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The Kimono in Western Eyes

From Art to Fashion

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Abstract

Art and Fashion, as cultural movements, visual representations of prevailing social and moral ideas, and responses to economic shifts and technological innovations, have much in common. Though both rely on creative acts, Art has a long and respectable academic history, while Fashion has been decried as ephemeral and trivial. Without a doubt, however, just like Art, Fashion contains its social base and can be examined exists on context.

As a process to explore the interconnection of Art and Fashion, this paper focuses on kimono as a particular cultural object, which has evolved in its artistic form as well as an aesthetic realm. This paper consists of three parts. The first chapter, The Kimono: the Cultural History, chronicles the evolving process of kimono and its social function in Japan until the seventeenth century, and it examines how the West understood in kimono when it first arrived. The Second chapter, Kimono in Western Art, 1800-1900, focuses on kimono's journey to Europe in the eighteenth century through the end of nineteenth century, and contextualizes its social meaning through Art. The third chapter, Kimono in Fashion, is the discussion of the shifting society of the early twentieth century and the transition of kimono from Art to Fashion, specifically putting attention to Mariano Fortuny and Paul Poiret. By way of conclusion, the kimono's impact on the West is re-analyzed through Art and Fashion, showing how it has evolved transitionally to respond to, and driven social change.

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1. Art and Fashion

In past decade, fashion has become an increasingly significant part of the study of culture. Not only confined to the catwalks and collections, fashion has started to be exhibited in museums as valuable resource. Number of exhibitions on fashion are held all over the world and its recent trend is to see fashion in form of art, often bringing light on the cultural icons; 'David Bowie' exhibition held in 2013 explored Bowie's collaborations with artists and designers in the fields of fashion and art, 'Grace Kelly – Style Icon' exhibition in 2010 traced the most stylish actress, who is still recognized as enduring icon.

1.1. Why study art AND fashion?

The study of art needs little justification. Art has a long academic history that has been respected over centuries. Going as far back to 16th century, Giorgio Vasari wrote a book on the lives of famous artists from the scholar and collector, publishing the first edition of his account of artist's lives, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*in 1550[1]. He is considered to be the first art historian and often referred as the "father of art history," offering a key-source book on Italian Renaissance art. Vasari charted the innovations and improvements in painting by Italian artists from the fourteenth century to his own time, using the word "rinascita," 'rebirth,' to describe the process which now being referred as "renaissance[2]." Amongst more recent works, Helen Gardner's *Art Through the Ages* has already sold more than two million copies, and Ernst Gombrich's *The Story of Art* remains as

[1] *Le vite de piu eccellenti architetti, pittor, et scultori*, first published in 1550; a second, enlarged edition appeared in 1568.
[2] Mackrell, Dr Alice. *Art and Fashion: The Impact of Art on Fashion and Fashion on Art.* (London: Batsford, 2005.), 7.

the most famous and bestselling introduction to art, translated into over 35 languages[3]. These books offer comprehensive views on art history and the interpretation of art, and it is still currently used as a required text for introductory courses in art history in many universities. Other example includes distinguished art critic such as Robert Hughes, also publishing *The Shock of the New*, an illustrated book on history of modern art[4]. As the old studies shows, art has been classified as one of the classic subject to learn, and respectfully researched as "a continuous weaving and changing of traditions in which each work refers to the past and points to the future.[5]"

On the other hand, compared to art, fashion has only recently been recognized as an academic field, and in various places is still not fully accepted as a respectable academic discipline. Traditionally, understanding fashion was the province of dress curators and historians who where interested in categorizing the particular features of apparel and changing forms of dress[6]. There is an old example of publication on fashion history, Auguste Racinet's *Le Costume historique*[7]. This book was originally published in France between 1876 and 1888, and it depicted costumes, dress, and styles in the end of the nineteenth century. Containing nearly 500 plates of costume images, yet it is not scholarly or academically researched. In 1899, an economist, Thorstein Veblen analyzed the fashionable in economical perspective and argued as a behavior to display wealth and power through "conspicuous consumption" and "conspicuous leisure.[8]" And in recent years, Roland Barthes also articulates the fashion magazine industry in link to economics. Valuable though these

[3] Gardner, Helen. *Art Through the Ages: an introductory to tis history and significance.* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1926) Gombrich, Ernst. The Story of Art. (New York: Phaidon Press Inc, 1950)
[4] Hughes, Robert. The shock of the new: art and the century of change. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991)
[5] Ibid, cover page.
[6] Craik, Jennifer. *Fashion: The key concepts.* (New York: Berg, 2009), 8.
[7] Racinet, Auguste. *Complete Costume History.* (China: Taschen, 2012)
[8] Veblen, Thorstein. *The theory of the leisure class.* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1992)

early studies and publications have been, it did not address the significance of fashion in factors that shape cultural continuity and change.

The great difference between art and fashion is that fashion is strongly linked to consumption. Classified as a commercial activity, fashion has been a target to be decried, regarded as ephemeral, trivial and frivolous. In consumer culture, people often take their identity from the value of the goods they purchase as much as from social values. However, in this past decade, there is no doubt that fashion is becoming an increasingly significant part of the study of culture. Not only as a consuming activity, fashion is certainly a cultural activity that marks the age. Lars Svendsen offers an engaging analysis of fashion in *Fashion: A Philosophy*[9]. Drawing upon the writings of Adam Smith and Roland Barthes, he explores fashion as both a historical phenomenon and a philosophy of aesthetics. He also traces the connection between fashion and consumerism, and the evolving fashion with art, politics and philosophy as motivation behind the constant pursuit of the new.

Hence, combination studies of Art and Fashion are rare. The striking aspect of art and fashion is that both are visually available, and studying them together enhances our understanding of cultural evolution. Both fashion and art construct imaginary worlds, using a language of style to invigorate beliefs, perceptions and ideas. And as both are primary sources, people can study those ideas by actually looking at the remaining clothing, paintings, and photographs.

There is no doubt that there has always been a synergetic relationship between Fashion and Art. Since the late twentieth century, the art world has embraced fashion as a legitimate art form, thus fashion is coming close to be acknowledged as a primary artistic

[9] Svendsen, Lars. *Fashion: A Philosophy.*

form as well as an aesthetic realm.

1.2. Two-Way Cultural Processes

Art and Fashion are usually seen as one way, where Fashion influences Art in a simple way: fashionable dress often finds itself represented in art. An art historian, Debra Mancoff, for example, has recently explored the influence of fashion in impressionist paintings in the late nineteenth century. In *Fashion in Impressionist Paris*, she analyzes impressionist artists such as James Tissot who depicted sense of contemporary life of the fashionable women in Paris[10]. Painters such as Monet, Renoir, Manet were inspired by the cosmopolitan life in Paris were men and women dressed appropriately for life in and around the capitol of modernity.

However, this research argues for the possibility of a two-way cultural process between art and fashion. For this, one good example is Kimono, which found exposure to European publics initially via paintings, since it was an external artifact. In fact, its adoption as fashion was in large part a result of an artistic sensibility on the part of the European elite. Exposed via Art first, the Kimono's cultural journey followed back to costume and fashion in alien lands.

This study fits the recent understanding of Fashion as one form of communication. Theoretical studies have been published on this topic. In *Fashion, Culture, and Identity*, Fred Davis argues that fashion takes role as communication, and that the individual preference reflects deeper social and cultural forces, which is characterized by tensions over gender roles,

[10] Mancoff, Debra N. *Fashion in Impressionist Paris*. (London: Merrell Publishers, 2012)

social status, and the expression of sexuality[11]. Herbert Blumer describes fashion in context of social and economic change stating, "any area of social life that is caught in continuing change is open to the intrusion of fashion.[12]" In this perspective, fashion serves as a marker in which to express the complex world of culture and society. Instead of adapting clothes to the needs of everyday life and movement it requires, clothing has been one of the tools to satisfy the tastes of the buyers.

The interweaving of the worlds of fashion and art was especially pronounced in Paris during the period 1910-1940[13]. Famed French couturier Paul Poiret once noted, "I have always liked painters. It seems to me that we are in the same trade and that they are my colleagues," As another example, in 1937, Elsa Schiaparelli designed a "lobster dress" in collaboration with the surrealist painter Salvador Dali. Schiaparelli's designs ranged from Art Deco, through Cubism, to Surrealism, bringing modern art to fashion.

Indeed, not only collaborating, there has been many times when fashion trends followed artistic trends in visual art. A painter Sonia Delaunay, who designed clothing during the 1920 to 1930, wrote an essay regarding the influence that paintings brought on her.

> Fashion, clearly influenced as it now is by painting, has to become creative… At the moment, one movement is influencing fashion as it is influencing interior design, the cinema, and all the visual arts; anything that does not submit to these new principles that artists have been seeking over the past hundred years will be outdated[14].

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[11] Davis, Fred. *Fashion, Culture, and Identity*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.
[12] Blumer, Herbert. 1968. "Fashion." *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences.* New York: Macmillan.
[13] Davis. *Fashion, Culture, and Identity.* 186.
[14] In her essay, she gives a brief outline of the artistic evolution that interested her and the fashion designers, starting from the Impressionism where she explained, "Art and Life began to approach one another." She also mentions how she is focusing on use of colors, especially inspired by Cezanne and Mattise.
Delaunay, Sonia. "The Influence of Painting on Fashion," *Bulletin d'Etudes philosophiques et Scientifiques pour l'examen des tendances nouvelles.* (Paris: 1927) translated in Stern, Radu. *Against Fasion: Clothing as Art, 1850-1930.* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004) 183.

Visual art is a world of imaginary, which can be defined in ideological, philosophical, and moral terms, and it certainly has become to be an inspiration for the fashion designers in terms of their original construction in garment and color scheme. Influenced by such ideas and aesthetics, there have been many examples where fashion designers develop their creation in influence of art, and Kimono in west is one of them.

1.3. My Questions and Organization

This research paper consists of three main parts, The Kimono: the Cultural History, K Kimono in Western Art, 1800-1900, and Kimono in Fashion.

Chapter 1, "The Kimono: the Cultural History," explores the process of the evolution of Kimono until the seventeenth century. Going as far back to the seventh century, it analyzes the social and cultural signification that Kimono wearing represented in Japan. A number of canonical works have been identified and comprehensive studies have been published on clothing and the textile history of the pre-modern Momoyama and Edo eras. Analyzing these studies, this chapter chronicles the motifs, dye colors and design compositions popular during each particular year, and lay them on social context of gender. Furthermore, shifting its focus to the West, it examines how the West perceived kimono when it first arrived into their hands, and it analyzes its social and cultural meanings through existing paintings.

Chapter 2, "Kimono in Western Art: 18^{th} – 19^{th} century," traces the kimono's journey to the Netherlands, Britain, Europe and America from eighteenth century through the end of nineteenth century. During Edo period, Japan evolved from a relatively secluded confederation into a national polity, extensively engaged in international commerce and

geopolitics. By analyzing the western paintings and prints in this period, this chapter explores the shifts in the relationship between the kimono and the wearer and illustrates how kimono was identified, whether as a real garment or as an image. Moreover, it follows into examination of European elite's perspective of kimono, and the relationship of the new idea of kimono, as well as the pre-exitisting western ideas about costume, forming the idea of "undress." By analyzing the impressionsists painters, Tissot and Whistler, and their works, this chapter then identifies the process in which kimono first been aware as an exotic grament by the European elites. Kimono was then translated for certain purpose discribed in words as 'feminine,' 'domestic,' and 'erotic.'

Chapter 3. "Kimono in Fashion," focuses on the transition of kimono from art into fashion. It traces the transition of kimono in which to explored and reinvented into forms of fashion with questions such as who, how and why. It specifically puts attention to Mariano Fortuny and Paul Poiret as two significant fashion designers who contributed to make the transition of kimono into fashion. This chapter then explores the subsequent history of kimono until to the modern fashion, illustrate how kimono shifted in its social context as to indicate the more liberal and practical statement of women's wear.

2. The Kimono: Cultural History

2.1. Origins

The origin of Kimono goes as far back as to the seventh century, when the nascent Japanese imperial court adopted styles of robes and court clothing from the Chinese. Chinese culture from Sui and Tang dynasties provided the model of civilization for Japan and aristocratic clothing styles was among the first things that Japanese rulers borrowed. Men and women wore a similar upper body garment and ceremonial skirt, and beneath this skirt, men wore pants and women wore another long skirt called *mo*[15]. During Nara period (710-194), Japanese adopted rules for court dresses explicitly based on those of the official Tang clothing codes. It was then that the code specified that all robes should be crossed left side over right, which continues to stays as etiquette for Kimono wearers today[16]. Moreover, it was during this period the first divergence appeared in men's and women's upper-body garment: men upheld the traditional round-necked, narrow-sleeved style from Sui dynasty, and women adopted the crossover neckline worn by Tang ladies[17]. These two types of robe referred as *agekubi* and *tarikubi*, and for the next several hundred years this gender distinction held.

After Emperor Kammu decided to build a new capital in the beginning of Heian period and move the court to Kyoto, Japan closed its doors to direct outside influence, turning to their own artistic pursuits. The elegant formality of the Heian period (794-1185) brought some masterpiece in Japanese literature, such as *Genji Monogatari*, which is claimed to be

[15] Liza Dalby, *Kimono: Fashioning Culture*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 27.
[16] Ibid, 27-28.
[17] 橋本澄子『図説着物の歴史』（河出書房新社、2005）70.

the world's first novel, written by a court lady, Murasaki Shikibu. The tale describes the colorful ensemble of robes worn by the female heirs of Prince Genji's attention[18].

Fig 1: 五衣・唐衣・（十二単）賀陽宮敏子妃着用, 1928, 文化学園服飾博物館

Clothing began to reflect not only gender but also age, ceremony, class, and place. With wider width and sleeves, women attired colored layers of silk *uchigi* often to express seasons; this multilayered silk was called the *jyuni-hitoe* (Fig. 1)[19]. Hidden beneath the *jyuni-hitoe* was the *kosode*, a simple garment worn close to the body[20].

The Heian period was followed by an era of warfare dominated by the samurai class. The courtly luxurious kimono was replaced by more practical and movable clothing.

[18] Eicher, Joanne B. *Berg encyclopedia of world dress and fashion, vol.6, East Asia.* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 355.
[19] 橘本, 図説着物の歴史, 71-72
[20] Ibid., 72.

During Kamakura period (1185-1333), men of the warrior class wore clothing consisted of kimonoed top and short trousers, called *hitatare*. Warriors wore an intricate suit of armor over the hitatare[21]. Leaving a little of the Heian courtly style, women focused on rather practical aspects in attire.

Fig 2: 表着　小葵地鳳凰文二重織, 鎌倉時代, 国宝, 神奈川鶴岡八幡宮蔵

By Muromachi period (1392-1573), reducing the outer garments, women ceased wearing *hakama* and *mo*, and instead started to use *kosode* as the major item of dress (Fig. 2)[22]. As a period followed by the long lasting fights, the Muromachi culture was filled with sense of joy and release from the terminated war. The dying and weaving of the *kosode* were under influences of foreign textile technology such as Portugal and Spain, thus became more novel

[21] Dalby, *Kimono*, 34.
[22] Ibid., 36.

with bright coloring and new designs (Fig. 3)[23].

Fig 3: 白地草花肩裾模様縫箔, 桃山時代, 重要文化財, 東京国立博物館蔵

Distinctive *kosode* style was developed such as Keicho style (1596-1615), which marked the golden age of luxurious *kosode* costumes. Keicho style incorporated a combination of abstract and representational motifs as well as bold geometric compositions done in contrasting colors, and this style leads to the subsequent era.

The three-hundred years of peace and another solitude came along in Japan. During the Edo period (1603-1868), the rise of the merchant class brought vitality and energy. The social shift from the era of the warrior to the era of the merchant artisan was reflected in clothing both by the appearance of design aesthetic and the growth of a consumerist

[23] 橋本, 図説着物の歴史, 75.

mentality toward clothing as fashion. The textile merchants began to publish design sample books called *hinagata-bon* from which customers could choose and order a robe. *Hinagata-bon* was published from 1666 until 1820. New books were created and distributed as styles of *kosode* changed, and this Edo-version of fashion book contributed to the increasing demand for silk *kosode* robes[24].

The vital energy in Edo enhanced the design and patterns of *kosode* as well. Then, *kosode* became as a canvas incorporating novel abstract patterns and sense of colors, which differs largely from the uniform and plain designs of *kosode* in the middle ages. A new technique of silk dying called *yuzen* provided the technical means to create detailed and painterly pictorial themes, expanding the width of expression in *kosode* design (Fig. 4).

Fig 4: 染分縮緬地源氏物語文様友禅染繍小袖, 江戸時代中期, 丸紅株式会社蔵

[24] Van Assche, Annie, ed. *Fashioning Kimono: Art Deco and Modernism in Japan*. (Milan: 5 Continents Editions), 16.

The characteristic of *kosode* in early-Edo period is called *Jinashi*, meaning "ground-less"; the patterns and embroidery covered almost all the fabric. In Kanbun era (1661-1673), motifs were drawn in large scale, placed asymmetrically in diagonal from shoulder across sleeve and down to hem[25]. Japanese words were embroidered on top of patterned *kosode* as motifs from classical literature, reflecting the intellectual tastes of the townspeople[26]. In the following Genroku era (1688-1704), *kosode* robe designs showed a shift from an asymmetrical composition placed on either side of the upper half of the robe, to a symmetrical one placed on the lower half. The Genroku style is said to represent the full maturation of the *kosode*, and it continues to influence kimono styles today[27].

Except for brief encounter with European missionaries and traders in the 1500s, Japan remained insulated from the outside world until the late nineteenth century. Shortly after commodore Matthew Perry's arrival in Yokohama in 1853, the Tokugawa shogunate was overthrown in 1868, thus marking the end of the Edo period. The following Meiji period began with the restoration of the emperor as the leader of nation and started to build a modern military system. Japan's quest for modernization was led with the term *bunmei kaika*, or "civilization and enlightenment," which implied that the West was superior in material culture, military might, and technology. Japan began to participate in the World Expositions, which provided opportunities to represent Japan to the West and allowed Japan to learn about significant developments occurring in the West. In dress, although kimono continued to be the main style of dress in Japan until the late nineteenth century, the Meiji government started to recommend Western-style clothing as the Emperor and Empress appearing in Western

[25] Dalby, 39.
[26] 伊藤　佐智子, *The Kimono: History & Style*. (Japan: Pie Books, 2011) 90.
[27] Van Assche, ed. *Fashioning Kimono*, 16.

clothing in public[28].

2.2. Social Function of Kimono

While kimono form is rather simple, the culture surrounding it and the social function that it serves are complex. A person accustomed to the culture of kimono knows at a glance the gender, age, and social standing of the wearer, as well as the season and the occasion. For instance, a kimono made of *rinzu*, or a soft, figured silk satin, and decorated with *yuzen*, or hand-painted rice-paste resist-dyed patterns, with gold-wrapped thread embroidery, would be worn semi-formally by a woman. A somber-colored kimono made of *tsumugi*, or an expensive, high-grade fabric made with hand-spun raw silk, would be worn as everyday wear for social visits by a middle-aged man or woman of good socioeconomic standing. And an indigo and white cotton kimono with *kasuri* patterns formed by selectively resist-dyeing warp and welt thread before weaving would be worn casually around the home or in one's immediate neighborhood.

As *kosode* became the every-day wear for all, by Edo period, it started to signify status by differentiating its sleeve-lengths, obi, and patterns. The four-tiered ranking system established by the military government in the early seventeenth century positioned samurai at the top, supported by farmers who tilled the land and provided daily staples. Artisans who crafted material goods placed third in this hierarchy, and the merchants who traded in those products occupied the lowest recognized social stratum[29]. The feudalistic society was apparent in the width of obi and its style of tying. By the early seventeenth century, the law

[28] Eicher. *Berg Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Overview of Japan," 348.
[29] Eicher, *Berg Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Kimono", 356.

called *Buke-shohatto* was issued to classify the clothing according to classes[30].

Another important aspect in kimono that possesses social meaning are the sleeves. Sleeves have always been a main focus of kimono, as to proclaim differences in age, gender, and formality by their length. For example, the long sleeve was called *furisode(振り袖)*, meaning swinging sleeve, and this lengthening of sleeve was *kosode*'s first major stylistic ramification. '美しいふり袖土へもふちつと.' This is a senryu of the Edo period. It depicts the scene where hemline of the *furisode*, almost touching the ground. *Furisode* was usually worn by a young woman. The length of the sleeves would indicate the woman's age, and in some cases, marital status[31]. The longer the sleeves are, the younger the woman.

Along with the sleeve, *obi(帯)* is another part of *kosode* that evolved and widened the variety of *kosode* design. From mid-Edo period, the feudalistic characteristic of the society was reflected on more types and widths of the *obi*. When the obi first appeared during the Momoyama era, it was narrow just to serve as a string to hold a woman's *kosode* together. It was during Edo period that the *obi* grew in size and its style of tying diversified. During the early 1600s men and women alike wore a 7-centimeters *obi*, yet by 1680, women wore an *obi* twice that width. Fifty years later the woman's *obi* was about 25-centimeters wide, and by 1800 an obi widened to 37-centimeters[32]. With growth in size, the *obi* became to serve not only as a functional belt but also as a major decoration of the attire. The rise of the *obi* followed by number of variation in its style of tying, and it differs by the woman's class, gender, and marriage. For example, during mid-Edo period, young unmarried women tied the *obi* at their back and middle-aged women tend to tie in the front[33].

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[30] 橋本,『図説着物の歴史』, 80-81.
[31] Eicher. *Berg Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Overview of Japan," 346.
[32] Dalby, *Kimono,* 45.
[33] 橋本澄子, 『着物の歴史』.

Fig 5 : 菱川師宣《見返り美人図》江戸時代・元禄年間（1688～1704）前期, 東京国立博物館蔵

The beauty painting genre, *bijin-ga（美人画）*, is a featured part of Edo period *ukiyo-e* and Meiji period and later modern *nihon-ga(日本画)* painting. Painters created their own idealized images of women, differing greatly by period and artist. For instance, 『見返り美人図』 is one of the most well-known *bijin-ga* in Japan (Fig. 5). It captures the moment when the woman turns around while she walks from right to left, swinging her sleeves lightly. Although only half of her face is shown, Moronobu Hishikawa has drawn with more attention on the woman's body and the kimono in a way to emphasize the posture and its fabric. The

scarlet colored kimono made of *rinzu* that is weaved with floral patterns is decorated with embroidery of cherry-blossoms and chrysanthemums. This *bijin-ga* is rather a fashion icon, certainly portraying not only the ideal image of women yet the ideal kimono and fabric. Painters have continued to pursue the depiction of the beauty of the garments worn and the elegant refinement of gesture and pose, thus showing a significant hints of women in society and the social function of kimono.

Through the way to modernization, the Meiji went to great lengths to define the role of women. The *kimono* became enlisted in rounded idea of the Japanese women. Men were expected to wear suits and women to wear kimonos. Women were expected to act under the motto of 'good wife, wise mother' (良妻賢母), which affected greatly to the role of women in the society.

2.3. The Kimono in the West, 1500-1800: images and realities

Edo period, as it is mentioned above, was the period when Japan took a choice to isolate itself from the world, yet by limiting direct trade and exchanges in small peninsula, Japan allowed trades with the Netherlands[34]. As mentioned in the introduction, the period between latter half of the seventeenth century and the early nineteenth century is concerned as the first phase in understanding the respond of the West to Japanese art. In this chapter, it shows how Dutch incorporate kimono into their lifestyles during this period.

It was not until 1543 that the West first visited Japan; it was the Portuguese sailors landed on one of the small southern islands[35]. Beginning in the mid-sixteenth century,

[34] サントリー美術館『オランダ美術と日本-1680~1991』(サントリー美術館, 1991) 11.
[35] Collcutt, Martin. "Cicra 1492 in Japan: Columbus and the Legend of Golden Cipangu," *Cicra 1492: Art in*

Europeans – particularly the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch – actively traded with Japan, importing silk textiles among other Japanese goods. Along with these traders came Catholic missionaries, who successfully converted thousands of Japanese to Christianity. Alarmed by the intrusion of Western religion and culture into traditional Japanese life, Tokugawa Iemitsu, the ruler, declared it illegal for the Japanese to ravel to other countries. By 1640, Japan's borders were virtually closed to the outside world, and only the Dutch East India Company was allowed to conduct trade business in Japan[36].

Fig 6: 阿蘭陀船入津之図, 1800. 国立国会図書館. ＜寄別 7-5-2-2＞

The Tokugawa Shogunate ordered the Dutch factory to move to *Deshima*, a man-made island built in Nagasaki made in 1634. This island, which was formed by digging a canal through a small peninsula, remained as the only place of direct trade and exchange

the Age of Exploration .(Washington, D.C.: Yale University Press, 1992), 305-307.

[36] Stevens, Rebecca A. T. and Wada Iwamoto, Yoshiko. *The Kimono Inspiration: Art and Art-to-Wear in America.* (Washington, D.C.: Pomegranate Artbooks, 1996) 16.

between Japan and the foreign countries during the Edo period. Originally built to house Portuguese traders, it was used by the Dutch as a trading post from 1641 until 1853. As part of *sakoku(鎖国)*, the self-imposed isolationist policy, a Dutch ship was allowed to dock once a year with strict policy on the goods that could be traded as well as their quantity and price (Fig. 6)[37]. In this circumstance, though the trading was minimal, the Netherlands imported large quantities of Japanese porcelain and lacquer ware[38].

Japan learned about culture and sciences from the Netherlands as the only window on the world outside. Scholars established the *Rangaku*, the Dutch studies in various fields such as medicine, industrial technology, geography, etc. and a number of outstanding scholars and artists emerged from this background. In tern, such isolation that Japan ruled expanded Japan's exotic aura for the Dutch. Due to the limited number of import goods, the allure of Japanese art and culture intensified, and the few Japanese objects that came to the West via the Dutch were highly prized[39].

[37] The print shows a Dutch ship firing a signal gun in Nagasaki harbor. The writing in Dutch in the margin above says "Scene of a Dutch ship arriving in Nagasaki harbor." "Dutch Factory on Dejima." *Japan-Netherlands Exchange in the Edo Period*. 2009. National Diet Library. Accessed on 9 Nov, 2014. <http://www.ndl.go.jp/nichiran/e/s1/s1_2.html>

[38] Chisaburoh F. Yamada. *Mutual Influences between Japanese and Western Arts.* (Tokyo: 大塚巧社, 1968) 10.

[39] Stevens. *The Kimono Inspiration.* 16.

Fig 7: Jan Steen, *Portrait of Gerrit Gerritsz Schouten*. 1665. Private Collection.

The influence of Japanese art to the Netherlands could be learned from the remaining paintings and textiles. This cultural exchange between Japan and the Netherlands was held two centuries earlier from the Japonisme movement, thus it provides another perspective in how Japanese art and fashion was understood in the West. Jan Steen depicts an administrator of a trading company wearing a kimono-like gown (fig. 7). The Dutch East India Company regarded the imported kimono as kimonos or *Japonsche Rocken* in Dutch, as such treasures that eight Japanese chests filled with them were given to Charles II of England in celebration of his coronation[40]. Kimono depicted in this painting is drawn in a sheen and brightening way, which tells that the fabric is made of silk. It also contains some patterns in

[40] Bianca M. du Mortier. "'Japanosche Rocken' in Holland in the 17th and 18th centuries" *Dresstudy 21*. (1992) 7-9.

gold and silver. In the Netherlands, kimono was worn especially or mostly by the wealthy men in use of room-wear or gown[41]. Although most of these men were not aware of the Japanese nuances, such as the age appropriateness of certain colors or the literary allusions represented in the surface decoration, they valued the garment's beauty and rarity. Hence, the imported kimonos became associated with wealth, high social status, and sophisticated taste in the West.

Fig 8: Frans Hals, *Paulus Verschuur.* 1606–1667. oil on canvas. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

It was the mixture of exoticism, functionality and indication that led these rich men to adopt kimono into their private life. Certainly Dutch men experienced a sense of exoticism through coming in touch with this new form of clothing. It is not surprising to consider kimono as a gown since its form was totally different from the conservative fashion in the

[41] Peck, Amelia. *Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500-1800.* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013) 261.

West during sixteenth and seventeenth century. As Frans Hals depicted in many of his painting, men in seventeenth century Europe wore clothing colored mainly in monochrome with large collar (Fig. 8). Thus it is understandable that kimono functioned as a clothing to offer mobility and comforts for these men, which lead to adopt as a room wear.

During this period Japanese art were incorporated into the lives of Dutch and kimono were seen in the Baroque and Rococo paintings, yet it did not signify a true appreciation of the artistic value of kimono. Their attraction lay mainly in their novelty as products of a distant and exotic culture, adopting them only to indicate wealth and to experience the comfort when they wear. Thus, the understanding of Dutch toward kimono was superficial and was mostly from the unusualness and rarity of its form and functionality.

During this period, many European countries had already started to explore the East. It was in the early seventeenth century that national trading companies greatly expanded and increased the circulation of goods around the globe[42]. Prior to this expansion, Europeans consumed only limited quantities of imported textiles from the Middle and Far East. Then, the Dutch and English companies were by far the largest importers of goods, including textiles to Europe, and they were competing for acquiring the market[43]. With the absence of silk industry in the Netherlands, silk imports were indispensable for them. Despite the competence with other countries especially with Britain, as they became to be the only European country to acquire the trading permission from the Tokugawa Shogunate, it was the Dutch who first incorporated the usage of finished fabric, kimono.

The wearing of a man's oriental-style morning gown became de rigueur in Europe, and due to its popularity, special regulations were proclaimed to dissuade men from wearing

[42] Peck, Amelia. *Interwoven Globe*. 84.
[43] Ibid,. 84.

them to church[44]. Several examples of the kimono from this period remain in museum collections in Holland (Fig. 9).

Fig 9: *Man's Morning Gown (Japonsche Rock).* Japan, for the Dutch trade, 1725-75. Silk, resist-dyed and painted, silk lining. Centraal Museum.

Due to the popularity of the kimono nightgown, the Dutch responded to this demand to commission painted-cotton versions[45]. Since the supply of authentic imported Japanese kimono was limited, oriental gowns made of *indienne* (Indian chintz) help satisfy the demand. They studied the chintz production, and produced Indian chintz gowns in the

[44] In 1672, Englsih East India Company officers and soldiers serving in India were ordered to wear only "English apparel" on the Sabbath; Rule and Burnell, Jobson-Jobson: Being a Glossary of Anglo-Indian Colloquial Words and Phrases, 65.
[45] Peck, Amelia. *Interwoven Globe*. 264.

Japanese style[46]. The popularization of the chintz version of the original silk gown, still named *japonsche rock* persisted throughout the eighteenth century[47]. The kimono-like oriental gowns were called *robes de chambre d'indienne* in France, and banyans in England[48]. The typical of robes the Dutch received in the eighteenth century was made of silk with pictorial patterns.

Indeed, it is important to note that the imported kimono was used to display their masculine luxury in private yet as time progresses kimono becomes an item for woman. This fashion pattern of male to female fashion unexceptionally followed the Western fashion pattern where women were influenced by male fashion.

The elaborately embroidered silks and velvets characterizing the formal attire gradually gave way to carefully tailored "undress" garments, setting the new mindset of fashion. This casual style reflected the image of nonchalance, and its aim was to look as fashionable and powerful as possible with seemingly little effort. Kimono offered the western men to show their private luxury, and this sense of "undress" that the West understood in kimono follows to the next phase; Kimono in Western Art.

[46] In 1689, Can Rheede advised that he was sending from Pulicat six Indian chintz gowns in the Japanese style and that he could supply one thousand next year if so requested; Breukink-Peeze. *Japanese Robes: A Craze*. 56.
[47] Gorguet Ballesteros et al., Modes en miroir, 92.
[48] Fukai, Akiko. *Fashion.* 28.

3. Kimono in Western Art, 1860-1910

3.1. Roots and Ideas of Japonism

The opening of Japan to the West in 1853 after years of isolation, created the cultural phenomenon of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe, which as to called *Japonisme*. Then Japanese artworks were traded not only to the Netherlands, but to and throughout Europe. Japanese works of art became potent catalysts for new designs in many disciplines, particularly affecting the ceramic industry, furniture making and textile design. As in paintings, it took a significant role in Impressionism, Postimpressionism and Viennese Secessionism causing a rethinking of space and pictorial organization. It also introduced a new array of sympathetic decorative options of design in the pan-European phenomenon of art nouveau.

The Impressionist artists particularly embraced this unseen and exotic imagery, thus soon incorporating its style into their works. Then the term, *Japonisme* was coined by the French critic, collector and printmaker Philippe Burty in 1872 to describe a range of European borrowings from Japanese art and the profound influence of Japanese aesthetics on Western art[49].

3.2. Exotic World of the Kimono in Western Art, 1890-1910

As we have seen, even from the earliest contacts, the Kimono was the key subject in depicting Japan in terms of a Western point of view. Except for some wealthy merchants in

[49] Mackrell. *Art and Fashion.* 86.

the Netherlands, little was known in the West of Japanese culture prior to the 1860s due to Japan's self-imposed isolation. When ukiyo-e arrived in Europe, it must have been a revelation for them. Without a doubt these images became central to forming the West's perception of Japan. While the images of landscape, nature, urban life and entertainments inspired the Western artists of that time, it was the full-color illustration of courtesans posing in their opulent layers of printed and embroidered kimono that inspired the most.

3.2.1. Tissot

Tissot had begun his artistic career as a religious history painter, noted for his fine technique and sense of realism. Tissot was an assiduous and highly competent painter, most of whose pictures are of pretty, elegant women. Yet despite the visually attractive property, his pictures mirror exactly the habits and preoccupations of the Victorian age, and many of the tensions and contradictions that lay beneath its deceptively glossy surface. As Wood states,

> The predicament of Tissot's heroines is a reflection of the ambiguous and paradoxical situation of the Victorian woman. The position of a woman of a certain social standing was that of a pretty bird in a cage – ornamental, pampered, but trapped within a rigid moral and social code. In art, she might be a femme fatale or a 'Belle Dame sans Merci', but she still had no vote; she was 'The Angel in the House', but had no right to own property; she was a goddess, but could not get a divorce[50].

It is true in one sense to understand Tissot as a fashion-plate artist, yet if one begins to look closely at his works, it is apparent that he depicted the life around him in highly personal and

[50] Christpher Wood, *Tissot. 12.*

individual way. Indeed, Japanese motifs including kimono were one of the tools, which he used to convey the unease situation that western women faced in the society.

Fig 10: James Tissot, *Young Lady on a Boat,* oil on canvas, 1870, Private collection.

The prototype of his female heroine, the forlorn, passive victim, was established at the very beginning of his career, with the Faust and Marguerite series. In *Young Lady in a Boat* (1870), a woman wearing an elegant dress is captured in a relaxed pose on a boat. Tissot particularly devotes attention to the subject's face, propped on a hand, the little finger touching the corner of her mouth (Fig. 10). With this kind of depiction, this attractive woman is drawn with seductive connotation. The pug behind her not only a sign of wealth and status, but the male property; the watchful eye of the pug suggests the presence of the husband.

Like Whistler, Degas and Manet, Tissot was also immediately drawn to Japanese art following the London Exhibition of 1862. By 1864, He was already a well-known collector of Japanese art, as is recorded in a letter from Rossetti to his mother in November 1864, in

which he wrote that he had visited a shop in search of Japanese objects. Yet he noted that

> I have bought very little – only four Japanese books…I went to his Japanese shop but found all the costumes were being snapped up by a French artist, Tissot, who it seems is doing three Japanese pictures, which the mistress of the shop described to me as the three wonders of the world, evidently in her opinion quite throwing Whistler into the shade[51].

Fig 11: James Tissot, *La Japonaise au Bain*, oil on canvas, 1864, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon.

[51] Rossetti to Mrs. Gabriel Rossetti, Doughty and Wahl 1965, 527, no.563. quoted in MacDonald, Margaret F., , Galassi, Susan Grace, and Ribeiro, Aileen. *Whistler, Women, & Fashion*. (New York: Yale University Press, 2003), 62.

The Japanese Girl Bathing was Tissot's first attempt at a Japanese subject (Fig. 11). It depicted a nude Western woman wearing an open *kosode* and set in an artificial Japanese-style setting with *shoji* sliding doors, folding screens and porcelains. Indeed, a level of artifice can be seen through his paintings. First, despite the title *La Japonaise au Bain*, the woman drawn is undeniably Western, accessorized with exceed oriental ornaments, which might be drawn from the Japanese dolls. The posture and facial expression of this woman is indeed very seductive, evoking erotic connotations. Second, as for the background, a hanging lantern, cherry-blossoms, a lily, and wooden interior with *shoji* likely to reflect the Japanese-ness, yet with the woman depicted together, it is very likely that Tissot drew this painting with third point of view. Third, according to Tissot, the element of fantasy in kimono is overwhelming female. Use of kimono in this painting is to state the undress, which makes this painting pornographic in some extent. Exoticism conjures fantasy. Thus, it is most likely that this painting was drawn form Tissot's imagination of Japanese.

Christopher Wood criticizes Tissot's depiction stating, "the Japanese element merely reflects a fashion in western taste and shows no understanding of Japanese art itself[52]." To this statement, it is clear that Wood's critique misses a point. It is less likely that Tissot drew this painting to show the correct knowledge of Japanese art. In fact, this painting was to show how the kimono and Japan were perceived in the West. As it can be seen in this painting, Japanese artifacts were perceived as exotic with the oriental sense, and kimono was the key item to express the erotic. In this way, in Tissot's painting, kimono was clearly translated for a certain purpose; to provoke feminine and erotic context.

[52] Christpher Wood, *Tissot,* 37.

3.2.2. Whistler

By 1863 Whistler was avidly combing the junk shops at Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Paris for oriental artifacts. Then, with the increasing demand for Japanese artifacts, specialist shops were established in London and Paris, which catered fro artists, writers and other enthusiastic *japonistes*. Farmer and Rogers Oriental Watehouse opened in 1862 in Regent street, London and its Oriental Manager, Arthur Lasenby Liberty, who shared the ideals of the Aesthetes, opened his own renowned firm, also selling Japanese goods[53]. By 1864, Whistler, Rossetti, and Tissot were competing with one another in collecting Oriental robes. Not only as a painter, Whistler was also a designer of interiors, picture frames and costumes. He assimilated the fashions of his time as an integral component of his art, which describes his craze for everything Japanese that was sweeping Paris and London[54].

As he appreciated beauty and style in women, his sitters represent a cross-selection of the fashionable world, including elite society women, actresses, artists, the aristocracy, members of his family and the demimonde. His depiction of women shed light on the change in the status of women in this period and the role costume played in the presentation of the self and social status.

[53] Mackrell, Dr Alice. *Art and Fashion*, 89.
[54] Ibid,. 84.

Fig 12: James Abbott McNeil Whistler, *Rose and Silber: The Princess from the Land of Porcelain*, oil on canvas, 1863-1864. Freer Gallery of Art Smithsonian Institution.

In his painting *Rose and Silver: the Princess from the Land of Porcelain* (1862-1864), Whistler posed a woman in the manner of a courtesan from a Japanese print (Fig. 12). Her kimono is tied loosely with a wide red sash, not in the tightly constructed way that was usually worn in Japan. Whistler overlaps the kimono correctly from the left to right,

demonstrating his accurate knowledge of kimono. The woman holds a fan and stands on a Chinese rug before a folding Japanese screen. The woman in Whistler's painting is named Christine Spartali, yet neither the painter nor the viewer are not concerned with who she is. As the title implies, she is a part of a still life exotic oriental objects. It is as if Whistler depicted kimono women as decorative subjects, reflecting the prevailing attitude towards women as part of men's home and property. Existing as passing objects, in this painting Christine is drawn especially for the male gaze.

Fig 13：James Abbott McNeil Whistler, *Caprice in Purple and Gold No 2 –The Golden Screen*, oil on canvas, 1864. Freer Gallery of Art Smithsonian Institution.

Similar analysis can be made in *Caprice in Purple and Gold No 2 –The Golden Screen* (1864) (Fig. 13). In this painting, this European woman is drawn in a sumptuous kimono, anointed in decorative silks, which sits beside woodblock prints and folding screen.

Again, set in indoor scene, woman is quietly looking into the Japanese woodblock prints. The Japanese motifs are used to demonstrate the ideal image of the European women, who stays at home and quietly studies the aesthetics of the East. Loosely tied kimono and the flowing silk show soft and somewhat erotic atmosphere, representing as if this woman is one of the aesthetic objects owned by man.

The women in Whistler's painting have been considered as James Laver describes them as "scarcely creatures of flesh and blood at all, yet in their sophisticated fashion, infinitely seductive[55]." His detailed analysis on Whistler's portraits are documented,

> As the light fades and the shadows deepened, all petty and exacting details vanish, everything trivial disappears, and I see things as they are in great strong masses; the buttons are lost, but the garment remains; the garment is lost but the sitter remains; the sitter is lost but the shadow remains. And that night cannot efface from the painter's imagination[56].

Whistler's own interpretation of women and fashion is depicted in elements of blurring and use of color scheme.

As women fought for and achieved more independence and rights, men felt threatened by the "nouvelle femme," who was regarded as a threat to the bourgeois family. In Europe, symbolist paintings were expressions of these fears, and in America, fear was drawn through depicting women in domestic scenes[57]. Instead of independence, a strong will, and self-love, traits such as domestic, submissive, and loyal were admired and written as so in most of the male-authored literature of the turn of the century. Kimono was indeed very suitable to express this idea of domestic woman and the male sovereignty that resumed in

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[55] Laver, James. *Whistler*. London, 1951. 235. Quoted in MacDonald. *Whistler, Women and Fashion.* 43.
[56] Eddy, Arthur Jerome. *Recollections and Impressions of James A. McNeill Whistler.* Philadelphia, 1903. Quoted in MacDonald. *Whistler, Women and Fashion.* 43
[57] Virginia M. Allen. *The Femme Fatale: Erotic Icon.* (Troy: The Whitston Co., 1983) 3.

many of the European countries. As above shows, Whistler's women in kimonos all appear in intimate, interior scenes. These settings are closed to the outside world and the looseness of the garments suggests a dressing gown worn at home in sense of privacy, and it is unlikely to claim this setting to be coincidental. Whistler proficiently transformed kimono to be a cultural marker to present the prevailing notion of women in western society. Thus, kimono depicted in western paintings had greater impact than just to depict the exoticism but to state propaganda in term of ideal image and role of women in the western society.

3.3. "Others" and "Otherness" in 19th and 20th Century Art

Among the many specialist shops for Japanese artifacts, the most popular was Madame Desoye's shop in the rue de Rivoli, opened in 1862, a haunt not only of Tissot and Whistler, but also of Gautier Baudelaire, the Goncourt Brothers, Emile Zola, Manet, Monet, Degas and Alfred Stevens, who were all collectors[58]. In 1878, the Gazette des Beaux-Arts mentioned how sundry objects from enamels to embroidered satins fund their way into 'a merchant's shop an immediately left for artists' studios or writers' studies', and naming numerous artists and writers who collected Japanese artifacts, the article concludes that 'the movement was established, the amateurs followed'[59].

[58] Mackrell, *Art and Fashion*. 91.
[59] Edmund de Waal, 'Mme Swann at Home', *A la recherché du temps perdu, vol 1.*, C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, trans. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989), 662.

Fig 14: Claude Monet, *La Japonaise*, 1876, oil on canvas, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Early in his career, Monet painted *La Japonaise* (1876), showing his first wife, Camille, dressed in a vibrant red kimono. Monet depicted his naturally dark-haired wife as a blonde *parisienne* surrounded by the exotic objects such as the elaborately embroidered kimono, a flock of sixteen paper fans, and tatami (Fig. 14). The folding fan in Camille's hand is decorated in red, white, and blue, which are the colors of the French flag; as a reminder that this woman is less *La Japoniase* yet *La Parisienne*. Although there is less sense of

eroticism in this painting, it leaves no doubt about Monet's interpretation of the geisha or a courtesan in a Japanese print.

Fig 15: Robert Raid, *The Violet Kimono,* 1910-1911, oil on canvas, National Museum of American Art.

Robert Raid also painted a number of kimono pictures in the early twentieth century. In *The Violet Kimono* (1910-1911), a woman is seated in an open kimono at her dressing table, arranging flowers in a vase. She is facing back at the viewer, reflected in the mirror, emphasizing that she is alone inside the house (Fig. 15). This painting also convinces the women at the age that they should stay domestic and submissive.

Fig 16: William Merritt Chase, *The Kimono*, 1895, oil on canvas, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza.

William Chase depicted women as part of the oriental objects (Fig. 16). This painting is notably similar to *Caprice in Purple and Gold No 2: The Golden Screen* that Whistler had painted almost thirty years earlier. Like Whistler, Chase connotes the prevailing attitude toward women as part of men's property, and his influence from Whistler is evident in the pose of the figure and composition. Chase was also an active collector of Oriental goods, influenced by Whistler with whom he spent the summer of 1885 in London[60].

As the paintings are taken as evidence, women in the cosmopolitan European and American art did not work outside the home, and they were never shown cleaning or even supervising household work. As Van Hook, the author of *Angels of Art* states, Women's

[60] 'William Merritt Chase, The Kimono,' *Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.* (Madrid: Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza.) 21, Dec. 2014. <http://www.museothyssen.org/en/thyssen/ficha_obra/340>

virginal purity was essential to the American self-image[61]. European value on role of women is likely to be similar as well. They were not represented as actively engaged in philanthropic and reform activities, and instead they were quietly sewing or pondering.

The supporting evidence from the existing paintings shows that kimono was indeed an important element in creative expression when the Western artists responded to its symbolic associations rather than to tis form as a garment. These associations were varied and often contradictory. Kimono symbolized the exotic allure of the Orient, or it was proof of artistic taste. Indeed, the context that kimono signified was more than its exoticism. For many artists like Tissot, Whistler, Raid and Chase used the kimono almost as kind sovereignty of propaganda, in which to pursue the ideal European women under the culture of male sovereignty.

[61] Van Hook, Bailey. *Angels of Art: Women and Art in American Society, 1876-1914.* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) 108.

4. Kimono in Fashion

As mentioned in previous chapter, women were treated in the same polished, precise, neutral way as their setting, and bathing them in the same gentle light, the artist equated the figures and the props, as precious aesthetic objects. Indeed, another implication is that only women have the time and the aesthetic aptitude to appreciate the precious objects[62]. In the late nineteenth century, women were not only precious objects in paintings but also the consumers. Ann Douglas has commented that at midcentury women shifted from being economically important as producers to being consumers[63]. According to Thorstein Veblen's contemporary *Theory of the Leisure Class*, the upper-class woman, another of man's possessions furthers his prestige not only by her idleness but by her consumption of other luxury objects.

4.1. Adopting Japonism

According to the *Le Grand Robert* dictionary, the word "kimono" had been in use in France since 1876, and it became more common around 1900[64]. Since around this time, the term kimono was frequently used in women's magazines, and soon the use of its word spread throughout the West, acquiring a more general meaning of "loungewear" along the way[65]. *Au Mikado*, a boutique located on the Avenue de l'Opéra, created a brand which they called *Kimono Sada Yacco*, and frequently advertised its kimono-style loungewear on the pages of the magazine *Femina*[66]. Furthermore, dressing gowns called kimono began to appear in the

[62] Van Hook. *Angels of Art*, 107.
[63] Douglas, Ann. *The Feminization of American Culture.* (New York: Avon Books, 1977) 77.
[64] *Le grand Robert de la langue française.* (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2005)
[65] Van Assche. *Fashioning Kimono*. 52.
[66] Au Mikado sold in France through catalogue orders up until World War I; Ibid., 52.

catalogues of Sears, Roebuck & Co. from around 1903[67]. These documentations show that the kimono was one the way to become distinct from the original Japanese sense of the word, and it was gradually absorbed into the general Western society. Here, kimono signified loungewear, a robe or gown worn casually in the house.

Fig 17: *Woman's Kimono-Style Dressing Gown with Sash for the Western market*, late nineteenth to early twentieth century. Los Angels County Museum of Art.

As for the export, modifications were made in terms of construction and motifs to suite the taste of female consumers of the West[68]. Based on modifications to the T-shaped

[67] Ibid., 53.
[68] Especially popular was the white embroidered Japanese cloth, rinzu, used in the kimono of samurai-class Japanese women at the end of the Edo period. Fukai, Akiko. *Fashion.* 284.

kimono silhouette, embroidered silk gowns embellished with motifs that were popular among the Western women; roses and cherry blossoms, butterflies and wisteria, or peacocks were common (Fig. 17)[69]. Labels placed inside the collar, such as 'S & Gump' of San Francisco or 'Sing Fat & Co.' of Los Angels, referred to the company responsible for marketing, but not necessarily manufacturing the kimono gown[70]. Japanese company, such as S. Nishimura and Takashimaya, produced kimono gowns under their own labels for export.

Fig 18: Turner, *Misses turner Court Dress Makers 151, Sloane Street London*, 1870s. The Kyoto Costume Institute[71].

[69] Milhaupt, Terry Satsuki. *Kimono: A Modern History.* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014),167.
[70] Ibid., 167.
[71] Fukai, Akiko. *Fashion.* 284.

The more modified version of dress for the Western style is shown in figure above (Fig. 18). Remaining traces of the original kimono seams can be noticed in the textile. Here, the Japanese kimono fabrics were unstitched and restructured into western style of dress. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the use of kimono gradually evolved to suit the outdoor wear; kimono initially worn as indoor wear has expanded its role for external use.

Until the turn of the twentieth century, women's fashion in the West was spectacularly restrictive, with the corset squeezing the rib cage while the crinoline and full-length hemlines restricted movement. After the French Revolution, the dynamic shift evolved from the flamboyant rococo style nurtured in the court culture to the simple style of neoclassicism[72]. Still, in the early days of the twentieth century, the female body was squeezed most tightly into corset and forced to fit the artificial S-curve of the dress, which emphasized the bust and hips. The popular at-home garments were the tea gowns with loose silhouettes, allowing women to loosen their corsets underneath[73].

In fact, the breakout of World War I accelerated the shifts in various aspects of society and culture; it demolished the old social systems and values that long controlled the western society, and the rise of powerful middle class brought a new lifestyle[74]. In this period, the role of women changed significantly as well; they stepped out of the home to participate in the society.

> To come and go as she wished, to sit in her open sports car, play tennis, and then perform the fox-trot at some thé dansant, a woman had to dispense with all unnecessary clutter. A simple combination garment had taken the place of the corset. Dresses were no longer fitted; they left the

[72] Fukai, Akiko. *Fashion: The Collection of the Kyoto Costume Institute: A History from the 18th to the 20th century. Vol. 1.* (Köln: Tashcen GmbH, 2005) 20.
[73] Ibid., *Vol. II.* 326.
[74] Ibid., 326.

body free and no longer clung tightly to the neck and arms[75].

As the society norms were challenged and new ideal form was bestowed on women, corset was no longer in need, and everyday clothing gradually attained a certain degree of functionality.

At times when haute couture designers sought their way to create new designs to lead the new shift in the society, kimono was the perfect inspiration. As a confluence of the novel movement of women and the rise of the haute couture, kimono was evolved by the designers, namely, Mariano Fortuny, Paul Poiret and Vionnet, to suit the needs of the new society. Kimono had now evolved in its symbolism; from a domestic and submissive wife of the male sovereignty to a more liberal and progressive women.

4.1.1. Fortuny

Mariano Fortuny, a painter, photographer, inventor, alchemist, architect and theatre designer achieved international fame through his innovative textile process and fashion designs. His costume design focused on the unrestrained, natural body in the classical sense, as he adored the Italian Renaissance and the great painters of Venice. Fortuny's interest in kimono was apparent in his kimono designs, which he freely appropriated and recombined to create his original works.

[75] Catalogue of the 1925 Exposition des artes Decoratifs et Industriels, Paris, Vol. IX, *la Parure,* 11-12; quoted in De Osma Guillermo. F*ortuny: Mariano Fortuny: His life and Work.* (New York: Rizzori, 1980.) 159.

Fig 19: Mariano Fortuny, *Kimono coat*, 1910s. The Kyoto Costume Institute.

Fortuny began to use silk, usually bought raw and in off-white and imported direct from China and Japan; later he added velvet, imported from Lyons[76]. Both silk and velvet were repeatedly used in his designs. In the figure above, an informal, indoor gown is shown with its pattern with butterflies and hollyhock motifs (Fig 19). The textile for this gown has the almost same design as that of Japanese cut silk velvet for kimono sashes.

As number of societies dedicated to clothing reforms in end of nineteenth century and beginning of twentieth century, Fortuny was leading designer who "wanted to create a

[76] Polan, Brenda, and Tredre, Roger. *The Great Fashion Designers.* (New York: Berg, 2009) 27.

totally new style of dress, the function of which would be to liberate the body, allow for complete freedom of movement, provide comfort and warmth, and above all, be beautiful[77].” The remaining works of Fortuny clearly indicates that kimono served as one of the catalysts for him to invent his new clothing. In other words, he elaborately converted kimono into clothing with new symbolic value.

Fig 20: Mariano Fortuny, *Silk velvet cloak over a blue and grey silk satin Delphos*. Venice, Liselotte Hohs.

In 1907, he created the loose Delphos Dress. It was worn by the dancer Isadora

[77] De Osma. *Fortuny*. 88.

Duncan, hinted at a radical shift in the sense of women's fashion[78]. The dress shown above is a gown, with dark blue velvet with polychrome stencil print (Fig 20). The lining, straight cut structure, and the sleeves resemble kimono. The garment underneath is the Delphos dress he first created in 1907. It was his classical Greek-inspired pleated dress, which was to be come one of his most famous designs. The fine silk pleats flow from the shoulder and gently surround the body. This modern and body-conscious form was a clear indication of new directions in twentieth-century fashion[79]. By 1920s, people were familiar with Mariano's dress, particularly the Delphos gowns, and "if they were not wearing them, they were certainly discussing them[80]." Lady Bonham-Carter, Miss Charlotte Ogilvy mentioned "Everybody went to Fortuny then. I think everyone I knew had a Fortuny dress.[81]"

Fortuny, perfecting his dyeing and printing techniques, experimented with all kinds of materials including linen, wool and others, yet he preferred silk and velvet, which were all directly imported from China and Japan[82]. He also searched for new color effects and wider range of designs by adopting stencils and hand-painting. Fortuny not only possessed books on Japanese designs and techniques, he also possessed a collection of *katagami*[83]. Translating into his original fashion, kimono was more than an inspiration but a key component to define Fortuny's fundamental works.

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[78] Polan, Brenda. *The Great Fashion Designers.* 7.
[79] The pleats change color in accordance with movement and the reflection of light. Fukai, Akiko. *Fashion.* 370.
[80] De Osma. *Fortuny*. 159.
[81] Mrs Ogilvy bought a black velvet cloak while she was shopping at the Palazzo Orfei in Venice, and her daughter bought a Delphos that she continued to wear for the next ten years. Haddon, Celia. 'Enduring Fashion,' *Sunday Times Magazine*, London, I March 1976.
[82] De Osma. *Fortuny.* 110.
[83] Ibid., 115.

4.1.2. Poiret

The decorative motifs and patterns of Japonism, with use of asymmetrical line, bold, flat colors and stylized organic forms, had a tremendous impact on Art Nouveau[84].

As a fashion designer known for his passion for orientalism, Paul Poiret created countless Eastern-inspired clothing. Poiret had served an apprenticeship under Jacques Doucet from 1898 to 1900, and had worked at the House of Worth in 1901, before opening his own fashion house in 1903. While still working for the House of Worth, he designed a cloak, which he called 'Confucius' (1901-02), and at this own fashion house in the rue Auber in Paris he designed a kimono coat which he called 'Révérend' (1905)[85]. One of his designs, a cloak made from black wool and cut along straight lines like the kimono, proved too simple for one of Worth's royal clients, the Russian princess Bariatinsky. She cried "What a horror; with us, when there are low fellows who run after our sledges and annoy us, we have their heads cut off, and we put them in sacks just like that.[86]" Her reaction led Poiret to open his own house in 1903.

According to costume historians Harold Koda and Andrew Bolton, Poiret's emphasis on draping rather than tailoring followed the cutting and construction principles of the "Greek chiton, the Japanese kimono, and the North African and Middle Eastern caftan.[87]" The inspiration Poiret derived from oriental clothing contributed to more physical freedom in women's dress and transformed the statuesque dress of the nineteenth century.

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[84] Mackrell. *Art and Fashion*. 112.
[85] Mackrell. *Art and Fashion* 120.
[86] Harold Koda and Andrew Bolton, 'Preface: The Prophet of Simplicity,' in Koda, Horald, and Bolton, Andrew. *Poiret.* Exhibition catalog of Metropolitan Museum of Art (New Haven, 2007) 13.
[87] Ibid,. 13.

> While studying sculptures of ancient times, I earned to use one point of support- the shoulders, while before me it had been the waist. All my gowns flowed from that point of support at the extremity of the shoulders and were never fastened at the waist. This new basic principle caused fashion to evolve toward classical antiquity… Fabrics flowed from this idea point like water from a fountain and draped the body in a way that was entirely natural[88].

In his autobiography, he mentioned that his designs arose not from a desire to release women from the tyranny of the corset, but from a passionate search for new form of beauty[89].

Fig 21: Paul Poiret, Coat. 1912. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[88] Mackrell, Dr Alice. Paul Poiret. (London: Batsford, 1990) 20.
[89] Mackrell. *Art and Fashion.* 116.

One of the most fundamental orientalism that Poiret expressed in his designs was the construction of the garments. The reductive planarity, cut along straight lines, and constructed of rectangles are especially seen in his coat designs (Fig. 21). The wrap construction is clearly brought from the kimono, allowing greater movement and looseness to the garment. Moreover, the use of abstract and geometric patterns as well as the use of the margin of the garment is undeniably Japanese.

Fig 22: Poiret, Paul. Evening gown, 1923. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art[90].

The gown above incorporates several major features that characterize Poiret: the

[90] Harold Koda. *Poiret.* 159.

use of fabric in which it is cur in one long length, an angled embroidered lozenge at the hip, and the wrap construction of the kimono (Fig. 22). Introducing a corset-free dress, suggesting the shift from the ostentatious artificial forms of the nineteenth century to the looser silhouette that elicits natural lines of the body.

As he introduced his Confucius Coat with its straight cut and ample shape in 1903, "Lola Montès" in 1906, and the Directoire style dress in 1907, he put forward a new line of fashion, abandoning the corset that rigidly limited movement of the body and leading to a sense liberation of women in society (Fig. 23).

Fig 23: *A group of Poiret's models in clothes designed by Poiret*. Photo by Henri Le Manuel. *L'illustration*, July 9, 1910[91].

[91] Fukai. *Fashion.* 344-345.

The early decades of twentieth century experienced radical changes in every aspect of the society, and the shift was explicitly visible in gender and class. An increasing number of highly educated and professional women, the more frequent use of automobiles, and growing fascination with sports were just some of the examples that resulted in a whole new lifestyle[92]. In such chaotic time, avant-garde designers responded fleetingly its notion of change in their pieces and added their own taste of aestheticism. The artificial S-curve silhouette was becoming a bygone character, and women were in search for more functional piece of garment that elicits their natural body.

[92] Ibid., 326.

5. Cultural Exchanges

Placing kimono within the social and cultural perspective, this paper makes an attempt to answer the following questions: How did fashion respond to or drive social changes? What kind of relationship do the Art and Fashion of kimono have? In such cultural processes, in what way did the kimono influence Fashion and the ideology of gender roles?

There have been differences in the response to the art of the other side, depending on the social and economic situation of the time. The ability and its way of appreciate and understand the art of another culture varies in extent from age to age, and the things it seeks from other culture differ accordingly. Indeed, dividing into roughly three phases, this paper examined the evolution of the kimono in the West, and demonstrated the complex language linking Art and Fashion ideologically and aesthetically. These three phases display a fundamental difference in its approaches to which it appreciates and adopt Japanese art in its own culture. First incorporated by the Dutch lives, imported kimono served as nightgown for affluent men, who understood little of its cultural significance and adopted them only to indicate wealth and to experience its rarity and comfort. As kimono was widely acknowledged by the rest of Europe, it transformed its role to be women's indoor gown with certain purpose; to provoke feminine, erotic, and domestic context. Women and designers who were exposed to these impressionist paintings then transformed kimono into connote liberal and progressive ideology of women in society.

Clothing means more than just a textile to wear. Now, clothing is strongly related to the word fashion, bringing distinctive and often habitual trend in style in which a person dresses. Without a doubt, fashion is vital in which to trace culture, economic and social

situations, and ideology of a particular country or region. Kimono fits to this context of fashion, and this study clearly demonstrated that kimono served to be a strong vehicle to trace the Western Fashion. The kimono was first adopted as men's night-gown in means to indicate wealth and power, it then was used as women's night gown in the context of male sovereignty leaving connotation as 'feminine,' 'domestic,' and 'erotic,' finally it evolved in its form into fashion to indicate the more liberal and practical statement of women's wear.

The history tells that not only its appearance yet its role has been changed corresponding to the surrounding circumstances throughout a long time period. Setting kimono within its social, cultural, and artistic context, this research discussed a history of the interaction between tradition and culture, Art and Fashion, as well as gender and aesthetics of the West.

Fig 24: John Galliano for Christian Dior, Paris Haute Couture Week, *Angela Lindvall wearing kimono,* Spring/Summer 2007.

Although the Japanese influence on Fashion in the West rapidly faded away in the 1930s, kimono's prevailing symbolism had been absorbed for the continuing revolution. In the Western mind, the kimono remains today as the most enduring symbol of Japan and Japanese style, but also as an item that is also invested with many additional meanings, which are often contradictory: including, exoticism, eroticism, female virtue through domestic good taste, women's liberation, and high fashion (Fig. 24). As the boundaries continue to be pushed, the symbolic implication of kimono will continue to grow, as the evolving process of Fashion never ends.

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