

Embracing Intimacy: Inventing the Dream Bedroom

Fae Brauer

Ours is a society racked ceaselessly by nervous erythrim. We are sickened by our industrial progress, by science; we live in a fever, and we like to dig deeper into our sores. ... Everything suffers and complains in the works of our time. Nature herself is linked to our suffering, and being tears itself apart, exposes itself in its nudity (Zola 1896: 546; Silverman, 1992: 80).

Due to the abrasiveness of the modernized city, the invasiveness of new technologies and sensory overstimulation by the mass media, by 1896 Émile Zola regarded the modern subject as subsumed by fever (Zola 1896). Even before this time France had become, according to Italian criminologist, Cesare Lombroso, the most degenerate of all Western nations, his study of *Criminal Man* revealing that it had the highest rate of criminals in any European state (Lombroso 1876).¹ The 385% increase in suicide documented by Émile Durkheim (Durkheim 1897), together with the rapid rise in hysteria, neurasthenia, epilepsy and alcoholism – the French being the greatest consumers in Europe devouring 27 litres of pure alcohol every year including copious amounts of "the green fairy" – was correlated by Valentin Magnan, as well as Zola, to the increasing prevalence of nervous disorders (Magnan 1871). In a series of articles published in *Revue Scientifique*, Charles Richet, followed by Marie Manacéine, identified overexertion of the nervous system in the metropolis as one of the chief sources of suicide, hysteria, neurasthenia and national devitalization (Richet 1919; Manacéine 1890). The mounting fear of rampant degeneration, escalating depopulation and devolution to the point of extinction generated a national psychopathology of paranoia, a "queasy, sickening feeling that all was not right, that things were in decay and that one could not fit into one's own surroundings" (Hirst 2004: 24).

"We are afraid," confessed the writer Guy de Maupassant in 1889. "We are afraid of everybody, and everybody is afraid under this regime. ... Fear of cities, fear of disease, fear of degeneration, fear of corruption, fear of the electors, fear of majorities, and fear of newspapers and the opinions they voiced" (de Maupassant 1889: 388).² Without stable boundaries, modern subjects were in danger of being transformed, according to Georges Valbert, into "agitated" and weary "neuropaths".³ Within the discourses of neuropsychiatry and *la psychologie nouvelle*, both the sensory overstimulation of the "poisonous city" and the artificiality of mass media were inscribed as agents of degeneration, devitalization, hysteria and neurasthenia with an impact upon the febrile nervous system equivalent to what Walter Benjamin calls "a shattering of the interior" (Benjamin 1935: 38). Bombarded by mass advertising and overwhelmed with the physiological stress and psychological strains of the city, such 'new psychologists' as Maurice Rollinat pointed out that both males and females sought an escape from their overwrought nerves and the danger of contracting what Jean Martin Charcot called *les maladies nerveuses* (Rollinat 1883). Consistent with Henri Bergson's doctoral thesis, *Time and Free Will*, they longed for a sanctuary safe from the feverish pace and fracturing flux of metropolitan life in which intimate relationships, psychological intuition, imagination and "felt experiences" triggered by memory and empathy, could be embraced (Bergson 1889).

With the "sick city" identified by theorists and sensationalized by the mass media as an agent of alcoholism, criminality, suicide, cholera, tuberculosis, syphilis, hysteria and neurasthenia, by the *fin-de-siècle* the French interior was transformed into

a refuge able to fortify the physiology of city dwellers and to nurture their psychology. Following *la psychologie nouvelle*, their psychology was revealed as sensitive, nervous, susceptible to exhaustion and prone to imagistic suggestion and projection. To be able to nurture their psychological interiority, particularly their phantasies and dreams, the French interior became inscribed as a domestic haven of peace and security, imagination and relaxation able to foster the intimacy of close personal and sexual relationships. Within this haven the French bedroom became valorized as the most precious place for relaxing the body, releasing the unconscious, exploring creativity, enhancing dreams and achieving intimacy, as epitomized by its sanctification by Marcel Proust (Proust 1909-22).⁴ Within *La psychologie nouvelle*, the *boudoir* for woman and the *chambre à coucher* with its *lit conjugal* took on new roles as a soothing anaesthetizer not just of a citizen's overwrought nerves but that of the conjugal couple. Reconceived as a metaphor for the mind itself, what Jules Bois called a "chambre mental" (Bois 1900: 29),⁵ its interior space also became inscribed within Neo-Lamarckian evolutionary theory as a recuperative place to recharge the cerebral and psychological energy required for "creative evolution" in order to attain what Bergson termed *l'élan vital*: The vital life force (Bergson 1907: 88-99). Not only could a French citizen seek refuge from the sensory barrage of the metropolis within this "chambre mental" but they could also find vibratory reanimation, as this chapter will reveal, particularly through a dynamic and intimate interaction between its interior decoration and their psychological exploration. No more intimate refuge and energizing space existed for this to ensue than the *fin-de-siècle* bedroom.

Figure 1: Eugène Gaillard's *chambre à coucher*, Pavillon de l'Art Nouveau Exposition Universelle, 1900.

Reconceived within the interdiscursivity of Symbolist Decadence, *La psychologie nouvelle* and Neuropsychiatry as the site of dreams, memories, felt experiences and intimate relationships, as well as organic reunification, the *fin-de-siècle* bedroom became the locus for exploration by artists, architects and interior decorators associated within the Nabis, École de Nancy, *L'Art dans tous*, and *L'Art Nouveau*. Not only is this demonstrated by the prevalence of paintings of the intimate interior from Pierre Bonnard to Félix Vallotton but also the spate of new bed designs ranging from Louis Majorelle's 1900 *chambre à coucher* with its *Lit et table de chevet* (Janneau 1966: 30); G. Rémon's 1900 *Projet de chambre à coucher*, Émile André's 1902 *Lit de bout à décor de tulipe*; Émile Gallé's 1904 *Lit Aube et Crépuscule*; André Vallin's 1907 *Chambre à coucher*; Henri Ballery Desfontaines' 1907 *Lit et Psyche*, the *chambre à coucher* designed by Charles Plumet and Tony Seltersheim; Frank Brangwyn's *chambre à coucher* commissioned for Mr. and Mrs. Davis, as well as the twin beds designed by Delavicourt for *l'Art Nouveau Bing* in Turin in 1902. Yet as this book chapter will reveal, no more vivid reconception of its new role as the arbor of organic regeneration and the cocoon of unconscious vivification was created for the 1900 Exposition Universelle than Eugène Gaillard's *chambre à coucher* commissioned by Siegfried Bing for his Pavillon Art Nouveau (Fig. 1). Only in Gaillard's "dream bedroom" could the psychological interior and physiological exterior become indissolubly fused, reintegrated with nature, reconnected with living species and reenergized by the intimate embrace of its regenerative forms from plant-life to the growth of wood.

Organic Reunification and *Ineluctable Evolution*: Gaillard's Regenerative Bedroom

By comparison to France's wrought-iron monuments to engineering, industrialism and virility at the 1889 Exposition Universelle, the 1900 Exposition

Universelle represented what Debora Silverman calls a "retreat to an ornamental fantasy in the organicized private interior" (Silverman 1992: 85). Replacing the public iron monument with the private organic ornament, domestic ensembles of nature and interiority were celebrated in *Art nouveau*. Interiors with decorations infused with plants, insects and animals in the process of seasonal renewal were seminal in instilling the Neo-Lamarckian concept of evolutionary regeneration. Termed *Transformism*, after Jean-Baptiste de Lamarck, the Neo-Lamarckian Edmond Perrier, was one of many zoologists instrumental in revealing ways in which interspecies interrelationships, lost with industrialization, could be reanimated to revivify the physiology and psychology of the modern subject (Perrier 1888). These animalized interiors were also integral to the anti-anthropocentrism of modernists who rejected the binaristic demarcation of homo sapiens and animals in favor of the inseparability of human subjects from nature (Brauer 2014). As geographer, Elisée Reclus explained:

Man does not only live upon the surface of the soil, he has also sprung from it; he is its son, as we learn from the mythologies of all nations. We are an arrangement of dust, water and air (Réclus 1868: 434).⁶

Not until the last minute does Bing appear to have been officially invited to construct a pavilion with such interiors, which may explain why it did not appear in any of the official catalogues. Yet with the Porte Binet and other installations embodying the evolutionary aesthetic of Transformism, it seemed serendipitous to construct *Art Nouveau Bing*. Early in 1900 Bing and his assistant Louis Bonnier draw-up plans for this pavilion comprising six model interiors in a modern house or apartment on the French side of the Esplanade for the Exposition Universelle (Picard 1903: 273; Brauer 2013: 255).⁷ Having already hired Gaillard as the first new architect-designer for his workshops in 1897, Bing commissioned him to design its *salle à manger*, vestibule and *chambre à coucher* with the assistance of Georges de Feure and Edouard Colonna, on the understanding that everything in the pavilion was to be originally manufactured (Vandam 1985). While de Feure was commissioned to do the Boudoir and Dressing Room, as well as the exterior glass panels featuring *la femme nouvelle*, Colonna was responsible for the Drawing Room coloured in golds and blues. This new house was designed to be, as Julius Meier-Graefe surmized, "neither a museum nor a department store but a place of peace for the eye and the nerves ... and an intimate space in which to live, work, think and to dream" (Meier-Graefe 1900: 206-212). With "dream-like" rooms accentuated by the use of coloured glass panels, commissioned from de Feure, *Art Nouveau Pavillon Bing* was commended for evoking thought, memory and dreams. Yet no place within Bing's 'new house' captured this moreso than Gaillard's *Chambre à Coucher*, created in collaboration with de Feure. There buds, flowers, stems, roots and vegetables seem to flourish and intertwine in a profusion of glowing colours and phantasmagorical configurations.

Reunification with nature invigorated with the new methods of hygiene became seminal to designing the healthy domestic interior, particularly the new bedroom, capable of regenerating the nation. As Alfred Fouillée explained: "France needs ... better physical hygiene, capable of counterbalancing the affect of our intellectual overexertion ... and a vigorous reaction against our abandonment of the countryside for the city" (Fouillée 1892: 143-144). Design of the domestic interior then became invested with nourishing the physiological and psychological health of French citizens and regenerating the French nation. This is most clearly demonstrated by Henry Havard's *Art in the House*, first published in 1884 and circulated by the government through schools and teaching training centres in 1891 as the Manuel for interior design

(Havard 1884; 1891; Brauer 2013: 197-208).

Due to fear of infection from toxic domestic interiors, as much as from the pre-industrial city infested by plague, in his treatise Havard highlighted the problems that had been generated by a generation of paranoid hygienists who had insisted upon reducing design, particularly that of the bedroom, to its bare essentials.

A bedroom had to be absolutely naked without hangings, paperless with white washed walls and floors painted in oil, painted and washed with plenty of water at least once a week. The bed, according to these doctors, had to be reduced to a simple couchette, made of metal, with no curtains, and garnished with a mattress topped by horsehair. As for furniture [these doctors] would barely admit a vase or two - only accepting the most indispensable table and chair and that is all. Why this bareness? Fear of miasma (Havard 1884: 383).⁸

Yet paradoxically this Spartan bedroom had proven no more hygienic than any other, particularly as Harvard pointed out that the common cold had managed to kill more people than the plague (Havard 1884: 385).⁹ At the same time, he was aware that his colleague, Gabriel Mourey, regarded the *chambres à coucher modern style*, designed by those obsessed with modern hygiene, as not much better, being likened to torture chambers of the Inquisition (Mourey 1900: 268).¹⁰ Historically Havard traced the rupture and transformation in this design to the exploration of emotional sensations during the Baroque and "the birth of intimacy" when a distinction became clearly drawn between design of the *chambre à coucher*, *boudoir* and *cabinet de travail* (Havard 1884; Diana Cheng 2001).

From the advent of technologized modernity, Havard considered how the *boudoir* had increasingly become an "essentially feminine" psychological space for female self-fashioning and an emblematic room for women to be alone, to dream and enhance their imagination (Harvard 1884: 411; 417; Delon 1999).¹¹ The *cabinet de travail* for men acted more as "a place where one loves to be locked-in, to meditate, to reflect, a kind of intimate refuge, a blessed port which allowed us to gain possession of ourselves" (Havard 1884: 431).¹² Yet like others, Harvard was aware that as the culture of intimacy between married couples had changed, so had the articulation of their conjugal bedroom and the significance assigned to what he called the "lit d'anges": The marital "bed of angels" (Havard: 399). Although he detected that many husbands and wives had slept apart at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by the end of it, as Odile Nouvel-Kammerer points out, they were strongly encouraged to sleep in the same bed granting increasing significance to *le lit conjugal* and to the *chambre à coucher* (Nouvel-Kammerer 1995: 102).¹³ This was not just symptomatic of the vigorous campaign fought by French theologians against what they called *l'onanisme conjugal*, according to Alain Corbin, but of the French depopulation crisis (Corbin 2008: 270-276).¹⁴

With France's escalating depopulation constantly exposed by demographers from inception of the Third Republic to the *fin-de-siècle*, the need for French couples to sleep together in order to procreate regularly was constantly emphasized by State demographer, Jacques Bertillon, and the natalist lobby spearheaded by such Neo-Lamarckian obstetricians and eugenicists as Adolphe Pinard (Brauer 2008). Since depopulation was, in light of Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man*, aligned with devolution and encroaching extinction, repopulation became such a crucial Republican quest that the single *femme nouvelle* and *Le bachelier* became stigmatized as selfish, decadent and unpatriotic (Brauer 2005). The most licit site for repopulation, the conjugal *chambre à coucher* became the locus of national attention, although rarely did

Havard spell out its imbrication within procreation so clearly. By contrast to his discrete allusion to its sexual role as "an asylum of mysterious actions, of great and small secrets" (Havard 1884: 400),¹⁵ Havard openly stressed its importance in relation to imagination, contemplation and its function as "the refuge of memories".

It is ... a sanctuary, and also the fatal place where the most powerful to the most humble find they are alone with themselves, where truth so often betrayed, cutthroat, banned, appears suddenly in its *deshabillé*, sometimes unflattering ... where during the night the mind welcomes the vagabond of imagination, reliving the past, evoking vanished images, calculates, speculates, tries to predict, combine, arrange, decide and finally prepare for the future (Havard: 400-401).¹⁶

When furnishing their *chambre à coucher*, Harvard recommended that the conjugal couple not hesitate to adorn it with paintings, statues, ceramics and enamels, particularly given "the fortunate influence that art exercises on our imagination and our senses ... the contemplation of these beautiful artworks delighting the eyes, lifting the spirit and ennobling our thoughts" (Havard: 431).¹⁷ To stimulate the unconscious and to generate healthy energies, Havard also recommended that it be adorned with flowers, particularly a profusion of roses, Japanese and Chinese porcelain, silks and brocaded silks, satins and lacquered woods (Havard: 418).¹⁸ "First and foremost", he stressed, "adornment of the *chambre à coucher* must be intimate and contemplative" (Havard: 401).¹⁹ These criteria seem to have been heeded by Gaillard when Bing commissioned him in 1899 to design the "dream bedroom".

Figure 2 Eugène Gaillard, *Chambre à coucher : le lit conjugal, Pavillon de l'Art Nouveau, Exposition Universelle, 1900*.

Figure 3 Eugène Gaillard, *Chambre à coucher : Fauteuil renversé "Delvincourt", Pavillon de l'Art Nouveau, Exposition Universelle, 1900* (Bibliothèque des Arts décoratifs, Paris; n° 106 *Fauteuil renversé "Delvincourt"*, par E. Gaillard).

Directly behind Gaillard's bed-head, a floor-to-ceiling panel was inserted on the wall. Appearing like a bed canopy appropriated and modernized from Rococo designs, it was printed and embroidered with a garland of deep and pale crimson roses. (Fig. 2) Appearing to burst into bloom, this garland echoes the shape of the main bedhead and seems to frame the bed as if it were a bed of roses. Not just appliquéd onto the curtains, embroidered by Madame Anaïs Favre, as can be glimpsed in the wardrobe mirror of Fig. 1, these roses were continued onto the chair at the left side of the bed, as can be seen in Fig. 2, where they appear in a small rosebud pattern printed on velveteen. These roses appearing to burst into full-bloom also appear on the tapestry of the armchair on the other side of the bed, as can be seen clearly in Fig. 3, where they seem to be entwined on both sides of the back-rest, as well as across the head-rest. As they also appear to have been interwoven into the garland design of the wallpaper, as can be seen in Fig. 2, *le lit conjugal* seems to be enmeshed in roses. Yet instead of being literally represented, following Gaillard's emphasis upon the need to be inspired by evocations of flowers, plants and vegetables found in nature, they are suggested (Gaillard 1900: 107).²⁰ Rather than rarefying particular flowers, earthworms, algae, insects, dragonflies or irises and thistles as the essential steps of modern evolution and treating them in the École de Nancy manner as emotive objects, Gaillard stressed the importance of transcending them and transfiguring nature into new constellations (Gaillard 1900: 107; Gaillard 1906: 34).²¹ This transfiguration entailed, in his words:

Voir éternellement la même fleur en bois et jamais fanée, le même animal – en bois toujours – dans son attitude toujours pareille; l'insecte posé là immeublement, sans son épingle dans le dos et qu'une dique-naud ne peut dependant déloger : tolérer de telles réalités sur nous meubles familiers devient vite obsédant (Eugène Gaillard 1906: 60).

Yet despite Gaillard's stress upon both capturing and transcending nature by working in wood, particularly by being able to transfix the essence of a flower, animal or insect, the writer Gustave Soulier pointed out that Gaillard did not necessarily practice what he preached. His innumerable studies of various parts of plants, particularly of stems, leaves, vegetables and flowers, were rendered so minutely, according to Soulier, that they seemed to be viewed through a microscope (Soulier 1902: 25).²² Readily Gaillard admitted to deploying a microscope although he also confessed to the frustration of discovering with its help so many thousands of diverse elements intertwined in nature, that he could never satisfactorily fathom exactly where they led (Gaillard 1906: 63).²³

Attune to Gaillard's concern with tracing organic interrelationships rather than representing organic species, Soulier examined how Gaillard's in-depth scrutiny of vegetable structures revealed their "constant communion" with one another and their interdependence (Soulier: 26).²⁴ In being able to discover the movements of what Soulier called "spontaneous grace" alongside the "splaying of nervous forms," he considered Gaillard's studies had proven infinitely precious: The fibres that Gaillard was able to reveal, observed Soulier, "deliver all the richness hidden at the heart of the material. The memories, flames, speckles, pearlescent agents, gems and waves seem to succeed one another by very clear lines that have been smoothed into satin by his tool" (Soulier: 27).²⁵ At the same time, Soulier considered that Gaillard never seemed to forget how the diverse elements of a tree and plant growing normally are intimately part of the same organic "body" and "seamlessly attached to one another" (Soulier: 27).²⁶ Not only does this seamless growth appear in the carved arms-rests of Gaillard's armchair, as can be seen in Fig. 3, but also in its legs and feet, as can be seen in Fig. 4. It is continued not only in the framing, legs and handles of the wardrobe, as can be seen in Fig. 5, but also in the carved bedheads in which four main vegetable fibres seem to flow out from a central stem and seamlessly coil around one another with two of the coils meeting around the centre.

Figure 4 Eugène Gaillard, *Chambre à coucher : Fauteuil renversé "Delvincourt" (profile), Pavillon de l'Art Nouveau, Exposition Universelle, 1900* (Bibliothèque des Arts décoratifs, Paris; n° 106 *Fauteuil renversé "Delvincourt" (profile)* par E. Gaillard).

Figure 5 Eugène Gaillard, *Chambre à coucher : Armoire de l'Exposition, Pavillon de l'Art Nouveau, Exposition Universelle, 1900* (Bibliothèque des Arts décoratifs, Paris; n° 253 bis *Armoire de l'Exposition* par E. Gaillard).

Soulier also considered how what he called Gaillard's "naturalistic style" and "skeletal model", emanating from the study of vegetable forms, was illustrated by the way in which the leaves fanned out from the rods at the foot of the bed (Fig. 2) (Soulier: 27).²⁷ For Gaillard, this was seminal to his vision of "*L'Évolution inéluctable*" (Gaillard 1906: 63). By immersing the conjugal couple within this profusion of evolving forms in nature, Gaillard presumed that they would feel not only unified with nature but also vivified by its "ineluctable" energies of regeneration. At this optimum moment, following the Transformist dimension of Gaillard's *chambre à coucher*, they would be ready to perform what Pinard called "procreation rationnelle" – sex conducted in a rejuvenated state of mind and body to produce the healthiest possible progeny (Brauer 2008: 117-120). Since internal protoplasm was, following Neo-Lamarckian obstetrics, considered to interact with external parasites during conception of the embryo, the "ineluctable evolution" inherent to Gaillard's design of the *chambre à coucher* may then be ultimately aligned with the Radical Republican policy of repopulation and national regeneration (Giard 1876; 1888). Drawing upon *la nouvelle psychologie*, Gaillard's *chambre à coucher* was also meant to regenerate the

unconscious by functioning as a "dream bedroom", as highlighted by critics and the art media.

Suggestion, Hypnosis and *La Nouvelle Psychologie*: The Dream Bedroom

For the Symbolists, as Silverman succinctly surmises, "the interior was no longer a refuge from but a replacement for the external world" (Silverman: 77). The house was reconceived as not merely, in her words, "a passive receiver of imported technologies but an active producer of new instruments of psychospacial intervention" (Silverman: 77). Yet for this production to be able to happen, an understanding of the relationship of the unconscious to the environment was required alongside what Silverman calls "the psychological consequences of space" (Silverman: 77). This was highlighted by Count Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac, the model for Huysmans' *Des Esseintes*, who organized his apartment so that individual objects could dissolve into a field of suggestive visual energy (Huysmans 1884; Chaleyssin 1992). Linking interior decoration with psychological interiority, the Goncourt brothers, Edmond and Jules, also envisaged the interior as activator of both visual suggestion and nervous vibration (de Goncourt 1889). The dialogue between the narrator and their decor, particularly the nervous vibrations they stimulated to the point of transfiguring fevers, was captured in *À la recherche du temps perdu* by Proust, as epitomized by the whirling room in *Swann's Way* in which all the furnishings appear trapped in the centrifuge of the psyche (Proust 1913). This linkage between psychological association and interior decoration was corroborated by *la psychologie nouvelle*.

Modern conceptions of the social and psychological significance of interior space were the results of new medical theories on the powers of suggestion, and the relationship between external stimuli and mental health. While Théodore Ribot, appointed the first chair in Experimental and Comparative Psychology at the Collège de France in 1888, was one of the pioneers of the new *psychologie scientifique française*, it was at Salpêtrière where most experiments in the psychology of space were conducted by Jean Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet, Gilles de la Tourette, Alfred Binet, Charles Féré and Joseph Babinski. At Salpêtrière, Charcot and his 'Charcoterie' demonstrated that female patients suffering from traumatic or epileptic hysteria, and male patients suffering what Charcot called "virile hysteria", which Gilles de la Tourette also termed "neurasthenia", were susceptible to hypnosis, particularly conducted by animal magnetism (Binet and Féré 1887). Under hypnosis various forms of suggestion were found to trigger specific emotional and behavioral reactions, particularly such visual stimuli as coloured images, discs and signs to the extent that specific colours could be correlated with emotional states (Charcot 1888; Georges Didi-Huberman 2003; Asti Hustvedt 2011). Even Charcot's Tuesday performances demonstrated the affective powers of visual suggestion on the nervously febrile (Jean Martin Charcot 1888-1889). At the same time at the École de Nancy, Hippolyte Bernheim disputed that hysteria and other forms of nervous pathology made patients more prone to suggestion than normal subjects, particularly given the instability of boundaries between subjective and objective reality and the power of the environment to influence thought, feeling and actions.

Without resorting to hypnosis, Bernheim discovered that he was able to alter patients' behaviour by using only visual and verbal suggestion (Bernheim 1888; 2014). In fact, as Bernheim's experiments revealed, the mechanisms of suggestion and hypnosis could be used just as effectively on subjects not suffering any form of pathological disorder. Rather than imagistic suggestion and the externalization of visual

material being confined to nervous pathology, Bernheim reported that they were just as potent in 'normal' subjects. In his 1884 treatise, *De la suggestion dans l'état hypnotique et dans l'état de veille*, he diagnosed how visual images penetrated the unconscious, the very thought process transforming ideas into images: "One should not consider the transformation of an idea into an image as a morbid operation but rather a normal property of the brain" (Bernheim 1884; 2004: 52). He elaborated this transformation by focusing upon ways in which suggestion triggered images:

Suggestion, that is the penetration of the subject's brain by the idea of the phenomenon through a word, a gesture, a view, or an imitation, seems to me the key to all the hypnotic phenomena that I have observed. ... Suggestibility is such that, in the waking state, an idea accepted by the brain becomes ... an image. ... We are all suggestible and can experience hallucinations by our own or other peoples' impressions (Bernheim 1884: 53).

Since "sensorial hallucinations" were a condition of normal sleep when relaxation of judgment and verification released unconscious images, which he called "cerebral automatism", Bernheim concluded that "sensorial hallucinations" form "a great part of our lives" (Bernheim 1884: 54).

The discovery that the interior of the human organism was a sensitive nervous mechanism, prone to suggestion, visual thinking, and imagistic projection in dreams as well as everyday life, altered the meaning of interior decoration in the *fin de siècle*. Domestic, interior decoration became invested with the healing powers of the new psychologist, hypnotically easing French citizens out of metropolitan frenzy and fractured decadence into wholesome subjecthood and nation regeneration. Hence the domestic interior was invested with a major role on which the psychological health of the modern subject and the nation depended. This specifically French version of psychological interiority provided the intellectual vehicle for the transformation of the domestic interior from a place on display as an historical anchorage to one that was able to express personal feeling, evoke memory, suggest emotional states and trigger nervous vibration. With this new medical evidence showing that the built environment could both positively and negatively affect physiological and psychological states, interior decoration became invested with the task of facilitating the mental health of the citizens of France suffering the debilitating physical and mental effects of modern life. Art, particularly that reconnecting the urban subject with nature, was a prime medium for doing so, as explained by Émile Gallé:

Behold our ideal is achieved: furniture treated like the nude, ornamented with the equilibrium of its own structure, of its internal parts opening out like those of an animal or a plant, in their nerves, in their flesh, fur and feathers, tissues, membranes, bark, in their budding, flowering, fruitfulness; behold the labour of a sculptor, a work of intellect, of truth, of liberty – a work of delicacy, difficult, lasting and beautiful – that we advocate as our own and last efforts (Gallé 1884-1889; 1998: 275).²⁸

Following *la psychologie nouvelle*, the enterprise of interior decoration also became invested with new significations that entailed transfusing eighteenth-century associations of modernity, intimacy and interiority with nervous vibration, spatial self-fashioning and unconscious projection. Inspired by the Rococo, new interior spaces became necessary, according to Alain Mérot for the playing out of dreams (Mérot 1990: 20). Reality and fantasy oscillated within interiors creating, according to Jean Starobinski "a self-contained world in which life can be lived as a representation" (Starobinski 1964: 74-75). Just as Symbolist art was designed to trigger emotional

states in the reader, so the new interiors were designed to trigger these states in the beholder. Through the suggestive power of line, colour, texture, odour and shape, interior space became the domain of psychological self-exploration, self-projection and self-fashioning, particularly as a dream room. That Gaillard's *chambre à coucher* was perceived in this way was affirmed in decorative art reviews, particularly by the critic, Gabriel Mourey.

"First of all the eye is charmed", wrote Mourey of Gaillard's *chambre à coucher*. "It is a true visual delight. Some panels of gray-blue silk and gray-mauve and gray-green, like glass lit by moonlight, decorate the walls of a blooming dream" (Mourey, 1900: 266).²⁹ Yet while Gaillard may have subdued his panels and wallpaper, as indicated in Figs. 1 and 1, by no means did he apparently modify the colour of other parts of his *chambre à coucher*, let alone modulate the texture and composition of his fabrics. Although difficult to discern from Fig. 2, his bed coverlet was of mignonette green silk and apparently embroidered with plant stems and vegetable forms that seemed to weave their way through the bedhead, the curtain, chairs and the garland design of the wallpaper. The dream-like quality he was able to conjure was consistent with the way in which Bing's Pavillon was critically received overall by the art media:

The minutely wrought metal follows almost voluptuously the moulding and panels of furniture of a solid elegance; their lines suggest, without actually imitation, the finest models of the eighteenth century. ... The furniture is soft to touch, like silk, and has the shimmering hues of sumptuous damasks; the finish of the details, the preciousness of the chased copper, like so many jewels, make each item a collector's piece, a rare object, and - a delightful thing - it all blends into the whole. ... On the walls, in dream-like rosettes, the same dawn and twilight shades, of which de Feure seems to have discovered the secret, adorn the shimmering waters of a lake (Silverman: 287).

Its organic wallpapers, curved bedheads, optically charged panels, silken covers in "twilight hues" shimmering, according to another critic, like the water of a lake and its garlands of rosettes enfolding the bed in roses was like a dream (Silverman: 288). "He created a room which was soft, delicate and caressing," concluded Mourey, "without any eccentricity or weakness ... with beautiful motifs for thought and for the dream" (Mourey 1900: 257).³⁰ However, it was his use of wood that generated other states pertaining to what Gaillard called the "vibrations of nature and human rhythms", as illustrated by Figs. 1 and 2.

Les vibrations de nature et les rythmes humaines: The Vibrating Bedroom

Gaillard's choice of pearwood with ash-panelling for his bed was medium specific: "The essence of woods are extremely numerous and their variety offers an immense palette," he explained. "Their complete range has tones of exceptional splendour." (Gaillard 1906: 44-46).³¹ By no means was wood an "inert material" for Gaillard (Gaillard: 38).³² It was a living organism capable of opulent growth and continual enrichment even after it had been cut-down (Gaillard: 38).³³ Its design qualities were also ingrained within it, as Gaillard explained.

Woods representing longitudinal fibres are juxtaposed according to the direction of the vertical thrust, that is to say according to their growth in height with the tree. Fibres are joined together laterally depending on the direction of the growth of the tree. ... Wood is rigorously stable in the longitudinal sense of fibres. It is unstable in the transverse direction. Under the influence of the temperature and humidity of the air ... remembering the seasons each year and sensitive to the smell of renewal, fibres move laterally. ... They

keep concentrically positioned around the heart of the tree, bending sometimes ... Yet the bundle of fibres ... cut short at both ends, retains its immutable length (Gaillard: 39).³⁴

Not only did these movements represent the physical phenomenon of wood for Gaillard, but also their psychic qualities pertaining to their deracination: "The tree always haunts wood-making," he explained (Gaillard: 44).³⁵ When all the fibres met in a single piece of wood like the richest of palettes, Gaillard dramatically concluded that "they produce the most vibrant and the rarest intensity of vibration" (Gaillard: 45-56).³⁶ So important was this vibratory quality to decorative art that Gaillard carped that tapestries were unable to generate any. "All its flavour", he said of wood, "resides ... in the boldness of the vibrations or in the softness of the reflections that alone give to wood the hand of the artist" (Gaillard: 51-52).³⁷ These bold vibrations are epitomized in Gaillard's *chambre à coucher* by the vigorously pulsating wood graining in the wooden panels chosen for the bed-head and bed-end, as can be seen in Fig. 1 and more clearly in Fig. 2. Not only do these vibrations seem to be echoed by the electrifying striations in the bed-mat but also by the dynamic wood graining in the curved half-panels either side of the mirror on the wardrobe visible in Fig. 1, appearing like two sides of an acorn as indicated by Fig. 5. These vibrant optical wood markings were perceived as able to stimulate the unconscious, particularly through their purported facility to generate neurological vibrations and stimulate new energies comparable to radioactivity.

Once the radioactive materials discovered by Marie and Pierre Curie were perceived as offering unlimited sources of new energy, more than ever did regeneration of France seem attainable and devolution improbable. With Wilhelm Rontgen's discovery of X-rays in 1895 and Henry Becquerel's detection of radioactivity and radio-ways in 1896, Joseph John Thomson's identification of the electron in 1897, the invention of wireless telegraphy and the concept of electromagnetic waves vibrating through the ether by Oliver Lodge, the universe was understood as a vast network of continuous vibrations of varying frequencies beyond the threshold of human perception (Dalrymple Henderson 2013: 1-27; Enns and Tower 2013: 2-5). Invisible and inaudible extrasensory vibrations were perceived as conveying a dynamic flow of energy and sensation that scientifically explained psychic and occult phenomena. Within this meta-reality of vibrations, energy was charged with emotive, psychic and regenerative power, as epitomized by the concept of "sympathetic vibrations" theorized by Helmholtz as early as 1848 and retheorized by Edmund Gurney in 1886 when the brain was reconceived as a wireless transmitter. Within this vibratory model of sensory communication, protoplasm was considered able to transmit vibrations between the cells of all living beings from plants, animals, insects and trees to homo sapiens (Brain 2013: 116-117).

Following the amoeboid model of neuronal mobility, neurons were considered able to make functional contact through pseudopodial movements of the protoplasm of the nerve cells (Brain: 125). Prior to popularization of Santiago Ramón y Cajal's model of the nerve synapse, neuronal transmission was also likened to the behaviour of rhizopods and other unicellular organisms (Brain: 126-127). As surmized by Henri Bergson in *Matter and Memory*, everything in the universal network is physically interconnected and interdependent through continuous vibrations. "Matter ... resolves itself into numberless vibrations," he wrote, "all linked together in uninterrupted continuity, all bound up with each other and travelling in every direction like shivers in an immense body" (Bergson 1896; 1912: 208). Theorizing how the images of matter were determined by vibrations of light acting upon the retina, Bergson explained how these vibrations were able to penetrate the brain and memory: "The qualitative

heterogeneity of our successive perceptions of the universe results from the fact that each, in itself, extends over a certain depth of duration and that memory condenses in each an enormous multiplicity of vibrations which appear to us all at once" (Bergson: 77). When propelled by art, he speculated on the impact of these vibrations having the force of a "shell burst" able to stimulate sensibilities and engender a creative evolution – a concept with which Gaillard appeared all too familiar (Bergson: 1907).

Stressing that his creativity was bound up with his interdisciplinarity as an architect-decorator, Gaillard's crossing of disciplines seemed to stretch beyond the arts to Bergson's philosophy, the new sciences, as well as the new psychology. This was perhaps why he conceived of the decorative arts, particularly those integrated with nature, as able to unleash a flow of energy and vibrations between their interior designs and its inhabitants that could stimulate their sensibilities. Like Gallé, Gaillard remained constantly concerned that his organic sensuality was able to impart nervous vibrations. "The vibrations of nature and human rhythms amplified" was what Gaillard confessed that ultimately he hoped to achieve by his *chambre à coucher* (Gaillard: 66).³⁸ These vibrations were posited as an unseen force able to mediate interactions between the interior self and the exterior organic environment in order to induce a trance-like hypnotic state that would release the imagination and enhance dreams, as well as states of hyper-perception (Gaillard: 54).³⁹ By no means was Gaillard unaware of the neurological potential that this carried, particularly in terms of the evolution of physiology and psychology. "Once our sharpened sensitivity is able to reveal a different universe to us," Gaillard concluded, "we must modify our expressions and speak a different language" (Gaillard: 66).⁴⁰

Hence ultimately Gaillard's *chambre à coucher* seemed designed to function not just as a sanctuary from the invasiveness of new technologies and the sensory overstimulation by the mass media, but as an instrument of psycho-spatial intervention in three different but interrelated ways. By transforming *le lit conjugal* into a bed of roses enmeshed in plant stems, tree roots and vegetable structures, Gaillard signified their "constant communion" with one another in terms of Transformist evolutionary theory while reconnecting French city citizens with the lost energies of nature. In keeping with the domestic prominence granted the *chambre à coucher* at this time of chronic depopulation, the organic life with which Gaillard surrounds the conjugal couple is significantly in the process of budding and blooming. At the same time, his *lit conjugal* appears as the site of vivid vibratory energy conveyed by the dazzling optical wood graining in the panels at either ends of the bed, and the ways in which it was echoed in the wardrobe and bed mats. While consistent with what Gaillard terms "ineluctable evolution", these signs seem to signify the prospective function of this *chambre à coucher* as a regenerative space for "procreation rationnelle", where sex could be performed in a replenished state of mind and body in order to produce the healthiest possible progeny. Yet the design of Gaillard's *chambre à coucher* does not seem to be just aligned with national repopulation and regeneration imperatives. Invested with visually suggestive signs consistent with *la psychologie nouvelle*, Gaillard's *chambre à coucher* seems to evoke emotive states and trigger the imagination in order to nourish the psychological health of those Zola calls "weary neuropaths" suffering the debilitating "fever" of modern life (Zola, 1896). Likened to a "chambre mental", with an impact comparable to hypnosis, Gaillard's *chambre à coucher* appears to signal the possibility of easing French citizens out of fractured subjectivity into wholesome interiority. In exploring this trajectory, most critics and the mass media considered that Gaillard had invented the dream bedroom able to embrace intimacy and through its powers of suggestion, calm unconscious anxieties and lull its

dwellers into a dream-state. At the same time through Gaillard's use of woods with vibratory power, Gaillard's *chambre à coucher* also seems to signify the possibility of unleashing a flow of energy capable of stimulating neurological vibrations, releasing the unconscious and generating what Jules Bois considered would be a new state of superconsciousness (Bois 1900).

Notes

¹ So popular was *L'uomo delinquente* that five editions were published during Lombroso's lifetime with its first French translation as *L'Homme criminel* in 1887. Since criminals were atavistic, according to Lombroso's study of their skulls, this meant that France was the most devolved and degenerate of all Western nations. To Lombroso this was proven by the soaring levels of crime – particularly inflicted by the terrorist 'apache' and the marked influx of insane asylum inmates.

² *On a peut de tout le monde, et tout le monde a peur sous ce régime ...*

³ Refer Georges Valbert's articles, *Revue des deux mondes*, 1890-1900.

⁴ A chronic Asthmatic, for the last three years of Proust's life, he rarely left the bedroom of his apartment at 102 Boulevard Haussmann. Decorated with velvet curtains, wooden furniture, a piano and with walls encased in panels of cork, it was designed to keep out the noise and to absorb harmful dust. Proust identified it as the site of his creativity, writing much of *À la recherche du temps perdu* from his bed.

⁵ *Dans nos chambres mentales il n'y a seulement des locataires honorables et de bonne compagnie, mais aussi des visiteurs étranges... ; ils passent sur le théâtre intérieur qu'est le cerveau, comme des fântomes dans les maisons hantées.*

⁶ *L'homme ne vit pas seulement sur le sol, il naît aussi de la terre : il en est le fils, ainsi que le disent toutes les mythologies des peuples. Nous sommes de la poussière, de l'eau, de l'air organisés.*

⁷ So late in the day was Bing invited by Alfred Picard to participate that his Pavillon did not feature in Picard's official report.

⁸ *... une chambre à coucher doit être absolument nue, sans tenture, sans papier, avec des murs blanchis à la chaux et un parquet peint à l'huile, verni, et lavé à grand eau, au moins une fois par semaine. Le lit, pour ces docteurs, se réduit à une simple couchette, faite en métal, dépourvue de rideaux, et n'ayant comme garniture qu'un sommier surmonté d'un matelas de crin. Comme mobilier, à peine s'ils admettent un vase ou deux - les plus indispensables - une table, une chaise, et voilà tout. Pourquoi cette nudité? Par crainte des miasmes.*

⁹ *Les rhumes tuent plus de monde que la peste.*

¹⁰ *Les chambres à supplices de l'Inquisition n'étaient rien, j'imagine, comparées aux chambres à coucher modern style, où certains décorateurs ... nous conviaient à goûter les joies d'un sommeil réparateur.*

¹¹ *S'il est une pièce intime qui puisse compter parmi les pièces d'habitation réservées et difficilement accessibles au vulgaire, c'est bien le boudoir. Cette petite pièce, sous tous les rapports essentiellement féminine, est une innovation toute moderne. Refer also 417: *Malgré cela, réduit à son rôle nouveau, le boudoir a sa place marquée dans notre appartement moderne. Il jouera par rapport au petit salon, le rôle que ce dernier remplit à l'égard du grand salon. Il sera, pour la femme, l'équivalent de ce que, pour l'homme, est le cabinet de travail.**

¹² *... un lieu aimable où l'on aime à s'enfermer, à méditer, à réfléchir; que ce soit, pour nous, une sorte de refuge intime, un port béni, où il nous soit permis de rentrer en possession de nous-même ...*

¹³ *Or les manières de vivre cette intimité nouvelle ont évolué au cours du XIXe siècle et une révolution importante s'opère dans les chambres à coucher des couples bourgeois. Les modes d'organisation de la chambre - et notamment la place accordée au lit - ont changé de façon significative et traduisent une transformation de la vie conjugale : au début du siècle les conjoints des milieux aisés font "chambres à part", chacun dort chez soi; à la fin du même siècle, la norme veut que l'on dorme ensemble dans le même lit.*

¹⁴ While Catholic theologians stigmatized "l'onanisme conjugal" as "fraudulent" and "un état de péché mortal", Corbin also points out that refusal to participate in "l'acte conjugale" was also identified as placing the soul in peril. At the same time exceptional conditions were devised by these celibate theologians, listed by Corbin, when "l'épouse" could legitimately decline to engage. I am grateful for the gift of this book from Justin Fleming.

¹⁵ *La chambre, il ne faut pas l'oublier, est, avant tout, l'asile des actions mystérieuses, des grandes et des petits secrets ...*

¹⁶ *... le refuge des souvenirs. C'est dans le logis, un véritable sanctuaire; et aussi le lieu fatal où le plus puissant comme le plus humble se trouve seul à seul de soi-même, où la vérité si souvent trahie, fardée, bannie, se révèle brusquement dans son déshabillé parfois peu flatteur, où pendant la nuit, qui port conseil, l'esprit se recueille, l'imagination vagabonde revit le passé, évoque les images évanouies, calcule, suppute, cherche à prévoir, combine, arrange, décide et finalement prépare l'avenir.*

¹⁷ ... l'influence heureuse que l'art exerce sur notre imagination et sur nos sens; ce serait hier que la contemplation de ses belles œuvres réjouit les yeux, élève l'esprit et annoblit nos pensées.

¹⁸ ... des petits chefs-d'œuvre de fine ciselure, des statuettes délicates et frêles, ... des japonneries ou des chinoiseries; peu ou point de faïences, des porcelaines à profusion; en un mot rien qui sente le style. mais tout ce qui respire le soin, l'élégance, la délicatesse et l'abandon. ... des petits dessins, des fines rayures, des petits bouquets, des fleurs isolées. Comme tissus, pas de laines; uniquement de la soie et de la soie brochée, moirée, satinée, brillante, chatoyante, papillonnante, s'encadrant dans un bois laqué, réchampi de teintes claires, ou dans une armature dorée.

¹⁹ La parure de la chambre à coucher doit donc être avant tout intime et recueillie.

²⁰ Chercher l'inspiration dans les fleurs, oui! car les combinaisons que nous pourrions tirer de notre fond ne peuvent égaler la variété, l'imprévu, la gaieté, de celles qu'on peut faire naître des combinaisons de fleurs.

²¹ Mais prétendre charger chacun des objets que nous voyons ou touchons comme le voudraient certains de nous rappeler l'émotion de la fleur, c'est nous en donner la nausée. Mais prétendre charger chacun des objets que nous voyons ou touchons comme le voudraient certains de nous rappeler l'émotion de la fleur, c'est nous en donner la nausée. Gaillard 1906: 34: Lombrics, macaroni, os de mouton, iris, gui, houx, chardon, l'algue qui naguère enlisa tout (sic), la nuée survenue de mille insectes diverses, la libellule en ce moment pullulante, et, brochant sur tout cela, la gracilité - ô combien grêle! - des androgynes, leurs museaux émergent dans les moëlstroms des chevelures, leurs yeux vitellins dilatés qui guettent au travers des bouches éparses, voilà pour le public ce qui jalonne les étapes de notre évolution modernes.

²² Il nous a été donné de voir de lui nombre d'études agrandies de tiges et de fleurs, montrant comme au microscope, analysant et démontant l'attache, le développement des diverses parties de la plante.

²³ La Nature! - toujours et partout invoquée - peut être souvent la vibouscule-t-on sans penser tout simplement à l'aimer. On l'analyse au microscope et on ne la voit pas! On en saisit à la fois mille éléments divers et l'on s' imagine alors l'embrasser. Elle se dérobe

²⁴ Je veux parler de son étude approfondie de la structure végétale, de la constante communion, de la dépendance d'inspiration dans laquelle il s'efforce de rester vis-à-vis de la nature.

²⁵ Ces études sont infiniment précieuses pour trouver des mouvements d'une grâce spontanée, des épanouissements de formes nerveuses, et M. Gaillard en a très heureusement usé dans une certaine mesure; on ne saurait trop recommander aux artistes le contact avec l'anatomie de la nature.

²⁶ Mais il ne faut pas oublier qu'un arbre, qu'une plante croissent normalement, que leurs éléments divers font intimement partie du même corps et s'y attachent sans soudure

²⁷ Lorsqu'il se tient dans ces justes limites, M. Gaillard tire de l'étude des formes végétales un style naturaliste, peut-on dire, d'un caractère très personnel et très heureux : un modèle de squellette, dont on trouvera ici la reproduction, en présente un bon exemple; ce sont bien des feuilles qui viennent s'épanouir au sommet des quatre tiges formant les pieds, et qui soutiennent la tablette.

²⁸ Voilà notre idéal réalisé: le meuble traité comme un corps nu, orné du bon équilibre de sa structure, de ses organes épanouis comme ceux de l'animal ou de végétal, en leur nerfs, en leurs chairs, pelages, plumages, tissus, membranes, écorces, en leur bourgeonnement, floraison, fructification; voilà la labour du statuaire, l'œuvre d'intellectualité, de vérité, de liberté, - œuvre de tact, difficile, durable et belle, - que nous préconisons à nos propres et derniers efforts.

²⁹ D'abord le regard est charmé; c'est un vrai délice visuel. Des panneaux de soie gris bleu et gris mauve et gris verte, comme glacée par des clartés lunaires, décorent les murs d'un floraison de rêve.

³⁰ ... beau motif de pensée et de rêve.

³¹ Les essences de bois sont extrêmement nombreuses et leur variété offre une palette très étendue. La gamme, complète, possède des tons d'une exceptionnelle somptuosité.

³² Le bois, matériau fondamental, impose aux deux arts des règles communes. Il n'y a pas de matière inerte.

³³ Mais l'arbre est un organisme vivant et les conditions de son développement, de sa croissance opulente, affectent, longtemps après qu'il est abattu, indéfiniment même, le bois, matière ravie à son tronc dépecé.

³⁴ ... le bois est rigoureusement stable dans le sens longitudinal des fibres. Il est au contraire instable - dilatable et contractile - dans le sens transversal. Sous l'influence de la température et de l'état hygrométrique de l'air, se souvenant aussi des saisons et sensible chaque année aux effluves du renouveau, les fibres, capricieuses, se meuvent latéralement : ou bien elles prennent un peu leurs aises, ou bien, au contraire, elles se serrent davantage les unes contre les autres. Inquiètes des fibres voisines dont un trait de scie ... dépourvues des outiers qui les maintenaient à leur place concentrique

autour du cœur de l'arbre, celles incurvent aussi parfois, de façon intempestive, leurs rangs que nous tenons tant à maintenir reigoureusement rectilignes. - Et cependant, mine feuillet our pièce d'un débit important, le faisceau de fibres, coupé net aux deux bouts, conserve sa longueur immuable.

³⁵ Il y a dans cela comme une hantise de l'arbre toujours présent

³⁶ ... tout cela fait de plus que l'on rencontre, dans un même morceau de bois, des valeurs différentes juxtaposées d'un même ton; ce qui produit les plus chatoyantes et les plus rares intensités de vibrations.

³⁷ Toute sa saveur ne réside-t-elle pas en effet dans la hardiesse des vibrations ou dans la douceur des réflexes que seule sait donner au bois une main artiste ... ?

³⁸ ... les vibrations de nature et les rythmes humaines, amplifiés

³⁹ Enlevez de la sorte, à de certains prétendus meubles, leurs menus points brillants - destinés croyons à provoquer l'hypnose

⁴⁰ Et puisque notre sensibilité aiguisée nous révèle un Univers différemment, nous devons modifier nos expressions et parler un langage différent.

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