

The Spectacle of It All: Reflections on the “Beardsley Woman”

In his seminal work *Orientalism*, Edward Said presents the concept that is his title as one which is continuously constructed upon discursive binaries, particularly those evincing an “us” versus “them” mentality. In creating such binaries the West maintains its dominant power structures through a “common history, tradition, [and] universe of discourse”¹ disseminated in texts produced from a Eurocentric, Western viewpoint, and resulting in imagined depictions in a collective daydream of the Orient and its inhabitants. The construction of femininity in particular was predicated upon the idea of the Orient as observed, as a “living tableau”² of sexual excess which came to be represented by the iconic figure of Gustave Flaubert’s Salammbô, the titular character and priestess who has a love affair with a snake in this 1862 historical novel. The pervasiveness of this image and of Orientalist elements within popular consciousness spanned several decades and remained virtually unchallenged until Victorian-era London, when Aubrey Beardsley re-imagined depictions of female spectacle and deconstructed both femininity and sexual mores in his drawings for such well-known texts as Oscar Wilde’s *Salome* and Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, transforming woman’s position within the Orientalist spectacle from one of passivity and weakness to one of strength and activity.

The Orientalism craze was far from over then when Aubrey Beardsley was born in Brighton, England in 1872. The construct of the imaginary Other thrived, in fact, and was seemingly verified in the form of popular human exhibitions of native Africans and Orientals.³ Though Beardsley may never have visited such exhibitions, his awareness of and interest in all things Oriental and exotic⁴ is found in his “Portrait of Himself”(1894). The image has a rather Oriental “feel” to it echoed in the large tassels of the canopy and in the voluptuousness in the plump pillow, bedding, and hourglass figure of the female form that is part of the bedpost, all of

which serve to emphasize Beardsley's small frame situated between the sheets. A sense of mischievous whimsy is present here as Beardsley in his turban appears to be looking either beyond the picture's border or behind him at a person or object hidden from the viewer's sight. In the upper-left corner appears in French the declaration, "By the twin gods all the monsters are not in Africa."⁵ This is typical of Beardsley's wit but significantly he does not play into the imaginary construct of Orientalism and instead of a real-life representation of an overly sensuous woman he makes himself the center of the spectacle. The portrait is intriguing in that Beardsley aligns himself with the so-called foreign "monsters" being paraded across the continent in human exhibitions.

It is disappointing and a bit baffling considering the repeated early recognition of his talent that so much of his legacy from the artist's point of view is unknown, but it is said that he was very fond of A.B. Mitford's *Tales of Old Japan*⁶ and of course the 1890s saw an explosion in the rise of artistic magazines, perhaps most importantly Siegfried Bing's *Artistic Japan*,⁷ in the pages of which Beardsley may have seen "woodcuts and paintings by the [Japanese] masters, including Utamaro, and Hokusai."⁸ He is known to have spent many a lunch hour perusing such texts at the "bookshop of Jones & Evans in Queen Street, off Cheapsid."⁹ He might have viewed Hokusai's work at London's Fine Arts Society in 1890¹⁰ and from his letters, we know that he viewed Whistler's "Peacock Room" on more than one occasion, revering his work enough to fully catalogue it in a letter to an old Brighton school chum.¹¹

Since both Beardsley and Utamaro had to contend with governmental censorship, they became by necessity rather agile at presenting their work in ways which would evade the censors. As a result, the ability to accurately read Japanese prints greatly affects one's interpretation of spectacle. Erotic *shunga* prints were an accepted part of Edo culture, though a

conscious attempt was made to confine them to the Yoshiwara, or red light, district in Japan. Such prints verge on the pornographic when viewed through Western eyes and access to Yoshiwara was relegated in large part to the wealthy and enjoyment of the prints was reserved for those who could read their symbolic clues. For readers of Utamaro's prints this was at least as literal as it was symbolic. Japanese travel guide information of the time noted courtesan's unique characteristics, the houses they were associated with, and such pertinent details as when they would be washing their hair or where they might take a stroll. Characterizing the female as spectacle was very much then a construct maintained by physical as well as social boundaries. For Beardsley's viewers it was more important to be able to read the symbolic clues of his drawings; readers had to navigate feelings they could not fully explain, as both the public and critics were not yet fully familiar with the basic principles underlying Japanese prints. For all the talk about embedded sexual references in his drawings, Beardsley's subversion is more often than not hidden in plain sight, especially as concerns his poster depictions.

These depictions, in part, led to the creation of the "Beardsley Woman" and contributed to the identification of her as a parallel to the "New Woman." During Beardsley's childhood gender roles and restrictions were vigorously contested as women gained legal and financial freedom. Beardsley experienced these shifting attitudes directly. He grew up with a mother who was forced to take over the position of breadwinner when her husband failed to do so early in their marriage. Becoming a breadwinner himself at any early age and knowing the need for both his mother and sister to work may have predisposed Beardsley to champion the causes of the "New Woman," who was winning better working conditions and gaining more educational opportunities in England. In general, the "New Woman" was moving beyond the traditional

confines of the Victorian home in pervasive ways and was easily elided with the “Beardsley Woman.” As Linda Zatlín observes,

She [the “New Woman”] could make demands on her husband for her own pleasure, thereby causing a redefinition of her sexual role in marriage. [...]. Pride in motherhood, an awareness of the power inherent in education, the knowledge that she can have a private life and be a fully sexual being – all these things endow her [the Beardsley woman] with the independence that accompanies equality. The Beardsley woman’s positive assertions of her sexuality overstep the role to which society relegated her.¹²

Conservative response to the principles espoused by both these new women was sarcastic and belittling; contributing to the derogatory designation of the “Beardsley Woman” in particular was the way in which Beardsley combined elements of Japanese artwork with his depictions of women and books.

Perhaps even more discomfiting to the Victorian patriarchal order was the prospectus for the front cover of the first *Yellow Book* issue (April, 1894). Here, the woman’s darkened silhouette results in a flattened two-dimensionality reminiscent of Japanese prints; her thick-lipped, open mouth is considered vulgar, and her apparent unwillingness to acknowledge the shopkeeper is unattractive by traditional standards. The bookkeeper’s posture clearly indicates her impertinence and determination to make her own selection and purchase but more importantly Beardsley clearly undermines his masculinity in two ways: his flowing robe marks him as effeminate and the woman’s hand gesture marks him as cuckolded. Significantly, the woman is not only unaccompanied but she is out alone walking the city streets at night. The unique effect of these two drawings in particular, then, is to move the female from what was traditionally considered a position of weakness, the center of a spectacle created as the result of a

controlling male gaze, to one of self-assertiveness and independence, one more in line with the characteristics of the age's, and of Beardsley's, "New Woman."

Publication of Beardsley's illustrations to Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (1894) seemingly confirmed conservatives' worst fears about the "New Woman." Though this was a limited run publication, its contents were nonetheless considered the most erotic prints ever published in England.¹³ This was due, on the one hand, to Beardsley's use of sexually deviant grotesqueries, and on the other hand to the overly aggressive behavior of the titular character. Viewers used to the calm, feminine figure draped in diaphanous veils as seen in Gustave Moreau's painting *Salome Dancing Before Herod* (1876) and representative of the female construct as passive within the spectacle were no doubt ill prepared for the masculine sexuality Beardsley's Salome displayed. *Salome* is essentially a tale of excess, an excess of passion, power, and obsession. As Elliot Gilbert succinctly states, "What the plot of the play describes is an embattled patriarchal culture, relying for strength on tradition, on genealogy, on a formal world order, under attack by a corrosive, disobedient, unbridled female sexuality," and this comment provides an obvious parallel to 1890s English society.¹⁴ Beardsley termed the style he used in *Salome* a "'mystico-oriental' manner";¹⁵ which included the ever-present impressions Whistler's "Peacock Room" had upon him, and expanded the techniques discovered in Japanese prints along the way. Beardsley was deeply influenced by the early Japanese book illustrators who worked exclusively in white and black.

In "The Peacock Skirt" and "The Black Cape," Beardsley utilizes black and white patterning to reflect the yin and yang of femininity and masculinity. In "The Peacock Skirt," the Salome figure is fully enveloped by her garment and perhaps the aggressiveness associated with the male bird, along with its plumage, is present here as well. Salome seems to arise from the

fullness of her skirt which takes up much of the lower half of the composition. The sinuous nature of her curvature recalls the form of a snake, alluding to the seductiveness of a Salammbô, as she leans over to speak to, or perhaps simply to observe, the young Syrian guard. Though Salome's mannerism can be considered masculine, she displays feminine physical characteristics and the heavy black coloring of her robe and hair align her with the dark, recessive aspects associated with the feminine yin. In the play she is also consistently associated with the moon, a symbol of yin femininity, which is echoed in the crescent shapes adorning her garment. In the "The Peacock Skirt," the Syrian guard evinces a similar sexual ambiguity in that his knobby knees mark him as male and his white attire aligns him with the masculine yang yet his arm and hip placement are decidedly feminine. Ultimately, the young guard appears to be in an inferior position as Salome overturns the usual female position within the spectacle and makes her "prey" the object of a feminine gaze. In "The Black Cape," the ambiguous nature of Salome's sexuality helps Salome stave off reverting back into the typical spectacle pose. Once again, even though she is the only object for observation here, she simultaneously embodies the darkness associated with the feminine yin and the whiteness associated with the masculine yang of the previous drawing while maintaining the graceful posturing of a high-class courtesan but his courtesan is not of the usual variety: the stiff, sharp angles of her kimono-like cape recall the appearance of a Samurai warrior's kimono and the contrast between the cape's angularity in the upper portion of the composition and its full voluptuousness in the lower half provide a contrastive balance. A closer look at Beardsley's drawing reveals his playfulness as well. The tiny hat atop Salome's head is both an odd addition of Western, feminine attire within a highly stylized Eastern setting and a whimsical reference to its impermanence, its precarious, shifting position of femininity.¹⁶

The ultimate moment of feminine agency found within the *Salome* series is, however, “The Climax.” Here, the Japanese principle of asymmetry is evident in the placement of the floating or suspended figures of Salome and Iokanaan in the upper portion of the composition where the circular, cloud-like forms suggest a comparison with one of the peacock panels in Whistler’s “Peacock Room.” Usage of another Japanese technique is present in the depiction of Iokanaan’s severed head, which appears to arise from a lily pond. The long stream of water or blood flowing down from the head evokes the way in which “Japanese designers conveyed a sense of the supernatural by showing a vision, such as a ghost, emerging from a wisp of smoke.”¹⁷ While the emergence of the severed head is certainly of interest, and some critics associate it with the lily as symbolic of purity, an assessment in keeping with Iokanaan’s character in the play, more intriguing is the positioning of both heads. With the two long, devilish strands of hair standing on end contrasting with the two, smooth ones draped over her shoulder, Salome holds Iokanaan’s Medusa-like head within inches of her own and with an intense stare, an overt appropriation of the kind of gaze seen in the female spectacle, she seems to demand for him to open his closed eyes. The two figures are further linked by the similar pose of their arched eyebrows, their full lips and fleshy, jutting chins: the thin strand of Salome’s garment piercing the water or bloodstream, the life force, flowing from Iokanaan’s head is reminiscent of the blade used to end his life at Salome’s insistence. In drawing such parallels, Beardsley invites viewers to examine the persistent “exchange,” even in death, between these two characters. At the moment of “The Climax,” Salome is triumphant: not only has she managed to acquire Iokanaan’s head, thereby symbolically extinguishing the male gaze, without bloodying her own hands, but also literally holds that gaze in her hands. Ironically, Iokanaan is

forced to do in death that which he refused to do in life: give Salome her due by paying proper attention to her.

As in the *Salome* series, Beardsley privileges female desire in *Lysistrata* but the emphasis is on the female as collective instead of individual. Here, male and female confrontations are egalitarian in nature instead of menacingly one-sided. Given the general nudity of Beardsley's illustrations, the *Lysistrata* (1896) series would seem automatically predisposed to spectacle. The nudity is not, however, gratuitous but rather perfectly in keeping with the plot. Men appear naked as well in Beardsley's drawings. Female sexuality is not, therefore, so much exposed and ridiculed as is often the case in spectacle but put on par with male sexuality. In Aristophanes' play, Lysistrata and other women of Athens capture the Acropolis, which houses the treasury and subsequently the purse strings for the ongoing war. The Athenian women plan to withhold both money and sex from the men of Athens until they broker a peace with Sparta. The Athenian women have no trouble withholding money from the war effort but when it comes to ignoring their men and suppressing their own sexual appetites their enthusiasm for the project wanes. Beardsley's depiction of one such moment, "Two Athenian Women in Distress," reveals the continued influence of Japanese techniques upon his work as the drawing recalls the cropping technique found in many of Hiroshige's prints: "The placement of the central focus of a painting or a print to one side is one of the Japanese master's key organizational concepts. As opposed to the central placement of a figure, which tends to render that image static, an off-centered citing forces the eye to move, creating a compositionally intriguing portrayal."¹⁸ The scene is also one of the most humorous of the play: unable to contain their desire for their returning men, some of the Athenian women attempt an escape from the Acropolis where Lysistrata hopes to contain them until peace has been effected:

Lysistrata: “They want their men. They can’t live without them. I caught one stealing out through the black Cave of Pan. Another rigged herself a rope and pulley and halfway down I pulled her up again. And still – they’re slipping out. [...] Look, there goes one.”¹⁹

The scene, as Beardsley properly depicts it, is one of sexual freedom and release. The woman on the left glides through space with one foot perched upon a dove and her hand positioning indicating masturbation. The woman on the right is generally considered to be pleasuring herself as well, though the source of the person or object stabilizing the rope is indeterminate.

The “Beardsley Woman” as depicted in *Salome* (aggressively masculine) and in *Lysistrata* (sexually preoccupied) undergoes a radical change in terms of spectacle in the illustrations for Alexander Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock* (1896). Beardsley’s characteristic combination of multiple artistic styles continues: elements of Orientalism are present in the turbans worn by the dwarfs, while the influence of Japanese art is revealed in the many contrasting textures and patterns used to effect depth. The technique provides a parallel with the kimonos in Kikugawa Eizan’s “Spring Pleasures” (c.1815), the composition of which “is a riot of colour and contrasting textile designs – it marks a complete break with the past [and ushers in] the increasing role of textiles as compositional elements.”²⁰ In two pivotal drawings, “The Rape of the Lock” and “The Battle of the Beaux and the Belles,” Belinda herself is virtually absent from the scene. The center of the compositions, the location of tension and therefore of the resulting spectacle, is not occupied by Belinda, nor by any woman in fact, but by the dwarf who capitalizes on the moment of general distraction to mischievously indulge in a cup of tea.²¹ Removing the female from the center of the spectacle and replacing her with a male, a male who has been historically identified as sub-human no less, requires explanation. Robert Halsband accounts for the dwarf’s presence “as an accessory to eighteenth-century décor, when wealthy and aristocratic ladies sometimes equipped themselves with such servants.”²²

In “The Battle of the Beaux and the Belles,” Beardsley again makes the dwarf the center of the spectacle. Proportionately, the dwarf even appears to be larger than he was in the previous drawing. Forceful as her tongue lashing at the Baron for his despicable act of robbing her of her lock may be, visually, her act is mitigated by the dwarf’s central positioning. Belinda is thereby physically distanced from both the Baron and the spectacle. Moreover, the only solid black of the composition, the middle portion of the dwarf’s turban, further draws the viewer’s eye to him at the center. Zatlin identifies Beardsley’s use of this kind of grotesque figure, terming it “the confrontational observer, [who] represents the late-Victorian male” and the way his gaze objectifies women.²³ Beardsley’s technique is similar to one employed by *shunga* artists, who often included a well-known figure of fiction in their prints: Maneemon. In contrast to Zatlin’s “confrontational observer” and the male gaze it engenders, “Maneemon replicates the viewer’s ambivalent and intrusive presence. He is never an actor in the story, but he sees everything; he is unable to have any effect on what occurs, but he himself is affected by it and imitates it. Maneemon can respond to the sexual stimulation of what he sees, on his own, privately and unwitnessed, just like the stimulated viewer.”²⁴ Maneemon gazes at the other figures within the print,^{60/25} not at the viewer outside of it. Such usage of the Maneemon figure invites the viewer to occupy his same space within the print, placing him there as an active observer. In “The Battle of the Beaux and the Belles” the viewer is separated from Belinda and from the positioning of the spectacle itself because his eye follows that of the dwarf, who provides a diagonal thrust by both leaning into and gazing in the direction of Belinda’s overturned chair and the Baron’s “surrendered” walking stick. In this way, Beardsley effectively shifts the focus of the spectacle from the usual exploitation of femininity in order to comment on the constitution of modern-day masculinity. And here one can expand upon Zatlin’s assessment of the

“confrontational observer” and his outward gaze while including the aspect of the Maneemon “inside” gaze: a key difference between the illustrations is that the dwarf of “The Rape of the Lock” looks directly at the viewer; whereas, the one of “The Battle of the Beaux and the Belles” looks towards the upturned chair - that is to the state of male/female relations.²⁵

This state was epitomized in Beardsley’s most notorious poster, which he designed at the request of actress and manageress Florence Farr for the Avenue Theatre in London, where avant-garde, or “New Drama,” plays were regularly performed. The image is of a woman standing behind patterned, gossamer curtains. Her body faces the viewer but her eyes look sharply to her right. Critics and the public alike found the woman threatening and offensive and readily associated this “Beardsley Woman” with the “New Woman.” They “criticized [Beardsley and the poster] for showing the woman as a primitive (i.e., ‘non-European’ with all of the racist connotations such a term implies) and lascivious whore. The ‘Comedy of Sighs’ became the ‘Comedy of Leers’ in the *Punch* cartoon.”²⁶ As Sturgis notes, “the ‘Japanee-Rossetti girl’ was ‘not a thing to be desired’. [...]. The *Pelican* found her ‘biblious, lackadaisical, backboneless, anaemic, ‘utterly’ and generally disagreeable.’ It was said that ‘even the cab horses shied’ at the sight of her.”²⁷ Beardsley’s poster may be more favorably compared to Utamaro’s “Mosquito-Net” (c. 1797)²⁸ in which the aspect of a diaphanous curtain is still present but more importantly encompasses aspects of the spectacle. The “Mosquito-Net” reverses the male and female positions in that the male instead of the female appears to be in the more traditional position behind the net. In addition, the female is standing and looks upon her seated lover, so that the usual spectacle positioning is reversed: the female is the perceiver not the perceived. This can be related to Beardsley’s poster in that his female is an empowered perceiver as well. She is not completely behind the curtains; a break in them contributes a kind of peek-a-boo aspect to the

composition. The fact that Beardsley's woman is not emerging from under a net, as in the Utamaro print, denotes that the gender tables have been turned. Beardsley's woman is clearly doing the watching. Part of what may have caused the caustic reaction to this poster may be that the anxiety viewers experience as a result of the unknown: they do not and cannot know what or who has captured the woman's attention. Placing the woman in the position of voyeur also connotes her as a sexual being with sexual wants and desires, precisely the aspects of "Beardsley's Woman" and the "New Woman" that late-Victorian society tended to discourage and repress.

Of course, the power of Beardsley's poster may be considered provisional in that the voyeur position itself is transitory or dependent: one must have someone to look at after all. A final example will clarify this possible contradiction and illuminate what Beardsley so cleverly accomplished in his depictions of shifting positions within the spectacle. For the cover design of the first issue of the *Yellow Book*, Beardsley drew a kind of masked ball image of a joyous woman wearing a large hat and positioned in front of a man who is lurking over her left shoulder. The most unique aspect of this cover design is that the "Beardsley Woman" can be interpreted as occupying a dual position, as both voyeur and object of the spectacle. Clearly, the fact that the woman occupies the better part of the picture frame and is centered within it supports the determination of her as spectacle. Zatin certainly finds this to be the case, as she asserts that "again the domination of a woman is the subject [of a drawing], and Beardsley creates the menace partially through a man's sinister glance."²⁹ As with so many of Beardsley's works, however, the woman's facial expression is rather ambiguous. There is something in her eyes that evinces pleasurable excitement more than uncomfortable anxiety or downright fear. Contributing to this effect is the diagonal thrust beginning from the thick, black line moving up

from the woman's right shoulder and ending just beyond her mask. From that point, the viewer's eye follows the diagonal to the next such black line beginning at the woman's left shoulder; the viewer's eye then continues to follow the diagonal to the bow at the back of her hat and finally on to the masked man's mouth. The angle of the woman's oversized hat and her left shoulder form a V-shape that simultaneously singles out and envelopes the masked man. Ultimately, these directional pulls serve more to encompass than to hide the man. As a result, one may wonder if the woman might be more accurately classified as a voyeur rather than an object of a spectacle and consider the possibility that she may be titillated here. Though the woman presumably does not see the man, and expanding the limited traditional view of a voyeur from someone who requires a concrete visual in order to effect arousal to include one who indulges in the visual evoked by way of imaginative visualization, one might argue that the lack of actual vision is more enticing, more erotic here. In fact, the woman's sensed presence of the masked man causes her thoughts to run wild. This interpretation of "Beardsley's Woman" is actually more egalitarian. On one level this view is supported by the fact that both the man and the woman wear bows and masks; they are both part of the game that is the masquerade. On a more complex level, the participants are empowered in equal measure: both are necessary to the game being played and either could break the spell of it at any time by shifting the focus of his or her vision and acknowledging the presence of the other. In this sense, Beardsley makes visible the "game" of the spectacle by delineating man's and woman's position within it. It is in this way that Beardsley includes both genders, or at the very least both masculine and feminine elements, the yin and the yang, in his drawings meant to challenge the sexual mores of the "Beardsley Period."

End Notes

¹Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1978) 272-73.

²Ibid., 58.

³“Question of the Month: Human Zoos”: Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire, director of the Parisian Jardin d’acclimatation, decided in 1877 to organize two “ethnological spectacles” presenting Nubians and Inuit. That year, the audience of the Jardin d’acclimatation doubled to one million. Between 1877 and 1912, approximately thirty such exhibitions were presented at the Jardin zoologique d’acclimatation. Representative coverage includes *Illustrated London News*, July 6, 1889 (17-19): a two-page spread on The Java Village at the Paris Exhibition entitled “The Java Dancers at the Paris Exhibition”; December 14th, 1889 (759): “Sketches of Madagascar” and 765: picture at the Paris Salon: “An Open-Air Restaurant at Lahore.”

⁴ Pennell, Joseph. The first article about Beardsley and his work appeared in the inaugural, April 1893, issue of *The Studio*, which contained a picture of an “Oriental Room” in a section devoted to interior design.

⁵ The “twin gods” here might refer to the twin-sexed herm, a figure Beardsley employed throughout his work but in *Salome* in particular. See also Sturgis, 7: Sturgis reports that Beardsley’s grandfather, William Pitt, was a military doctor station in India for several years where married into the wealthy Lamb family. It seems generally accepted that his wife was of mixed race, but it “is unlikely that Aubrey would have guessed the intriguing possibility that he was a Bengali octoroon.”

⁶ Zatlin, Linda. *Beardsley, Japonisme, and the Perversion of the Victorian Ideal*. 7. See also Sturgis: 28, 40: At Brighton Grammar School, under the direction of E.J. Marshall, Beardsley was exposed to a unique curriculum of “nature excursions, sketching parties, school plays and

concerts, visiting lecturers, informal exhibitions, and, of course, games: a constant round of stimulation, carried through with a sense of enjoyment and fun.” Marshall is also noted for creating “*Past and Present*, the first school magazine in England” and site of Beardsley’s first published material, “Jubilee Cricket Analysis,” which appeared in the June 1887 issue when he was 14 years old. The piece was composed of visual images punning common cricket terms and the moment marked the presence and acknowledgement of a witty playfulness that would be part of Beardsley’s artistic legacy.

⁷ A perusal of a representative volume, number 6 of 1891, which Beardsley might have seen includes in issue number 32: beastly imagery in Hokusai’s “Temptation of Buddha”; in number 33: the unusual image of “The Suicide” by Kuniyoshi and in number 36: humorous picture of “Hell” in which a beast lazily kicks his legs which in turn move a fan for the “enjoyment” of those suffering below him.

⁸ Zatlin, *Japonisme*, 13.

⁹ Sturgis, 63.

¹⁰ Zatlin, *Japonisme*, 7.

¹¹ Maas, 19-20.

¹² Zatlin, *Aubrey Beardsley and Victorian Sexual Politics*, 132.

¹³ Read *Aubrey Beardsley*, 6. See also and Zatlin, *Sexual Politics*, 4.

¹⁴ Gilbert, 150.

¹⁵ Sturgis, 143.

¹⁶ *Punch*, April 7, 1894. This issue contained a comic sketch entitled “Full-up”: an omnibus sketch. There are three people sitting on an omnibus; in the center is a woman dressed in a black

cape with very wide, accordion style sleeves that push the man and woman on either side of her nearly off their seats. The cape evokes Beardsley illustration here.

¹⁷ Zatlin, *Japonisme*, 149. For other examples of the type of prints which evoke Beardsley's employment of an Eastern treatment in a Western context, see Addiss.

¹⁸ Ibid., 131-32.

¹⁹ Aristophanes, 70.

²⁰ Newland, 153, fig. 52b.

²¹ The dwarf's sly wink directed towards the viewer echoes Beardsley's expression in "Portrait of Himself."

²² Halsband, 106.

²³ Zatlin, *Japonisme*, 220.

²⁴ Screech, 208.

²⁵ One might be tempted here to push the yin-yang envelope so to speak and consider "The Rape of the Lock," with its composition mostly of white, as a symbolic link to masculinity, and "The Battle of the Beaux and the Belle," with its darker composition, as a symbolic link to femininity. On the one hand, such an assessment emphasizes the opposition between the yin and the yang and on the other it reveals the duality of the two principles. To "color" the calm, feminine passivity (yin) of "The Rape" as white is to note its masculinity (yang). To "color" the active, masculine bustle (yang) of "The Battle" as dark is to note its femininity (yin).

²⁶ Elliott, 88.

²⁷ Sturgis, 184.

²⁸ Asano, vol. 2, 183.

²⁹ Zatin, *Sexual Politics*, 63-5. Zatin's analysis is worth a fuller understanding of it: "Because of the lack of perspective and the downward position of his head, he appears to be looking down her bodice (and perhaps doing something to her which causes her enjoyment, further suggested by the phallic candle). The viewer begins to think about the reason for the contrast in their expressions but is quickly riveted by the man's bold eyes and wonders about his intentions and his actions. His expression conveys the privilege of secret knowledge; moreover, he engages the viewer in a conspiracy of that knowledge. Whatever his action is or will be, he invites the viewer to watch, and through that invitation makes the viewer his accomplice. [...] In fact, her seeming ignorance or lack of concern about his presence suggests that they do not share a love relationship; while he may have touched her body, he has not touched her soul. He sardonically invites the viewer to perceive objectification of the woman as a measure of his success as a male.

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