement, to the unskilled sub-employed wife of the country potter in seventeenth century England, and finally to the aristocratic decorators of Wedgwood. The art pottery movement seems to have grown from its specifically Western roots, though, later in the movement, in the early twentieth century, the earlier, non-Western histories were often acknowledged. Despite the idealistic addresses of the likes of Susan Frackelton, urging her fellow women potters to follow in the footsteps of their American Indian sisters, the art pottery movement was distinctly Western European in origin. The women art potters in England and America in the nineteenth century were the artistic descendants of those women mentioned above from the eighteenth century who seem to have come into recognition because of a general stylistic movement, Rococo, which was widespread, much sought after, and was thought to be distinctly feminine in nature and origin. For all of the lip service paid to non-Western and indigenous cultures, working methods and styles used by women in the nineteenth century were undeniably Western European.

When the taste for the Rococo ended, women had already established themselves in the pottery industry. The idea that women were perfectly suited to recreate a style which was
considered a feminine one was joined by the idea that women were the best suited to execute delicate, decorative work—such as painting on china. It is important here to realize that art pottery emerged out of china painting. Two of the major figures in the turn-of-the-century women’s arts movement, Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau, both began painting on china before they went on to create the vessels themselves. It should also be noted that they did not turn to the stylistic or production models of their own indigenous history but, instead, embraced those of England and Western Europe, such as Wedgwood and Bing & Grondahl.

The decoration of china became the means by which women established a strong and lasting presence in the pottery industry and, though different social classes reacted differently to the presence of women, theories of decorum and social philosophies changed to accept this condition. Henry Doulton, who, in 1820, took over what became one of England’s most successful potteries from Martha Jones, who had been running the business since her husband’s death, at first rejected the notion of hiring women as skilled decorators in his business. By the mid-nineteenth century he was hiring young women from England’s new female design schools and acknowledged that if economic necessity deemed it imperative that a woman work outside of the home, then the work “should be as far as possible restricted to occupations not involving severe labour, and as much as practicable to the arts that beautify and adorn life” (quoted in Buckley, 1990, p. 63).
The Economic Context of Women’s Involvement in Art Pottery

Doulton’s quote and his change in attitude is very revealing and quite consistent with other attitudes regarding women’s involvement in art pottery. As noted, Doulton at first resisted employing women in his factory and then later relented, saying that if, indeed, it was the case that a woman had to work, then she should have a job which fit the accepted values regarding the female demeanor. Quite possibly, Doulton might have simply found that hiring women was profitable, because they worked for lower wages. Could not women have sailed on the high tides of capitalism ushered in by the Industrial Revolution to maintain their place in the annals of art pottery production?

The nineteenth century witnessed tremendous technological growth. Economic transformation was seen in England and America in the years 1820-1860 as they changed from agriculturally-based economies to industrial ones. The first International Industrial Exhibition was held in France in 1798, which featured the newest and most advanced machinery and industrial techniques. (Pevsner, 1949, p. 23) This exhibition was fostered by the philosophy of Rationalism which was so much a part of post-Revolutionary France. Pevsner (1949) writes that Rationalism, or inductive philosophy, and experimental science were the prevailing intellectual currents in
Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. (p. 22)

He writes,

> Even the religious revival which took place was a strong element of rationalism and marked understanding for worldly tasks and the ethical qualities of workaday life. The change in European thought was accompanied and followed by a change in social ideals. Thus the newly roused inventiveness received an equally new practical scope. Applied science as a means of governing the world soon became a part of a program directed against those classes which had governed during the Middle Ages. Industry meant the bourgeoisie as opposed to the Church and the Nobility. The French Revolution accomplished what had been slowly preparing for more than two centuries. The medieval social system was swept out of existence, and with it the class of cultured and leisurely patrons as well as the class of cultured and guild-trained craftsmen. (Pevsner, 1949, pp. 22-23)

The Industrial Revolution embraced science, industry, and productivity. It was also hallmarked by the creation of a new social order in which technology, productivity, and capital, financial gain, reigned supreme rather than one's ancestry, social class, or academic training.

Advances in the technology of machine production enabled manufacturers, in nearly every realm imaginable, to turn out much larger volumes of goods than ever before. This ushered in a consumer ethos the likes of which had not been seen before in European history. Moreover, this great, and fairly sudden, increase in production called for more and more hands to work the machines. Labor historian Thomas Dublin (1979) cites that between 1820-1860 in England and America, the proportion of workers not involved in
agriculture rose from 28% to 41%. (p. 4) The ability of the worker to
tend the machines was considered far less than how cheaply a
worker could be had. The result of this industrial situation was a
lowering in the quality of goods produced because of the huge
proportion of unskilled workers following the directions of one
designer, who may or may not ever then actually see the finished
product. Cheap products produced by even cheaper labor were the
hallmarks of the Industrial Revolution.

The imperative nature of cheap labor to the Industrial
Revolution was in nearly all cases socially detrimental. Men were
paid very low wages and worked twelve to fourteen hours a day.
Children were sent to the factories to help support their families.
The manufacturers made a case for children in the factories, from the
age of five and older, because they had small fingers which could
better and more quickly run certain types of machinery. (Pevsner,
1949, p. 24) This was especially true in the textile factories. Like
men, they worked twelve to fourteen hour days in factories where
the doors and windows were kept locked until 1902 when labor
reform managed to have children's workdays reduced to twelve
hours. (Pevsner, 1949, p. 24) In reality, children were the cheapest
form of labor and their incomes, no matter how small, were needed
to keep the new industrial worker family afloat financially.

It will come as no surprise that women were hired in the
factories in great numbers as well. Theories of social decorum
regarding women of the lower classes were ignored as women took
their place as yet another form of cheap labor under capitalism. Women worked in the factories to supplement the low pay of their husbands or to support themselves alone. The Industrial Revolution had droves of women flocking to the doors of the factories. Dublin (1979) notes that by 1860 more than 60,000 women were employed in the textile industry in New England alone. (p. 6) Anthea Callen (1979) writes of nineteenth century factory women:

Since the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution working-class women had been relegated to the most menial and poorly paid jobs; every circumstance, from inferior strength and slower work to the demands of child rearing, contrived to place such women at the bottom of the work scale. The shift of production from the home to the factory, and the onus of bread-winning from the whole family to the father had diminished the value of women's productivity within the family. Her wage became a subsidiary to the man's, her lower pay and thus cheap labor a threat to his job security. (p. 26)

Hence, on an official level, capitalism insured women's place in the industrial work force though her working conditions were certainly no better than those of sub-employment, even though she did not have to gain entrance to the industry through a male relative. This new "status" within the economic structure caused its own brand of societal tensions. With women happy to be able to earn any wage independently, they did work for much lower pay than males. Males saw this as a threat to their own job security and economic livelihood, as Callen noted, and were very hostile to the idea of women in the factories. Many jobs in the factories were not
strenuous or difficult, just monotonous, and factory managers made it clear that women and even children could do the work men were doing.

Though women were highly exploited under the capitalist systems of the Industrial Revolution, they were afforded, for really the first time in Western history, an official place in the ranks of the independent wage-earners outside of the previously socially acceptable occupations of teacher or governess, which, themselves, carried class distinctions. Even members of the lowest social classes, no matter how uneducated and unskilled, now had a means to some sort of economic independence, though this independence carried its own physical, psychological, and social tolls. Nineteenth century society finally realized that, in many cases, women worked out of financial necessity, not to rock the existing social order. Buckley (1990) writes,

The plight of untrained women who had little hope of marriage or who were widowed and had no means to earn a living was of growing concern to 19th century social commentators. A dilemma faced Victorian society as it struggled to come to terms with the shortcomings of one of its central tenets—the division between the professional and domestic spheres. In 1872 women outnumbered men by nearly a million, and three million out of the six million adult women had to support themselves and their dependents. (p. 48)

The pottery industry benefitted greatly by the official introduction of women into its factories. Buckley (1990) notes that, by 1870, women represented over half of the workforce in the British art pottery industries. (p. 1) They filled both skilled and
unskilled jobs, generally according to their training which was a result of their social position. The physical descriptions of the English potteries in Stoke-on-Trent and the social specifics of its workers fills the pages of the novels and short stories of the English writer Arnold Bennett. Bennett wrote about the details of his life in this area of England and his works give accurate and moving accounts of what life would have been like for the men and women of the pottery industry. His 1902 novel, *Anna of the Five Towns*, reveals a plethora of details regarding social and gender stratification within the potteries. Bennett’s works turned a particularly sensitive eye to the plight of women within the pottery industry, so much so that various social activists and labor reformers turned specifically to the potteries after reading Bennett’s novels. (Buckley, 1990, p. 31)

Clara Collett, author of the 1893 Royal Commission on Labour Report on the Employment of Women, turned to the women in the glazing and over-painting departments in pottery industries because of the health hazards, such as “wrist-drop” from lead poisoning, pointed out in Bennett’s novels. (Buckley, 1990, p. 26)

In *Anna of the Five Towns* Bennett outlines the different positions women would have held in the pottery industry, from the women who handed the clay to the male at the pottery wheel, to the plate presses which saw men and women working “side by side, the women subordinate to the men” (Bennett, 1902, p. 118), to the specially trained china painters in their clean studios. Bennett points out that women china painters made more than any other person in
the pottery industry, excluding owner, and managers. He wrote of them,

The paintresses form the noblesse of the banks. Their task is a light one, demanding deftness first of all; they have delicate fingers, and enjoy a general reputation for beauty; the wages they earn may be estimated from their finery on Sundays. They come to business in cloth jackets, carry dinner in little satchels; in the shop they wear white aprons, and look startlingly neat and tidy. Across the benches over which they bend their coquettish heads gossip flies and returns like a shuttle; they are the source of a thousand intrigues, and one or another of them is continually getting married or omitting to get married. On the bank they constitute "the sex." An infinitesimal proportion of them, from among the branch known as ground-layers, die of lead poisoning—a fact which adds pathos to their physical charm. (Bennett, 1902, p. 121)

Bennett's passage is strangely revealing regarding women's movement into industry during the Industrial Revolution. There is a whimsicality in his physical description of "the paintress" with her decent earnings, fine clothes, and clean work space, which is ironic when compared to the manner in which a portion of these women will die from this very work. It must have been acknowledged by the pottery managers and manufacturers that their china painters were pale, lost the motor control of their hands and wrists, and then died. It seems as though in the one area in the potteries in which women were seem as highly skilled, and were given the status they deserved, their lives were being bought. Women were seen as expendable. The managers must have known that another young, willing female painter who had to support herself would step into
the shoes of the last woman who died of chemical poisoning. In this case, the price of economic freedom was entirely too high and this was the fate built into the system if a woman wanted to get as high as she could in the pottery industry. Until the reforms in social philosophy brought on by the writings of John Ruskin and William Morris and their Arts and Crafts ideals, china painting was the artistic ceiling for women within the pottery industry in England.

The Emergence of Arts and Craft Ideals in Response to the Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution gave women a firm foothold in the pottery industry; the social reformist ideals, which came to be known as “the craftsman ideal” of the “Arts and Crafts Movement,” fostered by the writing and work of John Ruskin and William Morris, provided a strong philosophical argument for an elevation in their status. Labor historian Eileen Boris (1986) writes,

“The craftsman ideal,” based on the example of the English art critic John Ruskin and his disciple William Morris, was a reaction against industrialization, urbanization, modernization—against what we can more precisely call the growth of a bureaucratized corporate structure in the context of capitalist social relations. The craftsman ideal sought a new wholism, an end to the division between the human spirit and material reality that from the late eighteenth century separated the mental from the manual, city from country, individual from community, work from play. By uniting art with labor, craftsmanship hoped to counter the fragmentation that had destroyed beauty in the process of degrading work. (p. xi)
Ruskin and Morris, among others, recognized that since the advent of industrialization, not only had working conditions and pay plummeted, but the quality of the goods had greatly diminished. England’s Great Exhibition of 1851 sought to display the fruits of the boom in technology since the advent of the Industrial Revolution. While the exhibition did show that more goods were being produced faster, they were obviously the products of machines. Any individual sensitivity of style of the original designer was lost in the production process which involved far too many hands. As a result, labor within the context of machine production was seen by the likes of Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin as degraded. They waged a campaign, which was carried out most successfully by Ruskin’s student Morris, in which handicraft, and the work of the individual, would be elevated.

The philosophy of Ruskin and Morris placed handicraft, which was to be seen as an art, in direct opposition to industrialized labor, and wedded to the labor of everyday life. Boris (1986) writes,

... the craftsman ideal offered an alternative, perhaps even an oppositional, culture; that is, a set of symbol systems, social understandings, and behaviour patterns in contrast to the dominant norm. A new production order, a new sort of community with the craftsman as the characteristic citizen and craftsmanship as the core value, would be a way of life in sharp contrast to the commercial values of the era of big business. Arts and Crafts would form the material counterpart to a simpler, more virtuous, and natural life. (p. xii)

The craftsman ideal sought to reestablish the structure and value system of medieval society, with its individual craftsmen, specialized
communities, and guild systems—the same system which France desperately tried to throw off in its embrace of progress, technology, and change, after the French Revolution.

The Arts and Crafts Movement of Ruskin and Morris probably had at least partial origins in what Callen (1979) calls a middle-class “crisis of conscience” (p. 2). The prosperity of the middle class, which did not have to labor in factories, was taking its toll on the lower classes, which did. The middle class realized that factory workers worked for a reason and knew that any social reform must still include a form of satisfactory economic livelihood, but one that acknowledged the individual and sought to elevate his or her quality of life through a joy in labor.

The pottery industry was the perfect venue for these ideals. Though heavily changed by the implementation of the machine since the Industrial Revolution, pottery, more than any other industry, still relied heavily on hand labor such as the throwing and, especially, the decoration of forms. Boris (1986) writes of this situation,

Potteries ... had traditionally relied on hand and horse power; even when the advent of clay processing machines and steam-powered potters' wheels made pottery a mass production industry in the 1870s and 1880s, it was still based on hand technology, still tied to artisan culture, crafts processes, and workshop organization. (p. xiii)

Pottery had not been capable of being entirely subsumed into the transformative processes of the Industrial Revolution so it could be swayed by Arts and Crafts ideals, or so thought social reformers.
Education within the bounds of the craft of each respective worker would create joy in the individual in the creation of his or her craft and, at the same time, elevate the quality of the product, which would result in an increase in both personal recognition and monetary remuneration, and the confidence that the individual might be able to exist outside of the capitalist factory system utilizing his or her craft.

For various reasons, women, and particularly the decorators, both impacted and felt the impact of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The Arts and Crafts Movement was interested, essentially, in transforming society through the Arts and Crafts. The women decorators in the pottery industry had already had to fight the system to get where they were in the industry, and theirs was the one area of pottery production which could not be touched by the machine. Porcelain decals were not invented until the early years of the twentieth century so the surfaces of pottery had to be painted by hand. This circumstance, alone, gave women a strong presence in the Arts and Crafts Movement. In the United States, English china painters were the progenitors of the women of the American art pottery movement whose participants, from the beginning, concerned themselves with self-promotion, monetary reward, and the reform potential of the skilled craft of porcelain painting and later production.
In the United States, though, women in pottery production were from the beginning much more professional as they generally came from a higher class and were concerned as much with philanthropy as with the promotion of pottery as a means of financial gain and personal recognition for American women. Both Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau, from the very beginning, saw art pottery as a way to earn a financial livelihood. They also saw it as an avenue of potential gain for other American women who, for any number of reasons ranging from the drain of men to the frontier of the West, the enormous number of male casualties of the Civil War, or the simple need to escape from the grip of a patriarchal household, had to support themselves financially. American women saw pottery production as what would today be termed a “socially conscious” or “socially responsible” business just as so many eco-friendly businesses do today. The most important factor here is that they saw it as a business from the beginning.

Social Stratification and the Women’s Art Pottery Movement

Despite the ideals expounded in the rhetoric of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the work done by women under the guise of the Arts and Crafts mentality was highly stratified socially. The history of pottery production on the continent, in England, and in America, was theoretically based along the lines of gender stratification. The
word "theoretically" is used because as was illustrated earlier the jobs that went along the levels of stratification made it acceptable to pay women lower wages than men. The mid-nineteenth century saw production stratified more along lines of class as well as gender. The American Art Pottery Movement took its organization mainly from one social strata of pottery production, the decorators, who formed the upper echelons of women's involvement in pottery production in England. It should be reiterated here that the first women named in the annals of the history of pottery production were either attached to an important male within the field, like Sabina and Anna Elisabeth Auffenwerth, or were from the aristocracy, like Wedgwood's Lady Elizabeth Templeton and Lady Diana Beauclerk. Later, the women the highest in the pottery industry, Bennett's "noblesse of the banks," the china painters, often came from a higher social class than their unskilled, working class sisters who wedged clay or worked the plate presses.

The philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Movement sought to be egalitarian, even Socialist, but in reality its effect differed dramatically from class to class. Gender stratification became even more rigid the higher one went up the social ladder and so the two types of stratification literally fed off of one another. A multitude of "rules" revolved around women's decorum in the nineteenth century, even among Arts and Crafts reformers, and this affected how women's industry evolved in this movement. John Ruskin, the founder of the movement, wrote extensively on the need to offer
women the same educational opportunities as men. Yet, he felt that women should be educated not to enable them to make their own economic and intellectual way in the world but to provide the best possible support system for their spouses. He wrote,

In a world of social upheaval, of ruthless business competition, she was to be the calm eye in the centre of the storm, and was endowed with ideals of virtue and wisdom, and given the spiritual and moral guardianship of the menfolk returning from the trials and temptations of an amoral commercial world.

Her job was to provide in the home a haven of calm serenity, to be “a companion who will raise the tone of [her husband’s] mind from . . . low anxieties, and vulgar cares” and “lead his thoughts to expatiate or repose on those subjects which convey a feeling of identity with a higher state of existence beyond this present life.” (quoted in Mrs. Sarah Ellis, 1844, pp. 99-100)

The Victorian woman, in ideal terms, was to be “The Angel in the House,” from Coventry Patmore’s popular poem about ideal womanhood from 1854. If a woman had to seek an occupation it was important that it be a decorous one which fitted in with Victorian ideals: art was the perfect outlet.

Callen (1979) writes,

In the search for suitable occupations for gentlewomen, art rapidly came to be recognized as one of the few areas in which women’s participation could safely be encouraged . . . . Here was an area of employment for women that could be seen as an extension of the traditional feminine accomplishments of the period, which would enhance rather than erode the role designated as “natural” for Victorian womanhood. Arts
and Crafts could be seen to comply with Ruskin's ideal of woman's place, and with Tennyson's "Man for the sword and for the needle she: Man with the head and woman with the heart . . . . All else confusion." (p. 25)

Notice the preoccupation with decorum around the employment of the gentlewoman. This is a key to one of the great hypocrisies of the Arts and Crafts Movement: though it was supposed to be concerned with all social classes, hence its connections with Socialism, the results of its reform efforts affected mainly the middle and upper classes, those classes from which the philosophers of the movement were drawn. None of these theories of decorum applied to the lower classes. Lower class women were thus not offered the educational opportunities that Arts and Crafts ideals made possible for the middle class. They still did the lowest-paying drudge work within the potteries and saw only token improvements due to Arts and Crafts reform efforts. Advances were really only seen in the middle and upper classes.

Women's involvement in art pottery production was stratified into three levels. The lowest level consisted of the uneducated, unskilled working class and rural peasant craftswomen. Attempts were made in the very latest years of the nineteenth century by organizations such as the Home Arts and Industries Association to organize the sale of traditional means of production and to preserve these traditions. These efforts were short-lived and had little effect on the education or economy of this class. Industrial working class
women, at least in England, saw very little change in their roles and economic standing due to the influence of Arts and Crafts ideals on pottery production.

In America, because of the upper-class philanthropic beginnings of the Art Pottery Movement, attempts were made to educate and improve the quality of life of the industrial working class female. Schools, workshops, and societies, such as Boston's Saturday Evening Women's Club and Jane Addams's Hull House, run by wealthy women, sought to train lower class and immigrant women in handicrafts like pottery production to keep them out of the harsher, more corrupt industries like textiles or even prostitution. Many of these Arts and Crafts philanthropic organizations, at some point, opened sales rooms in which to sell the goods of these women and encourage their progress developmentally and economically. They also often sought to instill the values of the upper-class women from the dominant culture, who founded these organizations, into these women from different classes and cultures. In the words of Boris, they would “sanitize [society] through the Arts and Crafts” (Boris, 1986, p. 78).

The next level of stratification of women in both English and American art pottery production were those women, upper-class and aristocratic, with an abundance of time and money on their hands, who sought to organize the philanthropic efforts for the lower and working classes. Dorothea Brooke, the heroine of George Eliot's novel Middlemarch (1871), as well as Marcella Boyce, the heroine of Mrs.
Humphry Ward's *Marcella* (1894), both come to mind as fictionalized stereotypes of this type of woman. Both are beautiful, educated, and suddenly find themselves with an abundance of money and large rural estates. Both try to convince their male relatives to initiate labor reform on their estates but are denied, until, that is, the male relatives die leaving them with the money, time, and a willing constitution to improve the lives of the lower classes. In real life, Jane Addams, Ellen Gates Starr, and Vida Dutton Scudder were the heroines, and they were much more consistent and committed than either of these English characters from fiction.

A third stratification consisted of the "destitute gentlewomen" who had fallen on hard times and had to covertly find a means of making money. In England, before the true acceptance of Arts and Crafts ideals, it was acceptable for a woman to learn the genteel art of china painting but she could not sell her product. These women were to be executing this work for the beautification of their own homes, a very important facet of the Victorian woman's ideal. According to Callen (1979), however, workshops were often set up as though their only purpose was to instruct upper-class women in the art of china painting when in reality they were an economic venture in which these women anonymously produced pieces that would then be sold outside of the workshop. (p. 9) This illustrates just how socially damaging it would be for a Victorian gentlewoman to try to make a livelihood from pottery, no matter how dire her circumstances.
In America, gentlewomen were really educated middle-class women who had not the means to marry, were left unprovided for by the death of a father or husband, or simply believed in the emancipation of women and her right to an economic livelihood. This is the class which founded the American art pottery movement, and included Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau. Mary Louise McLaughlin was the daughter of the most prominent architect in Cincinnati, never married, and was a firm believer in the women’s rights. Adelaide Alsop Robineau was from an educated family, and went to college. While at college her father left the family and they suffered severe financial reverses, forcing her to use her artistic training to support herself. Irene Sargent, Arts and Crafts spokesperson and a colleague of Robineau’s at Syracuse University, wrote in 1906,

At the beginning, as is often the case, necessity was the spur to action. The feminine art which Miss Alsop began to practice as an accomplishment, quickly provided for her a means of livelihood with which to meet severe reverses of fortune. (quoted in Weiss, 1981, p. 45)

China decoration was the perfect outlet for this class because it was both decorous and yet manageable and profitable. Weiss (1981) writes of china painting:

It could be executed in a small studio or at home, and it was delicate work which did not require heavy, physical labor. Other aspects of pottery such as the grinding of clays and glazes, the throwing or casting of bodies, and the firing of kilns were duties which, according to that era’s way of thinking, had to be executed by strong boys or men.

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Instruction in china painting soon became a woman's domain, and frequently these women also sold the pigments and other necessary supplies. Moreover, the final product--be it a decorated vase or tea or dinner service--was much in demand by other women. Thus the production and selling could be contained within a genteel, feminine world. Not least of all, both the artist and her client could have the satisfaction of fulfilling William Morris' injunction of having objects which were at once beautiful (or at least decorative) and ostensibly useful. (p. 45)

This quote sums up the ideological beginnings of the American Art Pottery Movement. It should be noted that American women had so much success in this area of the Arts and Crafts that, in the early years of the twentieth century, they turned away from simple surface decoration, and the baggage of social decorum and women's roles, toward the complete production of porcelain, from clay to finish. In doing this they threw off the shackles and social limitations of their British progenitors, and challenged those of their own country. Their challenge was successful. Later chapters will discuss the challenges and the successes of Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau.

To summarize briefly, advances in women's roles in art pottery production were inconsistent along the lines of social stratification. Great ideological inconsistency has become one of the academic hallmarks of Arts and Crafts philosophy and rhetoric. William Morris spoke out for the equality not only of all classes but of all people. However, his workshops exemplified traditional historical Western divisions of labor. The work of his own daughters in his workshops
was unrecognized and unpaid, two injustices that Morris criticized in industrial factories.

Absent from this entire discussion of women's involvement in art pottery is the mention of one intangible, and economically irrelevant, benefit of the Arts and Crafts Movement and that is the idea of sisterhood and community. Sisterhood was, for many American women, the movement's raison d'être. Art pottery production provided many women with a community of like minds and resources which were lost to women in most facets of industrial pottery production. Women helped and understood the plights of other women in a venue which was completely socially acceptable. The following song was sung every year at the annual breakfast of McLaughlin's Women's Pottery Club in Cincinnati, Ohio, attesting to the psychological comfort created in this new atmosphere of art pottery production:

Twenty busy women, prone to work in clay;
Twenty busy women, toilers every day;
Twenty busy women, all in love with art;
Toiling in Pottery, with hand and head and heart;

Here we meet as ne'er we've met before;
Here we meet to vote that work's a bore;
Here we meet, our cups of tea to quaff;
Here we meet to talk, and sing, and laugh.
(quoted in Boris, 1986, p. 12)

Hence, the chapter illustrates how very logical it was for ceramics to become a field dominated by women in the Arts and Crafts Movement. There was nothing revolutionary or even out of
the ordinary in their physical presence in the industry, just in how that presence managed to transform it following the theoretical lead of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Before one can examine the impact of Arts and Crafts ideology on the women involved in American art pottery one has to fully understand the circumstances surrounding the movement’s birth in England in direct response to the Industrial Revolution, the topic of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3

"REDESIGNING THE WORLD": THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, ART EDUCATION REFORM, AND THE THEORETICAL SEEDLINGS OF THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN

"Beauty is an element of immense pecuniary value."
--William Ewart Gladstone, 1890

The first part of the title for this chapter, "Redesigning the World," comes from the book by the historian Peter Stansky (1985) entitled Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s, and the Arts and Crafts. Stansky's title is appropriate for his book, which details the theoretically reformist agenda of William Morris's role in the British Arts and Crafts Movement, a Movement which sought, first, to revitalize English design by taking it outside of industry, and second, to elevate the lower social classes through art and joy in labor. I chose the title for this chapter because it captures many of the different facets of the mid- to late nineteenth century British ideas about the relation of art to society, especially industrial society. As will be explained in this chapter, the Industrial Revolution in England was responsible for the great decline seen not only in the craft of the goods produced but also in their design, and in the
overall poor quality of life of the industrial worker. This decline in the quality of British goods became recognized as a national problem in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, and poor design was seen to be one of the roots of the products’ inferiority. Various Royal commissions felt an urgent need to improve the design process of industrial goods before export trade was adversely effected. The result of thorough national inquiries into the links between design and production within industry was a massive campaign of art education which began in primary school and ended with evening classes aimed at the industrial worker. They sought to “redesign” the fairly insular aesthetic world of Industrial England. The Arts and Crafts Movement was a reaction to both the Industrial Revolution, with its dehumanizing working conditions and the resulting poor products, and in some respects, to specific elements of design reform that were being passed on through the revamped system of art education. Therefore, it is important that the reader understand something of the chronology of the development of art education in conjunction with the Industrial Revolution before the advent of the Arts and Crafts Movement to get a true sense of what the founding philosophers of the Arts and Crafts Movement were reacting against.

The Arts and Crafts Movement also sought to “redesign the world.” To Arts and Crafts theorists such as John Ruskin and William Morris, the world could be changed for the better through aesthetic education and an appreciation of the arts. Their use in the workplace
would restore dignity and hence joy to one’s labor and change the face of society from the worker on up. Pragmatically, one’s world would be more beautiful because everyday objects would be better designed and a new importance and higher aesthetic standards would be attached to one’s work as well as one’s domestic environments. In all instances, art was seen as having an impact on the larger world, not just the immediate realm of industry or consumer, an idea fairly revolutionary considering that, historically, art had been only the realm of the aristocracy, the Church, and the monied, in short, the select of society rather than society at large.

This might explain the renewed interest in the Arts and Crafts Movement seen in the late 1980s and 1990s when several major Arts and Crafts exhibitions were travelling accompanied by large catalogues. In the 1970s and especially the early 80s the “artworld” per se was an insular and mysterious realm not to be touched by the theoretically unawares or those people unwilling to understand why most art could no longer be purchased, not only by the upper middle class but by art institutions themselves, those places erected solely for the collection and display of art. With art becoming the realm of corporate collections and millionaires, with new and emerging artists charging six figures for work that is intellectually elitist, what a breath of fresh air is the Arts and Crafts Movement with its humble forms, emphasis on integrity of design and process, and the theoretical goals of elevating the working classes, even if this goal was never really achieved on a large scale.
The Birth of the Industrial Revolution in England and the Impetus for the Implementation of a National Art Education Curriculum

In 1798, England, which was enjoying the acceleration of technical improvements in industrial processes, took first place in the National Industrial Exhibition in France. (Pevsner, 1949, p. 23) Pevsner (1949) notes the results of this achievement,

The immediate consequence of this . . . was a sudden increase in production, demanding more and more hands, and so leading to an equally fast increase in population. Towns grew up with horrifying rapidity, new markets had to be satisfied, an even bigger production was demanded, and [industrial] inventiveness was stimulated anew. (p. 24)

The working conditions in the factories became the worst ever in European history with 12-14 hour work days in unhealthy buildings which had their doors and windows locked. As noted earlier, children were needed to tend the smaller machinery and to contribute to the subsistence economy of their industrial household and so came to the factories from the age of five. The aesthetics of objects were left to the manufacturers who generally refused to pay professional designers. Hence, the quality of England’s products began to spiral downward.

In approximately 1820 the second phase of the Industrial Revolution began. Edward Lucie-Smith (1981), in his The Story of
Craft: The Craftsman’s Role in Society, captures the sense of aesthetic muddle which gripped British industry at this time:

By this time the impact of industry and its industrial growth on standards of craftsmanship and design in everyday objects had become very complex. Neoclassicism eased the transition from one set of attitudes to craft to quite another--design was no longer a matter of interaction between the prevailing taste of the time, the particular patron and the maker, but rather something imposed unilaterally from above . . . . The class which the revolution enriched associated wealth and its enjoyment with all the luxuries laboriously handmade for their predecessors. There was a vogue for the complex richness of the Elizabethan style, popularized by the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott. There was also, from about 1830 onwards, a renewed taste for the Rococo. But the so-called Grecian style was also liked, and carried on Neoclassical ideas in somewhat attenuated form. The chief characteristic of the period was therefore its eclecticism and lack of stylistic coherence. The effects of this were compounded by the fact that the growth of population and wealth reduced the direct influence of the small group of educated arbiters of taste, who had succeeded in imposing their ideas almost throughout the eighteenth century. As had already happened in Wedgwood’s case, the real responsibility for design passed to the manufacturer, and the manufacturers of the period, unlike their great predecessor, were in many respects ill prepared to bear the responsibility. (p. 109)

Pevsner (1949) wrote further of this industrial condition,

It is sufficient here to say that manufacturers were, by means of new machinery, enabled to turn out thousands of cheap articles in the same time and at the same cost as were formerly required for the production of one well-made object. Sham materials and sham technique were dominant all through industry. Skilled craftsmanship, still so admirable when Chippendale and Wedgwood were
at work, was replaced by mechanical routine. Demand was increasing from year to year, but demand from an uneducated and debased population, living a slave life in filth and penury. (p. 8)

Most histories note the Crystal Palace, or "Great Exhibition" of 1851 as the event which illustrated to the world and England, itself, that English goods were decidedly inferior in design to international counterparts which were also exhibited at this international exposition which sought to showcase industrial achievements through examples of products. In reality, people had been trying to call attention to the negative ramifications of the Industrial Revolution for decades before this to no avail. As early as 1831, Thomas Carlyle wrote and spoke of how the Machine Age was transforming society in a negative manner.

Ewart's Select Committee of the House of Commons

In 1835, William Ewart, a close associate and friend of Gladstone, put forth a motion to put together a Parliamentary committee to identify why English goods, especially manufactured ones, were spiralling downward in quality and greatly effecting the export trade and ultimately the national economy. (Buckley, 1990, p. 45) Charles R. Richards, who, in 1929, published a treatise on the American ramifications of instruction in applied art in England, wrote that this committee was appointed "to inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and of the principles of design among the people, (especially the manufacturing population) of the
country; and also to inquire into the constitution, management, and efforts of institutions connected with the arts” (Richards, 1929, p. 311). Ewart was particularly qualified to oversee this official study as he came from Liverpool, one of England’s oldest core industrial cities, and one known throughout England as a seat of practicality.

The 1836 report by Ewart’s Select Committee of the House of Commons on Arts and Manufactures pointed out that British industries were having a difficult time finding artists and designers to work for them and that they must avoid “copying foreign work, particularly French” (Buckley, 1990, p. 45). Manufacturers had been hiring foreign designers extensively until they suddenly faced a shortage and did not have an indigenous design population. The report recommended the founding of design schools and resulted in the establishment of the School of Design, now known as the Royal College of Art. (Richards, 1929, p. 311) Special mention was made of the founding of female design schools and government pecuniary aid for all design schools. By 1840 design schools for males were beginning to be put in place aided by various government grants towards their formation and management. For example, Richards (1929) notes that in 1840 the government targeted the manufacturing districts and gave them a £10,000 grant for the establishment of schools of design in the larger towns. (p. 311)
The Founding of Schools of Design

The Schools of Design were the first state-supported art schools in England. As noted, they came into being because of the evidence presented by the reports of Ewart's Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures which outlined a need for art education which had a direct and practical application to manufacture. (Bell, 1963, p. 59)

Ultimately, they were founded to improve the quality of industrial goods produced by England to assure continued economic success for the nation and in so doing to create a new class of "Art-Laborers" as the educational program was aimed, to use the wording of Ewart's Select Committee, at the "manufacturing population of the country."

The Schools of Design were to be the antithesis of the Royal Academy which was accused in Ewart's report of being "exclusive and oligarchical" (Bell, 1963, p. 57). The Royal Academy had come into being in 1768 to elevate or purify the taste of the nation of England, in the eloquent words of its director, Sir Joshua Reynolds, to bring England into "glorious preeminence amongst the great civilized nations of the world, to foster a breed of giants cast in the antique mould of Raphael and Michelangelo, and so act upon the genius of the nation . . ." (Bell, 1963, p. 29). The art created within was so-called Fine Art, done in the grand continental manner which included history painting and the use of elevated themes. The Royal Academy was in every sense an academy, a place of academic art, and Ewart's
Report recommended, really demanded, that the new Schools of Design be formed in direct opposition to this program and to have a curriculum which was closer to that of the historic workshop of the guild system. Bell (1963) writes, “the purpose of the schools was emphatically not to produce artists but rather to form the taste of artisans . . .” (p. 67). There was to be no figure drawing and no work from casts from the antique because this was an integral part of the curriculum of the Royal Academy and formed the basis of history painting. The Schools of Design did not want its students to aspire to the creation of “High Art” but towards an art education which would give them a “skill” to be used in an industrial occupation. (Bell, 1963, p. 67) In short, everything taught had to have a direct and practical application to industry of some sort. From this report grew a system which contained the Royal College of Art, many national Schools of Design, and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The School of Design opened its doors on June 1, 1837. It announced its mission as one which would “afford the manufacturers [i.e. industrial workers] an opportunity of acquiring a competent knowledge of the Fine Arts, as far as the same are connected with manufactures” (Bell, 1963, pp. 72-73). The syllabus was as follows:

1. Elementary - Outline Drawing, shading from plaster, modelling and coloring.
2. Instruction for design in special branches of industry.
   a. Study of fabrics and of such processes of industry as admit only of the application of design under certain conditions.
b. The study of the history of taste and theoretical knowledge of style, etc. (quoted in Bell, 1963, p. 100)

If an industrial community wanted a School of Design (and if it had a population over 10,000), it could petition the government to open one to meet the needs of the industry in its particular region. When regional Schools of Design were opened, they altered their individual curricula to fit the needs of the type of industry in the region. For example, the School of Design in Nottingham, known for its textile production, would have a very different curricula from that of the School of Design in Coventry, known for its pottery production. Industrial communities took advantage of this provision and by 1843 six Schools of Design were in existence as well as a Normal School. Between the years of 1842 and 1852, twenty-one additional Schools of Design were created in cities such as Nottingham, Coventry, Sheffield, York, Manchester, and Leeds.

In 1842, The School of Design for Females opened. The rules of eligibility for entrance to this design school were as follows: "The School of Design for Females having been established strictly with a view to the benefit of those who desire to study Ornamental Art with reference to its use in some industrial occupation, no one who wishes to study drawing merely as an accomplishment can be admitted" (quoted in Buckley, 1990, p. 47). Only those who demonstrated a financial need to work gained entrance. One might also infer that society was becoming aware that a growing number of women, including gentlewomen, were in dire need of an avenue of
employment which was "respectable" and somewhat genteel. Art fit
this description and the growth of art schools in the 1840s and 50s
might have been at least partially a response to this situation.
Anthea Callen (1979) points out that, ironically, art classes offered
especially for the working classes in the evenings were often filled
with gentlewomen. (p. 25) Richards notes that approximately
twenty-five percent of all those receiving art instruction were
women amateurs. (Richards, 1929, p. 313)

In all the Schools of Design, regardless of regional curricula
variation, nature and the imagination were avoided in favor of the
study of ornament. Bell (1963) writes:

The Schools of Design had been created in order to satisfy
the demands of industry; they had been modified to
pacify the industrialists and a great uniform system
based entirely upon the requirements of manufacturers
was fastened upon every art class and every art school in
the country. Under that system it was not what Dickens
called "fancy," but fact and fact alone which was to be
regarded. (pp. 261-62)

Bell is referring to Dickens's Coketown, his parody of an industrial
town from the 1854 novel Hard Times. Dickens (1854/1960) writes:

Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the
town; fact, fact, fact everywhere in the immaterial. The
M'Choakumchild School was all fact, and the school of
design was all fact, and the relations between master and
man were all fact, and everything was all fact between
the lying-in hospital and the cemetery . . . . (p. 29)
The first ideologues of the Arts and Crafts Movement criticized the curricula of the Schools of Design as being purely for the benefit of the industrial employer with no accommodation made for the individual aesthetic, personality, or spiritual make-up of the student. Another telling passage of the time comes from a design classroom scene, again from Dickens’s *Hard Times* (1854/1960):

“You are not to have, in any object of use or ornament, what would be a contradiction in fact. You don’t walk upon flowers in fact; you cannot be allowed to walk upon flowers in carpets. You don’t find that foreign birds and butterflies come and perch upon your crockery; you cannot be permitted to paint foreign birds and butterflies upon your crockery. You never meet with quadrupeds going up and down walls; you must not have quadrupeds represented upon walls. You must use,” said the gentleman, “for all these purposes, combinations and modifications (in primary colours) of mathematical figures which are susceptible of proof and demonstration. This is the new discovery. This is fact. This is taste.” (p. 9)

John Ruskin, the ideological father of the Arts and Crafts Movement spoke his entire life in opposition to the impersonal, systematized, industrially driven art education of the Schools of Design and the so-called South Kensington system parodied in *Hard Times*. He wrote:

The tap-root of all this mischief is the endeavor to produce some ability in the student to make money by designing for manufacture. No student who makes this his primary object will ever be able to design at all; and the very words “School of design” involve the profoundest of Art fallacies. Drawing may be taught by
the tutors; but design only by Heaven; and to every scholar who thinks to sell his inspiration, Heaven refuses its help. (Ruskin, 1880, p. 344)

Reform in Art Education after the Crystal Palace Exhibition and the Birth of the South Kensington Program

Despite the government’s efforts at design reform through a national system of Schools of Design, Britain’s industrial products were, as noted earlier, still aesthetically inferior in 1851 and the government began a very serious attempt at centralized control of art/design education with an eye towards the still suffering export trade. The Crystal Palace Exhibition left a surplus of funds which totalled £150,000. Henry Cole, who had been the principle figure in the development of the Crystal Palace Exhibition, proposed the idea that these funds be used to purchase a site at South Kensington which would become the central seat of industrial design reform in England. (Sutton, 1967, p. 58) Henry Cole, who in 1849 had called for a Select Committee to look into the management of the Schools of Design, was named superintendent of this “new” school which was renamed the College of Applied Art, and which included a Museum of Manufactures and the National Art Training School with the “mission of training teachers, designers, and ‘art workmen’” (Sutton, 1967, p. 54).

The College of Applied Art targeted the same “art laborer” class as did the Schools of Design; those who wanted to study art merely as an accomplishment could do so but they had to pay a fee which was
substantially higher than those attending classes to obtain an industrial position. Cole found that the biggest problem of all was the fact that students were completely unprepared when they got to the school. Cole used this fact to procure funds from Parliament, through the Board of Trade, to create a program of art education for all students beginning in elementary school and ending with the Colleges of Applied Arts in which the training would benefit industry. (Sutton, 1967, p. 54) In short, the South Kensington system had the same goal as the Schools of Design, to meet the pragmatic needs of industry, it just had a different, more regimented, means.

It should be noted here that "art instruction" consisted of studio activities only, specifically drawing, and drawing was seen as the key to good industrial design. Art curricula consisted of free-hand drawing from copies (flat examples), free-hand drawing from models, practical geometry, linear perspective, delineation of large letters, numbers, and diagrams. (Nichols, 1877, p. 190) Today this would be called beginning design or straight industrial design and even today's curricula is indebted to the South Kensington system.

One of the most important things about the South Kensington system was its regimentation. Curricula were set for every different age level and examinations were taken and sent to South Kensington for marking, hence exerting a complete control over its own "branches" of instruction, and assuring, in the mind of its...
superintendent, complete quality control. Also, successful teachers and those who furthered their own design education were remunerated financially.

A rigorous program of "grants-in-aid" was started to assure that large numbers of people of varying backgrounds were receiving art instruction rather than a select percentage. (Richards, 1929, p. 313) Each school or class involved in art instruction received a certain amount of money if they fulfilled a series of specific requirements regarding enrollment, equipment and materials, maintaining a non-profit status, the number and quality of its teaching staff, the progress of the students, and the quality of the curriculum compared to that provided by the regional central body of control (which was like a Board of Education), and how well the curriculum was adapted to the pervasive regional industries such as pottery or textiles. (Richards, 1929, p. 312) All schools and classes that received these grants were subject to very strict supervision to make sure that they were fulfilling the aforementioned requirements, requirements that were seen as the only way to advance art instruction throughout England.

George Ward Nichols (husband of Maria Longworth Nichols, the founder of perhaps the greatest American art pottery, Cincinnati, Ohio's Rookwood) in his seminal work Art Education Applied to Industry (1877) wrote that in the same year as the beginning of an aggressive policy of grants-in-aid was begun,

Parliament set its powerful machinery in operation; the Committee of Council for Education addressed the
Chamber of Commerce of Great Britain the following questions:

* What trades are now being injured by the want of technical education?
* How, and in what particular, are they injured?
* How do other countries, from their greater attention to technical instruction, absorb our trade? Give instance, and, if possible, statistics.
* What plan of technical education would remedy the evil?

(pp. 65-66)

On March 25, 1868 the House of Commons printed the replies to these questions in its Parliamentary Reports. As noted by Nichols (1877), the replies came from the “associations of the Chambers of Commerce for the United Kingdom, which reported the replies from the separate chambers of Nottingham, Kendal, the Staffordshire potteries, and Birmingham” (p. 66). This report illustrated that there was little if any technical art education. The pottery districts were somewhat of an exception in that the Stoke-on-Trent area had recognized the drop in the quality of its designs and in 1847 founded an art school specifically to cater to its own pottery industry. (Callen, 1979. p. 52) Previously, many of the potteries had held specific design classes, but this was the first official school.

One might also hypothesize that the managers of the potteries were tired of paying large salaries to foreign designers and painters who just emulated continental design. Nichols (1877) notes that the sum of ten thousand pounds a year per pottery was paid to foreign workmen. (p. 66) Hence, again, implementation of art education and
resulting design reform might have been due more to economics than
to aesthetics. England needed to be able to compete in the new
industrial economy in which it had so previously been so successful.

The immediate result of these reports was that associations
were created solely for the development of the arts. Theoretically,
these were to improve the aesthetics of Britain's manufactured
goods, to educate Britain's working class, and less importantly in an
official sense, to provide a respectable avenue of employment for the
growing number of women who needed to provide for themselves
economically. In reality, these powerful associations were
responsible for setting up art schools as well as implementing art
/design) education into elementary day-schools, night classes, and
training-colleges for teachers. The British government published an
official directory from South Kensington for the implementation of
art education which contained the “Regulations for Promoting
Instruction in Art.” Again, instruction in art simply meant drawing.
The government was to aid the separate areas of instruction listed
above (elementary day-schools etc.) financially. Nichols wrote with
amazement how “liberal” the English government was in aiding art
instruction. He writes,

The use of the word “aid” has real significance. The
Government not only invites the student to come and be
educated, but it really pays him for coming. In all the
history of persons who have been generous patrons of
art, or of beneficent governments providing for the
welfare of their people, certainly no system equals this
effort of Great Britain to encourage and stimulate art education. [Its] elaborate and thoughtful plan... is the result of twenty years in endeavoring to find out the best way to advance the industrial interests of that country. (Nichols, 1877, p. 68)

The liberality of the British government in aiding art education had quite substantial results as the following statistics will show. Between the years of 1855 (just four years after England's Great Exhibition) and 1873 the number of children in public and elementary schools for the poor receiving instruction in art, specifically drawing, rose from 18,988 to 237,733. The number of persons receiving art instruction in rural schools of art rose from 8,274 to 20,653. Admission in metropolitan schools of art rose from 610 to 2,715. Night classes were non-existent until 1866, and after their introduction attendance rose from 1,140 to 20,352, which is certainly the most telling statistic because it reveals that the working class, probably the industrial working class, was a targeted population for these art classes. (Nichols, 1877, p. 69)

The strength of the connection between art education and industry only grew throughout the later part of the nineteenth century as indicated by the following excerpt of a speech for the opening of the exhibition celebrating art and industry which opened at Dundee in Scotland on October 29, 1890. The speech was given by Gladstone's son, William Ewart Gladstone:¹

¹ A descendant of the William Ewart of "Ewart's Select Committee of the House of Commons on Arts and Manufactures."
The industries of the country will derive enormous advantage from the cultivation of art. Beauty is an element of immense pecuniary value. The traditional cultivation of taste and production of beauty in industrial objects, is better known—perhaps best of all known—perhaps—in Italy, and very well known in France . . . . In the enormous commerce of France, the beauty of the objects produced counts from year to year for a great many millions sterling, and these millions sterling would fade into air were the appreciation [sic] of beauty and the power of producing beautiful objects taken away . . . . I assure you that it is hardly an exaggeration to say that at the time I was a boy . . . there was hardly anything this beautiful produced in this country . . . . [Now the] introduction of beauty is becoming a regular portion of the industrial art. (quoted in Stansky, 1985, p. 25)

It should be noted here that a product of the South Kensington system by the name of Walter Smith would later implement this program of art education into Boston and the state of Massachusetts, transforming American art education for decades and forging the same links seen in England between art and industry.

As will be seen in chapter 4, the main Arts and Crafts theorists such as John Ruskin and William Morris worked against the connection between art and the industrial product which England had worked so hard to foster for at least half a century through the Schools of Design and the South Kensington program. Morris criticized the standards of beauty which were imposed and brought in social issues such as the quality of life of the industrial worker who had a hand in creating these industrial goods. To Morris and other Arts and Crafts theorists and practitioners, beauty was a holistic entity, and could not be an outcome of a fragmented work
process which was futile toil for the worker and completely devoid of any sense of quality craftsmanship. Contrary to the official parliamentary pronouncements and subsequent changes in national art education, Arts and Crafts theorists felt that art had to be separated from industry to maintain any aesthetic or moral integrity.

It is fitting to end this chapter on the developments in British art education in the nineteenth century and segue into the next chapter on the Arts and Crafts reform of art education by quoting the a schoolmaster, J. Snell, responsible for implementing the South Kensington program of design in his school:

Drawing as taught in our schools does not help the mind in its conception or appreciation for the beautiful; and if extensively followed, as indeed it must be to produce the desired effect, it will trench largely upon other subjects. Let the teacher give the children occasionally some lessons on form, proportion, symmetry; show them what is beautiful in their neighborhood, and require descriptions of any objects themselves graceful, whether artistic or natural. Let him take them to a hill or mountain top, and from thence look down upon some lovely country scene, and demand what are the elements of its loveliness. Let him point to the gold or silver-fringed cloud, standing out in bold relief from the blue sky; to the distant hills, whose grey hue melts into the grey hue of the horizon . . . . Let them gaze on the whole till the softness and repose that spreads o’er the scene sink into their young hearts, and fill them with the love of nature. Such teaching would be more elevating to the children of labourers and mechanics than drawing lessons. (quoted in Sutton, 1967, p. 67)
CHAPTER 4

"OF THE DEED, AND NOT OF THE WORD": JOHN RUSKIN, WILLIAM MORRIS, AND THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN

“He who would form the creations of his own mind by any other instrument than his own hand, would also, if he might, give grinding organs to Heaven’s angels to make their music easier.”

--John Ruskin, 1851

For certain socioaesthetic theorists, the art education implemented by the British government was not a useful or ethical way to either reform the design of industry or elevate certain workers into better, skilled, or more fulfilling positions. John Ruskin was one of these theorists, and he, along with his student William Morris, would wage a campaign of aesthetic and social reform against the trappings of the Industrial Revolution including the hierarchies of labor as well as the powerful, government-sanctioned industrial art education movement which essentially revolved around the idea of centralized control.
Ruskin was influenced by the work of Thomas Carlyle, who, as mentioned earlier, was one of the earliest critics of the products and social implications of the Industrial Revolution. In 1829 Carlyle wrote:

Our old modes of exertion are all discredited, and thrown aside. On every hand the living artisan is driven from his workshop, to make room for a speedier, inanimate one. The shuttle drops from the fingers of the weaver, and falls into iron fingers that ply it faster. For all earthly, and some unearthly purpose, we have machines and mechanical furtherances . . . . Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery, but the internal and spiritual also. Here, too, nothing follows its spontaneous course, nothing is left to be accomplished by old natural methods . . . . Men are grown mechanical in head and heart, as well as in hand. They have lost faith in individual endeavour, and in natural force of any kind. (quoted in Triggs, 1902, p. 2)

Carlyle called for a new ideal for the new industrial age. The new ideal society would extol not the virtues of the "prophet, poet, soldier, [or] statesman, [but the] industrial hero" whose work was "to civilize out of its utter savagery the world of Industry" (Triggs, 1902, pp. 2-3).

Ruskin was very influenced by two other ideas of Carlyle; the first being the idea that art should not pertain only to the leisure classes, and the second that work was the chief and noble duty of man, that labor was life. Ruskin also agreed to a certain extent with
Carlyle that education should be "of the deed, and not of the word," "a training in practicality at every turn" (Triggs, 1902, p. 7). Carlyle’s paper, the "Corn-Law Rhymes," from which the following is taken, influenced the rhetoric of Ruskin more than any other of Carlyle’s materials:

He that has done nothing has known nothing. Vain is it to sit scheming and plausibly discoursing; up and be doing! If thy knowledge be real, put it forth from thee; grapple with real Nature; try thy theories there, and see how they hold out. Do one thing; for the first time in thy life do a thing; a new light will rise to thee on the doing of all things whatsoever. Truly, a boundless significance lies in work, whereby the humblest craftsman comes to attain much which is of indispensible use, but which who is of no craft, were he never so high, runs the risk of missing. (Triggs, 1902, pp. 7-8)

The passage above bears many of the seeds which will come to fruition in the writing of Ruskin and, later, that of his student William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement proper. Ruskin stood by the idea of industry and its effect on England as expressed in the poet William Blake’s Milton of 1808:

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic Mills? (Blake, 1808/1927, p. 464)

To Ruskin, the "dark Satanic Mills" of Industrial England were a source of divisionism, on both social and individual fronts. They built up insurpassable barriers between life, art, and labor and,
worst of all, sought to drain the humanity out of the worker so that he or she might function most successfully within the industrial situation.

Ruskin stood for the unity of all arts, dispelling all notions of the separation between the so-called fine art such as painting and the craft of wood-turning, divisions which had become all too demarcated during the Industrial Revolution. Eileen Boris (1986) writes, "Industrialization divided crafts into the fine arts and the industries. Art became part of 'culture,' redefined in the late nineteenth century, according to the cultural historian Alan Trachtenberg, as 'nonutilitarian activities and goods ... a privileged domain of refinement, aesthetic sensibility, and higher learning'" (p. xi). To Ruskin, objects, even those used every day, could stand as monuments to the strength and integrity of a nation as well as to that of the craftsman who created them. Honesty was everything to Ruskin; honesty in labor, materials, and craft. At all times the product being created must bear vestiges of the individuality of the human hand which made it, rather than the perfect uniformity of the machine.

The aesthetics of the Industrial Revolution, or as Carlyle called it, the Machine Age, were about perfection and the ability to produce hundreds or thousands of flawless, identical objects. The implementation of art education in England, which usually consisted of drawing with the end of industrial design, catered to this machine aesthetic, and expression and innovative design was overlooked in
favor of technical and copying ability. Ruskin’s direct opposition to this aesthetic can be seen in his two most famous works, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice*, both of which were published in 1851, the same year as England’s Great Exhibition. In *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Ruskin extolled the multitude of virtues to the mind, body, soul, and even the nation, of craft handwork. In *The Stones of Venice*, the work which truly laid the groundwork for what would become the Arts and Crafts Movement, Ruskin studied the work of the medieval craftsman and how this work had an impact on his life. He wrote in *The Stones of Venice*, “Men were not intended to work with the accuracy of tools, to be precise and perfect in all their actions. If you will have that precision out of them you must unhumanise them” (quoted in Lambourne, 1980, p. 13). He continued:

If you will make a man of a working creature you cannot make a tool. Let him begin to imagine, to think, to try to do anything worth doing, and . . . out comes all his roughness, all his incapacity, . . . failure after failure . . . but out comes the whole majesty of him also. (quoted in Lambourne, 1980, p. 13)
The social historian T. J. Jackson Lears (1981) writes of *The Stones of Venice*:

[Ruskin] juxtaposed the creative improvisation allowed the medieval craftsman at work in the irregular Gothic style with the superhuman demands made by the Renaissance architects who insisted on recapturing classical symmetry. In Ruskin's view, the Renaissance rage for order led ultimately to the regimentation of the modern factory system, where mechanization and minute subdivision of labor had reduced the worker to "a heap of sawdust." By splitting the population into "morbid thinkers and miserable workers," the factory system created a situation that was morally and socially dangerous. (p. 62)

In *The Stones of Venice*, Ruskin outlined the following three rules for craft:

1. Never encourage the manufacture of any article not absolutely necessary, in the production of which invention has no share.
2. Never demand an exact finish for its own sake, but only for some practical or noble end.
3. Never encourage imitation or copying of any kind, except for the preserving records of great works.

(quoted in Lucie-Smith, 1981, p. 209)

It is clear that Ruskin's art ideals were in direct opposition to those put forth in what will be called the National art curricula which sought only to train designers for industry. One great formal difference was that Ruskin preached learning to draw through the observation of nature rather than through the copying of models. The most substantial difference between Ruskin's art education ideals and those established by the Industrial Revolution and its accompanying reforms lay not in any formal concerns but rather in
certain sociopolitical points. We have seen in chapter 2 that Ruskin's thesis, that art was essentially a reflection of one's humanity, led him straight into Socialism and the connection of art, labor, and ethics. Lionel Lambourne (1980) cites the following account of Ruskin:

"I don't care if you enjoyed it Madam, the question is, did it do you good?" he once sternly replied to a lady who had rashly said she enjoyed one of his lectures on design. The remark illustrates vividly the way in which for him morality was inextricably linked with the arts . . . . (p. 13)

Sociologically, the National art curricula had defused one of the mechanisms or distinctions between the upper and lower classes in England: access to art education. The genteel art of fine drawing was now available to all, so distinctions between social classes had to be made in other ways. Art became defined as that which was decidedly non-useful and could not be commodified. A beautifully turned wooden bowl was not considered art because it was made to be used and in most instances was made as a product to be sold and then used. A painting or sculpture, however, had no practical use, could not, at least theoretically be commodified, and, hence, were considered art. A great irony exists in the fact that the enormous wealth for the few generated by the Industrial Revolution actually caused so-called fine art to be commodified.

The fine arts, because of their lack of utility, became associated with higher ideals such as aesthetics, higher sensibilities, classical culture, and education, again taking them out of the realm of the lower classes. In the nineteenth century, the old Renaissance
distinctions between the non-utilitarian fine arts and the utilitarian crafts became tools used to buttress the walls between the classes. With this class distinction came the oppositional pairing of art and labor which is at the core of what Ruskin and later Morris, as well as other Arts and Crafts theorists, were out to subvert through their embrace of the craftsperson who finds joy in his or her labor. This became known as the "Craftsman Ideal." Boris (1986) writes:

The defenders of art as a higher and more spiritual essence began to place art in direct opposition to labor. Against such a restrictive concept, the craftsman ideal [of Ruskin] re-expanded the definition of art beyond painting, sculpture, literature, and architecture to include the arts and crafts, or decorative arts, once thought to be central to the idea of art. Even more significant, the craftsman ideal offered an alternative, perhaps even an oppositional, culture; that is, a set of symbol systems, social understandings, and behavior patterns in contrast to the dominant norm. A new productive order, a new sort of community with the craftsman as the characteristic citizen and craftsmanship as the core value, would be a way of life in sharp contrast to the commercial values of "the era of big business." Arts and crafts would form the material counterpart to a simpler, more virtuous, and natural life. (p. xii)

Ruskin acknowledged the disparity which existed between social theory and practice and tried to bring his ideas to practical fruition. In 1871 he founded the Guild of St. George which was based on the idea of the medieval craft guilds. Guild members were asked to live and labor according to the spiritual, social and moral principles of Ruskin's Craftsman Ideal. They were asked to
contribute to guild funds for which they received “fair pay and enjoyed healthy work and shared in community owned forms and industries” (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991, p. 14).

In reality, Ruskin's Guild of St. George had very little impact on the existing social or industrial order though he is to be lauded for trying to restore the balance between theory and practice. His prolific writing and tireless pursuit of the craftsman ideal influenced another generation of Arts and Crafts theorists and practitioners who did actually make strides, though perhaps never monumental, in changing the industrial order and restoring dignity and quality to one's labor. William Morris was the most successful of these followers and had an indelible influence on American Arts and Crafts movement through his actual physical involvement in the revival of traditional crafts and his incredibly strong commitment to society at large through Socialism. His tireless work, public speaking, and writing about the need for real handicraft in industry actually brought about changes in British art schools in the later nineteenth century which altered the course of both international design and art education.
William Morris

"I have only one subject on which to lecture: the relation of art to labour."

--William Morris, 1883

William Morris's (1834-96) Arts and Crafts reformist career began in 1851 when he, as an adolescent, refused to attend the Great Exhibition. Years later he reflected back upon this decision and said that even then he knew the following:

Men had become unnaturally separated from the sources and ends of their productivity. . . . All the daily expressions of life revealed a reductive, mechanical tension between toil and weary idleness, rather than a life-giving alternative between useful work and refreshing leisure. (quoted in Stansky, 1985, p. 49)

Then, at Oxford University, Morris heard John Ruskin speak, as did the likes of Oscar Wilde, and through the acknowledgment of certain shared theoretical proclivities, became his lifelong student. Wilde was prompted by Ruskin's Oxford lectures, to go to America in 1882 and embark on a national lecture circuit in which he discoursed on the English renaissance of taste. "House Decoration" and "Art and the Handicraftsman" were two of his lecture titles and speak strongly of the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement which was just gaining steam in England in the 1880s. Morris was prompted to action as both a theoretical and pragmatic practitioner of the Craftsman Ideal.
Along with the aforementioned theories of Ruskin, Morris was intensely interested in the nature of work which he contributed to as an Arts and Crafts theorist and, beginning in the 1870s, as a devout Socialist. He was also very interested in the revival of traditional craft techniques such as weaving and dyeing and the specific methods of work traditionally used in their creation. Morris's involvement in these craft techniques was not that of a typical theorist or historian. He believed that he personally should know about the most minute and ordinary details of any craft process he became involved in. Figures 2-3 illustrate that his hands-on philosophy became one of the ways in which he was parodied. Through his interest in the revival of traditional craft techniques, Morris (and 15 to 20 years later, a goodly portion of “progressive,” upper-class British women) was attempting not only to secure the survival of specific craft techniques for posterity but also to help the craftworker and, by association, society at large. All of this, of course, was a direct attack on the pervasive industrial mentality about which Ruskin wrote so venomously. Morris wrote:

For, after all, what is it that we are contending for? The reality of art, that is to say, of the pleasure of the human race. The tendency of the commercial or competitive society, which has been developing for more than 300 years, has been towards the destruction of the pleasure of life. Believe me, it will not be possible for a small knot of cultivated people to keep alive an interest in the art and records of the past amidst the present conditions of a sordid and heart-breaking struggle for existence for the many, and a languid sauntering through life for the few. . . . Let us admit that we are living in a time of barbarism
betwixt two periods of order, the order of the past and the order of the future. (W. Morris, 1915, p. 128)

In 1859, Morris married Jane Burden, the daughter of a groom in Oxford, and Morris undertook to build them a home, Red House, in an orchard in what was then Upton and is now Bexleyheath, near London, according to the most strict Arts and Crafts principles. The ramifications of this construction would radically change the direction of English design. Red House was designed by the architect Philip Webb along a strict adherence to Morris’s Arts and Crafts philosophy. (Figures 4-6) Stansky (1985) writes,

The impetus behind Red House—Morris’s recognition that if he were to have a congenial place to live, he must build it himself, just as he recognized that to have attractive [non-industrially produced] furniture and other appurtenances of living he had to design them himself, or have them designed by his friends. . . . (p. 40)

These friends who worked on all of the “appurtenances of living” for Red House in 1861 became the design firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company, Fine Art Workman in Painting, Carving, Furniture and the Metals, in which Dante Gabriel Rossetti was also a partner. William Morris’s daughter May (1936) wrote:

In the decorating of Red House we have a microcosm of all the activities that were to come. . . . And there it stood, “the house that Top [Edward Burne-Jones’s nickname for Morris] built,” among the apple orchards of Kent, with the date of 1859 turning in the winds on the vane about the roofs, fitted out, room by room, by enthusiasm and vigorous young invention, intimate, home-like, in its simple perfection the very pattern of a small English country dwellinghouse. (M. Morris, 1936, p. 11)
The firm produced stained glass, wall painting, painted tiles, furniture, embroidery, table glass, metalwork, and later on chintzes, and paper and woven hangings: all spawned from the ideas and craftwork done for Red House. The aim of this design firm was to "produce harmony between the various parts of a successful work" (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991, p. 17), to encourage excellence and integrity in design and execution, as well as a joy and new-found dignity in the working process. It seems that the brotherhood (because women were not involved at this time) of artists which came out of Red House and later the firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. was the physical embodiment of the much extolled Craftsman Ideal for the reasons just stated. What was true for Ruskin is equally true for Morris: the Craftsman Ideal was in direct opposition to commercial values, and arts and crafts formed "the material counterpart to a simpler, more virtuous, and natural life" (Boris, 1986, p. xii). Boris could be speaking specifically here of Red House when we realize that it was built in an orchard in a very rural setting and was originally designed as a communal place for multiple families. William Morris originally thought that at least the Burne-Joneses would share the dwelling and more later. And, of course, the philosophy behind the design and production of the house and all of its accoutrements is specific to the Craftsman Ideal.

Three years after the completion of Red House, in 1862, Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote to Charles Eliot Norton, Harvard University's first professor of art, that the aim of the firm of Morris, Marshall,
Faulkner & Co. was “to give real good taste at the price as far as possible of ordinary furniture” (Stansky, 1985, pp. 41-42). Quality and integrity of materials, design, and execution seem to have been considered “real good taste,” though scholars are in dispute about how truly affordable the wares and services of the firm really were. In 1875, Morris broke allegiance with certain firm partners such as Rossetti and another Oxford associate, Ford Madox Brown (who is known art historically as a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood), and reorganized as Morris and Company with himself as the sole proprietor. This was probably because of his growing devotion to the cause of Socialism and the idea that his business had to use whatever means possible to bring down the prices of its labor-intensive goods so that more could afford them while still maintaining the same high aesthetic and philosophical standards. Morris and Company specialized in two-dimensional pattern work such as stained glass, chintzes, tapestries, wallpaper, books, and illuminated manuscripts which are the hallmark, art historically speaking, of William Morris himself. (Figures 7-10)

As noted earlier, Morris was at this time becoming more and more heavily involved politically, actively speaking out against the English monarchy. His ideas on design reform began to be tied with stronger and stronger knots to politics, specifically Socialism, which inevitably cost him some followers. Cumming and Kaplan (1991) write, “He recognized the necessity to work within the mechanical and financial context of the age, in order to transform it” (p. 5). In
other words, Morris was not averse to using machines in the production of the goods of Morris and Company as long as the men involved were masters of the machine, as long as they, themselves, tended the machine, and were not the stereotypical exploited machine tenders of the factories of the Industrial Revolution, but were artists using the machine as a tool to help them create in a way that still had artistic integrity. The use of some machines also allowed for Morris and Company to offer its products at a fraction of the cost of what they would have to charge for something done entirely by hand. This decree of Morris's alienated him from some of his old, more rigid colleagues but ultimately gave him more followers, especially in the United States, because he was working within a system which acknowledged the presence of mechanization and capitalism—the widespread aftermath of the Western Industrial Revolution. Hence my contention that the philosophy of William Morris had a far greater impact on American Arts and Crafts than any of the other theorists. His theories somehow reflected some of the spirit of the American dream which walked hand in hand with the dream of technology (the machine) and monetary reward (capitalism).

Morris did not begin to speak publicly about Socialism until the late 1870s when he began to lecture on the "lesser arts" and the interrelation of art and society. "The Lesser Arts" was presented to the Trades Guild of Learning, a group organized by the Oxford positivist Professor Warr on December 4, 1877. It was intended for
an audience of laborers, specifically young carpenters, masons, and apprentices and it contained all of the seeds of his mature philosophy which differed from most other Arts and Crafts ideologues by its social zeal. What began as a rewording of Ruskin ended as a declaration of Socialism as can be seen from the following excerpt:

Nothing can be a work of art which is not useful; that is to say, which does not minister to the body when well under command of the mind, or which does not amuse, soothe, or even elevate the mind in a healthy state. What tons upon tons of unutterable rubbish pretending to be works of art in some degree would this maxim clear out of our London houses, if it were understood and acted upon! . . . Simplicity of life, begetting simplicity of taste, that is, a love of sweet and lofty things is, of all matters most necessary for the birth of the new and better art we crave for; simplicity everywhere in the palace as well as in the cottage. . . . We have even now partly achieved LIBERTY, so we shall one day achieve EQUALITY, which and which only means FRATERNITY, and so have leisure from poverty and all its griping, sordid cares. . . . Amidst renewed simplicity in life we shall have leisure to think about our work. . . . Men will then assuredly be happy in their work, and that happiness will assuredly bring forth decorative, noble, popular art. That art will make our streets as beautiful as our woods, as elevating as the mountain-sides; it will be a pleasure and a rest, and not a weight upon the spirits to come from the open country into a town; every man's house will be fair and decent, soothing to his mind and helpful to his work: all the works of man that we live amongst and handle will be in harmony with nature, will be reasonable and beautiful: yet all will be simple and inspiring, not childish not enervating; for as nothing of beauty and splendor that man's mind and hand may compass shall be wanting
from our public buildings, so in no private dwelling will there be any signs of waste, pomp, or insolence, and every man shall have his share of the best. (quoted in Stansky, 1985, pp. 58-59)

One great irony of this address was that the audience was not filled with young craftspeople from the building trades but of Morris's followers, specifically the craftsmen and clients of his own firm. Despite this fact, "The Lesser Arts" was seen by all as a success and was published in The Architect in December of the same year and in the next, as a pamphlet, adding to the spread of Morris's ideals. "The Lesser Arts" was the first of hundreds of speeches given by Morris through the end of his life. Perhaps the two most important of these addresses in terms of lasting and widespread impact were "Art under Plutocracy," delivered in 1883 and "The Revival of Handicraft," from 1888, which was then published as an article in the Fortnightly Review. "The Revival of Handicraft" was seminal in the formation of the Arts and Crafts Movement in America. He begins: "As a condition of life, production by machinery is altogether an evil; as an instrument for forcing on us better conditions of life, it has been, and some time yet will be, indispensible" (W. Morris, 1915, p. 64), and continues,

But unconscious as these producers of ordinary beauty may be, they will not and cannot fail to receive pleasure from the exercise of their work under these conditions, and this above all things is that which influences me most in my hope of the revival of handicraft. . . . So long as man allows his daily work to be mere unrelieved drudgery he will seek happiness in vain. . . . What on earth are we going to do with our time when we have
brought the art of vicarious life to perfection, having first complicated the question by a ceaseless creation of artificial wants which we refuse to supply for ourselves? (W. Morris, 1915, pp. 64-65)

It is important to point out here that one of the reasons Arts and Crafts pottery, or art pottery, was so widespread in America was because the so-called "woman-of-the-house" produced for her own home because she could not afford manufactured pieces or those from abroad.

William Morris had a lasting impact on design not only through his own tireless work and public education through speeches and publications but through the work of his many disciples after his death in 1896. Together they helped to create a new public with more modest tastes and made craft/art a more respectable profession for all classes. Morris's philosophies were very important to London's Central School of Design founded in 1896. W. R. Lethaby, a co-principal of the school, was a fervent follower of Morris's. Edward Joy (1976) writes, "[It] was the first of its kind to have teaching workshops for the crafts and was considered the most progressive art school in Europe until the foundation of the Bauhaus in 1919" (Bowman, Joy, & Klopf, 1976, p. 16). These teaching workshops came about because of Morris's concern with the revival of the most minute details of traditional handicrafts. This school, following the ideas of Morris, threw off the shackles of centralized industrial art education and its obsession with the end of mechanical production and embraced the imagination and learning by hands-on doing.
In 1898, two years after Morris's death, his student Walter Crane, became the head of the Royal College of Art, the leading school of design in England and bastion of national industrial art education. Stansky (1985) writes of the change wrought by Crane under the influence of William Morris:

Crane in his writing, teaching, and administration led the move away from ornament toward free design, a move toward freedom that made itself felt in other areas about the end of the nineteenth century. Crane offers a splendid example of Morris's influence in shaping changes in art education in England itself. The art schools no longer confined themselves to ornament but taught a whole range of arts. Schools of art were founded in various parts of London: Camberwell, Camden, Clapham, Hammersmith, Lambeth, Putney, South London, Westminster, Battersea. They were supported by local rates and hence were free from the central direction of the Department of Science and Art. (p. 29)

All of Morris's ideas about the Arts and Crafts and society would leave an indelible mark on American Arts and Crafts, especially pottery. Pottery could easily be made from "clay to finish" by one hand and was naturally inexpensive. It became, therefore, the most important front upon which Morris's American followers could challenge production within the factory system and attempt to reform the education system as it existed for women.

The opinions of historians vary as to how truly successful Morris's work was--how much his rhetoric actually prompted change in the lives of the working classes--yet none can deny that he ushered in an entirely new era in art in which the quality of design was seen in direct correlation to the quality of life, the actual living
conditions, of the population. The task fell to the women of the Arts and Crafts Movement to take the movement out of the hands of rhetoricians and into working and middle-class life, for what would now be termed "grass roots" social, political, and economic change.
CHAPTER 5

WORK!: THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

“Don’t mourn dear heart, but work . . . .”
--Louisa May Alcott, 1873

In 1927, in a report entitled “Art in Industry: Being a Report of an Industrial Art Survey Conducted Under the Auspices of the National Society for Vocational Education and the Department of Education of the State of New York,” Charles Richards wrote,

In America we assumed our place as a nation practically at the time of the industrial revolution. We had no aesthetic traditions except those of the mother countries where the old order was shortly to change to the new. Furthermore, the material needs of life absorbed all the energies of our people. As we expanded and became prosperous the genius of leadership was absorbed in the development of our natural resources, the expansion of our railroads, the opening up of our mines, the felling of our forests, the building of factories and the organization of our industries. Naturally, under such conditions, we looked to the old world for our artistic leadership. Our architecture is the most outstanding illustration, but the same fact runs through all of our arts. Like all Europe we have gone back to the past and we have gone back largely through the eyes of Europe. (Richards, 1929, p. 2)
In studying the birth and rise of the Arts and Crafts Movement in America, one must bear in mind all of the factors put forth by Richards's report and also the yet-to-be studied impact of the very recent Civil War, the nation's greatest psychological, economic, sociocultural trial to that date, and one which caused a nation as a whole to reflect upon its own history with a critical mind and apply this critical reflection toward the future of the nation and the culture of its people. One must also look to those traits which have been seen, historically, as important in the formation of America's internationally distinct cultural patterns such as the Protestant Work Ethic. In philosophy and literature, new ideas appeared. Ralph Waldo Emerson preached the gospel of self-reliance and the idea of giving our personal and national cultures a fresh start. Walt Whitman presented an affirmation of common, everyday life. Henry David Thoreau wrote of the importance of our national landscape and its influences on our psyche or soul. (Mumford, 1931, p. 12) All of these pronouncements or beliefs did have an impact on the psychology of the nation so soon after its worst national crisis.

A thorough study of all of these factors in relation to the rise of the American Arts and Crafts Movement would certainly fill a volume of its own and a mere chapter in a dissertation would not even begin to scratch the surface of the socioeconomic, sociocultural, and psychological intricacies involved. What this chapter will attempt, however, is a recognition of some of the conditions which were responsible for the decidedly unique direction American Arts
and Crafts took in terms of theory and practice. Four “factors” will be looked at as pronounced ways in which the American Arts and Crafts Movement differed from its British and European progenitors: (1) the colonial revival which arose after the Civil War, (2) the prevalence of the Protestant Work Ethic, (3) the impact of the growing immigrant population and their need to acclimate to American culture and values, and, perhaps most importantly, certainly for the purposes of this study, (4) the pragmatic educational impact of the women involved. The first three factors will be discussed in the present chapter. The last factor will be the subject of the remainder of this dissertation which will look at the women who were driven by the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement to educate women in the arts as a means of achieving economic independence. Under the leadership of women such as Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau, as well as others such as Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, “American craft leaders,” as noted by Lears (1981) “turned revolutionary visions of [William] Morris into advocacy of educational reform” (p. 81). What the leaders, however, do not really tell us through their histories or the histories that have been constructed around them (in a manner which bears a striking resemblance to the discipline of psychology's onerous “single-event theory of psychosis”) is that the success, especially in America, of the movement did not stem from them but from the sheer number of talented and devoted amateurs and artists, an enormous portion of which were women, who believed that their
work in the arts and crafts was a noble and worthy endeavor because it was honest, often painstaking or difficult work and that it went hand in hand with some kind of education. In America, at the later end of the nineteenth century, work and education were the keys to success for both the indigenous and immigrant population and so the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement were a perfect sociocultural fit. In America, the practitioners of the Arts and Crafts Movement, not necessarily the leaders, veered away from many of the strict pronouncements of the iron leaders of the British Arts and Crafts Movement, and worked with the emerging systems, be they capitalist, industrial, or educational, to reform them from within in a manner which was more successful than the radical Socialist reform attempts of the British Arts and Crafts Movement.

The Emergence of the Movement: Social and Educational Influences

Before one can delve into the four factors which gave the American Arts and Crafts Movement its own distinctive character, the theoretical and practical educational bridges between the British and American Movements should be detailed. Though the American Arts and Crafts Movement differed considerably from its British progenitor, its gene pool did come from Britain and Britain alone.

As the opening quote by Charles Richards so aptly illustrates, America was truly in its toddlerhood throughout most of the nineteenth century. All energies were turned toward the formation
and development of a national infrastructure. In some parts of the country such as the West, subsistence living was the norm, and mere survival a challenge. After the Civil War, the situation was even more dire and it is no small wonder that America as a whole had little time for the development of so-called cultural institutions let alone an aesthetic identity. The immediate mission of the nation was to strengthen its economic base and, with a sizable portion of the country financially crippled, it had to look to foreign markets through export trade.

The nineteenth-century had seen many economic Depressions, in 1819, 1837, and 1857, but one in 1873, brought on by the financing of the Civil War, was the most extreme. (Current, 1976, p. 177) This Depression, also called "The Panic of 1873" was brought about by the failure of the investment firm of Jay Cooke and Company, and lasted four years. In this time unemployment rose to three million and plummeting agricultural prices caused thousands of farmers to lose their farms. (Current, 1976, p. 177) A shift towards industry was the only hope of saving America's future economy.

Very quickly the nation found itself in position similar to that of earlier Industrial England. Inferior goods were being produced based on English and Continental models by untrained laborers in abysmal conditions. There were, however, two important differences. The first was the large and ever-growing number of immigrants flocking to America lured by the prospect of financial gain and religious and social tolerance. And second, the growing
number of women had to be given a place within the wage-earning system because they were bereft of any patriarchal support. As early as 1843, pockets of American society acknowledged the problem of the unprovided-for female, partially in response to the drain of men to the West (Callen, 1979, p. 43) but also due to male casualties of the Civil War. 2.9 million men (and boys) fought in the Civil War, 623,000 died and 800,000 suffered severe casualties. (Davis, 1991, p. 126) The historian Keith Davis (1991) writes,

Bullets and disease claimed as many casualties between 1861 and 1865 as in all other American wars combined, from the Revolution to Vietnam. Most mid-nineteenth-century American households suffered the loss of a family member, relative, or friend, and that collective trauma left an indelible mark on the culture. (Davis, 1991, p. 126)

The Philadelphia School of Design for Women was opened in 1843 to address the issue of the “unprovided-for woman” and was, incidentally, the first school explicitly for design in the country. An excerpt from its prospectus reads:

The courses of instruction pursued in the school have for their object the systematic training of young women in the practice of art, and in the knowledge of its scientific principles, with the view of qualifying them to impart to others a careful art education, and to develop its application to the common uses of life, and its relation to the requirements of trade and manufacture. (quoted in Callen, 1979, p. 45)

It is appropriate to note that at this time, women were being trained to earn a living as art educators rather than as artists themselves. Hence, they were responsible only for the “careful” art education
which would benefit the industrial needs of the country. At this time, they were still once removed from the actual institution of trade.

On top of these differences add the distinct sentiments of the American Colonial Revival brought on by the recent agonies of the Civil War and the recognized national "mythology" of the Protestant Work Ethic. All of these differences actually provided conditions which were quite perfect, both theoretically and pragmatically, for, not only the germination of British Arts and Crafts ideals in American soil, but for the flourishing of these ideals in practical terms. The ideals of the British Arts and Crafts Movement hybridized into more democratic and broadly applicable form which had a far greater and longer lasting impact throughout American soil.

England's Arts and Crafts theories, as well as other art education systems, became a definite presence among America's bourgeoisie and upper classes after the mid-century, through various national exhibitions and tours as well as a burgeoning age of communication. For example, America sought advice from Britain on how to heighten the quality of its own industrial products after seeing the great improvements in British designs at the Paris International Exhibition of 1867 as opposed to the inferior goods of the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851, which prompted English design reform. By the 1870s America, or at least parts of it, was very
interested in English art education reform and wanted a system which would improve the quality of their industry product just as it had in England.

**Walter Smith and the South Kensington System of Drawing in America**

Charles Perkins Callahan, a prominent Boston citizen, was exposed to the South Kensington system of art education in England and saw the effects it had on the nation's industrial products. He contacted Henry Cole, superintendent of South Kensington, about how to implement the program into Boston schools, with the goal of the eventual improvement of industrial designs in New England, especially the textile industry. Henry Cole recommended Walter Smith, who, as Wygant (1983) writes, "had grown up in the system, through over twenty years as student, teacher, and headmaster" (p. 55). Smith had taught in and around the industrial city of Leeds and had set up evening classes aimed at the industrial worker which was exactly what the Boston schools and the state of Massachusetts felt was needed to reform industrial design in the state. (Wygant, 1983, p. 55) In 1871, Walter Smith took up his position as State Art Director of Massachusetts and Director of Drawing in Public Schools in Boston. Among other things, he set about fulfilling the mission of the Drawing Act of 1870 which called for the "provision of free drawing instruction to men, women, and children mandatory in all
communities of the commonwealth with a population exceeding 5,000" (Efland, 1990, p. 97). Efland writes,

Smith had two main objectives: to create a plan of instruction in drawing that would be distinctly industrial, and to instruct the regular teachers to give instruction without the aid of special instructors, as part of their regular school work. (Efland, 1990, p. 103)

His drawing plan was to encompass all educational levels from primary school through high school as well as evening classes, and also, many different economic levels. It revolved heavily around outline drawing which was of great practical importance to industry and hence the term "industrial drawing." The teaching of teachers was an important part of his program and in 1873 the State Normal Art School (now the Massachusetts College of Art), which was probably the first public school of art in America, (Callen, 1979, p. 44) opened with Smith as director. With the opening of this school, Smith could truly attempt to implement a design curriculum which was consistent throughout the academic system and coordinated with instruction in evening classes and teacher preparation. Wygant (1983) writes of Smith,

He believed that drawing should be related to all other studies as a major form of presenting ideas, and it should develop perception, imagination, taste, a love of order, skill in industry, and the enjoyment of the beautiful. (p. 56)

He also felt that women should have the same educational opportunities as men and saw art as an avenue of employment for women in the new industrial age. Callen (1979) writes,
Smith saw art education as one area in which positive efforts could be made to erode traditional destructive attitudes and foster a greater equality between the sexes; at a time when the subjects were causing increasing controversy, his opinions appear to be unusually progressive . . . . (p. 44)

In Smith's own words,

My own fear has been, and now is, that hitherto women have been treated as pets and playthings to be indulged and delighted in, but not to be held responsible for anything; have been educated with the view that all should become merely the ornaments of society and not its essentials, the important half of its structure; and that finally men have come to regard women with a patronizing feeling in which there is an infinite amount of good nature in some cases, but no justice in any case . . . . We educate women superficially, and then smugly say they have no minds; we withhold reasoning processes from them, and then say they cannot argue, but jump to conclusions; we train and grind up our boys in athletic sports, in Euclid and conic sections, and the differential calculus, and our girls in Berlin-wool work, in waltz-playing, and the Paris fashions, and then proclaim that men can reason, women only perceive, men can create, women only appreciate. . . . Half of the troubles we find in the world arise from, and are a first judgement upon, our presumption in making distinctions between [boys and girls], in fostering the self-conceit of the one, and sacrificing the independence of the other. Let the same education from the first to the last, physical and mental, be furnished for both sexes. (Smith, 1877, pp. 163-65)

Walter Smith may be seen as a fairly unlikely candidate for the office of “Art Educator Most Influential to the Arts and Crafts Movement in America,” since the South Kensington system which he promoted was bitterly opposed by British Arts and Crafts theorists.
such as John Ruskin. It is important, however, to note how influential his philosophy on the importance and availability of art education to all ages and social classes became to the American branch of the Arts and Crafts Movement. It is equally important to acknowledge his impact on the art education of women. Smith believed that women should be given the same educational opportunities as men so that they could uphold their half of the "structure" of society. He stopped short of true enlightenment, as he hoped American women would "flock to the studios . . . leaving the ballot box alone" (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986, p. 28), yet he did make great inroads in providing practical art education for women.

Charles Eliot Norton

The historian T. J. Jackson Lears (1981) says that Charles Eliot Norton, Harvard University’s first professor of Fine Art (where he taught art history), was the main precursor of Arts and Crafts ideology in America. (p. 65) Norton met John Ruskin between 1855-57 and they began a friendship which would last 45 years and would cause him to meet other important figures in the Arts and Crafts Movement such as William Morris.

Efland notes, “Art education at Harvard began with the appointment of Charles Eliot Norton in 1874” (Efland, 1990, p. 64). Through his very visible position at Harvard University, where he
held the official title “Annual Lecturer in the History of the Arts of Construction and Design, and their Relation to Literature,” which was later changed to simply “Professor of Fine Arts,” Norton influenced not only hundreds of students but also the public as well. He wrote to Ruskin that he wanted to teach at Harvard University so that he might “be brought into close relations with youths whom I can try to inspire with love of things that make life beautiful and generous” (quoted in Efland, 1990, p. 64). His curriculum consisted of the teaching of the “golden ages” (Efland, 1990, p. 65) of Western Art History up to the Renaissance. He did not feel anything created after the Renaissance was worthy of study. Ideally he wanted students to have practical instruction in studio art as well, though Harvard was very careful about having studio courses in its curriculum.

Because Ruskin, Morris, and other Arts and Crafts figures extolled the virtues and practical import of regular exhibitions of Arts and Crafts work, Norton founded the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston in 1897 and became its first president. Modelled after England’s Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston began with 71 members and blossomed to over 1,000 in 20 years. (Kaplan, 1987, p. 18) It operated under the notions that regular exhibitions of work which exemplified Arts and Crafts ideals elevated public taste, raised public awareness of the theories, goals and products of the movement, and exhibited the high technical standards of the participants. Hence, Charles Eliot Norton could be justifiably considered the Director of Public Relations for the
Arts and Crafts Movement in America. He did not roll up his sleeves and sit down at a loom as did William Morris. He used his important connections and visible position in the academic world and community at large to preach the message of the Art and Crafts Movement to the large and liberal audience of the Cambridge and greater Boston community who would, in turn, take his message further.

Other Influences

As collector Max Palevsky writes in Leslie Greene Bowman's exceptionally fine exhibition catalogue American Arts and Crafts: Virtue in Design (1990),

By 1875 the world was dramatically “smaller” than in 1775, seemingly reduced in size due to advances in communication, education, and transportation. A coppersmith in upstate New York could copy motifs from a Glasgow tearoom, a Cincinnati housewife could expand upon the techniques of French ceramic painting, and a woodworker from Buffalo could exhibit his furniture in Turin. (Bowman & Palevsky, 1990, p. 13)

Despite the very vocal Arts and Crafts ideological presence of Charles Eliot Norton at Harvard, many Arts and Crafts art historians tribute Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition of 1876 (which was nearly cancelled because of the Panic of 1873) with the introduction of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts ideal into the consciousness of the American public at large. (Callen, 1979, preface) It was in direct response to this exhibition, specifically to the china
painting exhibits as well as those of the Royal College of Art Needlework in South Kensington, that the New York Society of Decorative Art, the first of its kind in America, was founded by Candace Wheeler in 1877. This was, incidentally, the same year that Mary Louise McLaughlin founded the Cincinnati Women's Art Pottery Club. Isabelle Anscombe (1984) writes of Wheeler's founding of the New York Society of Decorative Art,

> The society found outlets for work, set standards, and organized education and instruction: "the new society which was to open the door to honest effort among women" was launched, . . . the idea of earning had entered into the minds of women. (p. 36)

Candace Wheeler had been influenced by the English exhibition at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia and had sought out further information on the educational system responsible for the production of such work. She ended up modelling the New York Society of Decorative Art on the Royal College of Art Needlework, though the New York Society dealt with china painting, woodworking, and painting as well as needlework. But the serious American interest in English art education reform began much earlier, in 1870.

**American Lecture Tours**

Thousands of Americans attended the lectures of Oscar Wilde, who, after hearing Ruskin lecture at Oxford, toured America in 1882-83 in order, as Peter Stansky writes, to "enlighten the natives on the English Renaissance of taste" (Stansky, 1985, p. 34) through such
lectures as "House Decoration" and "Art and the Handicraftsman."

Walter Crane, one of the figures most instrumental in reform in art education due to the Arts and Crafts Movement both in England and America, visited for a lecture tour in 1890. Crane founded England’s Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in 1884 and in the 1890s became the head of the South Kensington School of Art which became known as the Royal College of Art. (Efland, 1990, p. 153) His lectures and work within arts institutions were in a great part responsible for the spread of the four main principles of Arts and Crafts design education reform which, as noted by Efland (1990), are as follows: "regard for the material, regard for the use, regard for construction, [and] regard for the tool" (p. 152).

Charles and Janet Ashbee also toured America in 1890 and made regular trips thereafter. Cumming and Kaplan (1991) give Charles Ashbee the label Arts and Crafts “designer and administrator” (p. 26). In 1888 he founded the School of Handicraft and subsequently a Guild of Handicraft in London’s Toynbee Hall which grew out of a Ruskin reading group. He was most interested in the communal elements of the Arts and Crafts Movement—workshops, guilds, and even utopian communities—and the goals of self-sufficiency and integration with nature. Like Ruskin and Morris, Ashbee felt that good design was dependent upon quality of life. He saw the Arts and Crafts as a way to improve domestic conditions through work. It should be duly noted here that Ashbee did not include women in his communal, bucolic, artistic pursuits. Cumming
and Kaplan write of Ashbee's Guild after it moved to the idyllic setting of the Cotswolds,

> the ideal of a brotherhood of craftsmen denied the inclusion of women as full members. Women who were art school-trained were confined to craft as a pastime or as philanthropy, or to crafts considered appropriate for their sex—textiles and pottery decoration. (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991, p. 28)

Regardless of Ashbee's personal Arts and Crafts practices, he was responsible for the consistent dissemination of Arts and Crafts ideals in America. One of the most important moments in all of his visits was the 1890 trip to Jane Addams's Hull House in Chicago which had been loosely based on Toynbee Hall in London, with which, as noted, he had earlier been involved.

At the beginning of the century May Morris made very popular tours of the United States lecturing on a variety of facets of the Arts and Crafts Movement such as embroidery and art and social concerns. She often spoke as a member of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society which readily accepted women into its ranks and whose goal, according to Walter Crane, was to reflect in art "the intellectual movement of inquiry into fundamental principles and necessities" (quoted in Stansky, 1985, p. 239).

The interest of potential American Arts and Crafts reformers, educators, and artists was peaked by these lecture tours and many made pilgrimages to England to study and observe developments first-hand. Efland provides two important examples,
Elbert and Alice Hubbard founded a craft community known as Roycrofters in East Aurora, New York, in 1895, following a visit to Morris's Kelmscott Press the previous year. They helped popularize the Morris ideals of the craftbook in this country. Similarly, Ellen Gates Starr founded the craft program at Hull House after learning her craft at the Doves Bindery in England. (Efland, 1990, p. 153)

To the English Arts and Crafts ideologues it would probably seem a great irony that the ease of communication and travel which allowed for the growth of the Arts and Crafts Movement in America was at least partially made possible by advances in technology that went along with the Industrial Revolution.

The Colonial Revival in America

One of the psychological after-effects of the recent Civil War was a revival of interest in Colonial America, from architecture to gardening, government, and tool-making. After the stark realities of war became known to the nation, it turned its eyes nostalgically to the past when life was difficult and, even dangerous, yet simpler; when one had to provide every implement of life for one's own self, from food to clothing and shelter, absolutely everything that one needed in everyday life. Every person had to be concerned with his or her own survival, and had to be skilled in practical terms. The American historian T. J. Jackson Lears (1981), in his seminal book
Simple-Life advocates sought to revitalize older producer values. Calls for the simplification of life stressed the sanctity of hearth and home, the virtues of life on the land, and the ennobling power of work. (p. 74)

These ideas had a specific set of implications for women. With the Colonial Revival women were expected to be practical and turn their attentions to their home, not necessarily to make a castle of serenity for one's husband as Ruskin writes, but to fit into the mythic mold of the frontier or pioneer woman. Instead of leaving calling cards and reading European novels, women were always to be doing and making. The idea of the pragmatic, non-passive American woman is an important one throughout the 19th century and provides a telling contrast with ideas of British women of the same time. One need only read about the self-sufficient working heroine Christie in Louisa May Alcott's novel *Work: A Story of Experience* from 1873 and compare her to the women who flail about on the tides of male society in British novels such as the title character in Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Marcella* (1894). Both of these novels were clearly influenced by the progressive ideas behind the Arts and Crafts Movement, yet there is a distinct difference in character between the two main protagonists which goes far beyond mere character development and expresses sentiments about women's
characters in each respective culture in a manner which is very revealing. The American woman is truly more independent, less constrained socially, and lives by doing rather than philosophizing.

The Colonial Revival saw the re-emergence of American practicality: the fact that Americans can make things. The historian Scott Graham Williamson (1940), in his book The American Craftsman, writes that “This attribute has been and is one of the primary factors in our national ‘genius’” (p. 1). He continues, “This was truly a pioneer society. Under the circumstances a prime requisite for survival and social usefulness was the ability to make things” (Williamson, 1940, p. 3). His hypothesis is that “America was once a nation of craftsmen,” (Williamson, 1940, p. 2) and that there is an inherent respect for the craftsman built into the American social hierarchy. He writes,

When every man was a jack-of-all-trades the bulk of his work was necessarily crude and primitively functional. This kind of production, at best, could only be stop gap. When the colonists had got their second wind, the skilled craftsman in a specific field began to stand out. This was the artisan, and it was natural that he should become a focal point in the developing community life of America. He formed the third in succession of the class strata of Colonial social order, ranking immediately after the dominant, landed and merchant families, and the second level of small, landed yeomen, or farmers. The qualities of character, temperament, and native talent which were often invested in the true craftsman tended to thrust him into leadership and prominence in public life. Craftsmanship amounted to more than merely a trade or “business.” It was an art and an avocation. Statesman
and leaders of genius, such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, found the time in their crowded lives to be craftsmen of the first rank. (Williamson, 1940, pp. 4-5)

Within the ethos of the Colonial revival in 19th century America, the typical sociocultural inclination to value the practical knowledge and skill of the craftsman sets a very different tone for the birth of the Arts and Crafts Movement in this country. The rhetoric of Morris, Ruskin, et al., which called for the elevation of the craftsman was unnecessary and so the movement in America, from its first inception, stood on a much heartier foundation.

The Protestant Work Ethic

Hilda Lathrop, the heroine of the writer and activist Vida Dutton Scudder’s 1903 semi-autobiographical novel A Listener in Babel exclaims, “And there is a song I shall sing at my weaving. Life without industry is guilt; industry without art is brutality” (quoted in Kaplan, 1987, p. 208). Industry is used as a synonym for plain and simple work and the message is clear that work is the key to a respectable life. Nowhere was this message more pertinent than in 19th century America which was grappling with its own recent past and embracing the so-called Protestant Work Ethic, which has become so much a part of the American mythology. The ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement, as encapsulated by the semi-fictional
Hilda Lathrop, seemed to have been designed with a mind toward application to American society which had the Protestant Work Ethic as part of its nationalist persona.

The American obsession with the work ethic got its start with America's puritan culture as exemplified in this Isaac Watts poem of 1715:

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower. (Watts, 1715/1848, p. 33)

Antebellum America was obsessed with what could be gained through the myth of the Protestant Work Ethic. Popular culture was filled with conventional Jacksonian success stories and the likes of Horatio Alger's Ragged Dick series. Published between 1868-70, these stories, known as "myths" in contemporary social studies classes, revolved around the Protestant Work Ethic and the social and financial success which was the reward of such an ethic. The literary historian Joy S. Kasson notes that this series was considered not only very entertaining but very fashionable and influenced a generation of young readers. (Kasson, 1873/1994, p. xxvi) In Ragged Dick, a respectable gentleman tells the hero:

"I hope, my lad, you will prosper and rise in the world... You know in this free country poverty in early life is no bar to a man's advancement... Save your money, my lad, buy books, and determine to be somebody, and you may yet fill an honorable position."

(Alger, 1868/1985, pp. 55-56)
T. J. Jackson Lears (1981) writes, "In America the work ethic has always been a touchstone of national morality" (p. 60). He hypothesizes that the combination of the Protestant Work Ethic and the Colonial Revival, which he defines as "anti-modernism," transformed American culture and truly gave it its own independent identity for the first time in its brief life. It is the contention of this student that this combination also paved the way for the Arts and Crafts Movement to be eased so successfully into American life, one could even say, into the mainstream of American life. Lears writes.

In work-obsessed America, it was not surprising that the recoil from overcivilization generated a critique of modern work. Despite shopworn paens to the nobility of toil, a number of observers began to see that labor in industrial America was being degraded as never before. In the factories and bureaucracies of organized capitalism, even the more fortunate workers were being reduced to the status of machine tenders or paper shufflers. (Lears, 1981, p. 60)

He continues,

Yearning to reintegrate selfhood by resurrecting the authentic experience of manual labor, a number of Americans looked hopefully toward the figure of the premodern artisan. His work was necessary and demanding; it was rooted in genuine community; it was a model of hardness and wholeness or so it seemed. (Lears, 1981, p. 60)

The Protestant Work Ethic was, of course, more than a work ethic, or an ethic pertaining to mere economic necessity, but was something with a therapeutic value, a moral value, something which defined one's identity. On an ironic note, one might hypothesize that
one of the reasons the Protestant Work Ethic retained such a grip on the psyche of 19th-century America was the very fact that it existed hypocritically alongside slavery. Perhaps in the national psyche of the 19th century middle class, the Protestant Work Ethic extolled the great virtues of work, which was, after all, what the life of a slave consisted of, and hence somehow justified, almost along missionary lines, the existence of slavery. One might also hypothesize that those who could afford slaves felt that they above any sort of public morality such as the Protestant Work Ethic. But these are the ruminations of but one student.

The idea of the Protestant Work Ethic dovetails into the ideology of the British Arts and Crafts Movement and partially explains why it had a greater impact in the United States than in the country of its origin. It is important here to note that this all had a very lasting impact on the educational systems which were developing in the United States at the same time. The combination of the ideals of the Protestant Work Ethic and the Arts and Crafts Movement were closely linked with progressive educational policy such as the likes of John Dewey and his commitment to the "integration of mind and body, thought and action, classroom and society" (Kaplan, 1987, p. 302). The manual training programs which were so much a part of the American educational landscape at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth grew from these
same seeds or influences. In America, work took on the characteristics of religion in terms of its claims toward personal, social, and spiritual redemption.

To end this discussion of the importance of the Protestant Work Ethic to the emergence of the Arts and Crafts Movement in America, and ultimately to the work of the women who are the subjects of this study, I'd like to look again at the Louisa May Alcott novel Work. Joy Kasson writes that for Louisa May Alcott, work had a special transcendent significance for women in the nineteenth century, that it took on far greater spiritual significance for women than men. The novel affirms that Labor provides materially but also spiritually. As the heroine's new husband lies on his death bed he says, "Don't mourn, dear heart, but work" (Alcott, 1873/1994, p. 320). Kasson writes, "the novel ends with the promise that the coming generation of women will not only receive but deserve their liberty, by learning that the greatest of God's gifts to us is the privilege of sharing His great work" (Kasson, 1873/1994, pp. xxix-xxx). Interestingly, she also points out that the title page of the first edition of this book is an engraving of a bee busily sipping nectar from a flower with a quotation from Thomas Carlyle, who as noted earlier was an important influence to the British founders of the Arts and Crafts Movement: "An endless significance lies in work, in idleness alone is there perpetual despair" (Kasson, 1873/1994, p. xxvii).
The Socialization of the New and Growing Immigrant Population

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw an ever-burgeoning immigrant population and an industrial society which was quite happy to use, one might just as well say exploit, this population as a seemingly inexhaustible supply of cheap labor. The labor historian Thomas Dublin (1994) notes that in some urban centers the immigrant population made up as much as 65% of the late nineteenth century industrial workforce. (p. 200) The heart-wrenching photographs taken by the police reporter turned social reformer Jacob August Riis, which he published in a book entitled *How the Other Half Lives* in 1890, reveal the appalling living conditions of this population who often "worked twelve or more hours daily in their desperate attempts to maintain family unity" (Madison, 1890/1971, p. v). (Figures 11-12) Through Riis's photographs and books he battled against the general plight of and poor material existences of the immigrant population until his death in 1914.

Riis could not be considered an Arts and Crafts reformer but a person ardently devoted to the cause of the reform of the immigrant population in America who commanded a constant media presence. His work informed the consciousness of the larger public as well as those such as Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr who would use the Arts and Crafts as a means of improving the lives of this same
immigrant population. Arts and Crafts reformers sought not only to improve the material existence of the immigrant population but to use the Arts and Crafts as a means of socializing this population into American culture. Eileen Boris (1986) writes,

By the early twentieth century, school, settlements, individual and group workshops, and arts industries attempted to organize production around the craftsman ideal. While the schools taught manual arts, along with establishing standards of taste, asylums and settlement houses were using handicrafts in industry and social therapy. Settlement houses also promoted arts and crafts for recent immigrants to preserve both pre-industrial traditions and immigrant cultures. Craft workshops were also set up by artists and intellectuals, wealthy suburbanites, and genteel women, who had traced the origins of workshops from the production methods of the medieval artisan, European peasant, Native American, and Appalachian highlander. (p. 103)

The reader should be briefly reminded here that the immigrant population fitted well into the general ideology of the Arts and Crafts Movement because they often brought with them the pre-industrial craft traditions of their respective countries. A great effort was made by Arts and Crafts ideologues to preserve these pre-industrial traditions. This point is exemplified by the fact that William Morris went out into the English countryside to learn centuries-old techniques of loom weaving, as well as various American figures such as Irene Sargent keeping alive some of the production techniques of Native American pottery.
Jane Addams, inspired by the reformist agendas she saw through Arts and Crafts institutions such as London’s Toynbee Hall, which applied Christian Socialism to the needs of London poor, in 1889 opened Hull House with Ellen Gates Starr on Chicago’s immigrant and poverty-filled West side. Starr had studied bookbinding with the influential Arts and Crafts figure T. J. Cobden-Sanderson and later set up a book bindery at Hull House. Hull House was what became known as a settlement house (and started the Settlement House Movement in the United States). It was an actual physical location which sought to draw, in the words of Jacob Riis, the “other half” of society through its doors and nurture them through carefully prepared programming. This programming began by meeting the immediate physical needs of the people who flocked there, in essence providing them with food and shelter. After immediate needs were met, the programming of the Settlement House sought to educate the person towards long-term life solutions, often acclimating a poor immigrant to his or her new country and providing the skills for an economic livelihood. The Settlement House Movement was the beginning of the field of Social Work.

The Arts and Crafts played a role in that they were often the means by which the Settlement House trained these individuals for the workforce, seeking an alternative to the industrial machine. Boris writes,

The influential Jane Addams viewed spinning, weaving, and other “primitive” crafts as means to larger ends. First, by cultivating the immigrants’ handicraft skills,
Addams hoped to restore self-respect among people living in a hostile and alien industrial city. She believed that children, then in the process of becoming American, "would no longer be embarrassed by their parents' 'old country' ways if those ways elicited praise." This pride in "women's primitive activities," as Addams called the old manufacturing processes, would bring mothers and daughters closer together, strengthen family life, and ultimately adjust immigrants to the industrial city. (Boris, 1986, pp. 131-32)

On other fronts, clubs and workshops were set up which did not seek to provide food and shelter for the immigrant population but to provide them with a viable economic life and acclimatize them to American culture. Boston's Saturday Evening Girls Club was begun by the Paul Revere Pottery. The pottery targeted Jewish and Italian immigrant women from the city's impoverished North End and attempted to offer them a happy, healthful wage-earning occupation, an opportunity to earn the small sum necessary for . . . school expenses, a way to avoid either the evils of the factory or the more dreaded life of prostitution. (Boris, 1986, p. 114)

Boris continues,

Most of the thirty decorators during Paul Revere's thirteen year heyday belonged to the Saturday Evening Girls, an "Americanizing" club that met at the library for lessons in civic responsibility and social values. (Boris, 1986, p. 114)

All of these traits, the Colonial Revival, the Protestant Work Ethic, and the infusion of a vast immigrant population, created a society ready for the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement. These
same traits were also the reason why a case has been made for the fact that the Arts and Crafts Movement had a far greater, more wide-reaching, and longer lasting impact in America than in its native England. America was still so young at the time of the burgeoning influences of the Arts and Crafts Movement that industrialization didn’t threaten what Isabelle Anscombe (1984) refers to as “national well-being” (p. 34). Also, the nation’s well-being had already been shaken to its very core by the Civil War. It was such a young country it had not had a chance to really establish any pattern of normalcy. Because industrialization was not the threat it was in Britain, it did not inspire the harsh class divisiveness, made common knowledge by the likes of Charles Dickens, which so characterized English culture at this time. Hence, American proponents of the English Arts and Crafts Movement turned the revolutionary visions of Morris, which were prompted by industrialization and all of the ramifications of the strict divisions between classes, into educational reform. The political pith, most specifically Socialism, was replaced by a mission of educational reform.

A case can also be made for the fact that no area of the population was more affected by the ideals and pragmatics of the Arts and Crafts Movement than women. No “field” of women more impacted than those involved in the production of pottery, the so-called “Art Pottery Movement,” such as the two subjects of this rest of this study, Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau. These two subjects are worthy additions to the annals of the histories
of both Art History and Art Education and they also, when studied as a group, provide a model for what the Arts and Crafts was in America and what it caused in society. Edward Lucie-Smith, in his study *The Story of Craft: The Craftsman’s Role in Society* (1981) writes,

Though there was not a wide continuity of style, pottery provides a glimpse of the wide spectrum of American attitudes towards the crafts—the involvement of amateurs, and particularly of women (a heritage perhaps from the pioneer communities of much earlier in the century), the willingness to take decorative and technical ideas from any source, an interest in experiment for its own sake, a thrust towards individual self-expression without worrying too much about utility, a strong commercial acumen which contrasts with this, and an interest in craft not for its own sake but as a medium of education. [emphasis added] (p. 223)

Through the study of Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau, it will be shown that these two women used the medium of pottery, combined with Arts and Crafts ideals, to educate several generations of women so that they might earn an independent, respectable, and personally rewarding living.
CHAPTER 6

FOLLOWING THE LINE OF PROGRESS AND THE WILL-O'-THE-WISP:
MARY LOUISE MCLAUGHLIN, THE BIRTH OF THE AMERICAN ART POTTERY MOVEMENT, AND THE ART EDUCATION OF WOMEN

The title of this dissertation begins with the words “Out of the hands of orators” because American women in the art pottery movement took the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement out of hands of the numerous orators of the movement both in England and America and put them to practical use with their own hands and those of the countless women who they influenced and educated. They took over the movement by the sheer act of “doing,” and left an indelible mark on the manner in which women were educated and accepted into the wage-earning strata of society. Isabelle Anscombe (1984) states in her book A Woman’s Touch: Women in Design from 1860 to the Present Day.

Unlike such American craftsmen as Gustav Stickley or Elbert Hubbard, who both actively promoted the socialist theories of William Morris, albeit without fully understanding their true political content, the women working in American crafts at that time had little interest in imbuing their work with either romantic medievalism or socialist content. Nevertheless, Mrs. Wheeler’s [Candace Wheeler, Founder of the New York Society for
Decorative Art] desire to establish a profession for women was programmatic in a way that the Socialism of Morris and the British Arts and Crafts Movement, where the involvement of women was purely haphazard and pragmatic, never was, and her ideal of the practical woman was the exact opposite of the contemporary European image of femininity. Her distinctly American belief that self-help had led her by a very different route to the simple belief that women should be practical in whatever ways they could. (p. 40)

Candace Wheeler absorbed the orations of many Arts and Crafts ideologues, both English and American, and was dismayed by their lack of practicality. She sought to make practicality a virtue in American Arts and Crafts, especially in the women she, herself, reached through the New York Society of Decorative Arts. The importance of practicality, with pragmatic results, is the thread which runs through the work of Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau, and the manner by which they sought to educate women in the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement to ultimately achieve the goal of financial independence. The absorption of the concept of practicality into the often windy ideologies of the Arts and Crafts Movement is, to this student's thinking, the reason why the American Arts and Crafts Movement had such a wide-ranging and long-lasting impact in America as a whole, not to mention in the realm of the art education of women. Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau took the Arts and Crafts Movement out of the hands of the orators and into their own. The same hands which left their mark on clay vessels made an equally remarkable impression on the society of women.
Mary Louise McLaughlin and Her Early Art Education in Cincinnati

Edward Lucie-Smith's *The Story of Craft* (1981) begins his chapter on "The Arts and Crafts Movement in America" with the following quote:

Pottery was always the preferred media of the artist-craftsman, and it was through ceramics that the new gospel launched by Ruskin and Morris made its first practical impact across the Atlantic. The year was 1871, and the place, suitably enough, was the meat-packing city of Cincinnati, the place where the assembly line was even in its birth-throes. It was important, and also characteristic of the American situation, that the movement was launched by amateurs--socially prominent young women. Their first enthusiasm was overglaze china painting, and a class to teach this skill was set up at the Cincinnati School of Art. Among the pupils was Mary Louise McLaughlin, the daughter of the city's leading architect. She and her colleagues became so skilful that they were able to send a display of their products to the Centennial Exposition held in Philadelphia in 1876. (pp. 221-22)

Lucie-Smith glosses over some things, such as the fact that the very first "enthusiasm" of these women of Cincinnati was woodcarving, and only later did they become intrigued by "mineral painting," but it is important to note that this notable historian credits Mary Louise McLaughlin with the birth of what would become the art pottery movement in America, that branch of the Arts and Crafts Movement which dealt with ceramics.
The following vita of Mary Louise McLaughlin came from the Bulletin of the American Ceramic Society from 1938, in a special issue honoring the artist:


This very pragmatic biographical overview, written just before McLaughlin’s death, is important for two reasons. First, it is a contemporaneous account of the life of a figure considered important enough to have an entire issue of this national society’s bulletin dedicated to her. Second, the pragmatic, matter-of-fact manner with which her numerous and various accomplishments within the world of pottery and art education are listed is indicative of the manner in which McLaughlin went about her own work. She was practical, forged ahead at all times, and simply worked at what she loved and felt was important. All of her accomplishments stemmed from the fact that she sought to rectify the lack of art education she had in school. (McLaughlin, 1914) She sought to educate herself in the arts and was further inspired or driven by the rhetoric and products of the British Arts and Crafts Movement. She wrote:
We were, in fact, at this time, upon the eve of a great awakening in matters artistic. Tidings of the veritable renaissance in England under the leadership of William Morris and his associates had reached this country. It was the beginning of the Arts and Crafts movement, and it was given to Cincinnati to take the first step in its organized development in America. (McLaughlin, 1938, p. 218)

Mary Louise McLaughlin (Figure 13) was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1847. She stated in the address to the Porcelain League quoted above, that her “earliest recollections were of drawing and the desire to cover every available surface with my efforts” (McLaughlin, 1914). McLaughlin received what would have been considered a very good education for a woman at that time. Her father was a very prominent member of the community and the leading architect in Cincinnati, so McLaughlin was afforded the educational benefits of the privileged. Regardless of the benefits accorded to one of McLaughlin’s social class, she continually lamented the lack of art education in her education. She wrote,

In those days, however, the art was not considered a necessary part of the school curriculum, so it was not until my school days were over that I sought instruction in drawing at a small private art academy on East Fourth Street, Cincinnati. This school was presided over by a lady whose artistic ideas and methods were decidedly early Victorian. After some time pleasantly but unprofitably spent at this school, I went to the Art School then held in the College Building and graduated therefrom without honors, except the winning of one or two prizes. . . . Later I had the privilege of attending, for a short time, the first life class taught in Cincinnati by Mr.
Duvenick [Frank Duveneck] at the Museum and have always felt that he was the only teacher who had any influence on my artistic development. (McLaughlin, 1914)

This statement is important for two reasons. First, it states, unequivocally, that Mary Louise McLaughlin had to search for some avenue of art education in the 1860s and, hence, one can deduce that the rhetoric of the English Arts and Crafts Movement via Ruskin, Morris et al. was yet to have any pragmatic impact in America, or at least in the "meat-packing" town of Cincinnati. Second, McLaughlin leaves no doubt in the reader's mind about her feelings for the artist and teacher Frank Duveneck and his life drawing classes. Duveneck's influence on Mary Louise McLaughlin, which was profound and lasting, will be discussed later, in proper chronological order, after she begins experimentation in the realm of art pottery.

Mary Louise McLaughlin, and other women like her--those hungry for some avenue of art education--not only had to seek out this education themselves but they often had to organize it, actually put it in place. In this way, they were following the ideals of the English Arts and Crafts Movement without even really knowing about them. The following passage illustrates this point and the reader should note that McLaughlin, just out of high school and unhappy with some private art classes she was taking which she referred to disparagingly as "Victorian," was one of the "Cincinnati ladies" mentioned. The passage, by Kate Gannett Wells, is from an article entitled "Women in Organisations" which appeared in the Atlantic Monthly in 1880:

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In 1864 the Cincinnati ladies induced the trustees of the McMicken University to open a School of Design, and to this were donated their paintings and statuary. Through Mr. Ben[n] Pitman resulted the woodcarving department. Encouraged by the great success of that school, the Wheeling School of Art in this country, and the Sheffield School of Design in England, the Women's School of Industry, St. Louis, the Rochester, New York, and Portsmouth, Ohio, Woodcarving Schools have arisen; whilst the Catholic sisters of Notre Dame and Ursaline Sisters of Brown County, Ohio are teaching their own pupils and worshipping amidst their own carving. (Wells, 1880, p. 363)

This contemporary statement shows that McLaughlin and her colleagues are ready to be vessels of the rhetoric of the Arts and Crafts Movement as it comes from England, and also that their professionalism, a professionalism unknown to the women of the Arts and Crafts Movement in England, would cause it to flourish. Not only did they organize a school--the McMicken School of Design was later renamed the Art Academy of Cincinnati--they obviously made it an educational model which was emulated by many other institutions, and is still in existence today. We must consider this as a part of McLaughlin's professional activities even though she will not acknowledge herself professionally in the realm of the arts for many years. We must again consider the practicality which instructed her professional work in her lifetime. No adequate art education existed in Cincinnati for women and so she banded together with a group of women and provided it. This would be a pattern she followed throughout her life. If no classes were taught
on a certain aspect of art education she either organized one or
taught it herself. If no books existed on certain aspects of art she
wrote them and yet to this day she is referred to as the consummate
“amateur” of the Art Pottery Movement! (Lucie-Smith, 1981)
Women did not accomplish this in the British Arts and Crafts
Movement until much later because of social restrictions pertaining
to women and, especially, women of the upper classes. Also, one
must refer back to the practical American mind-set so much a part of
the mid-19th century sociological landscape, discussed in chapter 5.

McLaughlin then consistently attended classes at the Cincinnati
School of Art for several years. McLaughlin stated of this period:

I went to the Art School then held in the College Building
and graduated therefrom without honors, except the
winning of one or two prizes, one for sculpture in 1876
and a prize for an original design, the first of the kind, I
believe, ever offered, which consisted of a small piece of
niello work given for the purpose by Mr. Probasco.
(McLaughlin, 1938, p. 217)

Though McLaughlin seems to characterize herself as a mediocre
student the work that she began there would take steps towards not
only ensuring that women could receive an education in the arts but
also that they might actually be able to use this education to support
themselves financially. This would all come through the work
McLaughlin began in china painting while still at the Cincinnati Art
School.
The Seeds of the Women’s Pottery Club

One of the instructors at the school, Benn [sic] Pitman, was brought in to establish a wood carving department. McLaughlin proved to be a very capable and talented wood carver and Pitman sought to expose his students to a variety of artistic techniques and areas of traditional art history and contemporary art, specifically the decorative arts. For McLaughlin and this group of women hungry for quality exposure to the arts, Pitman gave regular Saturday morning lectures on decorative art. The following statement from McLaughlin reveals how important he was to her specific artistic development:

Under his inspiring leadership, our efforts were soon to be drawn into unexpected channels. In the exhibition of the Arts School in 1874, some pieces of china painting executed by one of the pupils at home were shown, and we expressed a desire to learn something of the mysteries of this art. Mr. Pitman undertook to procure the necessary information and, on his return from his vacation trip to New York in that year, he brought some mineral colors. He also unearthed an instructor in the person of a young German woman who had learned the art in Berlin. Mr. Pitman then invited a group of his scholars in the woodcarving class to meet at his office and be instructed in the art of painting on china.

(McLaughlin, 1938, p. 218)

The “group of scholars” from this woodcarving class, mostly from Cincinnati’s most prominent families, would become the nucleus of the Cincinnati Pottery Club which was pivotal if not seminal in founding the American art pottery movement. The Pottery Club
consisted of the following members: Mrs. William Dodd, Mrs. George Dominick, Miss Alice B. Holabird, Mrs. Charles Kebler, Mrs. Harriet Leonard, Mrs. A. B. Merriam, Miss Clara C. Newton, Miss Julia Rice, and, of course, Mary Louise McLaughlin. These women were very vocal about their enthusiasm for china painting and because of their social positions, were able to spread the zeal. Herbert Peck (1968) states that by 1875, just one year after Benn Pitman procured the materials for china painting for his class,

the interest in china painting had spread to a point where a committee was formed, not only to promote it as a promising field for the lucrative employment of women, but also as a means of raising funds needed for participation in the forthcoming Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Designated as the “Women’s Executive Centennial Committee,” this group furnished the china for decorating, and the amateur decorators gave generously of their time and talk. (p. 4)

This committee was spearheaded by Nichols, Dodd, Newton, and McLaughlin, who, besides their exploits in art pottery, helped found the institution known today as the Cincinnati Art Museum. Little is known about McLaughlin’s first foray into ceramics via china painting, though her submissions to the Cincinnati Exhibit at the Philadelphia Centennial consisted of a carved standing desk (Figure 14) and a number of pieces of painted china. (Figure 15) Ceramic historians Garth Clark and Margie Hughto (1979) write,

The painted china was exhibited alongside carved wood, needlework, and watercolors in the Cincinnati Room of the Woman’s Pavilion. Although these objects lacked formal accomplishment--and at times showed
unfortunate lapses of taste—they did represent one of the earliest attempts to employ ceramics as an independent art medium in the United States. (p. 5)

It should be added that the group’s work was very favorably received by the public.

All of the china painting exhibited by the Cincinnati women was executed on industrial blanks, or pre-thrown and pre-fired forms. These forms were then painted with “mineral colors,” porcelain paints, which is called, technically, “overglaze decoration.” No photographs or engravings of the Cincinnati women’s exhibit could be found, but all of the work consisted of functional forms covered with botanical paintings executed in a very naturalistic manner, bearing vestiges of Victorian flower painting while also reflecting the deep, luminist tonalities of contemporary American painting.

The Influence of Frank Duveneck

At this point it is best to explore one contemporary painter, Frank Duveneck, who taught Mary Louise McLaughlin, and whose style seems to reflect something of that attempted in the china painting of the Cincinnati Pottery Club. As mentioned earlier, McLaughlin attributes Frank Duveneck with being the only teacher from whom she really learned anything, so it is important to briefly explore exactly what about his work and teaching were so valuable to her. Perhaps most important was his insistence on the intense
scrutiny of nature and rendering from life. This becomes a very important aspect of art education under the theoretical auspices of the Arts and Crafts Movement, which McLaughlin was becoming attuned to, and especially in training in art pottery. McLaughlin and Robineau again and again refer to the inspiration to be found in nature. McLaughlin used the flowers in her own back garden for the subjects of embellishment for her china painting and pottery.

Adelaide Alsop Robineau, in her magazine Keramic Studio, wrote to her readers, “Then there are the Parks and Botanical Gardens where one can make sketches from nature, which will be an immense help in floral designs. Study the growth of the plants, the formation of leaf, stem, bud and flower” (Robineau, 1901, June, p. 1). The women of Tulane’s Sophie Newcomb Memorial College Pottery were taught to study and use their own Southern flora and fauna as decorative mainstays. Nathaniel Wright Stephenson, in his 1910 article, “Newcomb College and Art in Education,” wrote,

The Gulf Coast, with its typical flora and fauna; the swamps of Louisiana filled with the wild flowers of their season,—the blue flag, the yellow jasmine, the tiger lily; the forests of pine, magnolia and cypress [all offered] native forms of grace and beauty well worthy of being worked into a definite and characteristic vein of delineation. (p. 259)

One may very well conjecture that Duveneck’s mission in art education of getting his students to work with and from nature paved the way for the acceptance of some of the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement pertaining to truth and integrity in design.
Frank Duveneck (1848-1919) was born in Covington, Kentucky, a city directly across the river from Cincinnati. Like his student Mary Louise McLaughlin, his first serious foray into art came in the media of wood. He carved wood altarpieces for the Catholic churches in Covington. Only later did he branch out into the media of oil painting through which he would make his reputation. Like McLaughlin later, he came to teaching as a way of filling a gap in the American educational system which he saw filled in Europe.

Because no class rosters are extant from Duveneck's classes in Cincinnati, one can only surmise the time frame in which McLaughlin attended his classes. It was early in her career, presumably before the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876 which made her focus her attention strictly on art pottery. Duveneck returned to Cincinnati from Munich and Italy where he had been working in 1874. In the fall of 1874 he had an exhibition of paintings in Cincinnati which was not well received and taught a life class, without pay, at Ohio Mechanics Institute in Cincinnati. (Thompson, 1987, p. 61) He did not teach again in Cincinnati until the fall of 1890 when he taught a painting class, which went on for two years, at the Cincinnati Art Museum organized by none other than Maria Longworth Nichols who established Rookwood Pottery (Thompson, 1987, p. 61) and had a career-long "feud" with McLaughlin. It is highly probable that McLaughlin attended the life drawing classes at the Ohio Mechanics Institute in 1874.
Because, by her own admission, McLaughlin greatly admired Frank Duveneck, it is worth considering the following two points. First, Duveneck’s paintings have been said to “palpitate with life” (Heerman, 1918, p. 8): he indulged in stylistic techniques which were very hands-on and visceral, rooted in life and nature. Elizabeth Boots Duveneck described her husband’s painting technique as follows: “With a large flat brush he lays on the flesh color, modelling it like clay” (quoted in Thompson, 1987, p. 50). (Figure 16) Mary Louise McLaughlin’s shift from drawing to pottery may have been a very logical transfer of mediums considering the message of her most important stylistic influence. After all, what medium more direct, visceral, and rooted in nature than the actual earth—clay?

The second point worth noting is that Duveneck’s paintings often consist of warm brown, bituminous tonalities, (Figure 17) the same tonalities exhibited by many of McLaughlin’s pieces. (Figure 18) Duveneck’s main educational message to his students was about being true to the medium. This seems to come straight out of a lecture of William Morris. Because of Duveneck’s recent European experiences and the fact that his students were an international group, all recently transplanted from their respective homeland to escape contemporary art movements within, he must certainly have been very well acquainted with the philosophy and style of the Arts and Crafts Movement. It is probably safe to say that Duveneck was one of the people who introduced McLaughlin to the lesser known work and philosophy behind William Morris and the veritable
artistic renaissance occurring in England with the Arts and Crafts Movement. This, combined with his overall effect on his student, Mary Louise McLaughlin, may shed some light on how McLaughlin came to be such a pragmatic beacon of Arts and Crafts ideals, via art pottery, in America.

Early Technical Achievements

At the Centennial Exposition McLaughlin was first exposed to the faience, or underglaze, ware made by the Havilands at the famed Limoges factory in France. These wares were underpainted with slip, or liquefied clay which has colorants added to it, in hues of deep browns, blues, and golds, and overglazed with a clear, shiny glaze in what was called the Barbotine process. McLaughlin (1938) wrote of this experience of viewing Barbotine wares,

The new ware in its exquisite coloring and novel effects was a revelation to me, and I immediately began to wonder how it was done and if I could not do something of the kind. I learned something of hard-fire colors and sent to Paris to procure some, but it was not until nearly a year had elapsed that my purpose was carried out. During this time I had been doing overglaze work [china painting] and had prepared my first manual on this subject. (p. 218)

In late 1876 or early 1877 McLaughlin recreated the Haviland process of slip underglaze decoration. At first she painted under the glaze using pure oxides, like a watercolor wash. This produced satisfactory results but certainly not the depth and richness of hue
which characterized the Limoges pieces. Quite by accident, she mixed the oxides with slip, liquefied clay, which formed what is called an engobe. This engobe actually chemically alters to fit the clay body to which it is applied and adds a creamy richness to the surface and color of the design. Her untitled plate (Figure 19) is the first known American example of this process. It was executed on a porcelain blank (supplied from her favorite blank supplier the Union Porcelain Works at Green Point, New York) and is decorated in a motif of cat-tails, flying birds surrounded by a border of tree branches, all done in cobalt blue slip and overglazed in a fine clear glaze. This work offers many keys to the developing Arts and Crafts style of McLaughlin. The natural subject matter was chosen, manipulated, and simplified to fit the form it embellished. The tree branches, especially, approach conventionalization, or stylization away from pure naturalism to fit the purpose of the design. The blue and white decoration evokes comparison with Eastern wares which were an inspiration to the movement. All in all, this sounds as though it could be a description of one of William Morris's works, illustrating the fact that McLaughlin was very familiar with the English branch of the movement at this point.

**China Painting: A Manual for China Painters**

At the same time that McLaughlin was experimenting with the Haviland Limoges process she was working toward the education of
the large numbers of amateur china painters working who had little or no technical guidance. In 1877 she published *China Painting: A Practical Manual for the Use of Amateurs in the Decoration of Hard Porcelain*. McLaughlin clearly felt that china painting was an avenue of economic dependence for women if they could acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills.

The success of Mary Louise McLaughlin's first, and most important, book can be judged by the number of times it was reprinted. By 1911 it had been through five printings and set the tone for other practical texts on porcelain and the arts in general such as Adelaide Alsop Robineau's *Keramic Studio*, a periodical which reflected McLaughlin's blend of sound advice and instruction.

The book begins with the following passage from H. Taine:

Success depends on knowing how to be patient, how to endure drudgery, how to unmake and remake, how to recommence and continue without allowing the tides of anger or the flight of imagination to arrest or divert daily effort. (McLaughlin, 1877, frontispiece)

From the beginning, McLaughlin sets the tone that success in china painting means work, but work that will uplift and reward, echoing the lofty rhetoric of the Arts and Crafts Movement. She begins the book with the following statement,

The art of painting on china is certainly a beautiful one, and is, perhaps, particularly fitted to be an agreeable pastime for persons of leisure. There is, however, too general a tendency to consider it simply in the light of an amusement, unworthy of serious study, and an art for the practice of which no special training or knowledge is necessary. (McLaughlin, 1877, p. v)
She continues,

Now, what is worth doing at all is worth doing well, and the idea that one can successfully practice any branch of art without having previously learned to draw is false. The eye and the hand must be trained, and the taste cultivated, before any result worthy of the name can be achieved. (McLaughlin, 1877, p. v)

McLaughlin was obviously battling a stereotype which saw china painting as the hobby or leisure-time endeavor of those looking for temporary diversion. She presents to the amateur the idea that china painting is an endeavor requiring hard work, careful study, and the acquisition of skills, both technical and aesthetic. In this book, McLaughlin calls for a revival of china painting by those specially skilled so that the artform can attain the high status it enjoyed in various periods throughout history.

To McLaughlin and her pursuit of excellence in china painting through her own work and that of the scores of people who would come under her teaching through her books, articles, and studio instruction, the key to good work was drawing and natural observation. This, too, should remind the reader of the rhetoric of the Arts and Crafts Movement, especially John Ruskin and William Morris. She writes that the student must make it his or her “first business to acquire the art of drawing” (McLaughlin, 1877, p. vi). Then, the student should “educate the eye to perceive beautiful forms in nature or art, and the hand to transcribe them” (McLaughlin, 1877, p. vi). She warns the student against the slavish imitation of designs and motifs from history, another example of her
absorption of the ideals of the Arts and Crafts. One's art must be a product of one's own time and one's own surroundings. She goes on to write,

There will be no true revival of any branch of art unless founded upon the study of nature and the adaptation of her principles to design, and there will likewise be no advance possible to the individual art student without this study and practice. (McLaughlin, 1877, p. vii)

After extolling the virtues of drawing skill and study from nature McLaughlin goes on to rhapsodize, through Thackeray, about what can only be called the moral or personal benefits from this course of study. Again, these should be familiar to readers as containing the same sentiment as the Arts and Crafts ideals. She writes,

This study brings with it its own reward in the cultivation of what has been called the artistic sense, which, in the words of Thackeray, reveals "splendours of nature, to vulgar sights invisible, and beauties manifest in forms, colors, shadows of common objects, where most of the world saw only what was dull, and gross, and familiar. One reads in the magic story-books of a charm or a flower which the wizard gives, and which enables the bearer to see the fairies. O enchanting boon of nature, which reveals to the possessor the hidden spirits of beauty round about him--spirits which the strongest and most gifted masters compel into painting or song! To others it is granted but to have fleeting glimpses of that fair art-world, and tempted by ambition, or barred by faint-heartedness, or driven by necessity, to turn away thence to the vulgar lifetrack and the light of common day." (McLaughlin, 1877, pp. vii-viii)
Again, recall one of the main ideas behind the Arts and Crafts Movement: labor should be uplifting morally or spiritually and hence satisfying, with the positive implications of this labor spilling over into one's personal life.

While the introductory chapters of the book are filled with the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement though specific to the realm of china painting, the remainder of the text is quite pragmatic, "practical" as the title indicates. One need only compare the lengthy passages above with the following to see the difference in tone. Two passages will serve: the first is from the section "Preparing the Design."

In commencing to paint designs on china, the first thing to be done, of course, is to sketch the outline. The best way to do this is to prepare the china by rubbing the surface with spirits of turpentine, and, after having left it a few moments to dry, draw the design upon it very lightly with a hard lead pencil. (McLaughlin, 1877, p. 9)

The second is from the section entitled "General Directions for Painting":

Too much turpentine should not be taken into the brush when it is to be charged with color. Dip it into the turpentine, and, remove the surplus moisture by drawing the brush over the edge of the vessel containing it, before taking up the color from the palette. The tint may be tried first on the edge of the plate. Surplus color or moisture may be removed by touching the brush upon a muslin rag, which should always be at hand for the purpose of wiping the brushes. (McLaughlin, 1877, pp. 16-17)
Clearly, McLaughlin spares no detail, down to the wiping of a brush, in her minute description of the process of china painting. The other section headings include: “Composition of Palettes for Various Styles of Painting,” “Tinted Grounds,” “Mat Colors,” “Other Pigments and Mediums,” “Burnishing,” “Paste for Raised Gold,” and finally “General Remarks on Decoration.” This portion of the text ends with the following quote by Hammerton, “This indeed is a noble object, to gain admission into the paradise of natural beauty, and whoever labors bravely for that end shall have his reward” (McLaughlin, 1877, p. 77).

The second half of the book is entitled “Suggestions to China Painters,” a goodly portion of which revolves around the importance of drawing. McLaughlin pleads with the fledgling china painter to “Learn to draw before attempting anything with color to avoid disfiguring the fair face of some piece of porcelain” (McLaughlin, 1877, p. 81). She instructs those who will be teaching others the art of china painting to teach their students to be careful observers, that drawing is really the art of seeing.

The section “The Importance of Drawing” could come out of a John Ruskin or William Morris lecture and she tributes her ideas to that which she has seen in England. Students should draw that with which they are familiar. She writes, “Decorative art should exhibit individuality, should be an outgrowth of the life and surroundings of

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1 These glazes would be extremely influential to the china painters and ceramists in the Art Pottery Movement such as Adelaide Alsop Robineau and numerous other potteries, including Sophie Newcomb College Pottery.
the artist" (McLaughlin, 1877, p. 96). She then goes on, "The good results of such instruction in the school of design in England are evident in the excellent patterns of some of the wall-paper and fabrics imported from that country" (McLaughlin, 1877, p. 99). Of course, William Morris had a profound effect on wallpaper and textile design in England as these media were those in which he was most prolific. The rest of the section headings include "Lessons to be Derived From Japanese Art,"2 "Preparing Gold and Silver For the Decoration of Porcelain," "The Use of Metallic Paints Upon Porcelain," "Lettering," "The Use of Relief Colors," and, finally, "Firing."

It is appropriate here to reiterate that McLaughlin was acting as a professional art educator, rather than artist, in the writing and publishing of this text, which was targeted at a mass audience. She attempted, quite successfully to this student's mind, to provide them with the art education they would need not only to succeed in the technical implementation of this artform but also to enable them to consider this branch of the arts as an economic opportunity which would provide them with a social freedom traditionally little enjoyed in the history of the mass American female. She did not brandish the rhetoric of the Arts and Crafts in a brazen manner as did many English ideologues whose philosophies were completely wedded with a radical Socialist agenda but couched it in pragmatic terms more suited to the practical tastes of the American public. She enlightened then through practicality and simplicity, through poetry followed by

2 The interest in Eastern art is another similarity with the British Arts and Crafts Movement, as will be seen later in this chapter.
simple pragmatics, but the important part is that she enlightened and educated countless individuals. As a final note, McLaughlin, in an address to the American Ceramic Society in 1938, stated that twenty-two or twenty-three thousand copies of her manual on china painting had been sold.

Cincinnati Limoges:
Further Experimentation with the Underglaze Process

Writing this manual did not stop her technical experimentation in underglaze decoration (and her work in overglaze). She continued to visit other potteries as well and in late 1877 she visited the pottery of Patrick Coultry in Cincinnati, a site which would prove to be a nerve center for the development of the art pottery movement, first in Cincinnati and, by extension, America in general. In January 1878 at the Patrick Coultry Pottery, McLaughlin created an untitled pilgrim bottle. (Figure 18) This bottle exhibits a very thick usage of the slip underglaze so that the design does not look like a watercolor wash as in her earlier works but is almost sculpturesque. McLaughlin, herself, considered this her most successful emulation of the Haviland process with its thick underglaze decoration and rich hues. Exemplifying the ideas which she laid out in her manual, the form is covered in natural decoration, a bunch of English roses or camellias, originally drawn, no doubt, from nature. The importance to ceramic history exists in the fact that this decoration was painted on while the clay of the form was still wet, before the bisque firing.
hence wet-on-wet decoration. This discovery, perhaps more than any other development, propelled McLaughlin into the pages of ceramic history and really began the American art pottery movement. After this, she began to show her work extensively throughout the United States, first as a delegate of the Women’s Museum Association, and abroad.

McLaughlin began full-time experimentation at the Patrick Coultry Pottery where she tried to further perfect both her slip and glaze recipes for the wares which she called “Cincinnati Limoges.” She had been having problems with the body of the form shrinking too much to accommodate the slip and glaze which would cause a distortion in the design motif and a crackling of the glaze. She was introduced by a friend to a deposit of fine, red clay in the hills outside of urban Cincinnati. Using this local source for the body of her vessels, the slip and glaze fit perfectly and, at the same time, she was fulfilling one of the major tenets of the Arts and Crafts Movement in using local materials. McLaughlin worked on her Cincinnati Limoges wares on and off for the next twelve years. The process always remained the same as outlined above but she experimented with different oxides, or colorants, in the slips, the thicknesses of the slips, different types of overglazes, and finally, how to perfectly wed the design, which was usually botanical and drawn from local sources, to the aesthetics of the vessel.
McLaughlin's achievements in underglaze decoration were highly publicized, she exhibited widely, locally, nationally, and internationally, and she was to a great extent responsible for the boom in Cincinnati in interest in pottery decoration. Under McLaughlin's influence, the Patrick Coultry Pottery began to offer a range of classes in pottery decoration. These classes were often taught by members of the "mineral painting" class started by Benn Pitman, and McLaughlin had a full-time studio in the same space. McLaughlin did not teach these classes but she did teach the instructors something of her Cincinnati Limoges technique. Ironically, some of the male students in this class went on to form the nucleus of decorators of what would become the Rookwood Pottery, which was founded in 1880, and which would ultimately cause McLaughlin a considerable amount of professional grief. (McLaughlin, 1938, p. 219) In 1938 McLaughlin recollected this time:

It may be imagined with what abandon the women of that time, whose efforts had been directed to the making of anti-macassars or woolen Afghans, threw themselves into the fascinating occupation of working in wet clay. The potters imparted to them various tricks of the trade and some fearful and wonderful things were produced. Not long ago the proud possessor of some of these treasures showed me a pair of vases with characteristic decoration of the period. While still wet they had been rolled or otherwise peppered with fragments of dry clay until their surfaces were of a texture of nutmeg graters.
while all over had been hung realistically colored bunches of fruit. For a time, it was a wild ceramic orgy during which much perfectly good clay was spoiled and numerous freaks created. (McLaughlin, 1938, p. 219)

These less than suitably designed wares, (Figure 20) recalled humorously here, prompted McLaughlin to set certain design standards amidst what Clark and Hughto (1979) call this “overenthusiastic response to ceramics” (p. 7), and to begin a full-fledged campaign of art education geared toward the creation of beautiful and functional ceramic wares.

In 1879 a commentator for the Crockery and Glass Journal wrote, “The ladies of Cincinnati are slightly demented on the subject of art” (quoted in Kaplan, 1987, p. 65). The Arts and Crafts historian Wendy Kaplan writes,

Compared with women in other cities at the time, they may well have seemed so to observers because in Cincinnati the arts were not just a luxury for the wealthy; they were a necessity. There, all forms of artistic expression were enthusiastically supported. (Kaplan, 1987, p. 65)
In 1879 McLaughlin organized the Women's Pottery Club (which was sometimes referred to as the Cincinnati Women’s Art Pottery Club) with herself as the president and Clara Chipman Newton as secretary and in the words of its founder, “was organized and composed ... of the best workers in the different branches of ceramic decoration [and] did much to uphold the standard of good workmanship during the sixteen successful years of its existence” (McLaughlin, 1938, p. 219). The core group of the Pottery Club were those women from Benn Pitman’s china painting class mentioned earlier in this chapter: Mrs. William Dodd, Mrs. George Dominick, Miss Alice B. Holabird, Mrs. Charles Kebler, Mrs. Harriet Leonard, Mrs. A. B. Merriam, Miss Julia Rice, Miss Clara C. Newton and Mary Louise McLaughlin. The Cincinnati Art Pottery Club has been seen by many scholars as the first of its kind in the country and served as a model not only for other pottery clubs but other Arts and Crafts associations as well. McLaughlin personally chose the best female pottery designers and invited them to join the club. As a historical note, Maria Longworth Nichols's failure to receive an invitation to join this club, even though McLaughlin, throughout her career maintained that she had indeed invited Nichols--that the invitation
had simply been lost in the mail—caused her to found another ceramic workshop which became a rival to McLaughlin’s and eventually became the famed Rookwood Pottery.

The Pottery Club met for a very brief time at the Coultry Pottery and chose a studio which looked out over the gardens so that the decorators might be continually inspired by nature. They moved quarters because they found out that Coultry, the owner of the pottery in which they had studio space, had gone into a partnership with Thomas J. Wheatley. Coultry was providing, leaking, if one wants to think in corporate terms, Wheatley with all of the technical advancements in underglaze decoration made by McLaughlin and the Pottery Club members under her tutelage. (Clark, 1972, p. 119) At the same time Wheatley was making claims that he was the true originator of the underglaze decoration process in America. He claimed to have discovered the process in New York in 1877. The Women’s Pottery Club quickly moved quarters to the Hamilton Road Pottery of Frederick Dallas which was also home, ironically, to the studio of Maria Longworth Nichols, which would eventually become Rookwood Pottery.

McLaughlin created her most famous piece at this pottery, the Ali Baba Vase (Figure 21) from early 1880 amidst the design camaraderie of the Women’s Art Pottery Club. It was her largest piece yet, at thirty-eight inches in height, and consists of a heavy cream body covered with slips in hues ranging from sage green to greenish-white. The painted ground is covered with a diagonal
composition of Chinese hibiscus in an antique rose color with pale pink accents, sage green leaves, and yellow and white highlights. It is covered with a clear craquellure glaze. The form of the vessel and the decoration are indebted to Eastern influences, illustrating the stylistic influences of the Arts and Crafts Movement, though the manner in which it is painted is still somewhat Victorian in its naturalism. The design does not yet bear the conventionalization of the natural form which so characterized most Arts and Crafts pottery, but this is due to the painterly method of the Barbotine process. The *Ali Baba Vase* strikes an important first note in the score of the American Art Pottery Movement. It was well publicized, highly exhibited, and drew a considerable amount of public interest in this “new” artistic, rather than utilitarian, medium of clay, the medium as an avenue of economic gain for women, and its aesthetic and philosophical connection with the English Arts and Crafts Movement which was beginning to see more press. The *Ali Baba Vase* was also one of the great highlights of the Women’s Pottery Club’s first public reception which was held in May of 1880. The *Ali Baba Vase* can be seen in the wood engraving of the “First Annual Reception and Exhibition of the Cincinnati Women’s Art Pottery Club” (Figure 22) which appeared in Harper’s Weekly on May 29, 1880. This engraving and the accompanying article, which described in detail the elaborate reception in which the studio of the Women’s Art Pottery Club was transformed into a glorious flower bower in which one would experience the aesthetic delight of the vessels themselves.
thrust Cincinnati, the Women’s Art Pottery Club, and Mary Louise McLaughlin, as the progenitor of all of this, to the forefront of national interest in ceramic decoration and the art education of women in this area. Clearly, people were interested in the phenomena of women excelling artistically and economically in their chosen medium of clay. Crowds of anxious visitors awaited their turn to see the Women’s Pottery Club studio, wares, and the women themselves. This event was clearly seen as something between a fete and a spectacle but it gave the Pottery Club the exposure it needed and subsequently an interest in art pottery as an agreeable, exciting, and economically viable area of interest and employment.

The following contemporaneous commentary on American art pottery came from Harper’s New Monthly Magazine the next year:

It is curious to see the wide range of age and conditions of life embraced in the ranks of the decorators of pottery: young girls of twelve to fifteen years of age find a few hours a week from their school engagements to devote to over or under-glaze work, or to the modelling of the clay; and from this up through all the less certain ages, 'til the grandmother stands confessed in cap and spectacles, no time of life is exempt from the fascinating contagion. Women who need to add to their income, and the representatives of the largest fortunes, are among the most industrious workers; and it is pleasant to know that numbers of these self-taught women receive a handsome sum annually from the orders for work from sales, and from lessons to pupils. (quoted in Callen, 1979, p. 80)

In the ensuing years as the head of the Art Pottery Club, McLaughlin’s work began to pick up those stylistic characteristics which would become the true hallmarks of Arts and Crafts pottery.
from the 1890s onward when it gained full momentum in America, certainly, in part, due to her influence. Her Vase (Figure 23) of 1882 and her Bowl (Figure 24) of 1883 both owe a great debt to the design aesthetic of the East. Both are traditional Eastern forms covered with natural designs which are much more simple and refined, and certainly less painterly, than that of her earlier work. The design on the vase is incised and then outlined in gilt. The design of the bowl is outlined in gilt also—a definite move towards the more stereotypical Arts and Crafts design whose hallmark was the pronounced outline of the form.

This transition might seem unimportant but it is actually quite revealing. It shows that McLaughlin was in tune with the international design educators who became the purveyors of design taste in the Arts and Crafts period in America, including the likes of Owen Jones (The Grammar of Ornament, 1856), John Ruskin (Elements of Drawing, 1857), Racinet (Polychromatic Ornament, 1873), and Christopher Dresser (Studies in Design, 1876). All of these authors stressed naturalistic observation and the intense scrutiny of the growth and development of natural forms which would allow for their simplification. This would become quite important to the philosophy of the American Arts and Crafts Movement and was, later, further stressed by the likes of Lewis F. Day (The Application of Ornament, 1888), Walter Crane (The Bases of Design, 1898), and Arthur Wesley Dow (Composition, 1899). All of
these authors stressed conventionalization of design, or the simplification of nature: the stylization of the natural form to fit the composition of the form.

McLaughlin’s work at this time was not being created in any sort of a vacuum. Not only was the Pottery Club a flurry of activity and experimentation but there was an ever-growing interest in pottery in Cincinnati in general. With women eager to put their amateur trade to wage-earning trials, and capitalists eager to reap profits from yet another industry, potteries, on a fairly large scale, abounded. Thomas Wheatley founded his own pottery on the basis of McLaughlin’s Cincinnati Limoges recipe. Others included the Cincinnati Art Pottery Company, the Matt Morgan Art Pottery, the Avon Pottery, and, of course, the Rookwood Pottery. The Rookwood Pottery was the most successful and in business the longest. Just as in England, to insure that the designs of the forms and the surface embellishment were of the highest quality and originality, potteries opened their studios in the evening to classes in design and the technical specifics of ceramic decoration, (Ellis, 1992, p. 12) and McLaughlin’s Suggestions to China Painters was often the chosen text as it was the only one of its kind. (Anita Ellis, personal communication, February 1995) Rookwood historian Anita Ellis (1992) writes,

The School of Design of the University of Cincinnati, later transferred to the Cincinnati Art Museum in 1884 and renamed the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 1887, supported the combination of art and industry through formal training in industrial, or decorative, art. (p. 12)
In 1883, Rookwood’s founder Maria Longworth Nichols decided to close its doors to the Cincinnati Women’s Pottery Club as the products of the two “bodies” were often confused. Oddly, at the same time, the business manager, William Watts Taylor, fired all of the female designers and hired men. (Callen, 1979, p. 81) Ironically, he and Maria Longworth Nichols later hired members of the Women’s Pottery Club as designers such as Clara Chipman Newton and Mary Sheerer. This early genius of Rookwood had been supplying the Pottery Club with greenware to embellish and firing the finished pieces. After this, Rookwood’s production eclipsed the developments of the Art Pottery Club members who, including McLaughlin, had to resort to simpler, less technical forms of overglaze surface decoration. (Clark, 1972, p. 119) The loss of studio space and a lawsuit with Rookwood over the right to produce Barbotine ware led to the disbanding of this seminal art pottery group in late 1884. As noted, club members became decorators at other potteries such as Rookwood and to teach nationally. McLaughlin again turned her attention to overglaze decoration with which she experimented for approximately one year and wrote another technical treatise entitled Suggestions to China Painters.

Suggestions to China Painters

Again, it seems McLaughlin was ahead of her time. In 1884, a full fifteen years before Arthur Wesley Dow’s incredibly influential
text Composition, McLaughlin published Suggestions to China Painters, in which she extolled the virtues of Japanese art. This was years earlier than America's answers to Ruskin, Charles Eliot Norton, Ernst Fenollosa, and Arthur Wesley Dow, monumental figures in the discipline of art education who were connected with the distilling some of the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement for public consumption such as the value in Eastern, especially Japanese art. (Wygant, 1983, p. 105) McLaughlin directed her student readers to study the grace and seemingly carefree manner of outline and composition exhibited in Japanese art. In 1885, when art pottery and the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement were becoming household fixtures through the popular press, McLaughlin gave up her work in pottery and, in her own words, "actually refrained from dabbling in wet clay for nearly ten years" (McLaughlin, 1938, p. 219).

The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition

McLaughlin was by no means stagnant during this ten year period. She experimented in other media including decorative metalwork, specifically etching on metal, painting, and various other artforms including textiles. Her William Morris-like, multi-faceted artistic accomplishments are illustrated by the fact that her decorative metalwork won a silver medal at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1889. The Keppel Gallery in New York devoted a one-
person show to her in 1892 in which she exhibited oil paintings, watercolors, miniatures, etchings, pottery, decorative metalwork, illuminations and embroideries.

In 1893, McLaughlin played a very visible role in The Woman's Building at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and was a keynote speaker of a session of the World's Congress of Representative Women, (Weimann, 1981, p. 416) which focused on the quest for equal rights for women through a historical exploration and celebration of the craftswoman, "the individual artist" (Weimann, 1981, p. viii). (Figure 25) The motto of The Woman's Building was "Not For Herself, But For Humanity" (Weimann, 1981, frontispiece), which exemplified the mission of this portion of the exposition to showcase the historic achievements of women as well as their contemporary ones. The environment of the building and the élan of the displays sought to promote the acknowledgment of a historical, international sisterhood of women as independent creators and producers deserving of the same opportunities, rights, responsibilities, and respect as men.

According to the historian Jeanne Madeline Weimann (1981), pottery, along with needlework, were ranked of highest importance at this exposition, (p. 416) and so it seems logical that McLaughlin would have been invited to take part. She would have been in quite good company as the exhibitions and events for The Woman's Building were organized primarily by the Chicago Woman's Club which counted the educational reformer and founder of Hull House,
Jane Addams, as a member. As noted in chapter 5, Addams utilized practical education in various handicrafts such as pottery as a way to acclimate immigrants to American society and to provide them with an economic alternative to factory labor, charwoman drudgery, or even prostitution. Needy women and children were trained in the same manner, taught that work could be rewarding psychologically and economically and could afford one a sense of dignity.

McLaughlin had a special didactic exhibit room of ceramic pieces in various stages of glazing, (Weimann, 1981, p. 419) which seem to have been actual examples of techniques from her texts. She also exhibited two of her own works, a blue plate (Figure 19) and her Ali Baba Vase. (Figure 21) McLaughlin’s address revolved around the fact that at the time of the Columbian Exposition, 25,000 women were working in china painting in America and the number was growing. (Weimann, 1981, p. 416) McLaughlin urged women to produce to the best of their abilities to fight back against the backlash of industrial pottery producers who were vocal in their criticism of the inferior goods created by amateur women. Part of McLaughlin’s address was as follows:

“Since prehistoric ages, woman has figured largely as the maker and decorator of the vessels in which food has been served. . . . We, following the line of what should be progress, are inclined sometimes so to decorate these articles that the original use is lost sight of. In this, to our shame, be it said we fall behind our aboriginal models, who in their simplicity never lost sight of the fitness of things, and whose work consequently ranks high in true artistic beauty.” (quoted in Weimann, 1981, p. 416)
This address should remind the reader of the earlier passages by English Arts and Crafts ideologues such as William Morris who extolled the virtues of historic handicraft—that form should fit function and embellishment should be more than mere adornment but appropriate and meaningful.

Chapter 5 has suggested just how progressive McLaughlin was in terms of absorbing and disseminating the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement in America. She disseminated these ideals through her own studio work and pragmatic or technical writings rather than through philosophical rhetoric as was the case with these male figures from the history of art education. One of the contentions of this study is that the Arts and Crafts Movement did not spread through America through “intellectual channels” (Bowman & Palevsky, 1990, p. 34; Kaplan, 1987, pp. 52-60) until after it had spread first through a wave of “technical channels.” McLaughlin began instruction in china painting and ceramic experimentation before the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 which art historians credit with the sowing of the first theoretical seeds of the Arts and Crafts Movement in American soil. In other words, the stage was set in America for the actual handicraft to take precedence over philosophy. This is why the Arts and Crafts had the impact that they did in America and this is why Mary Louise McLaughlin should take her place next to those figures such as Charles Eliot Norton and Arthur Wesley Dow whose beautifully written theoretical passages have seduced art historians for the better part of a century.
McLaughlin and her female followers took the movement "out of the hands of orators," and out into the larger public domain through work, which was of prime importance to the purest ideology of the Arts and Crafts, that of William Morris.

A Return to Technical Experimentation and Developments in High Fire Porcelain

After a respite of nearly a decade, Mary Louise McLaughlin again decided to reenter the fray of art pottery and she did so with a spirit of adventure and professionalism which made up for her years away. She first appears on the radar screen of art pottery in 1985 when she took out a patent on a method of ceramic decoration which consisted of inlays of clay. ("[American faience,]" 1895, p. 1) She called this new method of decoration "American faience." Callen (1979) writes,

This process involved the painting of a decorative pattern in coloured slips on the interior surface of a plaster mould, the vessel then being cast in a different coloured clay. When the piece was removed from the mould the design was embedded into its surface, producing an inlaid effect. (p. 85)

The body of work utilizing this technique fell short of McLaughlin's ideals and she discontinued it after a short time. She writes, "This work was carried on at the Brockman Pottery, but again the disadvantage of not being able to control the entire process caused me to discontinue it" (McLaughlin, 1938, p. 219).
She was not discouraged, though, as she writes in 1938:

One who has experience the fascination of working in wet clay is never safe from its lure, and after a while I was again dreaming of the possibility of carrying out another ceramic venture, this time of much larger scope. This was no less than the making of porcelain, an enterprise the difficulty of which I had as yet but a faint conception.

(p. 219)

In approximately 1898 McLaughlin began full-time experimentation in porcelain. She was inspired by the work of the Porcelain League of Cincinnati which had been founded by some of the members of the Cincinnati Woman's Art Pottery Club and sought to produce hard-paste decorative porcelain. She did not find a suitable body recipe until 1900 after developing and experimenting with eighteen others and forty-five accompanying glazes. (Callen, 1979, p. 85) How prophetic was the quote by H. Taine with which she chose to open her book of over a decade earlier, China Painting!:

Success depends on knowing how to be patient, how to endure drudgery, how to unmake and remake, how to recommence and continue without allowing the tide of anger or the flight of the imagination to arrest or divert the daily effort. (McLaughlin, 1877, frontispiece)

This new ware was called "Losanti," after the original name of Cincinnati, L'Osantiville, and propelled McLaughlin, again, to the forefront of the American pottery and Arts and Crafts establishments. The production of her porcelain came approximately three years before Taxile Doat published his porcelain recipes from the famed Sèvres porcelain factory in Keramic Studio, ushering in a veritable craze in porcelain production in America. (Levin, 1982, pp. 172
Losanti ware was produced by a single high firing which resulted in the richest, creamiest, most translucent of glaze bodies. The form was glazed when it was in its leather hard stage in which it is solid and inflexible but yet still contains a certain amount of moisture. The glaze then actually soaked into the body of the vessel which resulted in an unparalleled richness in firing which McLaughlin felt was characteristic of certain Eastern porcelains such as those using the hard-to-emulate oxblood glaze. (Figure 26) The vessels, themselves, were the simplest yet of McLaughlin's, despite the fact that were the most difficult to produce. These early Losanti pieces had no painted or incised surface decoration, just the fitting of the glaze to the form. This was a direct reflection of the intensity of the shift which was occurring at a heightened pitch in the 1890s away from the cluttered, eclectic, and complex Victorian design and towards the uncluttered, simpler, stylized forms of the Arts and Crafts Movement, which were derived in part from the aesthetics of the East and its pottery. (Clark & Hughto, 1979, p. 21)

After McLaughlin had perfected the body and firing process of Losanti ware she began to concentrate on the surface decoration of her work. Her interest in Eastern pottery was combined with that of Art Nouveau. Her wood carving background stood her well as she began to carve the surfaces of her porcelains to provide subtle contours for her glazes to play off of. A photograph (Figure 27) from a 1901 Keramic Studio shows several pieces of her early Losanti ware which won a bronze medal at the Pan-American Exposition in
Buffalo, New York. McLaughlin’s porcelains at this exhibition inspired an entire issue of Keramic Studio, as well as its editor Adelaide Alsop Robineau who wrote that McLaughlin had motivated an entire generation of American potters to work in porcelain. (Weiss, 1981, p. 78) As the reader will see, Robineau carried this torch of educational inspiration through at least another generation.

McLaughlin’s Losanti ware kept the artist in the forefront of art pottery and its public and appeared regularly in Robineau’s ceramic periodical. Robineau first solicited an article on china painting from one of the country’s leading figures in 1899 but McLaughlin declined, hinting instead at her new work in porcelain. (Robineau, 1899, August, p. 65) Robineau was skeptical of this, and in July 1901, McLaughlin wrote a letter to the editor of Keramic Studio in which she corrected Robineau’s statement that no American was working in porcelain except tableware. McLaughlin fired a salvo as follows,

This is no longer true, because I have been producing porcelain of a purely decorative character for some time. It is now three years since I began a series of experiments in porcelain. The work is carried on at my home in a small kiln erected in my garden. (McLaughlin, 1901, p. 3)

McLaughlin was eager, it seems, to correct the record and assert the fact that one could undertake this in one’s own home, specifically one’s garden!

After this letter, Robineau’s trip to Buffalo to see her works at the Pan-American Exposition, and the positive reception of McLaughlin’s porcelains at the Paris World Fair of 1901, Robineau
solicited an article specifically on her Losanti ware (Robineau, 1901, December, pp. 178-79) and regularly afterwards. Through the pages of *Keramic Studio* Robineau and McLaughlin presented McLaughlin’s porcelain technical and stylistic experimentation in detail, exposing and inspiring thousands of art potters and women and the pragmatic effects of the Arts and Crafts Movement. (Robineau, 1903, p. 36) McLaughlin’s untitled porcelain vase of 1903 (Figure 28) is covered with a carved design of conventionalized leaves which warp around the form in a very stylized and poetic manner. The design fits the form perfectly and the two complement one another perfectly. The vase is a textbook example of the ideals of the American Arts and Crafts Movement. The kaolin and feldspar of the porcelain body are from Cincinnati, the design motif and form are simple, inspired by nature yet conventionalized, and the whole effect is consistent and pleasing to the eye.

It is though the pages of *Keramic Studio* that a public eager for this sort of education were informed that McLaughlin intended to retire from the world of pottery, at the age of 50, due to problems she was having with her garden kiln and her desire to pursue other interests including women in history. (Robineau, 1905, pp. 251-52) She eventually published her book on the latter topic, *The Second Madame: An Epitome of History*, in 1923.
Conclusion

Mary Louise McLaughlin was truly a pioneer in the field of American art pottery and, though overlooked in the canonical history of art education, she deserves recognition within this realm. McLaughlin used the high and perhaps unobtainable ideals of the English Arts and Crafts Movement in a fashion which made them widely applicable and acceptable in America, at least within the field of art pottery. As noted earlier in this study, one of the reasons the Arts and Crafts had the wide-ranging impact it did in America, that in did not in England, was because its major proponents did not adopt a stance which was militantly political in that it utterly rejected industrialization. Again, this may be due to the fact that America was a much younger country and did not have the same social rigidity. In America, industrialization, which was really just another word for a type of capitalism, was not the great social threat because of the class issues it raised, as it was in England. In fact, McLaughlin cooperated with industry in that both her work and that of the Cincinnati Women's Pottery Club came from a studio within existing production potteries, though they maintained private studio space. Stylistically and philosophically their work reflected the high ideals of the great rhetoricians of the British Arts and Crafts Movement such as Ruskin and Morris but these women created their pieces within the environment of the industrial system. Marion John
Nelson (1988) feels that this "compromised" (p. 4) and somehow tainted the "social, humanistic, and aesthetic goals" (p. 4) of the Arts and Crafts Movement. This "compromise," as Nelson puts it, also allowed for the first American art pottery coming out of Cincinnati to be priced at a level accessible to a much broader public than comparable work in England. As any good marketing manager will tell you, accessibility means visibility, and this visibility interested a broad public in the style, ideals, and social possibilities inherent in the Arts and Crafts Movement.

McLaughlin sought this exposure and through it became a vocal proponent for art as a means of economic freedom for women. One must remember that though McLaughlin came from a fairly wealthy and prominent family, she eventually, had she not made a successful career for herself out of all aspects of art pottery, from its instruction, production, and, for want of a better term, "marketing," would have had to depend on the good graces and pursestrings of her brother. Instead she chose independence and should be seen as a role model for other women artists and art educators of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This is important for two reasons. One reason specific to this study is that Mary Louise McLaughlin was the first model in her time for the independent production of art pottery by women. McLaughlin wrote and spoke endlessly on the pragmatic side of making art pottery a vocation for women. From her own books, to the address given to women at the 1890 World's Columbian
Exposition, to the pages of important art journals such as Adelaide Alsop Robineau’s *Keramic Studio*. McLaughlin stood as a woman alone, working to take the medium of art pottery to its greatest heights and to expose it to the widest audience. McLaughlin appeared again and again in Robineau’s editorials, (Weiss, 1981, p. 212) and Robineau began to work in porcelain only after seeing McLaughlin’s porcelains exhibited. As the editor of a journal dedicated to the ceramic arts she was certainly well acquainted with McLaughlin’s books and McLaughlin’s articles seem to be excerpts from these texts. The women of Newcomb College Pottery were also very much aware of McLaughlin, and several lending copies of her books were, and are, a part of the library of Newcomb College. (Mane, personal communication, May 15, 1996) So McLaughlin started the chain of events which would become the women’s art pottery movement in America.

The second reason it is important to underscore the pioneering role Mary Louise McLaughlin took in the pursuit of her own art and subsequently in her inspiration to other women to do the same through various means of art education, is that as mentioned in the first pages of this study, according to the criteria established by some of the most prominent historians of art education today, McLaughlin is not the model of the professional art educator. This despite her tireless pursuit of aesthetic and technical achievement in ceramics, her drive to educate as many people, especially women, as possible, through her own studio instruction, books and commentary in
contemporary arts periodicals such as The Glass and Crockery Journal and Keramic Studio, and her tireless “public relations” campaign for a three-fold marriage of women, the appropriate arts education, and economic independence through professionalism. When McLaughlin died in 1939, she had produced a tremendously influential, wide-ranging body of art pottery, several books and articles on art pottery, a book on oil painting, three history books, and several generations of women potters and art students to her honor. She wrote one year before her death,

Were circumstance to favor it, however, it is possible that I would again follow the will-o’-the-wisp that leads to the end of the potter’s rainbow where there is seldom found a pot of gold. (McLaughlin, 1938, p. 222)
CHAPTER 7


Adelaide Alsop Robineau, (Figure 29) born Adelaide Beers Alsop in 1865, was twenty years younger than Mary Louise McLaughlin, and carried her torch for the art education of women as a means of self-fulfillment and economic independence well into the twentieth century. This passionate message, communicated through her work, was written with the quill of her own personal life, in which art and art education were the means through which she escaped the financial straits brought on her family by her father. Hence, Robineau campaigned for women's social salvation in a tone comparable in its fervor only with the radical Socialism of late William Morris. Her work in the field of art education, specific to pottery, was extensive, wide-ranging, and very far-reaching. She is considered one of the most outstanding figures in the history of American art pottery, as well as in the history of twentieth century ceramics. She founded, published, edited, and contributed designs and articles to the seminal art education periodical *Keramic Studio*.
A Monthly Magazine for the China Painter and Potter, which later became *Design-Keramic Studio: A Monthly Magazine for the Art Teacher and Designer*. She was a central studio figure and set up pottery programs at a number of institutions including University City in St. Louis. At her own home studio in Syracuse, she founded the Four Winds Summer School, a six-week Arts and Crafts school directed at women that came complete with childcare. She was a professor of art at Syracuse University until her death in 1929.

Her pursuit for the art education of women as a means of economic independence and self-fulfillment was what could be termed an even more “progressive” or “radical” one than Mary Louise McLaughlin’s, because she spoke from first-hand experience, and was passionately devoted to and personally entwined in what she referred to as “the domestic problem.” “The domestic problem” was the conflict, still so present nearly a century later in 1997, between one’s work, in this instance the pursuit of art, and one’s family. She wrote:

> And now what are we going to do about the domestic problem, those of us who have homes and children and husbands and still feel called to follow the lure of art? For four long weeks the editor [Robineau] has been struggling with mysteries of breakfast, lunch, dinner, sewing on buttons and darning, sweeping and dusting and otherwise trying to cling to some shreds of decency and order in her household while a two hundred and fifty dollar order stands, needing only a few hours to finish and suspended ideas in porcelain are fading in the dim distance and others are crying to be put into execution. This is a periodical discipline that never fails as a chastener and the periods are coming with momentarily...
lessening intervals. If only some good whole-souled woman with a love for art but talent only in the way of caring for a household and children would have the inspiration to take the home in charge and make it possible for the artist to devote her entire energies to doing something worth while in her art, heaven would come upon the earth, and, between you and me, the honor of the artistic achievement would belong to her almost as much as to the artist herself. It is because of the children and the home that we cannot and will not give up, that the woman can never hope to become as great in any line as man. Art is a jealous mistress and allows no consideration whatever to interfere with her supremacy. Such dreams can never be realized; but in the meantime where are gone all those good old fashioned cooks and helpers who grew to love the family and became indispensable and faithful friends of a lifetime? (Robineau, 1913, p. 1)

Adelaide Alsop Robineau was an esteemed ceramist and an ardent feminist who, like Mary Louise McLaughlin, was supremely unhappy with the state of education for women, especially in the arts. She felt that contemporary art education for women emphasized the finishing school aspect, wherein art was seen as a symbol of culture, refinement, and high social standing, to be used to obtain a husband from the upper social classes, which valued these attainments. The lack of educational and economic opportunity was a problem Robineau sought to rectify in her lifetime. If she did not completely correct this problem she did make headway and educated, through various mechanisms such as her periodicals, pottery residences, summer school, and professorship at Syracuse University, thousands of other women to continue her work.
Robineau's Early Life

Unfortunately, not much information can be found on the first portion of Robineau's life. Only after 1899, when she began to edit and publish *Keramic Studio* does one have a crystal clear picture, through her own writing and illustrations, of her work and development. One peek into those mysterious lost formative years in Robineau's education and artistic development comes from a small book she wrote and illustrated as a teenager called *Ye Princess Ming* (Figure 30), executed in approximately 1880. This book obviously was important to Robineau as she kept it throughout her life and left it to her daughter Elisabeth at her death. *Ye Princess Ming* would have been produced just at the time when the Arts and Crafts Movement was starting to take its grip on America, about four years after the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, when the Arts and Crafts style was beginning to "trickle down" to the wider public to use a term from the world of political science. The Robineau scholar Peg Weiss writes that this very early work "shows something of what young, talented girls anywhere in this country might have executed" (Weiss, 1981, p. 43). She continues,

Its literary and artistic conventions (and pretensions) suggest the channeling of artistic talent into a socially acceptable form. From a literary point of view, this tale of unhappy love and death is what one might expect from a teenager. Its use of floral imagery—narcissi, cyclamens, tulips—suggest parallels with the sentimental language of
Victorian greeting cards or, on a higher level, *Flora's Feast* by Walter Crane. The Oriental setting of *Ye Princess Ming* and its pictorial imagery register the same omnipresent fascination with the Far East. All in all, it is a product of its time. (Weiss, 1981, pp. 43-44)

Not only is *Ye Princess Ming* "a product of its time," but one could also hypothesize that it is a product of the beginnings of popular interest in the Arts and Crafts Movement, at least in terms of style. The interest in the flat, linear style of the East is a hallmark of the Arts and Crafts Movement as is an interest in studying from nature, as it seems the botanical specimens, the narcissi, cyclamens, and tulips, were. If Robineau (or "Alsop" as she was then) was not familiar with the theories or philosophy behind the Arts and Crafts Movement she was at least familiar with its stylistic tendencies.

If we do not know much about Robineau's work in the early years of her artistic production we do know some of the motivations behind it, motivations which also fueled the educational fervor of her later life. Her father, Charles Richard Alsop, was an inventor, engineer, and "sometimes steamboat captain" (Weiss, 1981, p. 6) who essentially bankrupted his family. This led his wife, Elisabeth, to leave with their three daughters, of whom Adelaide was the eldest. A very unconventional family life ensued, with Elisabeth and Charles never divorcing though living the majority of the time in separately established households, even through moves to different states. Weiss (1981) writes that Adelaide was "of a responsible and independent character, determined to learn a trade by which she could support herself and help provide for the education of her
sisters, Clarissa and Amie” (p. 6). A serendipitously given Christmas present of china paints and the necessary supplemental equipment provided the means by which Adelaide Alsop Robineau sought to establish an economic livelihood.

The trade by which Robineau sought to support herself and provide for the education of her younger sisters proved to be porcelain painting. From all the evidence available, Robineau appears to have been self-taught through technical books such as Mary Louise McLaughlin’s 1877 China Painting: A Practical Manual for the Use of Amateurs in the Decoration of Hard Porcelain or her 1884 Suggestions to China Painters. This is a likely assertion as she would refer to them again and again as suggested texts for the readers of Keramic Studio. Ye Princess Ming, though somewhat naive, attests to the fact that Robineau had artistic leanings, and she quickly assimilated the techniques of porcelain painting. Irene Sargent, a contemporary of Robineau’s and professor of art at Syracuse University, commented on this portion of Robineau’s life and artistic career,

At the beginning, as is often the case, necessity was the spur to action. The feminine art which Miss Alsop began to practice as an accomplishment, quickly provided for her a means of livelihood with which to meet severe reverses of fortune. (Sargent, 1906, p. 923)

China painting was a decorous, socially acceptable trade for women and the impact of the Arts and Crafts Movement made the “decorative arts” very popular indeed. This all added to the fruitful hopes of Robineau’s that her chosen path would be a financially
rewarding one. It should be stated here that Robineau was never able to afford herself more than a precarious livelihood from the sale of her work but relied on her teaching and her educational magazine to support herself and her family. (Sargent, 1906, p. 923; S. Robineau, 1929, p. 201)

This is where the story of Robineau’s devotion to art education and art pottery begins, as she becomes a china painting instructor at St. Mary’s Hall school in Faribault, Minnesota. She herself graduated from this school in 1884, the same year that McLaughlin published *Suggestions to China Painters*. Accounts differ as to exactly how long Robineau kept this position. Weiss says that Robineau kept the position for several years, (Weiss, 1981, p. 7) while archival accounts at the Syracuse University archives lead one to believe that Charles Alsop moved his family to Syracuse just a year after Robineau took up the position. This is further complicated by the fact that in 1888, “Addie B. Alsop, artist” shows up in the city of Syracuse directory on West Onondaga Street. (Robineau Archive)

According to Weiss, Charles Alsop moved his family back to Minnesota in 1889, a year after Adelaide established a private studio. (Weiss, 1981, p. 9) She taught china painting at her alma mater, St. Mary’s Hall school, until her mother moved herself and her three daughters back to Syracuse in 1896. Robineau took on some private students at the family home, which now housed her extended family, before deciding to go to New York City to further her studies in watercolor painting to aid her china painting.
The Influence of William Merritt Chase

In New York, Robineau studied with William Merritt Chase at his school at Shinnecock, Long Island. Chase (1849-1916) was a member of the American painting group called “The Ten American Painters” or “The Ten,” one of the most significant art organizations of its time. The Ten consisted of J. Alden Weir, Edward Simmons, John Twachtman, Robert Reid, Childe Hassam, Willard Metcalf, Thomas Dewing, Joseph DeCamp, Edmund Tarbell, and Frank Benson. (Boyle, 1974, p. 147) William Merritt Chase was asked to join after the death of John Twachtman. The Ten seceded from the Society of American Artists because of the mediocrity of the work of the Society’s members, work which was exhibited in massive exhibitions. The work of The Ten is characterized by a sympathy, both stylistic and thematic, with French Impressionist painters. (Boyle, 1974, p. 149) They subsequently became the leading figures in American Impressionism which, incidentally, had very strong ties with Mary Louise McLaughlin’s hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio and McMicken School of Design where she took art lessons. John Twachtman, the founder of The Ten, was born in Cincinnati in 1853 and studied art at the Ohio Mechanics Institute and the McMicken School of Design, where he was taught by Frank Duveneck in the 1870s, as was Mary Louise McLaughlin. (Boyle, 1974, p. 164) Hence, Robineau and
McLaughlin were linked by the educational connections of their teachers as well as through their own work.

The Americanist art historian Richard Boyle (1974) writes of Adelaide Alsop Robineau's teacher William Merritt Chase,

From the era of the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 to the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893, where six of his canvases were exhibited, Chase was the embodiment of nearly every artistic influence exerted upon American painters in his time: still lifes and portraits in the manner of the National Academy; the silvery tonalities of Whistler; the bituminous bluster of Munich; the seventeenth-century Spanish and the Dutch artists; the suavity of Manet and Sargent; the bright color and broken brushwork of impressionism; all of these he utilized at one time or another and sometimes, it seems, simultaneously as well. (p. 183)

He taught hundreds of students at the Art Students' League in New York (of later American Abstract Expressionist fame) as well as through private lessons. He not only taught his students about painting style, history, and technique but he cultivated in them a "Bohemianism" that has come to be associated with the lifestyle of the artist. Robineau was not immune to this influence and her New York apartment exhibited the flamboyant, theatrical trappings of the urban Bohemian artist such as draping, Eastern screens, and political posters. (Figure 31)

At Chase's school at Shinnecock, Long Island, the favored stylistic technique was that of Impressionism and students were told to use the natural world outdoors as their studio for *plein air* painting. (Boyle, 1974, p. 202) Chase's body of work from
Shinnecock such as *The Hall at Shinnecock* (Figure 32) from c. 1895 is more restrained and gentle or softer than the rest of his oeuvre, as seen when compared with *Park Bench*, (Figure 33) from 1890, which was executed in New York City.

Robineau proved to be a talented student; twice her watercolors, mainly of subjects from nature—landscapes and flowers—were accepted for exhibit at the National Academy, and her miniature paintings on ivory were shown at various exhibitions. Financial instability forced her to fall back on her pursuit of the production and sale of her china painting, of which Figure 34, from 1899, is an example, by which she could earn an independent, though modest, living. (Weiss, 1981, p. 7)

**In Pursuit of the Arts and Crafts Ideal**

Even at this early stage in her artistic career, Robineau was the personification of the Arts and Crafts ideology espoused by William Morris, creating beautiful, useful objects which allowed her to avoid any contact with a means of employment which was stultifying. She was also able to earn a living through her artwork and, though her economic rewards may have been modest, according to the great Arts and Crafts rhetoricians, the spiritual, emotional, and social rewards of her work were enormous. Also, it is important to reflect again upon the fact that though American theories of social decorum were less rigid than British ones, especially pertaining to women,
Robineau was engaged in an occupation which would have been seen as highly suitable or appropriate for a woman. Peg Weiss (1981) writes of the economic demand for decorative arts, including art pottery, for the tastefully decorated home of the era:

Robineau had begun her career at an auspicious moment when both supply and demand were increasing rapidly and equally. Talented, industrious, disciplined, and blessed with a rare aesthetic genius, Adelaide Alsop was a woman in the right place at the right time. (p. 9)

Robineau also exemplified the ideal of the Arts and Crafts that salvation, in a non-religious sense of the word, comes through education. In the last years of the 1890s Robineau became increasingly concerned with the low technical quality of the china painting which was being done around her and she endeavored to start an educational periodical which would address the many stylistic, technical, and later, social issues which would effect the art of china painting and ceramics. She and her partner in this endeavor, who became her husband, wanted to publish a “purely technical magazine with designs and articles by the best artists in the country” (S. Robineau, 1929, p. 203). In 1899, Adelaide Alsop and her colleague in the idea behind this technical ceramic magazine, Samuel Robineau, were married. Weiss (1981) writes,

Within days of their marriage, the firm of Keramic Studio Publishing Company was incorporated in New York City with Samuel Robineau as president, Adelaide Robineau as editor, and a Syracuse friend of the Alsops, George H. Clark, as manager. Anna B. Leonard, a well-known china decorator [who was an original member of McLaughlin’s Cincinnati Art Pottery Club], served as a fourth member
of the corporation and as co-editor until 1903. Samuel invested all the capital that was necessary, $1,000, "to make a beginning," and the first number of Keramic Studio appeared in May 1899. (p. 9)

Keramic Studio and the Periodical Craze
of the American Arts and Crafts Movement

The birth of Robineau's Keramic Studio was both timely and well-needed. It was one of the first American magazines of the Arts and Crafts Movement in what would later become very swollen ranks which included such titles as Art Amateur, Art Interchange, House and Garden, and House Beautiful. Efland (1990) notes that periodicals or journals played a "unique" and important role in the American Arts and Crafts Movement. He writes,

Because they could be distributed by mail, [periodicals] played a more obvious educational role than in European countries where distances were much smaller. By the late 1890s photomechanical reproduction had become a technical possibility. (p. 155)

Taylor (1966) notes that the techniques of national advertising developed "concurrently" with the rise of American art pottery. (p. 24) Clearly, the many magazines, as well as brochures and catalogs, generated by the American Arts and Crafts Movement account for this correlation or parallel development. Keramic Studio is the perfect illustration of this point, as its back pages were filled with every variety of advertisement from class offerings to studio equipment.
Keramic Studio was a national monthly magazine and one of the few early periodicals devoted to one media. It was beautifully designed from cover to cover and utilized the most advanced techniques for reproduction available as its editor sought to provide her readers with a treasure trove of images for inspiration. Its content ranged from patterns from leading porcelain painters such as Mary Louise McLaughlin and Robineau herself, which could be copied onto china, to specific technical information, advertisements for ceramic classes and products, information on current ceramic exhibitions, nurturing words from the female editor, as well as an abundance of very high quality images of ceramics, many photographic—all revolving around the singular theme of the ceramic arts.

Most other magazines at this time dealt with stylistic and theoretical issues of the Arts and Crafts Movement in a general way, pertaining to multiple media or to social issues. In 1898, the Arts and Crafts magazine Brush and Pencil began to be published. Brush and Pencil was the journal of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society. This society included such prominent figures of the progressive era of social movements as Hull House founders Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr. They were frequent contributors to the magazine, as was the historian Oscar Lovell Triggs who founded the Industrial Art League in 1899, the same year Keramic Studio was founded, and the Morris Society in 1901. He also wrote the first history of the Arts and Crafts Movement, entitled Chapters in the History of the Arts.
and Crafts Movement (1902). 1902 also saw the birth of Handicraft, the publication of the largest craft organization in the country, the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts. Fueled by contributors such as Harvard’s Charles Eliot Norton, it was devoted to social and cultural issues and had a fairly elevated theoretical and intellectual standard.

In 1901, one of Robineau’s fellow Syracuse artists Gustav Stickley began to publish The Craftsman, which became one of the most visible and wide-ranging journals of the American Arts and Crafts Movement. Stickley was raised in a family of furniture makers and began to work in the “craftsman” style of the Arts and Crafts Movement after visiting England where he saw, first hand, the products of this movement as well as some of the leading British Arts and Crafts theoreticians. (Lucie-Smith, 1981, p. 230) Stickley tried to incorporate the British Socialist aspects of the Arts and Crafts Movement into his business, even at one point creating a working farm and collective community of craftspeople. Alas, none of these experiments worked though Stickley’s furniture business was extremely successful and hence the “craftsman style,” the aesthetic of the Arts and Crafts Movement, spread from coast to coast.

The Craftsman magazine was, in the words of the historian Edward Lucie-Smith (1981), “Stickley’s chief instrument of propaganda” (p. 230). It began leaning quite left with an issue entirely dedicated to William Morris, which included his Socialist theories, but gradually became more of a generalist Arts and Crafts
magazine though it never lost its Socialist flavor. Lucie-Smith (1981) writes,

[The Craftsman] covered everything and anything—art, architecture, poetry, drama, politics, economics, history, gardening, city planning and education. It printed stories by Tolstoy and Gorky; poems by Robert Frost and Carl Sandburg, and offered practical instruction in weaving, coppersmithing, furniture construction and leatherwork. It tackled the subject of women's liberation—one article was entitled "Is There Sex Distinction in Art? The Attitude of the Critic Towards Women's Exhibits." It also promoted an interest in the crafts produced by ethnic minorities within America, especially those of the American Indian. Though its circulation never rose very much above 20,000, The Craftsman tackled nearly all the issues which a craft-oriented public today might consider interesting and important. (p. 231)

Irene Sargent, friend, colleague, and supporter of Robineau, was a frequent contributor to The Craftsman. The following excerpt from a 1901 article Sargent wrote for The Craftsman illustrates the Socialist sentiment of the Arts and Crafts Movement which pervaded the magazine:

What is to be expected from a man, the play of whose intelligence is confined to the endless repetition of a single mental process, and whose physical exercise is restricted to the working of certain unvarying muscles? He will develop morbidly, and his mind will offer a resting place for destructive and chaotic ideas. . . . Being not without personal claims to dignity and power, he becomes an insurrectionist, perhaps even a pervert and a criminal. (quoted in Lears, 1981, p. 71)

Like Robineau, Stickley often contributed to his own magazine. In 1904 he wrote an article which did for the American Arts and Crafts
Movement what Walter Benjamin's seminal "Art in the Age of Reproduction" did for the Modernist Era. The following excerpt is from Stickley's "The Use and Abuse of Machinery, and its Relation to the Arts and Crafts" (1906):

[All art] must spring in the first place from the common needs of the common people. Merely to make things by hand implies no advance in the development of an art that shall make its own place in world-history as a true record of the thought and life of this age, any more than the making of them after "original designs" implies that these designs are the outgrowth of thought based upon that need which is the root of inspiration to the true craftsman, as well as upon his personal desire for self-expression. (p. 205)

Stickley's *The Craftsman* has been dealt with a little more extensively than the other periodicals to underscore the contrast with Robineau's *Keramic Studio*. Stickley infused his magazine regularly with the theoretical and intellectual dogma of the Arts and Crafts Movement, especially as it was known in England. It did, as Lucie-Smith noted, progressively widen its scope for the broader public but it could never completely rid itself of the distinct flavor of propaganda or intellectual dogma. *Keramic Studio* offered pragmatic information and homespun advice to designers and teachers, as well as hobbyists, taking the Arts and Crafts Movement out of the hands of orators and into those of the practitioners. The theoretical aspects of the Arts and Crafts Movement were important but only when closely connected to pragmatics ranging from technical processes to the child-rearing plights of female ceramists. Efland (1990) writes of *Keramic Studio*,

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As women studied the designs and patterns for painting, they also acquired the aesthetic principles of the arts-and-crafts movement; and since many of these women were also art teachers, these principles found their way into the classroom. (p. 154)

Hence, Robineau’s Keramic Studio, in antithesis to The Craftsman, taught through practical application rather than through dogma.

Robineau’s Role as Editor of Keramic Studio

It is important to follow up on a statement made earlier—that Keramic Studio offered its readers homespun advice. While The Craftsman always had an undercurrent of Socialism, Keramic Studio always maintained an warm, nurturing undercurrent. Robineau used her life, in all of its facets, from her ceramic work to her concerns as a mother, to instruct and inspire her readers and students and to provide some sort of long-distance identification or relationship between the editor and her readers. Weiss (1981) writes,

Robineau’s editorial stance was direct and personal. Notes concerning the travels or adventures of her colleagues were frequently published in the magazine. Indeed, the pages of Keramic Studio announced most of the major events of the Robineau’s personal lives, including the birth of the first Robineau child, a son, Maurice, in 1900. This personal touch gave the magazine an appealing warmth and special character so that, while the subscriptions never rose much above 6,000, this figure came to represent an intensely loyal readership. (p. 12)
The following editorial from the June, 1901 issue of Keramic Studio exemplifies this point perfectly:

Summer is at hand—the time for storing honey for the winter’s use. Stop being the busy ant, drudging away at your china painting, which by June becomes as stale, unprofitable and wearisome as rolling grains of sand up an ant hill, and become, instead, the busy bee, flitting from flower to flower and, seeming to idle away the sunny hours, yet spending the most profitable time of the year, gaining strength and inspiration and success for the future. Even to lie in a hammock and listen to the twittering of the birds and the rustle of the leaves and all the sounds of growing life about you, and to dream,—to dream and wake with that feeling of refreshment and belief in one’s own possibilities, is invaluable to your winter’s work. Often the best inspirations for designing come to one in this half-dreaming state, when the objective mind, loaded with its burden of heavy facts, is resting and the subjective mind has a chance to run riot and display all the unconsciously gathered honey of former hours. (Robineau, 1901, June, p. 1)¹

This monthly bit of prosaic advice would happily sit next to an article on the debate between teaching students by having them create designs which were drawn from nature or were conventionalized designs in which precise technical information is given on each method. (Robineau, 1901, March, pp. 227-28) Robineau could offer an opinion such as the following: “Conventional design is greatly misunderstood by the majority of teachers. It does not have to be geometrical nor of historic ornament” (Robineau, 1901, March, p. 227). And then she could return to her nurturing

¹ Robineau, like McLaughlin before her, is making reference to Isaac Watts’s admonition to children. “How doth the little busy bee.”
and personal advice to end the article, "Teach them [your students] to decorate, cultivate a taste for the artistic and beautiful and incidentally do serious studying yourself, otherwise you cannot teach" (Robineau, 1901, March, p. 228). This passage also underscores the idea that part of the mission of the magazine was to instruct those who taught others—-to improve not only the quality of design and production in the ceramic arts but also the instruction being received.

Another important aspect of the pedagogical side of Robineau’s Keramic Studio has to do with her chosen method of instruction. Adelaide Alsop Robineau can be linked very strongly in teaching sentiment with Mary Louise McLaughlin because of her insistence, as McLaughlin’s before her, first, on the importance of learning strong drawing skills and second, the necessity of drawing one’s subject from nature. Robineau was not against conventional design which would become a hallmark of the pottery of the American Arts and Crafts Movement but felt that the student or artist must first learn to observe closely and draw from nature and only then, after a thorough visual knowledge of the subjects being drawn was obtained, could the student or designer stylize or conventionalize. Again and again, she entreats her readers to “study the growth of the plants, the formation of the leaf, stem, bud and flower” (Robineau, 1901, July, p. 50), or to “sketch your flower in the open air, then in the house against different colored grounds, painting not what you know but what you see” (Robineau, 1901, June, p. 1). And,
On rainy days, take your careful drawings— we hope you have made drawings of separate leaves and petals, stamens and pistils, calyx and corolla of the flower; or, if an insect, head, antennae, legs, body, etc., etc.,--decide on the size and shape of your design, or if a border, the width and the spacing, and take your summer's pleasure in arranging and re-arranging motifs until you have found a combination that seems to you perfect, i.e., which would be spoiled by adding to it or taking from it one line or form. (Robineau, 1901, June, p. 1)

Always, these statements were bolstered by examples of the artist's own work, such as her studies of the potato blossom plant as drawn directly and naturalistically from nature (Figure 35) and the same potato blossoms, now conventionalized, as a design motif for a cup and plates, (Figure 36) which are from June 1902. Robineau's work which appeared in the pages of Keramic Studio would show the same evolution which she entreated in her readers. She moved from functional china pieces painted with naturalistically painted flowers to works covered in conventional designs though which she would earn her laurels in the history of the American art pottery movement and ceramic history.

This information also shows that she was keenly aware of issues in design theory, both historically and contemporaneously. The ceramic historian Martin Eidelberg writes of Robineau,

The inspiration of nature, one of the major tenets of nineteenth-century design theory, remained a constant factor in her work over the next decade. One can imagine that certain doctrines she later reiterated in the pages of Keramic Studio were part of her practice early one. For example, she stressed the importance of sketching directly from nature and studying the separate parts of
the plant—the leaf, the blossom, the bud—to understand better the plant's anatomy. This was a standard practice in Reform theory which can be traced to Christopher Dresser's portion of Owen Jones' *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856), a book which she frequently used at this time, and it could be found in other English manuals, as well as in Continental ones. (quoted in Weiss, 1981, p. 46)

By the time we can trace her designs, after 1899, she had mainly turned away from realistically rendered natural forms in favor of more conventionalized design popularized by the Arts and Crafts Movement, though she was also very interested in historical styles. In fact, the very first design lessons published in *Keramic Studio* had to do with a survey of historic ornament from the Egyptian period onwards. (Figures 37-38) The reader should again note that she illustrated not just the design sketch but how the specific design could be applied to a particular object, in this case a stein.

Despite the fact that historicism was theoretically anathema to the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement, it filled chapters in design texts by Jones, Dresser, and Racinet, which were used by a large number of Arts and Crafts designers including Robineau. In fact, her Egyptian historiated designs were not, of course, drawn from nature, but from Racinet's own Egyptian designs from his text, *Polychromatic Ornament* from 1873. (Figure 39) All of the texts also dealt with tempering of historic ornament through increased rendering skills derived from the close observation of nature.
Robineau stressed the decorum involved in using historicist designs, and the appropriateness of certain motifs on certain forms—an idea straight out of the writings of Ruskin and Morris, as well as Mary Louise McLaughlin. In an article which extolled the virtues of the border design through history, beginning with Italian Renaissance examples and ending with those from the Far East, Robineau wrote:

Decoration or ornament have [sic] been too much accustomed to consider as accidental or unrelated addition to an object, not as an essential expression and organic part of it; not as a beauty which may satisfy us in simple line, form, or proposition, combined with fitness to purpose, even without any surface ornament at all. The more we are able to keep before our minds the place and purpose of any design we have to make, the more we realize the conditions of use and service of which it must be a part, as well as the capacities of the material of which it is made; the more we understand its constructive necessities, the more successful our design is likely to be, and the nearer we shall approach to bridging the unfortunate gulf which too often exists between the designer and the craftsman. (Robineau, 1901, April, p. 1)

This statement very clearly outlines Robineau’s educational stance and the last sentence about “bridging the unfortunate gulf . . . between the designer and the craftsman” is really where the story of Robineau as a world class studio ceramicist begins, but this will be discussed later.
The Influence of Arthur Wesley Dow

The strong influence of Arthur Wesley Dow could be found consistently in the pages of Keramic Studio in its first few years and, subsequently, in Robineau's own work. Robineau had attended a class of Dow's when in New York (Weiss, 1981, p. 84) and she recommended his text Composition, to her readers in July 1900. He appeared no less than three times in 1901, in April, May, and August, the year he was giving fortnightly lectures and critiques in composition and design to the New York Society of Keramic Arts.

Dow was the purveyor of what he termed "synthetic" art education, which was based on the elements of design, which he felt linked art throughout all time and all cultures. Efland (1990) writes, "For Dow the purpose of the study of design was to enable the student of art to understand the basis of beauty" (p. 218). His theories were inspired in part by Ernst Fenollosa, director of the Japanese collections at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, which Dow had studied for his text Composition. Dow cut a formidable figure in the discipline of art education, striving to overhaul "modern" teaching methods. He taught "synthetic" art education in Boston, as well as life drawing, painting, design, art education classes, and an art course for kindergarten teachers. (Efland, 1990, p. 178) Like Adelaide Alsop Robineau later, Dow founded a summer school in Ipswich, Massachusetts in 1900, for “the purpose of obtaining a
better knowledge of the relation of art to handicraft and Manual training” (quoted in Efland, 1990, p. 178) He was made the Director of Fine Arts at Teachers College at Columbia University, arriving, as noted by Efland (1990) at the same time as John Dewey, 1904. (p. 178)

His ideas on the arts and design theory in general were greatly comparable with the Arts and Crafts Movement such as the idea of the importance of making beautiful things of everyday life. Dow’s thoughts on this were specifically inspired by the Eastern art which he studied for Composition, such as Japanese and Korean household utensils. He felt, as did Ruskin, Morris, and the subjects of this study, Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau, that beautiful objects could elevate one’s self and that, accordingly, one must teach one’s self to pick out that which is beautiful and discard the bad. They all also stressed the importance of drawing whenever possible from objects themselves—to draw and hence get intimately acquainted with the beauty of the object and to transpose that beauty, through one’s design, onto everyday life. With such sympathetic sentiments on arts education, it is no wonder that Robineau often highlighted the work of Arthur Wesley Dow in the pages of Keramic Studio, further spreading the ideology of the Arts and Crafts Movement, but through practical application of ideas rather than rhetoric.
**Keramic Studio: Conclusions**

*Keramic Studio* afforded the contemporary reader information on every aspect of the ceramic arts, from social issues pertinent to the practitioner, to practical applications of design and educational theory, to actual traceable design patterns. Woven in and out of all of this information was an obvious concern for the plight of the woman practitioner. As discussed earlier, Robineau addressed such topics as the constant struggle between one's family and one's work, the problem of finding affordable studio space. She even went so far as to write to kiln manufacturers to beseech them to make smaller and less expensive models so that women could afford to have them in private studios in their homes. In short, Robineau's *Keramic Studio* was a shining beacon of positive reinforcement for the legion of American women practicing the ceramic arts. Its readership was so loyal that it was able to continue publishing even though the difficult years of World War I when many other arts publications and organizations failed.

Weiss (1981) notes that after World War I *Keramic Studio* began to show its age and a gulf widened between what was highlighted between its covers and newer trends in the modernist design world. It was publicly criticized for not keeping its readers abreast of more modern movements in design. Peg Weiss (1981) writes,
The "modernistic," as Adelaide called it, crept only slowly into the pages of Keramic Studio, a bit uncomfortably "Deco" in the midst of the traditional orange blossoms and violets of the older-generation china painting designs. (p. 12)

The following quote is Robineau's defense of Keramic Studio which was written to Frederick Hurton Rhead (1880-1942), a critic and one of the leading figures in the field of American art pottery:

We let the new movements filter through in the influence shown in the work of our leading decorators, so that when it finally reaches our public it is sufficiently diluted and pre-digested to be accepted without too great a shock to the uninitiated. (Robineau, 1917, pp. 1-2)

In 1924, when Robineau was deep in her own studio work and teaching at Syracuse University she changed the name of Keramic Studio to Design-Keramic Studio and finally simply to Design to reflect a more modern sentiment. In 1928, Robineau openly invited applications for the position of editor of the magazine which is still in existence today, although the magazine was sold upon Adelaide Alsop Robineau's death in 1929.

"From Clay to Finish": The Studio Work of Adelaide Alsop Robineau

From the beginning of Keramic Studio, Adelaide Alsop Robineau contributed designs or patterns of her own which could be copied or modified by her readers onto porcelain blanks. (Figures 40-41) Her own method of working at this time consisted of the same: naturalistic patterns painted onto pre-produced forms. In 1900 she
exhibited a group of her painted porcelains in the Paris Exposition. (Figure 42) This group of works shows her a stylistic transition between naturalistic drawing, in this case of the botanical specimens so favored by American china painters of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, to the application of conventionalized designs. The forms which she chose to embellish with these designs are neo-Eastern in flavor--simpler and quietly graceful--slightly more refined than high Victorian ones which she often highlighted in *Keramic Studio*. The designs themselves are rendered in a simplified manner using a sinuous, graceful contour line, which is reminiscent of both the designs in Art Nouveau publications such as Eugene Grasset’s *Plants and Their Ornamental Application* (1897) (Figure 43) and in the pages of Dow’s *Composition* (1899). (Figure 44) The importance of theories behind conventionalized designs were obviously important to Robineau’s public or readers as we saw in the previous section specifically on *Keramic Studio*, but were evidently quite important to her own work as the following very engaged and passionate quote will attest,

The conventional in decoration is an effort to express symbolically a part of the abstract truths of the beauty of nature. One who aspires to the naturalistic can never approach the grand total of the truths in nature, that is the work of the Creator alone. (Robineau, 1912, February, p. 12)

By late 1900 or early 1901, while still publishing ready-made design patterns for china painters in the pages of *Keramic Studio*, Robineau expressed her feelings regarding the formal limitations...
imposed on decorators who used pre-made forms. She decided to attempt the production of ceramic works in the true style of the Arts and Crafts Movement— from clay to finish— doing away with any notion of division of labor. This was not a terribly uncommon occurrence among very serious china painters and, in terms of artistic progression, the move to the creation of the body upon which one designs is a logical one. Taylor (1966) writes,

Initially a genteel diversion limited to mere surface decoration, china painting became for many a passion that embraced the potter’s art itself. For such deeply committed amateurs pottery became nothing less than the ultimate synthesis of form, ornament, color, and glaze that resulted in a coherent artistic statement. Either ignored or snubbed as the pursuit of hobbyists, china painting has yet to be accorded serious study in terms of its influence in American decorative arts. (p. 12)

There is the possibility that Robineau moved to the creation of the complete ceramic form, the Gesamtkunstwerk in clay, as it were, to prove herself an artist in another media which was seen as artistically superior to “mere” china painting. An unpublished manuscript by Robineau’s husband Samuel, edited by the Everson Museum’s Carlton Atherton in 1935, includes an account of Robineau’s first foray into “clay to finish” ceramics. Samuel Robineau reminisced about his wife’s move into the creation of the complete ceramic form, and said “Mrs. R. did not like china painting and had always wanted to do better” (quoted in Atherton, 1935). The reader needs to take into account the fact that Peg Weiss (1981) takes issue with Samuel Robineau’s memory or his personal account of things on
a number of points (p. 205). This student finds it hard to believe that Adelaide Alsop Robineau could remain so dedicated to educating women in the art of china painting through her various means without liking it, let alone loving it.

It seems more logical that Robineau's shift from china painting or surface design to the creation of the entire ceramic form was as natural and straightforward a movement as Pablo Picasso switching from two- to three-dimensional work in his synthetic Cubist phase: exploration dictated direction. By 1901 she was aware of and very interested in the ceramic work of European studios as well as the pioneering American work in porcelain of Mary Louise McLaughlin. The May 1901 issue of Keramic Studio contained a substantial article on Denmark's Royal Copenhagen porcelain (Figure 45) which was a follow-up on a mention of the studio's work exactly one year earlier. Of these porcelains Robineau wrote,

The principle which has always guided the Danish artists and explains their phenomenal success is that the artist must conform the decoration to the material which he uses, so that the decoration and material must make one. As Mr. Dalgas [the art director of the Royal Copenhagen Manufactory] expresses it in his letter to us, porcelain is the refined, beautiful female ceramic body, which suffers no raw or violent treatment, as its peculiarities are grace and distinction. (Robineau 1901, May, p. 10)

Robineau goes on to note the importance of conventionalization of design for a true marriage of form and surface decoration. (Robineau, 1901, May, p. 11)
One might entertain the hypothesis that porcelain was of tremendous interest to Robineau because it was a suitable and socially decorous transition from china painting. Chapter 2 discussed china painting as a suitable pastime for women, an occupation causing few sociocultural ripples as opposed to stained glass or stone work which were considered unsuitable for women. Robineau’s article recounting the statement of the art director of the Royal Copenhagen factory that assigns porcelain to the female gender. He uses the words “refined,” “beautiful,” “grace,” and “distinction” to describe the very “female” medium of porcelain. Robineau may have been looking out for her readers who were looking for a socially acceptable way to carry their porcelain painting endeavors further. The rhetoric of the Royal Copenhagen factory may have functioned as some sort of overt or covert justification for porcelain-making as a female endeavor.

Robineau made another point in her article that would draw the notice of the American art pottery establishment, especially in Cincinnati. She wrote,

It is to be noticed that if artistic faïences have attained a rare degree of excellence in this country . . . gres [stoneware] remains very little used, and porcelain manufacture has been confined to the making of ordinary tableware. Europeans have thus far the monopoly of artistic porcelain, but there is no reason why it should be so, as we have in this country large deposits of kaolin and materials necessary for the manufacture of the best porcelain. We hear so much about the founding of schools of pottery, and there is among our decorators such a strong feeling that the time has come to give up
the old styles of decoration and turn to more serious and thorough work, that undoubtedly the next generation will see the birth of artistic porcelain manufacturies on this side of the Atlantic. (Robineau, 1901, May, p. 11)

The July, 1901 issue of Keramic Studio printed the following extracts from a letter written to Robineau from Mary Louise McLaughlin, some of which we have seen in Chapter 6:

In the KERAMIC STUDIO sent me, in the article on the Copenhagen Ware, the statement is made that no attempt has been made in America to produce anything in the way of porcelain except table ware. This is no longer true, because I have been producing porcelain of a purely decorative character for some time. It is now three years since I began a series of experiments in porcelain. The work is carried on at my home in a small kiln erected in my garden. The experiments have been carried on entirely by myself and, naturally, with many drawbacks resulting from inexperience, lack of proper facilities, etc. At last, however, I have settled upon bodies and glazes which will suit my purpose. The ware is a true porcelain, hard and translucent. It has been compared to soft porcelain, and probably does resemble the old Chinese soft paste more than anything else, although both the ware and the glaze are hard, being fired at a temperature of about 2,300° F. I have now an exhibit of twenty-seven pieces at Buffalo. (McLaughlin, 1901, p. 1)

Robineau had been aware of the china painting and texts of McLaughlin but seems to have been unaware of her experiments in porcelain. This letter assured that Robineau would follow the lead of one of her own, a female china painter who sought to earn a livelihood through her studio work and teaching, and who held her own life as an example to other women trying to do the same. Robineau assured her readers that they would soon see examples of
McLaughlin’s experiments in porcelain. McLaughlin’s work created a pattern which Robineau obviously used, though it is probably safe to say that she improved upon it.

Incidentally, two other articles in this July 1901 edition of Keramic Studio are worth mentioning. The first is another article on Danish ceramics, but this time the work of the Bing & Grondahl studio is featured. (Figure 46) Robineau described the work as follows:

The artists of the Royal Manufactory are painters. Bing & Grondahl are sculptors. Here the paste is everywhere incised, broken by open work decoration, thrown in powerful and striking shapes, and the color is only used to complete the decoration. (Robineau, 1901, July, p. 60)

This same description would eventually be able to describe the porcelain works of the women who wrote this piece. Robineau also goes on to mention the success of the conventionalized designs on these works that are not mere embellishment to the forms, but complete them. (Robineau, 1901, July, pp. 60-61) Again, this same description would later very aptly describe her own work.

In fact, the second article of note in this edition of Keramic Studio deals with Robineau’s own increasing interest in conventionalization of design. (Robineau, 1901, July, pp. 52-57) Robineau devotes six pages, quite long for her journal, to the conventionalization of the tulip. She conventionalizes the tulip from all angles and creates designs for a variety of different vessels including teacups, saucers, plates, and tiles, not to mention generic borders.
The contemporary student has the advantage of seeing that the July, 1901 issue of *Keramic Studio* was a seminal one for Robineau and what would become her art pottery followers. It contained information on everything, stylistically, which would be important to her own studio work in the ensuing years. The serendipitous juxtaposition of articles coincided with her very own first foray into the creation of ceramics from “clay to finish.” This experience resulted from a studio visit she made to the pottery of a colleague of hers, Charles Volkmar. Her husband, Samuel, recounted the event of his wife’s first venture into pottery rather than porcelain painting in an undated letter to Carlton Atherton:

...one day she went to visit her friend Chas. Volkmar in his little pottery in New Jersey, and there she took a little clay and made by hand a shapeless little cup, then decorated it with three carved beetles on the edge. Volkmar baked it and later in her own pottery Mrs. R. marked the date 1901, her initials A. R. and glazed the cup in blue and beetles in white. I have the piece yet, it is very interesting not only because of the date, the first piece of pottery she made, but because in that decoration of beetles she instinctively and unknowingly showed the kind of carved decoration in relief which she was going to use later on. (S. Robineau, 1935) (Figure 47)

In 1902 Robineau began to receive manuscripts in French for *Keramic Studio* on the making of high-fire porcelain, or “grand feu,” from Taxile Doat who came from the Sèvres Porcelain Factory in France. Being French, Samuel Robineau translated the series of articles which appeared through 1903 beginning in May. The Robineaus, under the auspices of Keramic Studio Publishing,
eventually published this series of translated articles in a book of 1905 entitled *Grand Feu Ceramics*. With Doat’s recipes in hand, Robineau enrolled in a summer ceramics course in Alfred, New York under Charles Binns, as did many other china painters who were beginning to get discouraged by what was perceived as the falling prestige of the medium of china painting as well as its artistic limitations. At the same time Robineau set up a porcelain studio in her own home in Syracuse and began to fire her own porcelains. Her first work was very much in emulation of the Danish Art Nouveau porcelains of the Royal Copenhagen and Bing & Grondahl factories in their use of stylized or conventionalized forms, sinuous contours, and sculpted surfaces.

Peg Weiss (1981) feels that local developments in the Syracuse Arts and Crafts establishment must have also been a strong influence on Robineau’s work at this time. (p. 15) The United Crafts Workshop of Gustav Stickley held unparalleled cultural activities for the public regarding the Arts and Crafts Movement, including lectures, public readings, book reviews, and widely acclaimed exhibitions. In March 1903, a highly influential exhibition opened at the gallery of the United Crafts Workshop in Syracuse in which the works seen were selected “according to the law set by the prototype of the craftsman, William Morris” (Weiss, 1981, p. 15). Works from many international Arts and Crafts designers were exhibited, including objects selected by Robineau from Bing & Grondahl’s *L’art nouveau* shop in Paris. (Robineau Archive) Seven vases of Robineau’s were
also exhibited. (Figure 48) These pieces, which Robineau called “experimental,” are typical of what would become her hallmark style, but much simpler. The forms were generally eastern in origin and were treated with highly conventionalized incised designs that in some instances approached pure abstraction. The design does not yet wrap completely around the vessel, a trait she advocated in the early pages of Keramic Studio, but is contained within or forms vertical or horizontal banding which would become one of the trademarks of Arts and Crafts pottery in America. The forms were covered in matte glazes of rich, earthy hues such as mossy greens, saturated golds, and sea blues. Naturally, this exhibition, and Robineau’s works, were featured in the June, 1903 issue of Keramic Studio.

After this exhibition Robineau began to experiment with very high-fire crystalline glazes. One of the unexpected off-shoots of this experimentation would be the founding of a women’s Arts and Crafts summer school, discussed in detail shortly. An amusing anecdote from Samuel Robineau’s unpublished memoirs recounts the incidents of Robineau’s experimentation in high fire porcelains which caused her to move and set up a large-scale studio and grounds which would eventually become a sort of educational campus for women. Robineau insisted on high-fire experimentation in their small rented house, aware as she was that Mary Louise McLaughlin was producing high fire porcelains in her garden in Cincinnati. In what was her last firing in this location smoke, billowed up from the floorboards, from
her kiln downstairs and, thinking the house was on fire, they kept
dousing the floorboards with water but Robineau kept firing this
batch of vessels. (S. Robineau, 1935)

Robineau and “Four Winds” House

This little “mishap” resulted in the purchase of land for a
private studio on a hill overlooking Syracuse in a location which was
oddly very similar in placement to Mary Louise McLaughlin’s studio
and Maria Longworth Nichols’s Rookwood studios which both
overlooked Cincinnati. This could very well stand as an affirmation
of the importance of the Arts and Crafts lifestyle as an integral and
even equal partner to work produced. The Robineaus first built a
studio on this hillside, in late 1903, and then in 1904 Adelaide Alsop
Robineau and an architect friend, Catherine Budd, whom Robineau
had met at William Merritt Chase’s Shinnecock school, designed a
house which was baptized “Four Winds.” (Shrimpton, 1910, p. 59)
(Figure 49) Both buildings still stand on what is now “Robineau
Road” in Syracuse.

“Four Winds” cottage seems to have been something of the
American equivalent to William Morris’s “Red House” situated just
outside of London or his Oxfordshire Kelmscott Manor. It was
designed in the style of the English cottage so favored by the Arts
and Crafts Movement in England. Examples and illustrations of these
cottages and the ideals behind their formal properties were
frequently featured in the pages of Stickley’s *Craftsman*. Weiss (1981) describes the interior (Figures 50-51) of Four Winds House as follows:

The interior of the house was distinguished by its dark oak paneling, the geometrical architectural detail reminiscent of Voysey and Mackintosh [both associated with the Arts and Crafts of the British Isles], ceramic fireplace tiles designed by Robineau herself and ubiquitous inglenook. A raised platform at one end of the dining room provided the setting for a magnificent built-in desk and perhaps suggested the importance of its use as an office space, yet in fact, it formed an ideal stage for impromptu performances by the Robineau children, two of whom did later become professional performers. (pp. 16-17)

The oak paneling and the inglenook can both be found at Morris’s two houses, Red House and Kelmscott Manor; Kelmscott also has a built-in desk.

The studio of Four Winds was equally ambitious. It had three floors with the kilns on the first, the pottery on the second, and the entire third floor devoted to a children’s playroom. (Shrimpton, 1910, p. 59) Robineau could work while the children played very near, pragmatically tackling her own “domestic problem.” Like Morris’s dwellings in England, Robineau’s Four Winds was of popular interest and it was featured in 1910 articles in *House Beautiful* and *American Homes and Gardens*. Grace Wickham Curran wrote the *American Homes and Gardens* article, which dwelled on the very “modern” domestic life of Robineau. (Curran, 1910, p. 364) The word “modern” seems to be a euphemism for the word “radical,” to placate the
magazine's more conventional readers. What is very important is the fact that Robineau used herself as an example to other women in every respect--she went beyond the realm of using her work and her own practical ideas in the arts as models for other women, and displayed her own then-unconventional life as a wife and mother, to the thousands of women periodical readers who would never have dreamed that they could run a home, be the "angel of the hearth," to use Ruskin's phrase, and earn a financial livelihood through the arts. She educated through example, and her own life in the arts as a wife and mother was the model.

Further Studio Developments

According to Robineau's daughter Elisabeth Lineaweaver who granted the historian Peg Weiss several interviews, Samuel was quite important to his wife's success. (Weiss, 1981, p. 206) He often acted as her business manager and firing technician, and with his help, Robineau was able to continue her prolific experimentation into the composition of a porcelain body and the creation of a vessel which would perfectly complement one of her unusual glazes and surface treatment.

Robineau exhibited and sold her works across the United States and through the national circulation of Keramic Studio but it was not until 1904 that she showcased her work to an international public which she did at the St. Louis Exposition. She exhibited the same
body of work which she earlier showed at the Annual Spring Exhibition of the New York Arts and Crafts Society, featured in the May 1904 issue of Keramic Studio. (Figure 52) In 1905 her Eastern-inspired porcelains form with complicated glazes and carved designs (Figure 53) were sold at the Macbeth Gallery in New York as well as at Tiffany & Company. (Robineau Archive)

By 1905, the Robineau's stylistic hallmarks were nearly fully evident. Her forms were elegant, graceful, and refined and she began to consistently carve into the surface of these forms conventionalized animals and flowers, recalling her earlier designs for china painting. Peg Weiss (1981) writes,

While her earlier designs for china decoration did rely heavily on rhythmically structured flowers woven into entrelac bands and symbolist heads with coiling coiffures, these elements are conspicuously absent from her carved porcelains. Rather, Robineau’s carved designs show a marked tendency toward vertical reality to banded, nonrhythmical designs. (p. 81)

Her work was certainly influenced by the organic qualities in nature and the fluid style of the Art Nouveau but it became decidedly more rigid and modern as her style progressed. After 1905 her work very closely followed the stylistic developments of the pottery of the British Arts and Crafts Movement with its sobriety of vessel and decoration, simple forms and conventionalized designs conceived with a strong vertical axis (which echoed the process of throwing the form) or restrained within the confines of horizontal bands. The transitional work Water Lily Vase, c. 1905-09, shows a simple form
covered with Robineau's hallmark crystalline glazes. (Figure 54) The rim of the vase is covered in a horizontal band of conventionalized water lilies which come straight from her early designs in Keramic Studio (Figure 55) and fulfill the stylistic requirements of the Arts and Crafts Movement as well.

Another work from approximately 1905 is her Viking Ship Vase (Figure 56) which portends the stylistic direction the work would take of many women inspired by Adelaide Alsop Robineau, such as the Sophie Newcomb College Pottery. Viking Ship Vase has a form somewhat evocative of Eastern ceramics but the carved decoration of a ship with full sails so perfectly merges with the form and the glaze that it seems to careen around the top and bottom of the vessel. The glazes are earthy, semi-matte greens, browns, and touches of pale blue, and the whole effect is one of restraint and kineticism merged into one evocative form.

The years between 1905 and 1910 were filled with experiments pertaining to porcelain bodies, difficult glazes, and the continuing quest for the perfect resolution of form, surface decoration, which in her case mainly dealt with carving and glaze. In these years she created neo-Eastern forms covered with the ancient Eastern "oxblood flamme" glaze, (Figure 57) which was extremely difficult to achieve, as well as what were becoming stereotypically Arts and Crafts vessels which were solidly composed and covered with conventionalized designs and matte glazes such as Wisteria Vase of 1907-08. (Figure 58) She engaged in this experimentation
while still editing and writing for *Keramic Studio*, raising a family, exhibiting at expositions, and beginning to think of founding an Arts and Crafts colony on the land of Four Winds. By 1909 she was seen as a very influential and formidable figure indeed in the discipline of art pottery. Her reputation was such that she was invited to collaborate with Taxile Doat, from the Sèvres factory in France, considered one of the world’s most important porcelain ceramists alive, in the University City Pottery in St. Louis, Missouri. The University City Pottery was organized to be the equivalent of a think-tank for the finest ceramists, who were paid large sums of money to collaborate, experiment, and produce exquisite wares. Needless to say, in early 1910, Adelaide Alsop Robineau, with Samuel, her husband and firing technician in tow, set off for St. Louis to the campus of University City.

**University City**

The entire University City venture was organized by Edward Gardner Lewis, the wealthy philanthropic owner of the St. Louis newspaper, the *Star*. Lewis was also the founder of the American Woman’s League, which was dedicated to improving the educational and general cultural activities of rural women, (Morse, 1912, p. 17) very much in the spirit of reformist agenda of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The University City campus, which included state-of-the-art facilities next to Forest Park, and the American Woman’s
League were to be linked in a progressive educational venture that also contained an enormous element of capitalism. Weiss (1981) quotes Lewis as saying that he wanted the School of Ceramic Art to "be the finest in the world," and "If the League [of American Women] wanted to make pottery, they would learn from the most famous potter in the world [Taxile Doat]" (p. 96). Lewis solicited the help of thousands of rural women, often poor or lower middle class, to sell magazine subscriptions within their communities for the benefit of being exposed to "culture" through scholarships to study at University City in lieu of proper wages. He would provide them with work which would enable them to pursue a meaningful career through cultural exposure at University City. Magazine publishers would let Lewis keep fifty percent of the subscription price of the magazine for his own coffers and he had to provide the women with educational perks. (Weiss, 1981, p. 93) For their work they were paid very modestly but, and this was the great enticement, offered scholarships at University City, both resident and non-resident, in both the arts and the sciences.

It is the opinion of this student that Robineau did not fully understand that this program really exploited women until she had already set up at University City. One could see that this venture would look wonderful--philanthropic, progressive, and very much in the mode of the most reformist of Arts and Crafts ideologies, yet it was based on the most callous of motives, the profit-making of its founder. Robineau explained the entry of Keramic Studio into this
venture of the Woman's League in several editorials beginning in August of 1910. She explained that she would actually lose revenue by taking part but a partnership with the American Woman's League was a way to expose more women to good, relatively uncomplicated methods of getting an education in the arts. She advised her readers that they would receive a free membership to the American Woman's League if they sold thirteen full subscriptions [at the price of $4.00 each] of Keramic Studio and mailed them to the offices of the American Woman's League. (Robineau, 1910, p. 1) She further wrote,

We assume no responsibility whatever, and are not soliciting subscriptions for the League. We are solely in the position of having become acquainted with a good course of study which is available for little exertion, and we are always glad to help others to the information we receive, although personally it pays us better to receive subscriptions direct than through any agency. But we accept the League orders to help along what seems to us a philanthropic movement. (p. 1)

It is hardly likely that the modern Robineau, with her concerns for the plight of the American woman, would fully approve of this organization, and one can only hypothesize that this was one of the factors that led to her relatively short stay at University City. It is reasonably easy to see how she would have been nothing short of seduced by the seemingly progressive mission of the program, a very good salary, the most advanced studio facilities, and the chance to work with a revered figure in international ceramics, Taxile Doat, whose work frequently appeared in the pages of Keramic Studio.
Robineau's duties at University City were to be ideal for her, to keep her own studio and to help direct the School of Ceramic Art with Taxile Doat and a man who was to be one of her greatest spokespersons, the English ceramist Frederick Hurton Rhead. She was also to take over the editorship of the journal of the American Women's League Palette and Bench: For the Art Student and Crafts-Worker, (Figure 59) which she founded via Lewis's urgings and financial sponsorship approximately six months before he approached her about the University City project.

In the first few months after her arrival at University City, Robineau experienced an idyllic studio life. Time and money seemed of no object in pursuit of accomplishment in ceramics. This was soon to end. Frederick Hurton Rhead, who was responsible for writing the curriculum manual for courses in the School of Ceramic Art and later implemented correspondence courses, wrote,

At this stage other demands were being made by League members and officials. Applications for instruction were pouring in. Within sixty days after the commencement of operations, I had on file over two hundred from prospective students for decorative work in porcelain, pottery, and china painting. These applications came not only from individuals who had never made pottery, but from craftsman and school and university instructors in various parts of the country. (quoted in Weiss, 1981, p. 102)

While at University City Robineau taught by opening her studio to interested students who learned through observation and assisting her production. The more elementary aspects of teaching the throwing of forms on wheels was done by Tom Parker, from England.
Kathryn Cherry taught porcelain painting and surface embellishment of the form. This freed Robineau to concentrate on the production of meticulously crafted porcelains, such as her most famous work *The Scarab Vase (The Apotheosis of the Toiler)* of 1910. (Figure 60)

According to Rhead, Robineau spent weeks on the wheel attempting the perfect form for the intricate carving which she would do on the *Scarab Vase*. (Weiss, 1981, p. 102) This vase is decorated with incised and excised scarabs, which are the Egyptian symbol of rebirth and creativity, broken up by rigid geometric forms such as the diamond. The porcelain was paper thin and translucent and was glazed in a semi-opaque white glaze which was then washed with a blue-green oxide. It emerged from its firing with several cracks which Robineau miraculously managed to fill before a second firing in which the cracks disappeared. *Scarab Vase* was truly a virtuoso piece within the world of ceramics and was an example of the "clay to finish" craftsmanship of the Arts and Crafts Movement in its over one thousand hours of handwork. The second part of the title of the vase, *The Apotheosis of the Toiler* could stand as the motto of the philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Movement, that work, the "toil" of the title, would result in a sort of glorification, an "apotheosis," and Robineau could have stood as its icon. Robineau, herself, explained the meaning of the vase's title in the *Keramic Studio* of August, 1911:

> The motif is taken from the beetle or scarab pushing a ball of food, symbolizing the toiler and his work. The interpretation of the design is as follows: the toiler, taking pride and pleasure in his work, holds it up, striving always toward the ideal, typified by the carved sphere
within sphere which surmount the cover. (Robineau, 1911, August, p. 84)

This vase was the grand prize winner at the 1910 Turin International Exposition, attesting to the international recognition of this artistic feat in porcelain.

Unfortunately, the great luxury of Robineau's ample studio time at University City was not to last, with nearly 50,000 women serviced in some way through correspondence courses. (Clark & Hughto, 1979, p. 67) The great potters were more and more called upon to be public relations personnel of the project, often opening their studios to hundreds of tourists at a time. (Weiss, 1981, p. 215) Accounts differ as to why the Robineaus left University City for Four Winds almost exactly a year after their arrival. Some accounts say that University City collapsed financially, though at one point it is recorded that magazine sales and educational offshoots were bringing in $40,000 a day. (Rhead, 1935, p. 6) Weiss attributes it to business disagreements. Regardless, in the Keramic Studio of February, 1911, Robineau publicly divorced the magazine from University City, though it had earlier promoted it, citing its "bad odor" (Robineau, 1911, February, p. 6). She stood by her magazine's endorsement of the on-site ceramic classes taught by the likes of Kathryn Cherry but denounced not only the business affairs of the American Woman's League and University City but the correspondence courses as well. (Robineau, 1913, p. 207)
None of this should take away from the recognition that Robineau, again, characteristically directed her talent and energy to an educational endeavor for women. Regardless, what was for a very short while the ceramic equivalent of today's brand new J. Paul Getty Museum and Education Campus, failed for reasons unknown or for a variety of reasons. What University City does attest to is the fact that, even for a short while, American women saw the arts as a mechanism for change in their rural lives, all the while unaware of the underlying capitalist motives of its founder, despite his Arts and Crafts reformist rhetoric of social salvation through work. Robineau's many-faceted association with the American Women's League and University City underscores her dedication to the art education of women under the auspices of the philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Movement. It also exemplifies the importance of such unconventional, and relatively unstudied, realms of art education to the history of the discipline.

The Four Winds Summer School

In late 1911, the Robineau returned with her family to their beloved hilltop Syracuse home, grounds and studio, Four Winds, and picked up where she had left off. Weiss (1981) provides this very sensitive and revealing insight into the life of this extraordinary woman and allows the student to realize the fullness and dedication
of her commitment to her work—because her life would, at least physically, have been just as full without it. She writes:

At that time, Adelaide’s three children were ages thirteen, eleven, and seven, and she herself was forty-eight years old. She made most of her children’s clothing (often batiked or tie-dyed and decorated with elaborate hand stitching and crochet), as well as elaborate costumes and wigs for her daughters’ dancing performances. She did all of the family mending and tended an extensive and splendid garden. . . . Besides her other chores, she found time to compile five large (and eventually very valuable) stamp albums for her son Maurice, and to trace the family genealogy (devising an eccentric system which traced the female as well as the male lines). She also kept the family photograph albums, photography being one of her favorite pursuits. Elisabeth has recalled hilarious but often tense family photo sessions in which the girls, dressed in Egyptian, Oriental, or other exotic costumes, were directed by their determined mother to strike dramatic poses in the garden, sometimes even in the middle of the lily pond. (Weiss, 1981, p. 30) (Figure 61)

It must be remembered that while she was doing all of this work within the household she was editing Keramic Studio as well as contributing many of her own designs for its pages, submitting articles for other publications, preparing works for exhibitions, mentoring other women in the arts, especially pottery, and beginning to feel the need to take her commitment to arts education a step further and found an Arts and Crafts community at Four Winds. (Robineau, 1912, April, p. 1)
The 1912 issue of *Keramic Studio* bore the following announcement which added yet another notch on the belt of Adelaide Alsop Robineau’s relentless pursuit of the art education of women:

Another good thing upon which the editor is congratulating herself is that she has inveigled some of her very good friends into spending six weeks the coming summer at her home, Four Winds Cottage, and having a summer school of design, china, decoration, etc., in the pottery. The enjoyable time which she expects to have will thus be shared by those readers of *Keramic Studio* who want to take advantage of this scheme to do a little summer studying with some of the best teachers. You can read all about the school in the advertisement, so we will only add that we shall be glad to meet personally some of the good friends we only know by letter.

(Robineau, 1912, April, p. 1)

The 1912 founding of the Four Winds Pottery Summer School was implemented as a stepping stone to the dreamt-of, but never realized, hilltop Arts and Crafts community, (Robineau, 1913, p. 1) perhaps inspired by the William Morris’s fictional utopian Arts and Crafts community from his novella *News from Nowhere* (1891). For three summers, 1912-14, Robineau ran a six-week Arts and Crafts summer school for a maximum of seventy women. (Robineau, 1913, p. 2) (Figure 62) Participants were offered a curriculum which was heavy on ceramics, both china painting and clay-to-finish pottery, as well as courses on general design, metal and leather work, basketry, carving, and landscape sketching, some of which took place in the gorgeous gardens at Four Winds. Robineau organized the school and did a great deal of the teaching but she also hired some of her
colleagues, who were noted as being some of the best in their respective disciplines. For example, Kathryn Cherry, whom Robineau had worked with at University City, was hired to teach china painting, and Henry Rankin Poore, author of *Pictorial Composition and the Critical Judgement of Pictures and Conception of Art* and professor of composition at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, taught outdoor sketching and studio critiques. Students were informed of the Four Winds Pottery Summer School via advertisements in magazines such as *Keramic Studio*.

What was utterly extraordinary about this school was the absolutely progressive attention to the pragmatic details in women's lives, their practical reality, which was so often the very reason they could not pursue art, the jealous mistress. The Four Winds Summer School provided a children's curriculum so that mothers did not have to leave their children behind (Robineau, 1913, p. 1) and promoted this fact in its advertising. Robineau wrote in the May, 1913 issue of *Keramic Studio*.

The feature of children's classes in basketry, carpentry, sewing and drawing will be continued, not only because of their popularity here but because many mothers have found it solves the problem of what to do with their little ones while they are themselves studying. (Robineau, 1913, p. 1)

Robineau addressed very pragmatically that pull between one's family and one's work and solved it at least in the microcosmic society of her school. Women knew this. The seventy women Robineau felt she could accommodate was just a fraction of the
number who applied and in the last year before World War I broke out and really caused the shutdown of the school, Robineau had been planning to expand and add sleeping quarters and food facilities to the grounds of Four Winds. In May 1913 she wrote,

Elsewhere will be found the advertisement of "Four Winds Pottery Summer School," but we would just like to say a word here about it for we feel that our dream of a really American school of ceramic design and decoration is beginning to come true . . . . (Robineau, 1913, p. 1)

The onset of World War I ended Four Winds Summer School and thoughts of its eventual expansion into an Arts and Crafts colony, but it did not stop the work of Robineau herself. Indeed, the years between 1914 and 1921, when she accepted a professorial post at Syracuse University, were golden ones for her regarding the promotion of her work. One of the reasons for this, and a very important one at that, is the Robineaus were in need of money. In terms of the mass public, courses in ceramics may have been seen as a distraction for women, or even a frivolity, when faced with the physical and economic realities of World War I. The spare time of many women was spent doing things for the war effort such as knitting socks for soldiers. (Anonymous, n. d.) Women who pursued an education in the ceramic arts to afford themselves economic freedom and a sense of equality with men in society may have jumped at the chance to contribute in whatever way they could to the war effort in which men had the more prevalent role, but this is simply a hypothesis.
In 1915, in an attempt to gather money to save Four Winds, Robineau, in a “deal” which would secure the position of her work in the history of American ceramics, wrote to Fernando Carter, director of the Syracuse Museum of Art (now the Everson Museum of Art) and offered to donate a substantial number of her works to the museum’s collection if they agreed to purchase some others. On November 12, 1915 she wrote:

In the days of the ancient Chinese potters, Emperors paid fabulous prices for examples of their work, and the nobility vied with each other to possess [sic] each piece which came perfect from the potter’s hands. All through the ages Kings and wealth have been patrons and eager purchasers of art crafts, not only of former times but of contemporary artists. It remained for grand America, who has been too busy just growing, to neglect contemporary and native arts and crafts, so that no country is so lacking in native craftsmen and crafts work. (Robineau, 1915)

She continued, promoting her own work and the proposal for its purchase and subsequent donation,

As a simple matter of “boosting” Syracuse such a collection might be a drawing card. When a city wishes to be called to sit up higher in the seats of honor, like a good businessman, she should put her best foot forward, if she has anything above the average, she writes it in large letters, if she has anything unique, she blazons it abroad--Syracuse has at least two unique boasts to make--there is the salt which gives its savor. And there are the Robineau Porcelains! (Robineau, 1915)

Robineau’s eloquence as well as powers of persuasion worked and this body of work formed the core of the collection of American art pottery at what is now called the Everson Museum of Art.
Despite this purchase, the studio at Four Winds had to be let and eventually sold (and the purchaser made it into apartments). Robineau’s studio was moved to the main house where she worked until she went to her position at Syracuse University.

Great Changes and Continuing Experimentation

It should be noted here that the Arts and Crafts Movement as it was described in the first chapters of this dissertation really ceased to exist after the Great War. The fairly idealistic notions about society took a back seat to the brutal and visceral reality of war in the age of the machine and mass destruction on a scale unbeknownst to the world. With 60,000 men killed or wounded in the first day of the attack on the Somme River, how trivial seems a debate on joy in labor. (Fussell, 1975, p. 13) This is not to take away from the relevancy of this problem but the time was not appropriate in the years of and immediately following the war. And so, in a dissertation which looks at the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement on two artists and their pursuit of art education for women, part of the story must end here. Robineau would continue to work towards the same goals she did before, but they were no longer simply the principles of a movement. She had assimilated them and made them her own. Her style, though, would continually evolve and we see something of a crash between the conventionalized style which so characterized not only the style of the Arts and Crafts
Movement but also her own work, and that of the new machine age aesthetic ushered in by the war and the new technology it generated. Scarab Vase: The Apotheosis of the Toiler was no longer the symbol of the age.

The years between the closing of Robineau's separate Four Winds studio and the advent of her position as a professor of art at Syracuse University, she continued to garner great recognition for her work. In 1915 a group of her works received the Grand Prize at the San Francisco Exposition and were chosen to exhibit at the Musée des Arts Decoratifs and at the Paris Salon. In 1916 she won an honorary award from the Art Institute of Chicago as well as awards from the Arts and Crafts Societies of Detroit and Boston. (Robineau Archive) In 1917 she was made an honorary "Doctor of Ceramic Science" from Syracuse University, who, as noted, would offer her a professorial position in 1920.

She also continued to experiment with the creation of porcelain bodies and complex glazes which would perfect the composition of her form. This aspect of her work—the perfection of the three-dimensional form, and its perfect control—became somewhat of a "holy grail" to Robineau at this time, in her mature style. The art historians Clark and Hughto (1979) write,

Her forms show an elegant finesse in line and proportion. The decoration that followed was successful because its form had a strength that matched and complemented the surface achievement. (p. 49)
Robineau still carved her porcelains upon occasion, though in a more restrained manner, as exemplified by the collection of works at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, (Figure 63) but the majority of her works in this phase looked very much like Eastern forms, though somewhat sleeker, with interesting and innovative glazes. (Figure 64)

Syracuse University

Robineau took up her faculty position as professor of art at Syracuse University in 1921 and took up a more traditional form of art education. At a university she had little control over the gender make-up of the student population taking her classes so the mission of the earlier part of her life, to target women, was not as applicable. Also, as we have seen, the Arts and Crafts Movement had seen its day and had lost some of its reformist gusto.

She continued to experiment in ceramics producing carved forms, such as the Threshold Plaque of 1923, (Figure 65) which are very similar to her earlier carved pieces, but she also produced works such as the 1928 vase (Figure 66) which is still carved, though in a much more minimal manner, bearing something of the new aesthetic of the modern. As it did the pages of her magazine Keramic Studio, the modern crept in, somewhat uncomfortably, in an aesthetic environment that still owed a great deal to the nineteenth century.
Her courses at Syracuse University revolved mainly around perfection of form in high fire bodies. Work was done in porcelain but she made her traditional reputation as a university art educator by creating a form of wares called "Threshold Pottery," after which her Threshold Plaque was named. (Weiss, 1981, p. 36) Threshold ware was a high fire stoneware that allowed for both refined forms and carving, exemplified by her own piece of threshold ware entitled The Sea (Figure 67) from 1927.

Her work continued to garner her great recognition and a few months before her death from cancer on February 18, 1929, seven of her porcelains were included in a Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition of contemporary international ceramics and received great praise. She continued to teach and create ceramics in her studio at Syracuse University until December 1928 just two months before her death, again standing as testament to her profound passion for art education. Weiss (1981) states very eloquently,

At her death, the Metropolitan Museum took the unprecedented step of according her a memorial retrospective exhibition (from November 18, 1929 to January 19, 1930). Seventy-one Robineau pieces, including the Scarab, . . . were assembled in tribute, as Metropolitan curator Joseph Breck wrote, "to the memory of one who may with every reason be called a master craftsman." (p. 40)
Conclusion

Adelaide Alsop Robineau was a model for women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as for women upon this eve of the twenty-first century. She refused to compromise her passions in any way and was a prolific writer, intellect, mother, wife, spokeswoman and advocate for the rights of women, art potter and art educator in every guise from art magazine editor to university professor. Weiss (1981) states that Robineau was “fully conscious of her role as a woman in achieving status in a male-dominated society” (p. 27). In every facet of her life in which, according to her daughter Elisabeth Lineaweaver, she “never wasted a moment” (quoted in Weiss, 1981, p. 29), she rigorously reached out to the culture of women. Keramic Studio was aimed at women and no inch of text was spared that would encourage the serious artistic inclinations, professional aspirations, and overall self-worth of her readers. She published mainly women writers and spread her “message” in other women’s magazines such as The Modern Priscilla, American Homes and Gardens and House Beautiful to encourage, on all fronts, women to create. She was an advocate of the professional mother and set herself up as a model. What is particularly important and moving to this student is just how applicable Robineau’s causes in the realm of women and the arts are in 1997, nearly one hundred years later.
In a study which looks at artistic figures as educators, it is fitting to end with the personal statements, thoughts, and feelings of those who benefitted most from the teaching of these figures, their students. This chapter closes with the reflections of Carlton Atherton, a student of Robineau's at Syracuse University, later studio assistant of hers and ceramics professor at The Ohio State University, who wrote this account of his teacher and mentor in 1935:

There was in her make-up a strange combination of forces—an intense sensibility and an all-absorbing intellectuality. She had a passion for reducing sensation, by a process of analysis, elimination, and synthesis, to abstract statement, yet preserving the sensation upon which her sensibility was nourished. By analysis and classification, she proceeded to work out separately and in turn, the effective qualities of line, form, and color. The process of organization then became the logical deduction from the already classified data of sensation, a deduction stated by perfectly ascertained and preconceived methods. This was more than a deliberate process and not a momentary recording of that divine inspiration with which artists are often credited; and yet inspiration is the only word which can be used before such beautiful conceptions. There were many things which were paradoxical in her personality, the combination of such elements as caution and recklessness, logic and intuition, patience and intolerance, prudence and indiscretion. These apparent discrepancies brought to fruition much that might not have materialized. Her inexhaustible patience and superhuman courage made possible many things which are lost to less pioneering potters. For her, nothing was too simple that its experience was not helpful, nothing too complex to try or to master. She was unmoved by catastrophe and never satisfied with apparent success.
Nothing stimulated her as much as conquering some seemingly insurmountable obstacle. No project, once started, was ever abandoned through failure of achievement, but by careful observation and deduction was brought to final completion through unyielding perseverance. (Atherton, 1935)
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION: THE HANDS AS EVERYWOMAN’S TOOLS

In 1898, George Twose, president of the Chicago Society of Arts and Crafts, reviewed the society’s first exhibition. He wrote,

Cups and platters, pots and pans, tables and chairs, though insignificant in their humble ministering, are important articles when considered in the light of the sensitiveness of man’s character and persistence of their effect. (quoted in Kaplan, 1987, p. 219)

In other words, Twose recognized that everyday articles set a standard for good or evil. Kaplan (1987) writes that “they both reflected personality and made character” (p. 219).

The subjects of this dissertation, Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau also recognized that one’s soul is reflected in one’s work and work was indeed important for the soul. Their accomplishments in association with the Arts and Crafts Movement in America as well as the accomplishments of their thousands of students gave the movement a lasting credibility which did not seem to be enjoyed by many purveyors of the movement in England. Perhaps this is because they let their work speak for itself and avoided the intellectual rhetoric which became such a hallmark of
the British Arts and Crafts Movement. They, themselves, spoke only pragmatically, presenting technical information and offering support to other women in the same difficult straits of production. These women truly took the Arts and Crafts Movement out of the hands of its orators and into the lives of thousands of individual women who followed the pragmatic lead of these two women and put its ideals into practical use. McLaughlin and Robineau presented women with the tools they needed in the form of their own hands, and bade them step foot into the world of industry and transform it by their very presence.

McLaughlin and Robineau provided their students with the idea of the personal importance of work and all of the benefits that went along with work: economic independence, a sisterhood of women who created art with their own hands, and the creative and spiritual outlet that is so much a part of the elusive richness of artmaking. And in some small way they contributed to the new independent social and political identity of the woman of the twentieth century—all through clay. It is no coincidence that the statue of “Industry” in front of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art is personified by a woman holding a vessel.
POSTSCRIPT

The original proposal for this dissertation included the study of the H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College Pottery, which was the female counterpart to Tulane University. But the Newcomb College Pottery actually belonged to the generation after that of Mary Louise McLaughlin and Adelaide Alsop Robineau. The pottery was socially progressive but the work was not seminal to the genesis of the art pottery movement in America as was that of McLaughlin and Robineau. To a great extent, the output of Newcomb Pottery, and its finest achievements, occurred after 1910 when the style and ideology of the Arts and Crafts Movement were waning and those of the Modernist era were coming to the fore.

I hope to embark upon a study of the H. Sophie Newcomb College Pottery as part of a group of women's schools, who had staff trained or influenced by McLaughlin and Robineau, and hence examine the blooms of the seeds sown by these two seminal art educators.
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Let us now suppose ourselves upon the examination of that school of Venetian architecture which forms an intermediate step between the Byzantine and Gothic forms, but which I find may be conveniently considered in its connexion with the latter style. In order that we may discern the tendency of each step of this change, it will be wise in the outset to endeavour to form some general idea of its final result. We know already what the Byzantine architecture is from which the transition was made, but we ought to know something of the Gothic architecture into which it led. I shall endeavour therefore to give the reader in this chapter an idea, at once broad and definite, of the true nature of Gothic architecture, properly so called; not of that of Venice only, but of universal Gothic: for it will be one of the most interesting parts of our subsequent inquiry, to find out how far Venetian architecture reached the universal

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