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John La Farge's Stained Glass Windows at the Thomas Crane Memorial Library: Old Philosopher, Alpha, and Omega

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John La Farge's Stained Glass Windows at the Thomas Crane Memorial
Library: *Old Philosopher, Alpha, and Omega*

Matthew Peter Bowman

B.A., Augustana College, 2012

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

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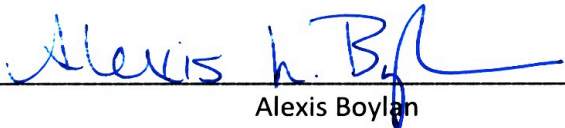
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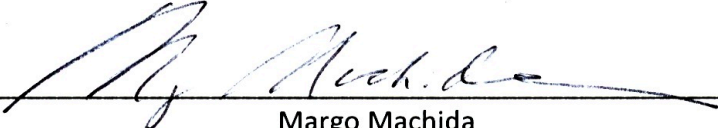
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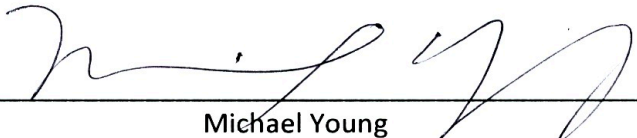
John La Farge's Stained Glass Windows at the Thomas Crane Memorial
Library: *Old Philosopher, Alpha, and Omega*

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Introduction

Old Philosopher, *Alpha*, and *Omega* by John La Farge are three stained glass windows deserving more attention in terms of their role in the history of the artist and their bearing on public perception of the space in which they are housed. The panels are located in the reading room of the Thomas Crane Public Library in Quincy, Massachusetts (**Figure 1**). This paper proposes new interpretations and understandings of these windows in relation to Thomas Crane, the namesake of the library. I argue that motifs found in the three panels offer correlations to Crane's biography and insight into how his family wished him to be remembered. Furthermore, this paper argues that the window's aesthetics are stylistically linked to the surrounding architecture and the tastes of the building's architect, H.H. Richardson (**Figure 2**). In focusing on the windows, I will highlight how the images therein illuminate a particular version of Crane's life and legacy that his family wanted to promulgate, and I will reveal aesthetic associations between the windows and the Thomas Crane Public Library itself.

My analysis of the stained glass triptych, the biography of Thomas Crane, and the library itself is narrow in focus, but a brief discussion of Gilded Age public decorative art in the United States will provide the broader context in which this analysis functions. During the late nineteenth century in the United States, a new affection was developing for elaborate decorative programs in public spaces.¹ Shifts in the national economy, growing industrialization, and changing gender, racial, and class positions coalesced to inspire various building projects oriented toward civic spaces. These advances created a unique opportunity for American artists

¹ See Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, "A New Renaissance: Stained Glass in the Aesthetic Period," in *In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986); David C. Huntington, "The Quest for Unity: American Art Between World's Fairs 1876-1893," in *Quest For Unity: American Art Between World's Fairs 1876-1893* (Detroit: The Detroit Institute of Arts, 1983); Richard Guy Wilson, Dianne H. Pilgrim, and Richard N. Murray, *The American Renaissance, 1876-1917* (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1979).

and architects, like La Farge and Richardson, to explore the stylistic and ideological possibilities they had studied and experienced in Europe.² This cultural transformation included a growing interest in stained glass. Intricate windows reflected a taste for opulence in late nineteenth-century American art and decoration.³ Installed in churches, residences, and public buildings, the medium eventually became a more familiar element in American decorative arts.

Library interiors also frequently incorporated stained glass commissions. Gilded Age and early twentieth-century libraries in particular became showcases for new designs and technologies in stained glass production. The passage of public library laws in New England during the 1870s and 1880s allowed for the proliferation of libraries—many of which included forms of stained glass. With the *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* panels, La Farge became one of the first renowned artists to create glass for a public library. A practitioner and inventor in the medium, La Farge held wide intellectual and artistic knowledge that would shape the material for years to come, and the Crane Library was one recipient of this expertise.⁴ The installation of these windows by 1882 was part of an enduring trend to include elaborate stained glass into American library design.⁵

Although on a much smaller scale than Richardson and La Farge's earlier collaboration at Trinity Church in Boston, the Crane Library elaborated on the figural motifs and treatments of

² David C. Huntington, "The Quest For Unity: American Art Between World's Fairs 1876-1893," in *Quest For Unity*, 37.

³ Virginia C. Raguin, *Glory in Glass: Stained Glass in the United States* (New York: Museum of Biblical Art, 2007), 93.

⁴ Richardson designed four other libraries in New England, yet the Crane Library was the only one decorated with luxurious glass by a fashionable artist. The library's possession of the *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* panels suggests the preeminence of the Crane Library among all of Richardson's efforts in this building type.

⁵ Katie Kresser writes, "La Farge indeed helped launch a decorative revolution whose effects would be seen in so many great American homes of the period and in so many fascinating decorative cycles gracing public buildings like America's Library of Congress." See Katie Kresser, *The Art and Thought of John La Farge* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 9. Her book is the newest critical assessment on La Farge.

color that they had begun exploring in that work. Richardson designed the plan and created the interior inlaid ornament. La Farge created the three stained glass panels. Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), a distinguished landscape architect who devised the original plan for Central Park in New York City, conceived the make-up and orientation of the grounds. While the Crane Library brought together arguably the most celebrated cast of architects and artists to ever work together on a small town American public library, an investigation of the artistic and architectural collaboration is not the purpose of this thesis. Preeminent among these men, for the purpose of my study, is La Farge. Understanding his stained glass panels is essential for comprehending the intention behind the library's decorative scheme.

While the Crane Library is most often considered in terms of Richardson's overall design, I wish to consider the role of memorial and of Crane himself as a crucial part of these stained glass panels and their import. In thinking about these windows as memorials to Crane, La Farge displayed a distinct viewpoint regarding the proper method for memorializing prominent American men. Regarding the proposed monument to General Grant in 1885, La Farge said,

I should wish that Grant's memorial might distinctly recall...the story of his name. Perhaps this impression would be made should his tomb be at the front or central approach to the monument. It might mark more strictly then a resting-place for his body, and might be the memorial of his personal life. Around, behind, and above it, but forming one connected whole, should rise the monument to his fame...⁶

Crane and Grant came from different backgrounds and became successful through different means. Yet while they are not historically comparable, the two men shared affluent and successful lives in a time of war and industrial progress. La Farge wrote these words three years after finishing the *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* windows, but evidence of the same perspective on memorial art can be found in the positioning of the stained glass panels at the Crane Library. From 1882-1908, the three windows were located at the "central approach" to the

⁶ John La Farge, "Notes and Comments," *The North American Review* 141 (1885): 399.

library entrance. They were the first things patrons experienced in the now demolished window bay across from the foyer. “Around, behind, and above” the windows is Richardson’s library— itself a commemorative edifice built in the memory of Crane as Grant’s neoclassical memorial tomb commemorated him. Grant’s tomb opened in 1897, memorializing the factual war hero. The Crane windows, on the other hand, remember an imagined adaptation of Crane.

This paper suggests that these panels helped form La Farge’s foray into memorial art. Chapter one considers La Farge’s early art education and his discovery of stained glass. Historically, he is credited as being the founder of opalescent glass, a rich form of stained glass that is still the highest standard in the medium today. The *Old Philosopher* window was his first experiment with a cloisonné technique. For its detailed complexity, the window has received much praise. An examination of La Farge’s stained glass method contributes to a technical understanding of the processes behind the *Old Philosopher* window, a distinctive philanthropic commemoration that came about during a period of prosperity and expansion in the American stained glass industry. This chapter seeks to explain the path La Farge traveled to reach his stained glass commission at the Crane Library.

In chapter two, I offer interpretations of the *Old Philosopher* window and its flanking panels *Alpha* and *Omega*. The three windows have been loosely deemed as memorials to Crane. I attempt to secure these panels within the language of memorialization and uncover how exactly they function to commemorate Crane. The *Old Philosopher*, the central window, is modeled on a fifth-century ivory diptych made during the late Roman Empire. It is possible that *Alpha* and *Omega* were based on diptychs as well. Upon their conception in Late Antiquity, ivory carvings acted as miniature commemorations. The historical evidence, then, firmly associates La Farge’s windows with the role of memorialization. The triptych is also likely a reference to Crane’s

religious convictions and ethics, as they create an allegorical link between Crane and the qualities of Unitarian piety and Roman virtue. Lastly, the panels are La Farge's contribution to the larger library. The orientation, design, and color of the panels befit the tone established in Richardson's architectural scheme and suggest a remembrance of Crane as a wealthy philanthropist who bequeathed a library for the betterment of the people in Quincy. In this way, the memory of Crane is firmly imbedded in the glass and structure as a whole.

Chapter 1

John La Farge's Journey to Stained Glass

The path to creating windows for the Crane library and becoming a successful stained glass artist was a slow and arduous one for John La Farge (1835-1910). Born in New York City to wealthy French immigrant parents, he manifested artistic talent at a young age. His grandfather, trained as a miniaturist, gave drawing lessons to the adolescent La Farge. In 1855 La Farge attended Mount Saint Mary's College in Maryland. Here he gained a strong grasp of classical, Christian, and literary iconography, which he utilized in his later artwork, including his stained glass.⁷ Upon returning home from college, La Farge dabbled in law at the insistence of his father, but his passion was in art. An opportunity between 1856 and 1857 to embark on a "wander year" visiting family in Europe turned into a chance to refine his artistic skills and knowledge of art history.

La Farge began his journey in Paris lodging with his cousin Paul de Saint-Victor (1827-1881), an influential art critic and a relative of La Farge's mother. He introduced La Farge to the paintings of Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904) a personal friend of Saint-Victor. For a short time, La Farge studied in Paris under Thomas Couture (1815-1879) who taught him to sketch directly from the model and stressed the classical tradition—both lessons he would later practice in the Crane commission.⁸ But perhaps more significant than his studies with Couture was the opportunity to work with Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898), the artist later commissioned

⁷ See James Yarnall, *John La Farge, A Biographical and Critical Study* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 17. This book is the newest and most updated biographical source on John La Farge. For other biographical material, see Cecilia Waern, *John La Farge, Artist and Writer* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1896) and Royal Cortissoz, *John La Farge: A Memoir and A Study* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911). For the best biographical and critical dissertations, see Helene Barbara Weinberg, *The Decorative Work of John La Farge* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977) and Henry Adams, "John La Farge, 1830-1870: From Amateur to Artist" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1980).

⁸ Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 35.

for the Boston Public Library stairwell murals. It is possible that La Farge recalled advice from Puvis de Chavannes when embarking upon public decorative art, both painting and stained glass. Outside of the studio, he gained knowledge of the great tradition of European figural art and copied canvases by the old masters at the Louvre. La Farge especially admired the works of Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863).⁹ In London, La Farge studied contemporary English paintings by Joseph William Mallord Turner (1775-1851) and the Pre-Raphaelites. The latter group, according to critic and biographer Royal Cortissoz, “made a very great and important impression upon” him and influenced his work when he began painting.¹⁰ But in spite of his fascination with modern European contemporary artists, La Farge turned more often to Italian Renaissance and Late Antique sources, such as ivory diptychs, for inspiration when creating stained glass, including the *Old Philosopher* and possibly *Alpha* and *Omega*.

The artist returned to New York in the winter of 1857-1858. He wrote, “Whatever I wished or intended or thought of was put aside by my return home, determined by my father’s wishing me back on account of his illness.”¹¹ In 1858 his father died, thus freeing La Farge from the burden of a law career and affording him an inheritance of several million dollars (by today’s standards) acquired from his father’s shrewd real estate investments.¹² His path to becoming a full time artist was now unobstructed and also potentially freed from the need to pursue commissions and cultivate patronage. The following year La Farge spent time in the Newport studio of William Morris Hunt (1824-1879)—the artist who studied with Francois Millet (1814-1875) in Paris and was responsible for bringing the Barbizon school to the United States—and

⁹ Ibid., 26.

¹⁰ Cortissoz, 98.

¹¹ Ibid., 97.

¹² Before his death, a New York newspaper ranked John Frederick La Farge on par financially with Cornelius Vanderbilt, putting them both down “for a million and a half.” “The Millionaires of New York,” *New York Times* (25 Jul. 1857), 7. Quoted in Yarnall, *La Farge*, 11, 22 n13.

learned to make painterly landscapes with loose brushwork.¹³ La Farge collected Barbizon lithographs in the 1850s, thus gaining experience with them prior to his work in Hunt's atelier. As with the period with Couture in Paris, his time with Hunt in Newport was short lived. While with Hunt, La Farge befriended the future novelist Henry James (1843-1916) with whom he shared an affinity for European culture and an interest in painting. It was La Farge, six years the senior of James, who influenced him to eventually become a writer.¹⁴ La Farge's education in Europe combined with his period as a student painter in Rhode Island provided the young artist with enculturation and sophistication that he would later bring to his work in stained glass.

La Farge's timely acquaintance with the art world eventually led to his start in New York City during the 1860s. His time there was uninterrupted thanks to his avoidance of the Civil War draft because of his myopia, although the war did impede his traveling to Europe for further study.¹⁵ During this time he exhibited often, and in 1860 joined the Century Club. In 1869 he was recruited to the board in charge of establishing the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹⁶ He also associated with artists who would later be categorized as American Pre-Raphaelites, such as William James Stillman and George Henry Boughton, reflecting his fascination with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood that had started with his 1856-1857 trip abroad and previewing his future contact in the 1870s with the English Pre-Raphaelites and their stained glass. Nonetheless,

¹³ La Farge first painted in oil while working under the French-American artist Francois Régis Gignoux in 1855, but Hunt is a more prolific figure in the cross continental art influence between France and the United States. Travel to Europe, specifically Paris, with the purpose of acquiring knowledge of European art was a practice carried out by other major American artists as well. For instance, Thomas Eakins studied in Paris with Gérôme between 1866 and 1869. Eakins emulated Gérôme's attention to detail through use of photography, background research, and costumes and props. With his painting *Max Schmidt in a Single Scull* (1871), Eakins puts his learning into practice by painting the subtleties of the human body with painstaking detail and control. See Michael J. Lewis, *American Art and Architecture* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 149-150.

¹⁴ Henry Adams, "The Mind of John La Farge," in *John La Farge*, ed. Henry Adams (New York: Abbeville Press, 1987), 16-17.

¹⁵ Yarnall, *La Farge*, 61-62.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

this demanding travel schedule yielded problems for the young artist. Extravagant spending paired with a shortage of income quickly led to mounting debt. In 1864 La Farge suffered his first bankruptcy—a result of his perpetual mishandling of money and a manifestation of financial woes that would plague him throughout his career. He would attempt to resolve these financial troubles by turning to more lucrative stained glass commissions in the 1880s.

The 1870s brought La Farge much apprehension regarding his artistic direction. Still life, portraiture, ideal figure painting, and landscape did not garner La Farge the fame or financial reward he desired, and he questioned his painterly contributions. His second visit to Europe in 1873 to exhibit *The Last Valley-Paradise Rocks* (1867-1868) canvas at the Durand-Ruel gallery in London led to his encounter with Pre-Raphaelite stained glass and persuaded him to invest more time in the medium and to test his hand at working with glass back in the United States. His exhibit received acclaim, but La Farge was nevertheless uncertain of his foothold as a painter since “at home he was making practically nothing on his pictures.”¹⁷ But during this period of self-doubt, La Farge spent time discussing stained glass with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and viewed examples in England and France. For La Farge, this experience strengthened his resolve to desert easel painting in favor of decorative commissions; it made him ponder “much again of the question of decoration, that is to say as far as [I] was concerned.”¹⁸ In the glass medium, the artist saw an opportunity to augment his income above his earnings from painting sales.¹⁹

By the end of the decade, La Farge publically announced his shift into the decorative arts. In December 1879 he publicized his decision to close his career as a painter by holding an

¹⁷ Cortisoz, 95.

¹⁸ John La Farge, “Reply to Mr. Bing of Paris,” (Jan 1894), 3. La Farge Family Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Quoted in Weinberg, *The Decorative Work*, 340. La Farge still painted after auctioning off his paintings but in a much smaller, almost minute, volume.

¹⁹ Ibid., 340. Also see Cortisoz, 185-187. He did not completely stop painting. Between 1870 and 1879, La Farge made eight canvases.

auction in Boston.²⁰ This decision came about, oddly enough, after winning “honorable mention” at the Paris *Exposition Universelle* for his *Paradise Valley* (1866-1868) canvas; La Farge was one of the only Americans recognized at the show.²¹ Despite this success, he was not enthusiastic about his stock in easel painting, since he was on the verge of financial ruin. At his auction one-year prior, La Farge refused to sell most of his work, but the remaining works left his ownership in the 1879 auction. In the preface to his catalogue, the auctioneer wrote, “This collection comprises all the available works remaining in Mr. La Farge’s studio. Many of the pictures Mr. La Farge refused to sell last year; but they are offered now to enable him to devote himself entirely to decoration.”²² Looking back on his early career in 1894, La Farge wrote, “For nearly ten years I was obliged to give up painting...and even now I exercise it more as a pleasure than as a business.”²³ Stained glass and monumental mural painting had now become his principle concerns.

²⁰ He had sold off paintings in the past, but this 1879 auction was more exaggerated in its finality. One year prior, in November 1878, La Farge sold his Newport paintings at a one-man Boston show. It was a social event “everyone has been to see...very much as in New York everybody goes to see Don Giovanni or a new play...” See “The La Farge Paintings,” *New York World* (19 Nov. 1878), 5. Quoted in Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 109. See also Henry A. La Farge, “John La Farge and the 1878 Auction of His Works,” *American Art Journal* 15 (1983): 5. Henry La Farge thinks the 1878 auction may have been organized by wealthy Bostonians to compensate La Farge’s poor payment for his Trinity Church murals.

²¹ Richard C. McCormick, “Our success at Paris in 1878,” *North American Review* 129 (July 1879): 3. The painting may have been received well because of its Impressionistic emphasis on optical effects and capturing light at a specific time of the day. La Farge performed these experiments in the early 1860s prior to the development of French Impressionism in the 1870s. He was independent of the French Impressionists, but displaying the canvas in Paris in 1879 would have garnered him attention as if he was working in the French modern style. To paint this scene and other works of the same subject matter, La Farge took a long time to paint the canvases. He writes, “...so as to get the same light as far as possible. By going frequently, if necessary every day and watching for a few minutes, I could get what I wanted.” His words here parallel Monet’s when he writes, “no painter can work more than half an hour from the same subject out-doors and remain faithful to nature. When the light changes it’s time to stop.” Quoted in H. La Farge, “The 1878 Auction,” 20.

²² Preface, Leonard’s Gallery, *The Drawings, Water-Colours, and Oil Paintings by John La Farge. To be sold at Auction...December 18 and 19, 1879*. Quoted in Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 110.

²³ “John La Farge to Samuel Bing” (1894). Quoted in James Yarnall, “Nature and Art in the Painting of John La Farge” in *John La Farge* (1987), 102.

One rationale for his transition to stained glass and the decorative arts was the monetary opportunity it provided. As one contemporary critic discussed,

There is a sure and comfortable prospect of employment and emolument for native painters who shall master the principle of decorative art...today artists like Tiffany and La Farge find it to their profit to paint walls rather than to paint canvases, to diffuse their light through stained glass windows rather than to reflect it from a background of Whatman paper.²⁴

But financial gain was not the only stimulus for a conversion to stained glass. La Farge thought that through the medium, he could better reach the public than with oil canvases. His windows had a social function. Most Americans lacked an intellectually demanding artistic education and knowledge of old master paintings, so La Farge reasoned that stained glass, with its simplicity and immediate sensuality brought about by beautiful light, was an art form accessible to anyone and could easily gratify the public regardless of viewers' knowledge of the artistic medium.²⁵ Another critic wrote, "He believes he is doing more for his art, his country, his fellow man [through stained glass] by leading the people through a love for color and illuminated figures."²⁶ In other words, stained glass, more than any other medium, could best influence the most people with its familiar beauty and color. Thus he embraced the medium even though stained glass, by his own declaration, was "harder work than using a brush."²⁷

In becoming a stained glass artist, La Farge joined a short history of American artists working in the medium. One notable artist was the Anglo-American William Jay Bolton (1816-1884) who carried out the first stained glass commission on American soil—fifty windows for

²⁴ "Union League Club," *Harper's Weekly* 25 (Feb. 19th 1881), 118.

²⁵ Kathleen Pyne, "La Farge and the Sensuous Environment," in *Art and the Higher Life: Painting and Evolutionary Thought in Late Nineteenth-Century America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 66.

²⁶ Anna Bowman Dodd, "John La Farge," *The Art Journal* (London) 47 (1886): 264. Quoted in Pyne, 66, 314. Although Dodd is paraphrasing La Farge in the article, Pyne reasons that it represents La Farge's viewpoint, not Dodd's, because Dodd argues with La Farge's line of reasoning.

²⁷ John La Farge, "Window Part III," in Russell Sturgis, *A Dictionary of Architecture and Building* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902), 1076.

the Episcopal church of the Holy Trinity built between 1843 and 1847 in Brooklyn.²⁸ He worked for the architect and church designer Minard Lafever (1789-1854), basing the program on sixteenth-century prototypes seen while touring King's College Chapel in Cambridge as a younger man. Bolton used broad shading and bold hatchwork to emulate the English glass.²⁹ Bolton believed in nineteenth-century progress, referring to his era as a time when people "possess better materials, a less superstitious religion, and a more cheerful taste, with all the experience and examples of the past to guide and correct."³⁰ As a decorative artist, La Farge shared Bolton's yearning for better materials and respect for past examples to guide present work, though he rejected the styles and techniques of prototypical European glass. For his *Old Philosopher* window, for instance, La Farge employed a brand new technique for fusing the panels together and directly modeled the image for the glass from a Late Antique carving; but the new type of glass he invented and used for the windows, as well as its novel color emanations, differed greatly from those of European windows or ones made by Bolton. In effect, La Farge commenced a new chapter in American stained glass that owed little to the past.

La Farge created a unique position for himself in the history of American stained glass artists, and the medium was his primary contribution to various decorative partnerships with other artists and architects in the late nineteenth century. The window commission for Richardson's Crane library was an early manifestation of what would be La Farge's long career of collaboration in the arts. The blooming of the American Renaissance in the late nineteenth-century, fed by commercial and industrial upswings following the Civil War and newly acquired wealth, allowed for a climate supportive of the embellishment of public spaces with decorative

²⁸ For more information on William Jay Bolton, see Clark, Willene B. *The Stained Glass of William Jay Bolton* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992).

²⁹ Virginia Chieffo Raguin, *Stained Glass: From its Origins to the Present* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003), 174-175.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 174.

art. Many prominent members of society—painters, sculptors, architects, scholars, politicians, businessmen, and investors—associated the post-bellum prosperity in the United States with the European High Renaissance.³¹ With his new medium, La Farge joined the collection of American artists and architects collaborating on public buildings. He directed most of his efforts in glass to memorials due to increased demand from the Gilded Age elite. Looking back on La Farge's career, a contemporary biographer wrote,

It is essential to the right comprehension of American glass to understand that it has grown out of and educated a real demand: the demand for memorial windows in the many churches of the cities and towns of America, a demand that is felt by those who can afford to spend a small sum for a memorial, as well as by those who can afford an almost unlimited amount.³²

Although this passage references the vogue for memorial windows in ecclesiastical settings, La Farge took part in related commissions outside of churches. The community library, an establishment within the public sphere, was a favorable spot for commemorative La Farge glass. He rarely created stained glass for purposes other than installation in churches and homes, so his set of windows at the Crane Library is exceptional within his oeuvre and distinctive as a public memorial created in harmony with the architecture of the library.

Discovering Stained Glass

As has been mentioned above, La Farge first seriously considered stained glass during his 1856-1857 European excursion. In reference to ecclesiastical windows in Belgium, he wrote, “the churches brought me to the knowledge of ancient glass.”³³ He also studied glass during his subsequent 1873 expedition to London and Paris and formed there an ambition to create glass

³¹ Richard Guy Wilson, “Expressions of Identity,” in *The American Renaissance*, 11.

³² Waern, 64-66.

³³ Cortisoz, 87.

rivaling the magnificence and color of Chartres cathedral (**Figure 3**).³⁴ Upon returning to the United States, he voiced criticism of the glass made both overseas and at home, expressing distaste for artists' dependence on painting the surface of the glass and lamenting the limited hues and varieties customarily used by stained glass artisans.³⁵

The poor quality of glass in the United States hindered his first commission in the medium. In 1874 the architects William Ware (1832-1915) and Henry Van Brunt (1832-1903) called on La Farge for a commemorative window for the class of 1844 at Harvard's Memorial Hall, a dining commons on the campus honoring fallen Union soldiers of the Civil War. Although he had not worked in stained glass prior to this point, La Farge was confident in his ability to do the project. His accomplishments in painting combined with knowledge of the history of stained glass, he explained in a letter, enabled him "to undertake the art of glass with the hope of carrying it further than it had gone."³⁶ This first attempt was a self-proclaimed failure. He tried plating and layering the glass to increase its brilliance, but his efforts did not satisfy him, so he crafted another window to fit his standards. The class committee approved the style of the window: a representation of a tall French Renaissance Knight named Chevalier Bayard, alluding to chivalry and associating that virtue with the class of 1844 by way of the prominent shield and

³⁴ Yarnall, *La Farge*, 97. In his pamphlet about stained glass, La Farge wrote, "However it may be, the twelfth century glass in Western Europe is at once a perfect model of its kind, and as it is applied to architectural decoration, an example and a lesson for all artists...But the older stained-glass windows, such for example as the glorious west windows of Chartres, have what may be called a frankness and sureness of expression that would make them recognized at once were we to see them transposed to modern buildings." See John La Farge, *The American Art of Glass, To be Read in Connection with Mr. Louis C. Tiffany's Paper in the July Number of the "Forum," 1893* (New York: J.J. Little and Co., 1893), 3. Henry Adams travelled with La Farge to France in 1899 and later wrote about the artist's reaction to the stained glass at Chartres. Regarding their visit together, Adams wrote, "...but whatever it was, it led him back to the twelfth century and to Chartres where La Farge not only felt at home, but felt a sort of ownership...La Farge alone could use glass like a thirteenth-century artist." See Cortisoz, 190-191.

³⁵ Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 97.

³⁶ "Letter from John La Farge to Grace Barnes, July 25th, 1905." Quoted in Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 99. La Farge is referring back in time to the 1874 commission in this letter.

helmet, symbols of strength and fortitude.³⁷ Still, La Farge lost the commission when the committee found out it would cost \$2000—double the price agreed upon initially.³⁸ Out of disgust with its negative reception and distaste for the primitive English methods and inadequate color ranges he was constrained to use for the window, La Farge demolished it.³⁹ He wrote, in reference to the *Bayard*, that “no good painters on glass, even of a fairly low degree,” combined with the limited “choice of glass,” made it difficult to paint the glass properly and supply adequate gradation.⁴⁰

Traditional techniques for creating stained glass could not fulfill his needs. La Farge studied and wrote about the long history of European stained glass that preceded him, but due to poor materials and inadequate methods, he was merely another struggling American artist in the medium, “the number of whom,” he wrote, “could be counted twice on a single hand.”⁴¹ Stained glass window creation began around the seventh century C.E. in France at the monastery of St. Peter in Monkswearmouth. The early examples were actually not stained. Medieval artists colored the glass with molten iron oxides—a process that produced a translucent glass material called pot metal. The glass was colored through heating while still in the pot. Painting was the only means to portray realism on pot-metal glass; Medieval glass artists usually depicted ornamental patterns and stylized figures rather than naturalistic forms, so choosing to paint on pot metal glass, by its

³⁷ As stated in the class minutes, “...each window shall contain one or more upright figures about the size of life...and that these figures shall be typical or historical. The choice of the design is also restricted to characters prior to the time of Shakespeare.” Class of 1879, “Secretary’s Report No. II,” (1882), 12. Quoted in James Yarnall and Julie Sloan, “John La Farge and the Stained-Glass Windows in Memorial Hall at Harvard University,” *The Magazine Antiques* 4 (1992): 643.

³⁸ “Memorandum” from David M. Little, secretary, Harvard University, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Prints and Drawings Department. Quoted in H. Barbara Weinberg, “The Early Stained Glass Work of John La Farge (1835-1910),” *Stained Glass* 67 (1972): 7.

³⁹ John La Farge, “Reply to Bing,” 4. La Farge Family Papers, Yale University. Quoted in Weinberg, “Early Stained Glass,” 6.

⁴⁰ John La Farge, “Reply to Bing,” 4. Quoted in Yarnall and Sloan, “Windows at Harvard,” 644.

⁴¹ John La Farge, “American Art of Glass,” 14.

nature a medium meant for flat and abstract design, made sense.⁴² The portions of glass were already colored when manufactured. Artisans did not paint them any other color except black for the purpose of blocking out exterior sunlight.⁴³ Since it was fired onto the glass, this black paint was quite durable. Unfortunately, few examples exist today. La Farge was aware of this dearth of color variety in Medieval windows, though he appreciated them for their truth to nature as representing “light by light itself.”⁴⁴ He also found some Medieval examples favorable, such as the windows at Chartres, which had minimal paint applied for shading and details—a practice he followed as a glass artist (**Figure 3**).⁴⁵

A new procedure for coloring stained glass called silver stain arose in the fourteenth century; it allowed for permanent absorption of colors and richer tones than pot metal.⁴⁶ During the Renaissance, Raphael, Cranach, and Dürer were all involved with stained glass windows, but excessive painting on glass during the period diminished the brilliance of the medium.⁴⁷ In the eighteenth-century, Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1793), English artist and first president of the Royal Academy, imitated paintings in stained glass and attempted to display similar light and shadow in glass by painting colored enamels onto opaque black pigment and firing them onto the glass. But according to La Farge, the Reynolds stained glass was dull and washed-out (**Figure 4**).⁴⁸ His critique was probably due to the fact that enamel paints tend to peel easily and the colors produced are rather weak. Additionally, during the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries, glass artists used stipple or colorless iron oxide to attempt color effects; but La Farge

⁴² Weinberg, “The Early Stained Glass,” 10.

⁴³ Henry Adams, “The Stained Glass of John La Farge,” *American Art Review* 2 (1975): 48.

⁴⁴ John La Farge, “A Definitive Treatise on ‘Stained Glass,’” *The Book Buyer* (Jun 1 1898), 395.

⁴⁵ Julie L. Sloan and James L. Yarnall, “Art of an Opaline Mind: The Stained Glass of John La Farge,” *American Art Journal* 1 / 2 (1992): 5. La Farge used paint in some of his early windows but mostly avoided it later in his career.

⁴⁶ Adams, “Stained Glass,” 48.

⁴⁷ Weinberg, “Early Stained Glass,” 10.

⁴⁸ John La Farge, “Windows Part III,” 1075.

believed its use smudged and obscured color.⁴⁹ In all, in the period between the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century, there was little technical innovation of stained glass. La Farge bluntly wrote that “The eighteenth century has little to tell us.”⁵⁰

The nineteenth century ushered in the next major wave of art glass innovation. La Farge continued the experiments in stained glass conducted by the Pre-Raphaelites in England and formulated his own processes that surpassed those English methods. With their newfound interest in craft, the Pre-Raphaelites revived medieval glass-making practices and offered their own innovations. William Morris, the principle stained glass artist of the group, was the European precursor to La Farge by virtue of his experimentation in the medium (**Figure 5**).⁵¹ During his “wander year,” La Farge came across Morris’s work and noted that he was already familiar with Morris from having studied his prints in New York City.⁵² In contrast to medieval glass techniques, Morris solidified leadlines, the metal joints that hold glass together, and broadened the spectrum of enamel paint colors; but Morris’s color choices lacked the immediacy La Farge desired.⁵³ Dante Gabriel-Rossetti, Ford Maddox Brown, and Edward Burne-Jones worked for Morris, creating designs that Morris could then transfer into stained glass. Even though La Farge associated with these Pre-Raphaelite designers during his trip to England in 1873 and liked their drawings, he found fault in their conversion to glass. Apparently, so did Burne-Jones, who in an 1873 letter to La Farge, complained that “his [own] designs assumed a commercial shape when translated into glass.”⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Henry A. La Farge, “Painting with Colored Light,” in *John La Farge* (1987), 198.

⁵⁰ John La Farge, “American Art of Glass,” in Russell Sturgis, *A Dictionary of Architecture and Building* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902), 1089.

⁵¹ While spending half of 1873 in England, La Farge may have met William Morris, but Henry Adams claims that they probably never met. See Adams, “Stained Glass,” 53.

⁵² La Farge is quoted in Cortisoz, 98.

⁵³ Adams, “Stained Glass,” 53.

⁵⁴ John La Farge, “American Art of Glass,” in Sturgis, 1090.

La Farge's concerns regarding stained glass transcended those of the Pre-Raphaelites. Morris normally rejected illusionistic effects and embraced flatness in his windows, but La Farge aspired to these aesthetics in his glass. He hoped to expand the possibilities of the medium into the future rather than relying on past medieval techniques. He also wished to enhance the capabilities of leading—the metal joints holding pieces of stained glass together—further than Morris had done. La Farge thought leading was a “necessity”; he wanted the leading alone to “give the design.”⁵⁵ He was also averse to the workshop execution of Pre-Raphaelite windows. Having designed the piece, Rossetti, Brown, and Burne-Jones left their workers completely responsible for crafting the object. La Farge repudiated this English principle. Instead, he would oversee all facets of manufacture and design of his windows.⁵⁶ La Farge's workers executed windows completely under his supervision.

But while window leading and workshop execution were among La Farge's stylistic concerns about stained glass, color was his foremost worry. This specific interest stemmed from his experiences as a painter, his studies of Pre-Raphaelite stained glass, and his experiments with Chevreul color theory. During his travels in Europe, La Farge had studied closely the color theories of Eugene Chevreul (1786-1889), a French physicist, who explored the science of color and light, theorizing about complementary colors and the harmonies possible through proper color juxtapositions. La Farge was most likely familiar with Chevreul's work as early as 1855 prior to venturing to Europe, though his time in France probably solidified his interest in Chevreul's theories. While looking at Chartres glass and other examples, La Farge relied on the

⁵⁵ John La Farge, “A Definitive Treatise,” 395.

⁵⁶ John La Farge, “Reply to Bing,” 3-4. Quoted in Weinberg, “Early Stained Glass,” 5. In this way, he also differed from his rival Louis Comfort Tiffany. Tiffany was not as vehement about protecting his artistic integrity. Whereas La Farge thought of his glass as a personal product, Tiffany cooperated with other designers in bringing projects to life. In Tiffany's own firm, L.C. Tiffany & Associated Artists, his first major design team consisted of Samuel Coleman, Lockwood de Forest and Candace Wheeler.

color theory principles outlined in Chevreul's publications, including *De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs et de l'assortiment des objets colorés* (1839).⁵⁷ Through Chevreul, La Farge learned that unpainted windows were more visually striking than painted windows which appeared dismal from a distance.⁵⁸ He therefore tended to avoid the application of paint in his stained glass windows.

Chevreul's influence is evident in the *Old Philosopher*, where La Farge juxtaposes and balances the primary and secondary colors of the window. Primary colors pervade the entire piece. Yellow fills the borders flanking the philosopher; lightly tinted blue accents the yellow in the borders and links to the central figural panel by way of the bright blue pillow underneath the philosopher; red illuminates the entire piece, lining the whole interior frame and emboldening the hanging curtain in the background and the bottom of the philosopher's drapery on his left leg in the foreground. Primary reds, blues, and yellows govern the window, but secondary green plays a major role in the window's aesthetic, covering the figure's green drapery in the center. In this way, the viewer's eye is drawn directly to secondary green and moved throughout the sections of the panel, starting at the drapery and turning towards the green hues in the column capitals and the decorative leaves in the borders.⁵⁹ The core primary colors take up more space, but secondary green demands the first glance.

⁵⁷ One of the English translations is *The Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colors* (1855).

⁵⁸ Adams, "The Stained Glass," 58. Also, Chevreul argued that "colored glass...would be a true transparent mosaic." See Michel Eugene Chevreul, *The Laws of Contrast of Color and their Application to the Arts*, translated by John Spankin (London: Routledge, 1859), 114.

⁵⁹ Besides green, the other two secondary colors are purple and orange. They are both present in the *Old Philosopher*. Depending on the way sunlight hits the panel, faint orange hues come out in the red borders of the interior lining. Purple is found in the bottom leaves of the vertical borders. The presence of these three secondary colors along with the three primary colors means that all colors are represented in the window and synchronized as if on a color wheel.

Chevreulian complementary colors are also illustrated in the *Old Philosopher*.⁶⁰ Green and red are complementary and dictate the color scheme of the central figural section. Blue and yellow are also complementary, pairing together in the two vertical side borders to mimic the complementary team of red and green in the middle.

Modeling himself on Chevreul, La Farge took an organized and scientific approach to instilling an array of color tones in his windows. As early as his time in Hunt's studio, La Farge began to develop an understanding of the methods to attaining true color, loathing the strictures of studio teaching, formulaic painting techniques, and arbitrary modeling of tones.⁶¹ Explaining his search for perfect complementary colors, La Farge wrote,

My youthful intolerance required the relations of color for shadow and for light to be based on some scheme of color-light that would allow oppositions and gradations representing the effects of the different directions and intensities of light in nature, and I already became much interested in the question of the effect of complementary colors.⁶²

The search for complementary colors continued into his adult career as a mature stained glass artist. Looking back, twenty years later, on the turning point to decorative art in his career, La Farge said that he had wished for “newer methods of studying color and light not having yet been developed to any extent, either among us or in Europe.”⁶³ La Farge was attracted to the Pre-Raphaelites' deft handling of “the great problems of colour,” but it was not until his invention of opalescent glass and the creation of such windows as the *Old Philosopher* that La Farge fully resolved the color conundrums plaguing European glass and his own work.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Colors opposite of one another on the color wheel are considered complementary.

⁶¹ Waern, 12.

⁶² Ibid, 12.

⁶³ “Bancel La Farge to Jean Charles Cazin” (May 2 1895), Yale University archives. Quoted in Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 84.

⁶⁴ Waern, 13.

Opalescent Glass

La Farge's solution to insufficient luminescence was the invention of an opalescent material. The first step in the development of opalescent glass came while bedbound with illness during his first decorative commission in 1876, painting murals at Trinity Church in Boston.⁶⁵ La Farge noticed sunlight shining through an opal tooth powder receptacle. This material was commonly used in practical kitchen and bathroom items. White glass was cheaper than porcelain, but it possessed manufacturing flaws, making it appear striated and opalescent.⁶⁶ The opaque particles, floating in suspension within the glass, refracted light in varied opacities and transparencies.

La Farge saw a chance to employ these properties to improve his glass; he could substitute opal glass for pot metal glass or mix the two together in one piece. Opalescent hues produced luminous effects and the complementary color combinations he wanted. La Farge theorized that layering this material in multiple sheets could make for an assemblage of various colors in one stained glass work without needing abundant paint. The process is also known as plating—the act of arranging glass pieces on top of one another to alter the base color on the bottom. Rather than painting on glass, as was necessary in pot metal, opalescent glass allowed the artist to produce patterns and three-dimensional effects without paint. The glass itself contained colored pigments, providing painterly effects. It also differed from pot-metal glass in containing calcifer which imbued opalescent glass with more opacity and solidity.⁶⁷ La Farge occasionally applied fired kiln paint to hands and faces, but the colorful opalescent glass technique allowed him to use much less of it in contrast to previous artists in the history of

⁶⁵ This account took place in either 1876 or 1877.

⁶⁶ Adams, "Stained Glass," 54.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 54.

stained glass making. And opalescent glass permitted more intricate and realistic color effects than pot metal.⁶⁸

Adding to the uniqueness of his new procedure, La Farge often sought out imperfect or damaged glass pieces for his windows.⁶⁹ He even incorporated broken bottles. Due to his inability to make glass on his own that satisfied him, La Farge bought opalescent pieces from various glasshouses. He also requested that glassmakers deliberately produce glass with mistakes or “the variations needed for translucency,” but his requests were oftentimes met with resistance.⁷⁰ Uneven planes resulting from varying sizes of glass, jewels, and cabochons allowed for depth, rounded forms, and convincing space.⁷¹ Since paint was limited or avoided entirely, variations in glass were necessary for accurate portrayals of color and tone. Different pieces in combination also mitigated the uniform thickness and color of available commercial glass; rough and mismatched glass paired together could fracture light in the course of transmission into interior spaces.⁷² After 1878, La Farge incorporated opalescent glass into all of his commissions, including the *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* panels at the Crane Library. Having put down his brush in favor of glass, he thought of opalescent glass with reference to his background as an easel painter. La Farge referred to the process as “painting in air with a material carrying coloured light.”⁷³

La Farge produced his first effective opalescent window in 1878. He dubbed it and his other beginning experiments “mosaic glass windows” because of their bejeweled opalescent

⁶⁸ Ibid, 54.

⁶⁹ Sloan and Yarnall, “Opaline Mind,” 8. Around 1878, at Thill’s Flint glass shop in Brooklyn, La Farge purchased imperfect opalescent glass pieces for use in his work that had been rejected at the shop. Their streaks and irregular tones and textures were perfect for his purposes, so La Farge bought all there was. See H. La Farge, “Painting with Colored Light,” 198.

⁷⁰ John La Farge, *American Art of Glass* (1893), 13.

⁷¹ Weinberg, *Decorative Work*, 347.

⁷² Ibid, 348.

⁷³ John La Farge, “Window, Part III,” 1080.

glass pieces encased by thick leading.⁷⁴ “By chance,” he said, “some person asked me to design a window. This I carried out and then I amused myself by replacing certain ones of the patterns that had the ordinary pot-metal, with these pieces of opal cut from the various boxes and such like.”⁷⁵ This first trial window did not survive. He received the first commission for an opalescent window in 1879 from Dr. Richard Henry Derby for his house in Long Island.⁷⁶ It was his first window made primarily of opalescent glass. The Derby window contains decorative motifs derived from the northern Italian Renaissance, taking inspiration from woodcuts in an influential Venetian book from 1499, *Hyperotomachia Poliphili* by Francesco Colonna.⁷⁷ It is a memorial in glass to Derby’s marriage to Sarah Coleman Alden, as evidenced by initials in the architrave and date in the base panel.⁷⁸ Prior to its installation in the Derby house, La Farge exhibited the window at his studio to much acclaim; the press called him a “pioneer” and trendsetter in the stained glass medium.⁷⁹ La Farge would later look to a European prototype for his *Old Philosopher* window. It is Late Antique, not Renaissance, in origin; but nevertheless, it is another example of his penchant for borrowing figures and motifs from one medium and re-appropriating them into glass for commemorative commissions.

Concurrent with his production of purely decorative memorials like the Derby Window, La Farge received a commission for an opalescent figural window from the Harvard class of

⁷⁴ Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 99.

⁷⁵ Waern, 53.

⁷⁶ The architect of the house, Charles Follen McKim, advocated for La Farge, and Dr. Derby accepted the recommendation. McKim trained in the firm of H.H. Richardson, the architect of the Thomas Crane Library, during the design and construction of Trinity Church. One year prior, in 1878, La Farge made a window entitled *Morning Glories* for the William Watts Sherman House in Newport, RI—H.H. Richardson designed the house and gave La Farge freedom to choose the artistic design. It was not pure opalescent glass, but rather La Farge combined traditional painted pot-metal glass with some pieces of white opalescent glass.

⁷⁷ Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 100. The present whereabouts of the Derby window are unknown.

⁷⁸ Sloan and Yarnall, “Opaline Mind,” 8.

⁷⁹ “John La Farge’s Stained Glass,” *New York Herald* (Nov. 3rd 1879): 8. Quoted in Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 100.

1860 for Memorial Hall, the site of his earlier disappointment. He first installed a pot-metal window, *The Battle*, in Memorial Hall in 1880 but removed it after becoming dissatisfied with the result. Basing it on a different Renaissance model that satisfied him, he finished a new version of this Greek war scene in 1881 (**Figure 6**). Like the *Bayard* window before it, the *Battle* adheres to Civil War subject matter, symbolizing soldiers who fought for the Union and memorializing their monumental efforts. The color red both dominates and accents the work. The billowing crimson flag in the leader's hand hovers over his regiment behind and links the two chancel windows together as one active, engaging, and unified scene. In the *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* windows, La Farge carried over his treatment of red hues (**Figure 1**). He abandoned vertical and active Renaissance figures for the *Old Philosopher* in favor of a singular seated and motionless Late Antique thinker. A tranquil subject was more appropriate for a library than the heroic figures necessary for a Civil War memorial.

Cloisonné technique and the *Old Philosopher*

These early experiments in stained glass led to exploration of a cloisonné technique first implemented from 1880-1882 in the *Old Philosopher*. La Farge was emulating an ancient method used extensively in Early Christian and Byzantine era enamels and in Chinese luxury objects.⁸⁰ It was also used for making jewelry. In connection with these opulent pieces, the term cloisonné denotes a luxury item—an association La Farge probably welcomed. The process involves placing copper wires between tiny glass pieces and firing the shards of copper until they melt, coalescing them into one whole piece. La Farge's innovation involved connecting glass pieces with thin filaments of metal which are then fused to the glass. The glass is plated on each

⁸⁰ La Farge most likely owned such objects. In Spring 1879, he auctioned Orientalia from his personal collection. In 1881 he participated in another auction, selling off some of his Oriental porcelains.

side with the surfaces layering on top of one other.⁸¹ The fine metal in between the glass pieces is almost invisible, and there is no need for paint, so the process was an evolution of stained glass that did away with painting (for the most part—La Farge still made minute touch-ups with his brush). Unfortunately for the artist, the cloisonné format proved too costly to use on a regular basis.⁸² It was tedious and precarious work, needing attention in precise increments, repeated firings in the oven, and careful protection from overheating.⁸³

The *Old Philosopher* commission in 1880 presented an opportunity for La Farge to create glass using this difficult cloisonné technique (**Figure 7**).⁸⁴ This window is a culminating example in the first phase of La Farge's opalescent stained glass production characterized by his reliance

⁸¹ John La Farge, "Reply to Bing," 9-10. Quoted in H. Barbara Weinberg, "John La Farge's Peacock Window," *The Worcester Art Museum Bulletin* 3 (1973): 2.

⁸² Nevertheless, La Farge did make several more cloisonné windows: *The Peacock Window*, 1890, Worcester Art Museum; central panel of the *Welcome* window, 1908, Metropolitan Museum of Art; six panels for Edward Bok made c. 1909 (one of these windows is called *Samoan Dancing a Standing Siva—a* cloisonné panel with an allegorical figure symbolizing "dance" derived from La Farge's 1890-1891 sojourn to the South Seas). Between 1881-1882, La Farge incorporated cloisonné into a window for a commission at The Cornelius Vanderbilt II mansion in New York City. The *Neptune Lunette*, featuring Neptune, the Roman god of the Sea, at the epicenter of the piece, has hints of cloisonné in the urn, Neptune *mascaron* wings, sea serpents, griffins, and flowers. See Yarnall, *La Farge*, 107. The bearded face in the center is comprised completely of cloisonné. See H. La Farge, "Vanderbilt," 64. The use of this technique for the central figure of the lunette is akin to La Farge's centralization of cloisonné in the middle panel of the Crane Library triptych—*The Old Philosopher*. The Vanderbilts disliked the *Neptune Lunette* after seeing it in situ, possibly due to its odd subject matter, and it was returned to the artist. See H. La Farge, "Vanderbilt," 64. La Farge cherished the window and kept it with him in his studio. He "thought it was good enough to keep as a sample" of his finest work. See W.M.M., "La Farge's Stained Glass," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 12 (1917): 9-10. In 1889 La Farge sent the lunette to the Exposition *Universelle* in Paris, where it received high praise. For the Vanderbilt mansion, La Farge put a simpler lunette with a Pompeian fountain design in its stead above the Vanderbilt door. See Yarnall, *La Farge*, 107.

⁸³ Weinberg, *Decorative Work*, 374. La Farge usually opted for a mosaic technique in making windows. It created modeling with various small glass pieces, though he did continue to utilize enamel paint for the faces and hands of figures. Juliet Hanson, a woman who worked for La Farge, executed most of them.

⁸⁴ La Farge employed the "hot" cloisonné technique for the *Old Philosopher*. In contrast to "cold" cloisonné stained glass which has individual pieces of glass fitted into a thin, wire framework and held in place with the help of an adhesive compound, "hot" cloisonné stained glass is formed as a single panel comprised of smaller fragments without leadlines that are fused together in a furnace. See John Stuart Gordon, "Paradise Remembered: The Late Windows of John La Farge," in *John La Farge's Second Paradise: Voyages in the South Seas, 1890-1891*, edited by Elizabeth Hodermarsky (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 2010), 168-169.

on personal and experimental methods.⁸⁵ The Board of Trustees for the Thomas Crane Library commissioned the window, most likely at the suggestion of H.H. Richardson, who was responsible for overseeing the interior furnishings; “In regard to the plans, arrangement of the interior and details of construction, in so far as they affected the use of the building for library purposes, both Mr. Crane and Mr. Richardson freely consulted with the committee and invited suggestions.”⁸⁶ H.H. Richardson, for whom La Farge had fashioned murals at Trinity Church three years prior; Albert Crane and Benjamin Crane, the sons of Thomas Crane, on behalf of their mother and Thomas Crane’s widow Clarissa Crane; and a joint committee formed in 1881—these people were likely all involved in recruiting La Farge for the job.⁸⁷ More than 1000 individual pieces of glass, “the greater number so small that they had to be handled with pincers,” constitute the window and prove the intricacy of the artist’s and his workshop’s labor.⁸⁸ Not only is it his only figural cloisonné window from the 1880s, but also it employs a figural motif, unusual for such a laborious project. It speaks to the confidence he had in using cloisonné for depicting an individual person as the subject for a window in a prominent public space visible to a wide range of patrons. It is a pivotal window within his decorative oeuvre up to 1882; La Farge himself believed that it was his most effective example of stained glass without paint. A contemporary critic, Mary Gay Humphries, wrote that “The most wonderful work in glass yet done by Mr. La Farge is the head of an old man reading...the work demonstrates a hitherto

⁸⁵ Weinberg, *Decorative Work*, 378. In 1885, the official ending date for his first phase, La Farge’s Decorative Art Company, which began in 1883, goes under following his arrest for Grand Larceny. These events led to his bankruptcy in 1885. In 1886, he escaped to Japan and found new inspirations, signaling the end to the first phase of decorative arts.

⁸⁶ *Tenth Annual Report of the Trustees of the Thomas Crane Public Library*, Feb. 1st, 1881, Thomas Crane Memorial Library Archives, 2-3. H. Barbara Weinberg thinks the Crane Family may have commissioned the window privately, but Richardson may have been involved in the commission.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

⁸⁸ Mary Gay Humphreys, “John La Farge, Artist and Decorator,” *The Art Amateur* 9 (June 1883): 14.

unknown possibility of art in glass.”⁸⁹ Over one hundred years later, in 2001, Roberto Rosa, a current stained glass conservator who restored the window and many others by La Farge, wrote similarly that “the *Old Philosopher* is the most interesting, intricate stained glass panel I have ever seen.”⁹⁰

The Old Philosopher proved that beautiful pictorial representations were possible without requiring the application of paint on the glass. The window, therefore, departs from the practice of the Pre-Raphaelites (**Figure 5**). La Farge’s placement of leadlines specifically diverged from their work; instead of setting them on a square grid across the figures, he formed them to follow the sinuous outlines and drapery folds of the bodies.⁹¹ Whereas the Pre-Raphaelites disregarded the merging effects of light and evocation of movement through their emphasis on precise and well-defined arrangements, La Farge achieved these elusive results by way of chiaroscuro in his opalescent glass.⁹² His advancement of the cloisonné technique to connect pieces of opalescent stained glass allowed for even better control of color effects. For instance, La Farge modeled the face and figure of the philosopher with separate glass pieces, creating variations in tone and forming an illusion of three-dimensional form through the various colors of different hues shining through the glass.⁹³ Since the metal matrix requires no backing to hold the window in tact, light can pass through the transparent glass without being blocked, further enhancing the appearances of color.

⁸⁹ Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 103. This information was derived from Humphreys, 13-14. She interviewed the artists and incorporated his high regard for the *Old Philosopher* into her article.

⁹⁰ “Roberto Rosa, conservator at Serpentine Stained and Leaded Glass, Needham, MA to Ms. Ann E. McLaughlin, Director of Thomas Crane Public Library, May 25th, 2001,” Thomas Crane Library Archives.

⁹¹ Adams, “Stained Glass,” 57. In his opalescent windows, La Farge enhanced expression by using various widths of lead to produce subtle effects of shadow and silhouette in the layered glass panes.

⁹² *Ibid*, 44.

⁹³ H. La Farge, “Painting with Colored Light,” 211.

La Farge also detoured from English stained glass principles by copying directly from a reproduction of the right leaf of a fifth-century Late Antique ivory diptych of a poet (**Figure 8**).⁹⁴ Although he was working from a copy, the artist essentially returned to the principles of his teacher Couture, who had emphasized copying straight from the motif. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, now owns a color study for the window, but La Farge used a now lost photograph of the diptych and a plaster cast replica to translate the image to glass.⁹⁵

Without the stricture of having the actual Poet and Muse diptych directly in front of him, La Farge was free to borrow the general form of the ivory from the photograph and cast and create his own rendition of the piece using experimental stained glass methods. The form of leading varies depending on the different sections of the central *Old Philosopher* panel. In the vertical strips on the outer portions of the window, La Farge used regular leaded opalescent glass, whereas the center portion contains cloisonné paneling. To create the central panel, La Farge probably started with a copper armature or frame to follow the lead lines of the original cartoon; he then fused this frame to the glass without it being noticeable in the graphics of the window.⁹⁶ The rich colors—bright green, gold, and red—of the window are reminiscent of those found in Byzantine cloisonné enamel and ancient Oriental cloisonné, objects La Farge would have had in his home. There are two side windows, *Alpha* and *Omega*, flanking the central portion (**Figure 1**). They are made of a combination of opalescent, pot-metal, and multicolored “confetti” glass,

⁹⁴ Weinberg, “Peacock Window,” 2.; Sloan and Yarnall, “Opaline Mind,” 32. The ivory is located in the Cathedral Museum, Monza, Italy. Yarnall named it *Diptych with Muse and Writer*. Weinberg notes that the source of this information came from Henry A. La Farge, son of the artist, on April 22, 1970.

⁹⁵ Yarnall, “G1880.28 A-C,” La Farge Catalogue Raisonné (Unpublished), 2. The cast was sold in 1911 at a sale at his Estate—cat. No. 211: “Casts. A Philosopher, Reproduction of a leaf of an ancient Roman Diptych in the treasury at Monza. Height: 13 ½ in.; Width: 5 ¾ in.” Quoted in James Yarnall, “G1880.28 A-C,” La Farge Catalogue Raisonné (Unpublished), 2. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston now owns La Farge’s color study for the window.

⁹⁶ Arthur J. Femenella and Jack Cushen, “Restoring the *Old Philosopher*,” *Stained Glass Quarterly* 85 (1990): 274.

but include no cloisonné. The sinuous ribbon-like motifs in each side window are repeated in the border of the *Old Philosopher*, linking the three opalescent windows together in a group despite the cloisonné *Old Philosopher* panel standing out as the most intricately detailed section of the triptych. The tri-part set is again joined together as one work via La Farge's attention to complementary colors. For example, varied hues of red and green pervade all three portions.

Old Philosopher, *Alpha*, *Omega*, and all of La Farge's opalescent windows are fruits of labor in uncharted territories of the decorative arts. The novelty and originality of opalescent glass prompted the artist to take out a patent in 1879, one month after declaring his abandonment of oil canvases and one year prior to his beginning work on *The Old Philosopher*. The patent cemented his devotion to stained glass over painting, since he made no similar effort in the painting medium to obtain a copyright. But La Farge's innovations in the medium did not go unnoticed, making his patent necessary to secure his title as inventor of the opalescent glass technique. Awarded in 1880, this patent came a year earlier than any patent for a similar technique given to any other artist.⁹⁷ Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933) took out two patents for slightly different opalescent techniques that were awarded to him in 1881, but he requested them after La Farge.⁹⁸ Tiffany's actions drew ire from La Farge, as he supposedly acquired information about the techniques by promising La Farge a partnership that never materialized.⁹⁹ Despite La Farge's inventing opalescent glass before him, Tiffany garnered more fame in the stained glass industry and had the advantage of superior wealth and marketing skills. La Farge worked on the *Old Philosopher* project during this period of upheaval.

⁹⁷ H. Barbara Weinberg, "John La Farge and the Invention of Opalescent Windows," *Stained Glass* 67 (1972): 5.

⁹⁸ While he visited La Farge's studio, La Farge showed Tiffany the effects of opal glass distinctive from and better than traditional pot-metal glass, so La Farge's use of the technique probably preceded that of Tiffany by several months. See Barbara Weinberg, "Opalescent Windows," 7-8.

⁹⁹ Weinberg, *The Decorative Work*, 367.

La Farge's activity in opalescent design, combined with the competition from Tiffany, contributed to the rise of an American stained glass culture. Before his invention of opalescent glass, "Comparatively little [stained glass] was produced in America, and imported glass offered by a small range for selection."¹⁰⁰ A throng of glass manufacturers arose in order to satisfy the increased demand for opalescent glass.¹⁰¹ By 1880, the U.S. Census Bureau counted almost 1,600 people employed in stained glass production; in contrast, few people engaged in this work in 1870.¹⁰² New designers sought acceptance in a growing stained glass market. In spite of the arrival of new artisans into the field of stained glass making, only Tiffany surpassed the output of La Farge in the medium. Spacious venues in which to produce stained glass propelled La Farge's production in the early 1880s. By 1880 his surging success in the decorative arts led to the founding of a large workshop in Manhattan; designers and draftsmen worked under his close supervision.¹⁰³ In 1881, La Farge, due to his rising stature as a decorative artist, again enlarged his operation by moving into the top floor of the Century building with a view overlooking Union Square. He was "a manufacturer" who controlled "one of the largest establishments of the kind in this country," employing "thirty workers in glass alone" and filling "commodious ware-rooms" stocked with "myriad shades and tints."¹⁰⁴ In the period between 1880 and 1883, La Farge's secular glass commissions reached a high point.¹⁰⁵ His windows were status symbols; he

¹⁰⁰ Humphreys, 13.

¹⁰¹ Adams, "Stained Glass," 56.

¹⁰² *Tenth United States Census: 1880* (Washington DC: United States Census Office, 1884), 2: 37 and 1039. Quoted in Virginia Raguin, *Reflections on Glass: 20th Century Stained Glass in American Art and Architecture* (New York: Museum of Biblical Art, 2007), 110.

¹⁰³ He oversaw all facets of glass-making, including the design and manufacture of the glass and the placement of lead lines

¹⁰⁴ Humphreys, 104.

¹⁰⁵ Based on the number of windows from houses and other secular locations reported in the 1987 John La Farge exhibition catalog, the most recent account of such information, La Farge made twenty-eight different windows of this sort by 1883.

produced hundreds of designs to satisfy the preferences of his clientele.¹⁰⁶ The *Old Philosopher*, with *Alpha* and *Omega* flanking it, is one of these noteworthy commissions.

¹⁰⁶ Yarnall, *La Farge*, 113.

Chapter 2

The Thomas Crane Memorial Library: *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega*

Old Philosopher, *Alpha*, and *Omega*, significant windows in La Farge's stained glass career, commemorate the deceased patron of the library as an altered and re-created version of the man that his heirs preferred to remember. The first official viewing of La Farge's windows at the Thomas Crane Memorial Library in Quincy, Massachusetts, followed the library's dedicatory address on May 30th, 1882. During the reception, townspeople and friends of Crane filed into the brand new library.¹⁰⁷ The three stained glass panels, placed on eye level in the window bay directly across from the entrance foyer, must have offered a pleasant, iridescent greeting of opalescent light to the crowd entering the memorial hall.¹⁰⁸ The windows were the proper backdrops for the reception scene; "[i]n the centre of the inner hall, between the alcoves, was a large portrait of Mr. Crane, adorned with smilax and flowers."¹⁰⁹ As references to each other in different media, the window triptych and large photograph or oil painting reminded people of the purpose of their gathering. They had assembled to honor Thomas Crane (1803-1873) and the

¹⁰⁷ No documentation exists saying that La Farge was present at the library on this day. Richardson was probably there. He gave a brief speech to the Quincy Masonic Fraternity during the dedication ceremony, but it occurred in the town away from the library grounds. See Charles Francis Adams, *Address of Charles Francis Adams Jr. and Proceedings at the Dedication of The Crane Memorial Hall at Quincy, Mass., May 30, 1882* (Cambridge: University Press, 1883), 36-37. It stands to reason that La Farge attended the event with his friend, Richardson.

¹⁰⁸ Today the three windows are located in a different window bay within the reading room. In 1908 William M. Aiken built an additional wing to the library and had the windows re-located. They are still significant decorations in the reading room, as they were moved just fifteen feet away from their original spot. Most La Farge stained glass windows have been taken out of situ and put into museum collections. The fact that these three panels are still located in the library makes them significant within La Farge's oeuvre.

¹⁰⁹ *Address*, 34. Adams included an image of Crane in his published manuscript of the *Address*. Another photo exists that shows the portrait of Thomas Crane on an easel. It faces the entrance and stands in front of the La Farge triptych, yet the stained glass panels are out of sight. From the image, it is difficult to ascertain whether the picture of Crane on display is this aforementioned photograph or an oil painting. From the vantage point offered in the photo, it looks very similar to the photograph in the *Address*. It is possible that La Farge was sensitive to the visual experience of patrons upon entering the library, providing them with a view of the juxtaposition of photo and glass.

building erected in his memory. The trio of windows stands still in the library as an everlasting monument in glass to that honored man (**Figure 1**).

But while *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* serve as memorials to Crane, they do not commemorate his actual personage. Rather, the windows create a new posthumous representation of the man who, in a number of ways, is fictitious. Previous scholarship has largely considered the three panels in this space as merely decorative and generic, lacking any direct memorial references to Crane.¹¹⁰ However, here I will offer other possible interpretations of this window triptych with respect to his memorialization and the retrospective embellishment of his reputation envisaged by Crane's heirs and suggested in La Farge's windows.¹¹¹

It appears that La Farge and Charles Francis Adams (1836-1915) worked towards the same goals of satisfying the Crane family in their memorializing of Crane. Adams was the chairman of the Quincy library system from 1875 to 1894 and an industrialist. Because of his Quincy roots and similar background to Crane, Adams may have been interested in aggrandizing the legend of another Quincy native who built a substantial fortune in the New York City granite trade. Adams was also the first man to hear news of the Crane family's bequest of funds for the

¹¹⁰ Concerning the central *Old Philosopher* panel, art historian Barbara Weinberg was first to describe the intricate cloisonné technique, the late antique ivory model for the figure, and the qualities therein, which La Farge translated into glass. Her discussion emphasizes the cloisonné technique, thus leaving out mention of *Alpha* and *Omega*, an omission likely due to the fact that *Alpha* was lost when Weinberg was writing her dissertation. On March 10th, 1998, library workers looked into a crate in the back of a closet in the library and found *Alpha* wrapped in newspaper and intact. The discovery led James Yarnall to discuss the Greek letters alpha and omega, each found in their respective windows flanking the *Old Philosopher*, arguing they are "emblematic of man's endless quest for knowledge." See Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 103.

¹¹¹ Of course, these windows are housed in a memorial library, but their specific relation to the patron and his life have not been characterized. One contemporary newspaper article claims that the Crane windows are memorials. In 1880 a local Quincy newspaper published a brief article describing the new library in its planning phase. The journalist writes, "As the building is entered, directly opposite the door and facing it, will be an elaborate memorial window of stained glass in honor of the father and husband of the donors." See "The New Library Building," *The Quincy Patriot*, August 28, 1880. This window referred to in the article is the *Old Philosopher*.

new library. Albert Crane contacted Adams in regards to offering a new library to the town. He wrote,

At length, in February, 1880, a gentleman called on Mr. Adams in New York, and, giving his name as Crane, said that he had come to see him in relation to the proposed memorial building in Quincy...Mr. Adams the next day carried back to Quincy the formal offer of a memorial library hall, which a fortnight later was acted upon and accepted at the annual town-meeting.¹¹²

Adams carried the good news back to Quincy. He was chosen to give the eulogy at the dedication ceremony of the memorial library on May 30th, 1882. Perhaps he volunteered to offer the speech, since he was the head of the library commission. Either way, Adams created a specific image of Crane through his writing and delivering of the speech.¹¹³ He spoke to an unbiased crowd that would readily accept a refined story of Crane's life, noting that there were "many here today who doubtless know little or nothing of Thomas Crane..."¹¹⁴ In Adams's words, Crane becomes a highly sentimentalized version of the factual person.

Complementing the speech, La Farge perhaps intended the window as a glass representation of Crane modeled on a Late Antique ivory prototype carved in the era of Roman virtue, which Adams associates with Crane. Crane's life was meant to be viewed as reminiscent of the Roman virtues embodied in the phenomenon of ivory diptychs for Roman Consuls. La Farge modeled the *Old Philosopher* from a Late Antique ivory called the Poet and Muse. This diptych was created in the fifth century during the late Roman empire (**Figure 8**). La Farge may have intentionally picked this particular prototype as a model for the *Old Philosopher*, acting

¹¹² D. Hamilton Hurd, *History of Norfolk County, Massachusetts, with biographical sketches of many of its pioneers and prominent men* (Philadelphia: J.W. Lewis & Co., 1884), 364.

¹¹³ In it Adams explained some of Crane's physical attributes and personality traits. Charles Francis Adams was the brother of Henry Adams—a close friend of both La Farge and Richardson. It is possible that La Farge had discussions about Thomas Crane with Charles Adams prior to making the window and prior to his address at the Dedication ceremony on May 30th, 1882. By then the window was in place inside the library.

¹¹⁴ "The Crane Memorial: The Formal Presentation to the Town of Quincy," *Boston Daily Globe*, May 31, 1882, 3.

from the desire of Crane's heirs—his widow Clarissa Crane and his sons Albert and Benjamin Crane—to create an idealized representation of Crane that recasted him as a virtuous man who valued learning. The Greek letters “alpha” and “omega” in their respective panels could be references to Crane's religious belief. These words are mentioned once in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament. His heirs may have wished for the windows to suggest his Judeo-Christian faith.

Finally, the *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* can also be interpreted in terms of their correlation with the style of the library outlined by the architect H.H. Richardson (1838-1886). La Farge designed the triptych on his own but did so in a way that harmonizes with the surrounding masonry, wood carving, and general scheme of the library. La Farge and Richardson made an ideal professional pair due to their shared background and interests. By looking at prior collaboration and the historical styles of the window and library designs, it is possible to understand the aesthetic relationship between the commemorative stained glass and memorial library as a whole. As an indirect reference to Crane, the *Old Philosopher* window serves as a symbol of library philanthropy in the 1880s that pre-figured and influenced the ensuing Carnegie library altruism at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century.

Thomas Crane and Quincy

Thomas Crane was born on October, 18th 1803, on George's Island in Boston Bay, near Quincy, coming from a family that had immigrated centuries earlier. The founder of the family was Henry Crane, probably born in England in 1621. He lived in Dorchester and Milton, Massachusetts. He was a large landowner, Milton town selectman in 1679-1681, and a trustee of the first Milton meetinghouse. Henry was an educated man, as evidenced by documents found

with his “fine, clear, flowing,” handwriting in the Massachusetts Archives.¹¹⁵ Crane’s father, Thomas Crane, Sr. (1770-1818), was born at Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1770. He was a successful, “thrifty” farmer who married Sarah Baxter (1771-1824), a local Braintree woman.¹¹⁶ But Crane’s and his father’s lack of success in establishing themselves in Quincy may have prompted Crane to seek success in New York City as an adult. Be that as it may, his memorial still ended up in Quincy.

Crane had a low level of education. But instead of developing an interest in learning through enrollment in schools, the young man cultivated a fondness for reading on his own accord. As the son of a farmer, Crane was mostly self-educated in Quincy, though he did attend a grammar school—his only formal education. As a child, he likely walked past the spot on his way to school where his memorial would one day stand. There was no high school in Quincy nor a graded public school. It is probable that he could write, since it is recorded that his family retained a “book of problems...its pages lined with exactness and filled with carefully developed problems.”¹¹⁷ His family owned few books, but the young Crane subscribed to a private reading association, the only available library.¹¹⁸

Upon his father’s death in 1818, Crane was forced to begin work. He began in the midst of a granite boom that affected Quincy, the state of Massachusetts, and most of New England. He learned the skill of stone-cutting at home, though exactly what he did in that profession while in Quincy is unknown. It is possible that he worked for William Wood, an early shoe manufacturer in Quincy and one of the first granite industrialists in the town. Crane may have

¹¹⁵ Rufus King, “Albert Crane,” *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* I (1919): 1.

¹¹⁶ Emily Wilder Leavitt, *Henry Crane of Milton, Mass., 1654, and Some of His Descendants* (Boston: Privately Printed, 1893), 13.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14. Also see Henry Fitz-Gilbert Waters, *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 47 (Boston: Historical Genealogical Society, 1893), 328.

¹¹⁸ Marble Francis Pratt, *History of Quincy, The Township Years, 1792-1888* (Quincy, 1944), 41.

worked for Wood in both the shoe and granite business, as evidenced by the fact that Crane's family shared pew number seventy-three with Wood's family in the old stone church in Quincy.¹¹⁹

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Quincy became an important center of the granite industry.¹²⁰ "Before the year 1800," a contemporary historian wrote, "these quarries were not worked or thought of much value."¹²¹ What had once been a sleepy agricultural village became a bustling industrial and business hub.¹²² Starting in 1803, entrepreneurs Jackson Field, Josiah Bemis, William Wood, and William Packard opened Quincy quarries. The environment they created was active and loud; "The quiet of the country village was broken by the incessant clink of hammers, occasional explosions, [and] the creak of heavily laden carts and trucks..."¹²³ Workers were literally constructing a new market in Quincy, but simultaneously they were stripping away pastoral beauty—damage to the countryside that would escalate from the granite railway system completed in 1826. During these years and in this environment, young Thomas Crane worked in the quarries, although his exact position at the time is unknown.

Concurrent with the escalation of the granite industry in Quincy, the town also became a center for innovation in tools required for granite procurement. In 1803, workers discovered that wedges could split the granite into any shape or size.¹²⁴ From that point onward, Quincy

¹¹⁹ Henry E. Bates, Jr., "The Cranes—Thomas and Albert: A Name Perpetuated" (paper delivered before the Quincy Historical Society, Quincy, Massachusetts, February 25, 1965), 3.

¹²⁰ Quincy granite was used in the eighteenth century but not as often. One prominent edifice in which Quincy granite was employed is the Hancock Mansion on Beacon Hill in Boston. In the nineteenth century this stone was used for the State Prison of Charleston (1815), St. Peter's Church in Boston (1817), and many prominent banks in Philadelphia.

¹²¹ George Whitney, *Some account of the early history and present state of the town of Quincy, in the commonwealth of Massachusetts* (Boston: Christian Register Office, 1827), 54.

¹²² At its highest point, there were thirty separate quarries operating in Quincy at one time.

¹²³ Daniel Munro Wilson, *Three Hundred Years of Quincy, 1625-1925: Historical Retrospect of Mount Wollaston, Braintree, and Quincy* (Quincy: City Government, 1926), 221.

¹²⁴ Whitney, 47.

designers conceived of various tools for granite procurement, including stone saws, machine polishers, Louis hole blasters, and bush or axe hammers.¹²⁵ These expansions necessitated institutional support to flourish. As a result of the Quincy granite industry, banks were chartered, the first town newspaper developed, and shipbuilding businesses sprang up to transport stone. Crane was born into this flourishing industrial milieu.

In 1823 the Bunker Hill Monument Association formed and chose Quincy granite for use in the memorial.¹²⁶ This selection advertised Quincy as a prime spot for stone along the East Coast and all around the United States. Locals had quarried granite there since 1800, but the attention derived from an important Boston committee further propelled Quincy's industrial stock. Soon more quarries were discovered and opened for business. The adoption of Quincy granite for this prestigious monument led to Gridley Bryant's planning and building of the first railway in the United States, since it was necessary for easier transport of granite from Quincy to the Bunker Hill site in Charlestown, Massachusetts. The people involved cherished "the spirit of internal improvements; and especially for a rail-way, which was an object of universal curiosity."¹²⁷ The first cars ran on October 7th, 1826. Commenting on the railway's positive impact, one contemporary historian wrote,

It has always been a desirable object to form an easier mode of conveying the stone from the quarries to the wharves, than by carting them, which has been found not only extremely burdensome and tedious, but also attended with an expense all would be glad to finish.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Pratt, 12-14.

¹²⁶ After the granite railway was built, the granite business dramatically increased and granite buildings became more common. It was soon used in construction of the customs houses in Boston, Providence, and others as well as the New York Stock Exchange. See Daniel Munro Wilson, *Quincy, old Braintree, and Merry-Mount; an illustrated sketch* (Boston: G.H. Ellis, co., 1906), 52.

¹²⁷ Whitney, 49.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 48.

Crane worked in the quarries during this time period and would have been exposed to these early railroad developments. He labored alongside a bold new technological design which “had never been tried in this country on so large a scale as was now contemplated.”¹²⁹ It is possible that he was among the men loading granite onto the train cars destined for the prestigious Bunker Hill commission.

Crane moved to New York City in 1829 and made his start back in the stone yards. He found success and ended up with his own stone yard on the east side and by 1835 was among the industrial leaders in the city. According to one journalist, Crane owned “valuable granite properties in New England” at this time, including a stone yard in Quincy.¹³⁰ He oversaw the transportation of stone from these properties into New York. An 1835 city fire paved the way for Crane to supply granite for new buildings.¹³¹ Because of his involvement, stone from his hometown was used in the construction of numerous buildings in the growing metropolis, including the New York Custom House, old Grand Central Station, the 42nd Street Reservoir, and St. John’s Freight Depot.¹³² He was never again a Quincy resident, but Crane maintained close ties to his hometown for both business ventures and personal visits.

In these years, Crane also expanded beyond his granite business. He made investments in the building and real estate industries and acted as a director for the Oriental Bank at the

¹²⁹ Ibid., 49.

¹³⁰ “Bequests by Mrs. Clarissa L. Crane: Money Left to Many Institutions in this City and Elsewhere,” *New York Times*, May 3, 1895, 5.

¹³¹ L. Draper Hill Jr., *The Crane Library* (Quincy: The Trustees of the Thomas Crane Public Library, 1962), 16.

¹³² Crane, in fact, dealt “all his life in the granite which underlaid his native place.” See Charles Francis Adams, *History of Braintree, Massachusetts (1639-1708) the north precinct of Braintree (1708-1792) and the town of Quincy (1792-1889)* (Cambridge: The Riverside press, 1891), 309.

intersection of Grand St. and East Broadway.¹³³ Eventually he began to take part in local politics and election campaigns. In an 1860 *New York Times* article, Crane is listed as an endorser for William R. Stewart, “of the firm of Stewart & Smith, Builders,” a Republican candidate running for county supervisor.¹³⁴ In the following year, Crane served as a delegate to the Tax Payer’s Union Convention.¹³⁵

Crane married twice while living in New York. Sarah Munn, his first wife, died in 1832 shortly after they were married. On November 23rd, 1836, he married Clarissa Starkey, daughter of George Starkey and Betsey Forristall, born in Troy, New Hampshire, in 1813. Clarissa bore eight children, but most of them did not live past infancy. By 1880, she had only two grown sons. Both took part in the offering of funds to Quincy for the public library. Little documentation exists on Benjamin Crane, but a year after his death in 1889, La Farge was commissioned for a memorial window to him at the library entitled *The Angel at the Tomb* (1890). A fitting tribute to a member of the Crane family who helped donate the funds for the library in 1880, the window can still be found at the Crane Library (**Figure 9**). Clarissa and Thomas’s other son, Albert Crane (1842-1918), attended prestigious institutions: Mount Washington School in New York City, Tufts College, and Columbia College Law School. Unlike his father, Albert successfully obtained a higher education¹³⁶

Thomas Crane died on April 1st, 1875, in New York City. His widow and sons took on the task of memorializing him. Five years after his death, they expressed interest in funding a memorial in his honor. Their choices were for a library and for imagery in the library that

¹³³ “Financial,” *New York Daily Times*, April 14, 1853, 7. ; “Bank Notices,” *New York Daily Times*, April 15, 1853, 6. He also served as an insurance company official, a director of street railway, and “a man of note on ‘Change.’” See Adams, 20.

¹³⁴ “Classified Ad 2,” *New York Times*, November 6, 1860, 5.

¹³⁵ “City Politics.: The Union Party of Tax-payers,” *New York Times*, September 30, 1861, 8.

¹³⁶ King, “Crane,” 1.

emphasized a minimalist religious symbolism, literary subjects, and Roman antiquity. Regardless of his success and established legacy in New York City, Crane's heirs chose Quincy for the location of their father's memorial. Writing to the Quincy selectmen to offer funds for the town library in memory of his late father, Albert Crane voiced his family's reasoning behind having the memorial built in Quincy,

Though long a resident of New York, my father always retained a strong feeling for the town of Quincy...After much deliberation, therefore, his family have thought that a memorial erected to him in Quincy would be both more appropriate than elsewhere, and most in consonance with the tender feelings and cordial interest he always manifested therefore in his lifetime, and which he constantly expressed to us.¹³⁷

With the commission of the library and its memorial windows, Crane's heirs built on some of the facts of his life to create both an idea of Crane and an ideal Crane: a self-made man, a lover of learning and reading, a community man, and a man who believes in civic and religious duties. This new image of Crane embodied the sophistication of the educated Albert Crane, thus bettering the reputation of Thomas Crane by indicating the newfound cultural plateau of the Crane family. His burnished characterization will be treated here according to the four facets promoted in the *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* windows: Unitarian piety, Roman virtue, the aesthetic connection between the windows and the library space, and the *Old Philosopher* as a symbol of the interest in learning and self improvement through library philanthropy. To start off, I will explain Crane's interest in Unitarian Universalist principles and suggest the *Alpha* and *Omega* windows as being references to his religiosity.

¹³⁷ Adams, *Address*, 29.

Thomas Crane and the Universalist Church

Crane was a dedicated churchgoer, belonging to the Unitarian Universalist Church.¹³⁸ In posthumous stories about the community, it was said that as a boy, Crane often walked from his home in Quincy Point to the church on School Street in Boston and back, a round-trip distance of twenty miles, in order to attend church service and listen to the charismatic preacher Hosea Ballou.¹³⁹ Religious thought was liberal in Quincy. “Indeed,” one contemporary historian wrote, “the utter absence of Calvinism, or strong orthodoxy, in the tenets of those inhabiting the North Precinct and Quincy is so marked, and so unusual for a Massachusetts community, that it cannot escape notice...[that] no orthodox church ever struck root in Quincy,” where “the tendency...was towards Universalism.”¹⁴⁰

As an adult in New York, Crane befriended anti-slavery leader Horace Greeley, a fellow member of the Orchard Street Church. “Mr. Crane’s sympathies with his advanced opinions and outspoken convictions,” one biographer wrote, “led to a firm friendship between these two strong men.”¹⁴¹ Crane “sturdily stated his fullest acceptance of the principles of that party and labored with it resolutely and unflinchingly.”¹⁴² The anti-slavery movement was a liberal viewpoint agreeable with most Unitarian Universalists, many of whom were among the country’s leading abolitionists.¹⁴³ Aside from Abolitionism, many Universalists tried to improve society through charity.

¹³⁸ Leavitt, 14.

¹³⁹ William Churchill Edwards, *Historic Quincy Massachusetts* (Quincy: Franklin Printing Service, 1954), 196. Also see Adams, *History of Braintree*, 310.

¹⁴⁰ Hurd, 364.

¹⁴¹ Leavitt, 14-15.

¹⁴² Waters, 328. To clarify the quotation, “party” refers to Crane as a supporter of the antislavery movement.

¹⁴³ Benjamin Rush (1745-1813), the treasurer of the U.S. Mint and Founding Father, was one prominent Unitarian abolitionist.

Crane and his wife, a fellow Universalist, generously funded Unitarian schools and causes. In 1852, leaders of the Universalist denomination founded Tufts College, and Crane became a benefactor to its library.¹⁴⁴ From that year until his death in 1872, he served as a trustee of the school. In memory of his father's commitment, Albert Crane donated \$100,000 to the Universalist Theological School at Tufts in 1906. It was subsequently renamed the Crane Theological School, operating under that title from 1906 until it merged with the Harvard-Andover Seminary in 1968.¹⁴⁵

Crane's wife Clarissa was an ardent supporter of the Universalist mission as well. She devoted "undivided love and service" to the Chapin home for the Aged and Infirm, housed in a building dedicated to the memory of Edwin Chapin (1814-1880), a famed Universalist preacher.¹⁴⁶ "With her husband," her funeral address reads, "in this church during the ministry of its former great preacher, she was one of the most devout worshipers and active worshipers by her constant presence encouraging and her generous gifts aiding every worthy enterprise."¹⁴⁷ Following her death in 1895, she willed generous sums of money to the New York Universalist Relief Fund, the Universalist General Convention, the Connecticut Universalist Convention, and the Universalist Church in Stamford, Connecticut.¹⁴⁸ Crane's and his wife's backing of Universalist causes suggests a link between Crane's religion and the particular choice of stained glass windows for the library provided for by donations from a Unitarian family.

Hinting at the religiosity of Crane, the *Alpha* and *Omega* windows include ecclesiastical symbols (**Figure 1**). "Alpha" and "omega" are Biblical references found in three separate verses.

¹⁴⁴ Edwards, 196.

¹⁴⁵ "The Educational Outlook," *The School Journal* 73 (1906): 276.

¹⁴⁶ Rev. Charles H. Eaton, "Address at the funeral of Mrs. Thomas Crane," in *The Starkeys of New England and Allied Families*, ed. Emily Wilder Leavitt (MA: Springfield Printing and Binding Company, 1910), XIII.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, XIV.

¹⁴⁸ "Bequests," 5.

Revelations 1:8 reads, “The Lord God, says, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the One who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty!’” Revelation 22:13 declares, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End!” Isaiah 41:4 is the source for the New Testament verses. It says, “I, the Lord, am the first, and with the last I will also be.”¹⁴⁹ Nineteenth-century Unitarian theology interpreted these verses literally: the actions of God are fulfilled by Him alone. This idea stands in opposition, for example, to Trinitarianism. According to Trinitarian doctrine, God exists as three persons in one: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. Unitarianism, in contrast, maintains that God is one being.¹⁵⁰

Alpha and *Omega*, flanking the middle *Old Philosopher* adorned with a solitary figure, could be allusions to the Unitarian tenets on which the Crane family wished to focus in their commemoration of him and in their shaping of his posthumous reputation. La Farge stylistically linked the *Old Philosopher* with *Alpha* and *Omega* by utilizing the same green color for the philosopher’s drapery and the two Greek letters. Since it was Crane’s heirs paying La Farge to create these specific images, it seems probable that it was a combination of their taste and his artistry dictating the subject matter.¹⁵¹ The Crane Library was not a church, a common place for multiple memorial stained glass windows, but rather was designated for public occupation. In

¹⁴⁹ Julia E. Smith, ed., *The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments; Translated Literally from the Original Tongues* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1876).

¹⁵⁰ James Martineau, a Universalist preacher and thinker in England during the nineteenth century, wrote, “If we could find the doctrines of the Trinity...in the Scriptures, we should believe them; we reject them, not because we deem them unreasonable, but because we perceive them to be unscriptural.” See W.G. Tarrant, *Unitarianism* (New York: Dodge, 1912), 64-65.

¹⁵¹ Although he was a Roman Catholic, La Farge was versed in making windows for Protestant patrons. He was, therefore, a Catholic making an impact on Protestant culture and leaving Catholic doctrine behind in preference for Protestant tenets in the philosophical undertones of his work. He believed that stained glass could take part in the fostering of moral sensibilities, turning people away from selfishness and violence and towards altruism and pacifism. The light shining through stained glass was a metaphysical metaphor for wayward people seeing “the light” and aiming for the higher life. For La Farge, the expressiveness of color emanations in stained glass was simultaneously illusionistic in their formalism and mystical in their spirituality. Through exposure to the sensuality of color in stained glass, self-refinement could result in the viewer. See Pyne, 48, 50, 53, 65-66.

this setting, *Alpha* and *Omega* are subtle references to Crane's religiosity. And since Mrs. Crane and her sons were donors to Universalist causes, the placement of these symbols in the Crane library windows were also a means to indirectly reference the living donors.

Thomas Crane, Late Antique Diptychs, and Roman Virtues

The La Farge windows not only highlight Crane's posthumous reputation as that of a pious, attentively religious man but also create an association of that man with certain Roman virtues and prototypes. Undoubtedly, the *Old Philosopher* was modeled from a Late Antique ivory carving, but there is visual evidence also to support the idea that La Farge based *Alpha* and *Omega* on related prototypes. These stained glass windows modeled from Roman ivory prototypes may speak toward the virtuous version of the story of Crane told by Adams during his address to the crowd at the dedication ceremony of the library. Crane's wife and son used not only the library but also the occasion of its dedication as an opportunity to make Crane into something—a scholar, a gentleman, an intellectual, and a paragon of Roman virtues. In his eulogy, then, Adams referenced the Roman mode of commemorating the dead. He remarked, “As you pass out of the gate of San Sebastiano at Rome, and follow the famous Appian Way...you pass the famous tomb of Cecelia Metella, built of great blocks of hewn stone, securely set on a vast and solid foundation.” Here Adams could be envisioning Crane, who most likely never left New England, as a cosmopolitan traveler of ancient Rome. Adams continued, “her husband erected that somber, dreary mausoleum to protect forever her ashes, while it perpetuated the memory of her name and of her virtues.”¹⁵² In this passage, Adams spoke of Roman commemoration and virtue in the same breath and simultaneously emphasized the notion

¹⁵² Adams, *Address*, 24.

of memory. It is an ideal version of Crane, not the actual person, that the family wished to be remembered.

As has been mentioned above, La Farge modeled the *Old Philosopher* window on a direct copy of the Poet and Muse diptych. Diptychs are paired relief carvings attached by a central hinge. During Late Antiquity, ivory carved diptychs frequently served as miniature commemorative plaques for significant occasions. In the fourth century, it became Roman custom to celebrate personal events by sending out presents in the form of diptychs ornamented with proper subject matter signifying the event, along with an inscribed message.¹⁵³ The receivers of these gifts probably displayed them on a wall, sideboard, or mantelpiece as symbols of pride.¹⁵⁴ Elite Roman families and consuls in Late Antiquity oftentimes held onto ancient idolatry; commemorative diptychs, with allegorical figures clad in classical drapery, visually demonstrated this nostalgia for the past and cultivation of refined classical taste.¹⁵⁵

Because of their extravagance, ivory diptychs were designated suitable only for the consuls, political officials of the highest rank, in a 384 law under Theodosius (**Figure 10**). Ornately carved diptychs marked these officials' inaugurations. They alone could send "their names and portraits, engraved on gilt tablets of ivory, as presents to the provinces, the cities, the

¹⁵³ Joseph Natanson, *Early Christian Ivories* (London: Alec Tiranti Ltd., 1954), 2. They could memorialize triumphs, honor the emperor, or exhibit a pair of important gods. See Richard H. Randall, Jr., "Consular Diptychs," in *Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters Art Gallery* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1985), 113. The most common recipients were friends and officials of high rank. The Poet and Muse diptych may have been intended as a gift. One theory states that the male figure in the Poet and Muse diptych was a rendering of an actual contemporary scholar or poet, the recipient to whom Flavius Constantius sent the ivory as a gift. See Kathleen J. Shelton, "The Consular Muse of Flavius Constantius," *The Art Bulletin* 65 (1983): 19, n61. On the other hand, the diptych could have been a private object, meaning a man commissioned it himself and modeled his image from an earlier portrait, or perhaps it stayed out of circulation and solely in the possession of its owner. See Anthony Cutler, "Five Lessons in Late Roman Ivory," in *Late Antique and Byzantine Carving* (Vermont: Ashgate, 1998), 16; Shelton, 20-21.

¹⁵⁴ Alan Cameron, "The Origin, Context and Function of Consular Diptychs," *Journal of Roman Studies* 103 (2013): 19.

¹⁵⁵ Natanson, 10.

magistrates, the senate and the people.”¹⁵⁶ Since the Poet and Muse ivory was carved after this law was passed, it is most likely a consular diptych, though this debate remains unsettled.¹⁵⁷ Regardless, all late antique diptychs, including the Poet and Muse, were considered miniature memorials.¹⁵⁸ Thus, this diptych was effective as a model for the *Old Philosopher*—a commemorative window placed inside a memorial library—that functioned to recast Crane’s reputation and make him appear as a paragon of Roman Virtues.

Alpha and *Omega*, the windows flanking the *Old Philosopher*, have formal affinities with a number of late antique diptychs. In this way, the trio of windows implies that Crane held the qualities of a Roman consul. For example, the consular diptych of Justinian from 521 CE has four decorative rosettes, one in each corner of the panel. An alternate diptych for Justinian has the same rosette pattern with a stylized roundel, similar in shape to a wreath, in the center of the rectangular ivory (**Figure 11**). Another consular diptych, an anonymous sixth-century CE ivory from the collection of Marquis de Ganay in Paris, has rosettes and a wreath with sinuous ribbons hanging from the bottom. The wreath surrounds the consul, memorializing the figure in the center of the panel (**Figure 12**). This mixture of motifs—wreaths, ribbons, and rosettes—is also found in both *Alpha* and *Omega*. If the figure were omitted in the aforementioned anonymous sixth-century ivory, the diptych would have almost exactly the same arrangement as both *Alpha* and *Omega*: one rosette in each top corner of the rectangular frame with one ribbon-adorned

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵⁷ The origins of the Poet and Muse diptych are debated, since the probable interior inscription of the name of the donor has been covered over. See Shelton, 20. Although, the lack-there-of may be of no consequence for identifying the diptych as a presentation piece, since many other diptychs are missing such inscriptions. See Cameron, 15. Conjectured identifications for the figure include important historical figures such as Ausonius, Boethius, Claudian, Ennius, and Seneca. See Shelton, 18, n52. The probability that multiple copies were produced is feasible, and it is also plausible that the artist of the Poet and Muse diptych fashioned his design after a monumental exemplar such as a philosopher statue from the Hellenistic Age. See Cutler, 18.

¹⁵⁸ Natanson, 13.

wreath in the center (**Figure 1**). La Farge may have seen copies of these or similar ivories when designing *Alpha*, *Omega*, and the *Old Philosopher*; certainly these similarities suggest that all three Crane windows may be an interpretation of Roman ivory into glass for the purpose of referencing Roman virtue and public service as exemplified by a Roman consul.¹⁵⁹

The Roman virtues were ideal qualities of life to which every citizen in Rome was expected to aspire.¹⁶⁰ La Farge and Adams would have looked upon them retrospectively as major aspects of *Romanitas*, or the Roman Way. This term refers to the cultural concepts Romans used to define themselves. Virtues were understood to provide Romans with the moral strength necessary to lead successful individual lives and promote a civilized empire.¹⁶¹ Personal identity was secondary to the common values and morals of the community. Scholars have categorized these virtues as personal—behavior and character of the individual—and public, qualities expected of everyone—or a mixture of the two. In Adams’s eulogy, Crane’s character is illustrated in both personal and public terms. Adams offered the tale of a man concerned with consistent progress in business and ethics, yet he positioned Crane as a protagonist in the saga of great New England men. Describing Crane and his Quincy forebears, Adams wrote, “he was, and

¹⁵⁹ In another example, the diptych of Boethius from 487, a wreath with ribbon is found inside the triangular pediment on each side of the diptych which portrays a man in classical garb seated on the right leaf and standing on the left. The style of the figure is similar to the poet in the Poet and Muse diptych. In this particular example, the singular male figure is juxtaposed with wreath motifs. Maybe La Farge thought of this diptych and juxtaposition when designing the Crane windows. As another piece of evidence, the alpha and omega symbols had their greatest realization in the art and monuments from the early Christian period. They are often found within Chi-Rho symbols on early Christian ivory diptychs concurrent with the Poet and Muse—another reason why all three windows or the triptych as a whole could be freely modeled from a variety of commemorative late antique diptychs.

¹⁶⁰ The specific Roman virtues discussed in the following paragraphs are best defined and summarized in Jacqueline M. Carlon, *Pliny’s Women: Constructing Virtue and Creating Identity in the Roman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁶¹ For more discussion on Roman virtue, see Harold Mattingley, “The Roman ‘Virtues,’” *The Harvard Theological Review* 30 (1937); Brian Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008); Myles McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and *The Oxford History of the Roman World*, ed. John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

to the last remained, in his own person and character, representative of whatever was best and strongest and most individual in [the community]. In commemorating here the individual, we also commemorate the mass.”¹⁶² Adams further described Crane as embodying all that was worthwhile in an industrious Quincy native. Yet neither Adams nor La Farge had ever met Crane in person; therefore, both the stained glass windows and the speech portray a romanticized apparition of the man shaped by the language of Roman virtue.¹⁶³

According to Adams, Crane hailed from “common hard-working New England yeomen.”¹⁶⁴ He did not seek “short-cuts to fortune” but instead “went to work at once on his trade...”¹⁶⁵ *Industria* or the virtue of hard work, by implication, was his patrimony. When Crane ventured to New York and accumulated wealth, he preserved, “amid all temptations, his New England birthright traits of simplicity, thrift, straight-forward honesty, and deep religious feeling.”¹⁶⁶ These qualities of New Englanders accord with multiple Roman virtues: *Frugalitas* or economic frugality and simplicity; *Veritas* or honesty; and *Pietas* or dutifulness to God. The “remarkable race of men to which he belonged,” Adams writes, “gave Crane the resources to “not infuse himself into great movements” of the general crowd and become “forever a part of them...on the contrary he was a quiet, domestic man, silent, strong and practical. Satisfied with the position he had won, and doing his honest day’s work in it...”¹⁶⁷ Crane, according to Adams, was a beacon of *Pudicita* or modesty. In accordance with *Auctoritas* or the sense of one’s social standing, Crane “does not stand forward and arrest attention as an imposing individuality.”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶² Adams, *Address*, 7.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 20. Adams wrote, “I never met Mr. Crane, and can therefore speak of him only from the report of others.”

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 5-6.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 18.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 16.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 6.

Adams describes Crane's lineage as "a rugged, stubborn, gnarly race."¹⁶⁹ His resilience or *Patientia* helped Crane cope with the difficulties of the Panic of 1837; he "suffered with the rest. He did not however, succumb. Once that crisis was weathered, he stood firm on his feet."¹⁷⁰ This sense of *Firmitas* or tenacity was more than psychological. It was physical as well. Crane's "capital was simply a strong healthy body" inherited from ancestors "accustomed to self-care..."¹⁷¹ *Salubritas*, health and cleanliness, was evidently a staple of the Crane family and a necessary attribute of a stonecutter. Hygiene could be considered a form of "native self respect" or *Dignitas*, and according to Adams, this, too, was an almost palpable trait of Crane.¹⁷² Also made tangible in his eulogy is Adams's fanciful prediction of Crane's potential intelligence. Crane had a minimal education, yet Adams posits that his aptitude could have been on par with that of the seated philosopher in the La Farge window.

Perhaps the most remarkable connections between Crane's intellect and Roman virtue are in the following passages: "The boy had a head of his own," said Adams, "and a brain that worked." He possessed prudence or *Prudentia* and "self control" or *Severitas*. "Had he lived later," Adams continued, "he would probably have taken to some one of those schools of philosophy and thought which have, with such regular occurrence, marked the periods of the century."¹⁷³ His "strong judgment and shrewd common sense" meant that Crane "would probably have worked his way to high office in the State."¹⁷⁴ According to Adams, Crane became successful in the New York granite trade because he possessed "too active a mind, and

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 20.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁷² Ibid., 16.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 17.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 20.

he had too large a brain, to permit him long to remain a journeyman.”¹⁷⁵ Even though Crane was a mogul of a blue collar trade, Adams points out that the qualities he possessed would have won “success in the other and more showy walks of life” such as an administration position in “a department of the national government...”¹⁷⁶ La Farge and Adams had both received elite schooling, yet Crane had not. Yet here is Adams’s rather feeble attempt to claim for Crane at least the unrealized potential for achieving the more refined and cultured class of moneyed men who exhibit the virtue of *Humanitas*. Albert Crane, son of Thomas and donor for the library, perhaps imagined himself in this class of man, enlisting Richardson and La Farge both for the design and decoration of a new public edifice and for achieving an idealized re-casting of his father’s reputation as a pious Unitarian Universalist who embodied the Roman virtues and valued learning and reading as means of self-improvement.

Adams was probably aware that ascribing such traits and virtues to Crane would support his story of Crane’s rapid social upsurge from stone laborer to granite mogul. Evidently, La Farge encouraged similar allusions between ancient Rome and the present day and may have shared such thoughts with Adams. Characterizing nineteenth-century art in the United States in 1885, La Farge wrote, “The phase of national life and art to which we must nearly approach, the intellectual bent most akin to ours, is that of the middle period of the Roman Empire.”¹⁷⁷ Acting on this claim, La Farge wrote about commemoration and nationalism and about championing Roman monuments as prototypes for American memorials.¹⁷⁸ He argued that, “In short, to no

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 18.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 20.

¹⁷⁷ John La Farge, “Style and Monument,” *The North American Review* 141 (1885): 450.

¹⁷⁸ Three years after finishing the *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* panels, La Farge wrote two articles about the future monument for General Grant. In one the artist links Romanesque and Roman cultures to the Byzantines and claims their art to be capable of best expressing modern interior decoration (including stained glass). The following idea also indicates the Romanesque and Byzantine sympathies shared by both La Farge and Richardson. La Farge wrote, “Fortunately there exists the Romanesque style of

people or art, to no system of public monuments, to no canons of taste or crystallization of styles, can we turn and find ourselves less strangers than among Roman works. There alone are monuments adequate to express our thoughts, splendid enough to reach our ideals.”¹⁷⁹ In these assessments, La Farge mentions Imperial Roman archetypes, though the one he uses for the *Old Philosopher*, the Poet and Muse diptych, is from Late Antiquity. Nonetheless, through a direct translation of the ivory sculpture into glass, Crane is figuratively linked to the Roman virtues which to his heirs signaled the high ideals American life needed, and which to the artist indicated the highest ideals of American and Roman art.

Thomas Crane, the Windows, and the Library

Crane’s widow and sons financed a library that would posthumously recast Crane as a pious and virtuous man, but having made their monetary offer and influenced the choice of architect, there is no evidence to suggest that they participated in the carrying out of Crane’s artistic rebuilding. The stained glass artist and the architect assumed control.¹⁸⁰ In this section I

architecture, which is not only a lineal descendant of the pure Roman style, but admirably adapted to the modernization of the great Roman forms. There is nothing in the round Roman motive which is not directly and readily expressible by the Romanesque, nor is there any wealth of decoration beyond its resources. It welcomes iron and glass. It is capable of large, massive surfaces of unbroken masonry, and permits the abundant admission of window openings. It covers at once the antique and the modern. It possesses all that is grandest in the Roman combination of wall and arch and pier, and inherits an abundant wealth of ornament which came down the full, yet turbid stream of oriental imagination and was filtered through the clarifying intelligence of the Byzantine Greeks.” See John La Farge, “Style and the Monument,” 447.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 450-451

¹⁸⁰ Richardson was the mastermind behind the entire library, but as previously discussed, La Farge designed all of his works and closely observed every facet of their creation. He made the decisions and choices for the stained glass windows. Richardson also likely involved himself in the direction of decorative art at the Crane Library. When speaking to inquiring clients for any commission, Richardson told them, “In preparing the architectural design I agree, after consultation with the owner, to use my best judgment. I cannot, however, guarantee that the building, when completed, shall conform to his ideas of beauty or taste, or indeed to those of any person or school. I can only agree to examine and consider this my own ideas upon these subjects. See Mumford, 55. Indeed, before Richardson drew up designs for Trinity Church, he and the building committee came to an agreement on February 2nd 1874. The architect was responsible for “all furniture and fittings,” the documents reads, “and decoration, with painting [done

will reveal how the style of La Farge's windows could have been determined by Richardson's architecture.

La Farge and Richardson were bound from the beginning to be collaborators. Their common concerns and backgrounds had set the foundation for their working relationship at the Crane Library.¹⁸¹ According to La Farge, "Mr. Richardson was a friend."¹⁸² They both received artistic training in Paris; La Farge studied with renowned painters and Richardson was a student at the École, enrolling in 1860—three years after La Farge returned from his "wander year" abroad. La Farge and Richardson first collaborated at Trinity Church, where the artist painted murals to cover the majority of the interior.¹⁸³ The building design earned praise for Richardson, and the paintings garnered fame for La Farge. It was the first monumental decorative program devised by artists native to the United States—a project renewed, albeit on a smaller scale, at the Crane Library.¹⁸⁴ Each man was destined to develop an affinity for eclectic artistic precedents,

mostly by La Farge], mosaic, sculpture, stained glass, and other like works, including pews, and organ, or so much thereof as the building committee may desire." See "Minutes of the Meetings of the Proprietors of Trinity Church," V (1872-1924), 54. Quoted in H. Barbara Weinberg, "John La Farge and the Decoration of Trinity Church, Boston," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 33 (1974): 326. The situation was similar at the Crane library. The board of trustees authorized Richardson to "take charge of the matter, and select such furniture as his judgment should approve." See "Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustees, Jan 23rd, 1882," Thomas Crane Library Archives. Quoted in H. Barbara Weinberg, *The Decorative Work of John La Farge* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), 372.

¹⁸¹ One contemporary biographer's comment sums up the favorable conditions Richardson established for artists, like La Farge, that worked for him. She wrote, "when walls and roof are standing a building is not finished but still needs that its builder should concern himself with every detail of its decoration, perfecting it or calling upon other artists to perfect it in a way harmonious with his own results. No feature was too small, no object too simple to engage his thought." Based on this assertion, Richardson included La Farge and his windows as integral ingredients to his recipe for an effective library. See Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, *Henry Hobson Richardson and His Works* (1888 1st ed.; 2nd ed. Park Forest: The Prairie School Press, 1967), 133.

¹⁸² Waern, 51.

¹⁸³ The architect had offered future work to La Farge after being impressed by his Freeland project panels (1867) at the National Academy of Design—his promise led to the Trinity commission. See Waern, 30. These panels of fishes and flowers were originally painted for Charles Freedland's Boston home in 1865.

¹⁸⁴ Richardson worked closely with the artist throughout the year, sometimes joining La Farge at his Sunnyside Place studio in Brookline, Massachusetts while he drafted mural designs. See Yarnall, *La Farge*, 110. La Farge rented this studio from sculptor Richard S. Greenough, brother of the more famous

and those new tastes would assist in making interior décor and windows that could embody the refined palate of the recreated Crane.

It took two years to complete the design and construction of the edifice and installation of the stained glass windows. In April 1880, Richardson commenced his first discussion about plans for the new library. He traveled to Quincy to talk things over with the town selectmen, library board of trustees, Albert Crane, and the chairman of the library—Charles Francis Adams, the same man who would later give the dedication eulogy. In 1883, one critic noted that it was “the third village library that Mr. Richardson has designed in Massachusetts, and, upon the whole, the most successful; and saying that is pretty safely saying that it is architecturally the best village library in the United States.”¹⁸⁵ At the Crane Library, Richardson realized his fullest assimilation of interior and exterior parts.¹⁸⁶ The library’s beautiful simplicity is owed to Richardson’s European training.

The windows correspond aesthetically to elements of the Crane Library that are indebted to Richardson’s studies at the École des Beaux Arts, a prestigious school Crane never could have attended nor seen. The architectural division at the École emphasized large public buildings with elaborate and sumptuous interiors as the pinnacle of architectural prestige.¹⁸⁷ Richardson and La Farge accepted that hierarchy of values, but the exterior and interior décor they designed for the library departed from the stylistic conventions of the École, substituting neo-Medieval forms for

sculptor Horatio Greenough. At its opening in 1877, the monumental scale and complex scheme were applauded and earned La Farge unprecedented fame as a decorative artist. See Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 95. One journalist recounted saying, “Mr. La Farge has decorated the new Trinity Church of Boston, and after this example we may be sure that churches elsewhere will not hereafter fall exclusively into the hands of plasterers and daubers.” See “Editor’s table,” *Appleton’s Journal* 2 (May 1877), 473. Quoted in Yarnall, *La Farge*, 96.

¹⁸⁵ “The Crane Library,” *Harper’s Weekly* 27 (1883): 251.

¹⁸⁶ “The building looks as though it had been conceived at a single inspiration, born by a single impulse.” See Van Rensselaer, 78.

¹⁸⁷ The École was producing many American architects, including Richardson, who incorporated public decorative art into their designs.

Classical ones and stained glass, stenciling, wainscoting, and Morris-inspired Arts and Crafts furniture and fixtures for varicolored marbles, gilded bronze, and ceiling frescoes on the interior.¹⁸⁸ Richardson, in fact, helped introduce stained glass as a factor in American École design. In contrast with the Renaissance layout, Richardson did not utilize the window in repetitive units for his architectural schemes but rather integrated it as an essential part of the interior space and established its dimensions not just for the formal requirements of the façade but also for the needs of the interior.¹⁸⁹ The three La Farge windows in the Crane library, therefore, were created as significant portions of the interior.¹⁹⁰ Since Crane is memorialized in glass inside a building with luxurious décor, his memory is tied to the prestigious École des Beaux Arts and exclusive taste.

The *Old Philosopher*, based on a late medieval prototype, reflects a medievalizing variation of Richardson's École design (**Figure 7**). It also reflects La Farge's unique choice of the Poet and Muse diptych as a prototype for his window, one with a medieval aesthetic that stands in stark contrast to the illusionistic windows that comprise the majority of his stained glass oeuvre.¹⁹¹ La Farge's cloisonné technique for the window also correlates with Richardson's

¹⁸⁸ When creating his buildings, Richardson drew rational ground plan designs from his studies at the École but dispelled with historical accuracy in favor of mixing tradition styles. He also rejected popular contemporary architectural fashions like the Queen Anne style. In general, characteristics of his libraries and other buildings include monumentality, solidity, permanence, control of light, shadow, and silhouette, and an emphasis on building with natural material (predominately stone).

¹⁸⁹ Lewis Mumford, *The Brown Decades, A Study of the Arts in America, 1865-1895*, Rev. Ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), 54.

¹⁹⁰ The small scale of the space likely governed the size of windows La Farge could design. *Alpha*, *Omega*, and the *Old Philosopher* are much smaller in scale to La Farge's other memorial windows installed mostly in churches for view upward by the gaze of large congregations. The original reading room of the library is more intimate than a grand church nave, so large windows would have clashed with this compact interior.

¹⁹¹ La Farge's later windows are decidedly more illusionistic. A window like the *Old Philosopher* suggests forms with bold color and texture, but a later panel such as *Spring* (1901) has delineated forms with slight line and variation of color. This change resulted in illusionistic qualities, imbuing figures and settings with more trompe l'oeil realism. See "Opaline Mind," 24. Illusionism also derived from La Farge's adoption of Japanese aesthetics. He collected Japanese woodblock prints and admired their high

penchant for medieval charm. In contrast to later Renaissance artists who avoided leadlines in favor of using stain and pigment for defining forms, glass artisans in the Middle Ages utilized leadlines for emphasizing the outlines and contours of figural forms. While revolutionizing the stained glass medium with his invention of opalescent glass, La Farge returned to traditional medieval practices by using cloisonné leads to design the *Old Philosopher*.¹⁹² The window and architectural style in the Crane Library therefore mutually embody the age, strength, and endurance of Late Antiquity.

John Ruskin (1819-1900), an art critic admired by La Farge and Richardson, was another European influence on the Crane Library.¹⁹³ An elite English academic who ascended to a professorship in the fine arts at Oxford in 1869, Ruskin was also a renowned philanthropist.¹⁹⁴ Crane's heirs would have approved of an abstract association between Crane and the scholarly and charitable Ruskin. There were also more concrete associations created by Richardson and La Farge, however. Critics and historians characterize Richardson's style as the "Richardsonian

horizon lines, flat colors, and asymmetry. La Farge's Fish window (1890), for instance, carries these Japanese artistic features. The artist's leanings toward illusionism were also brought about by his experiences during a year in the South Seas (1890-1891). While there La Farge became more concerned with color harmony in glass. Many varieties of glass were available, so he devoted his efforts to attaining "solid and true tones...where the design and the weight of color modulations were more important than any small delicacies, useless at a distance..." See H. La Farge, "Painting with Colored Light," 214. Among other uses, La Farge employed his newly obtained color palette to craft windows with illusionistic landscapes such as *Rebecca at the Well* (1896) which includes realistic trees with naturalistic bark.

¹⁹² Weinberg, "The Decorative Work," 386.

¹⁹³ In the 1850s, during his college years and afterwards, La Farge studied Ruskin and read "anything that would bring up the beauty of the medieval ideal." See Cortisoz, 67. La Farge also appreciated Ruskin's championing of the Pre-Raphaelites. Ruskin argued that they attained morality on par with those in the Middle Ages through loyalty to color, draftsmanship, and nature. Though he respected Ruskin during the first phase of his work in the decorative arts (his work at the Thomas Crane Library was in this period), La Farge's enthusiasm for the English critic eventually cooled. In 1901 La Farge wrote, "Over a quarter of a century ago, I had been asked to give some lectures at Harvard College, which was a place naturally given over to a respect for Mr. Ruskin. It was but natural, then, to refer to him as a person of such importance as he never can be again." See John La Farge, "Ruskin, Art, and Truth," *The International Monthly* 2 (1900): 510.

¹⁹⁴ For an overview of this topic, see P.D. Anthony, *John Ruskin's Labour: A Study of Ruskin's Social Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Romanesque,” emphasizing characteristics advocated by Ruskin and seen in the Crane Library: clear and powerful irregular picturesque massing, ingrained ornament, and polychrome. These Ruskinian aesthetics also harmonize with the stained glass, tying together Crane, Ruskin, and the “Richardsonian Romanesque” for those attending to the subtle similarities between La Farge’s glass and Richardson’s architectural massing, interior woodcarving, and exterior polychrome granite coloring.

The odd numbered tri-part window triptych on the interior and the asymmetrical massing on the exterior are both justified by Ruskin’s notion of the “picturesque” (**Figure 13**).¹⁹⁵ In one of his most influential works, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Ruskin wrote,

To compose is to arrange unequal things...Have one large thing and several smaller things, and bind them well together...One member of the composition must be either larger than, or in some way supreme, over the rest. There is no proportion between equal things...[composing] is to arrange unequal things.¹⁹⁶

Both the windows and the exterior library architecture adhere to the artistic philosophy Ruskin describes. They each exhibit beautiful inequality and the supremacy of one feature over others. Both windows and library façade exhibit asymmetry. In the front of the library, the entrance arch is off-center from the overhead gable and a single turret stands only at one side of the entrance, imbuing a sense of eccentricity and spontaneity to the façade despite overt asymmetry. The tri-part window set is also asymmetrical; instead of four panels there are three. La Farge intended to highlight his intricate cloisonné *Old Philosopher* by placing it between two less spectacular

¹⁹⁵ This idea was also French. In 1870, an École student described the French approach to architectural design as “the art of arranging parts...a French building is, as a rule, the organic outgrowth of one idea. Every portion, every ornament in the building,—aye, the ground it stands on and the gardens which surround it,—subserve that idea or purpose...The wings of the building and its minutest ornaments will all be in character with the main building.” See Breisch, 184, n38.

¹⁹⁶ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1849), 115. Quoted in Thomas C. Hubka, “The Picturesque in the Design Method of H.H. Richardson: Memorial Hall, North Easton,” in *H.H. Richardson, The Architect, His Peers, and their Era*, ed. Maureen Meister (Cambridge: MIT press, 1999), 21.

windows. This set of three opalescent windows repeats the triple character found in multiple areas of Richardson's façade. The attic window has three arches, and a three part tower-arch-window group exists underneath it. The dedicatory plaque above the arch is asymmetrical and tripartite—two relief squares of different lengths flank the elongated central brownstone carved with dates in relief. Richardson continued this triple grouping in his design of the stonework. Horizontal bands of reddish Longmeadow brownstone segment the library façade into three distinct layers or zones. The lower wall segment contains rock-faced North Easton granite; the upper wall segment contains random ashlar rock-faced North Easton granite; and the third and highest level is the orange tiled roof complete with Japanese eyebrow dormers.¹⁹⁷ Richardson grouped architectural elements of the front exterior in threes to unify the whole façade. La Farge carried on this exterior scheme in the interior with his window triptych, constructing a memory of Crane that resides inside and out, through the combined efforts of artist and architect.

The ingrained ornament of the Crane library interior is another form of ornamentation influenced by Ruskin and befitting the style of La Farge's stained glass (**Figure 14**).¹⁹⁸ The strigil twisted columns or colonnettes designed by Richardson and found above the fireplace match perfectly with those found framing the philosopher's body in the *Old Philosopher* panel. Similar capitals top the two columns in the window, quietly repeating the overt Romanesque qualities of the exterior columns. The column designs on the window and fireplace also

¹⁹⁷ Faith S. Schmidt, "The Architecture of the Crane Library by H.H. Richardson," (B.A. thesis, Columbia University and Thomas Crane Library Archives, 1979), 5-6, 8.

¹⁹⁸ The interior carvings relate to La Farge's glass in other ways. For example, the philosopher holds a scroll, a symbol of learning, in his hand—a motif repeated by Richardson in carved niches above the fireplace. References to the Quincy community are also present in the Ruskinian relief carving on the fireplace. Etched flora reminiscent of plants native to Quincy ornament the horizontal band directly above the mantel in seven separate square panels. The plant motifs encircle and intertwine Crane family coats of arms and the scrolls. La Farge might have hoped that patrons would take notice of these shared symbols and references between the window and fireplace mantel and conjure a memory of Crane as a Quincy man.

coordinate with the turned wooden bamboo-shaped legs on the reading tables and slim spindles on the chairs (**Figure 15**). When devising these legs, Richardson may have intended to copy the sinuous decoration from plates in Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture* or *Stones of Venice*.¹⁹⁹ A bronze plaque of Crane by Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907) was originally intended for placement on the rectangular portion of the fireplace above the mantel and in between the twisting columns. With its stylistic similarity to the column design, the philosopher stands in for this missing plaque.

The polychrome on the interior and exterior of the library is an additional Ruskinian influence, one first seen in the work of La Farge, with Richardson as overseer architect, in the Trinity Church murals four years prior. Richardson guided La Farge to use Ruskinian polychrome over the tower windows at Trinity to define the distinct portions of the arches (**Figure 16**).²⁰⁰ At the library, La Farge's multicolored opalescent glass counterbalances the neutral tones of light brown and tan granite on the exterior and dark brown wood in the interior. The windows stand out on the wall apart from the surrounding interior décor but do not clash with it, as La Farge's color choices for his windows are brighter forms of the pale Ruskinian and Richardsonian polychrome. This aspect and all the Ruskinian architectural components of the façade and interior repeat the formal qualities of the Poet and Muse diptych and *Old Philosopher* window; therefore, traces of Crane are found all around his memorial library.

¹⁹⁹ Breisch, 173, n27. The Evans firm executed the carvings on the chimneypiece after designs from the architect. Richardson trained those artisans "to forge Romanesque and Byzantine detail" from photographs. See Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *The Architecture of H.H. Richardson and His Times*, 2nd Ed. (New York: The Shoe String Press, 1961), 213 and Rensselaer, 79.

²⁰⁰ Virginia Chieffo Raguin, "Decorator: John La Farge," in *The Makers of Trinity Church in the City of Boston*, ed. James F. O'Gorman (Amherst & Boston: The University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 121. It is possible that Richardson intended to incorporate Ruskinian polychrome in the interior of the church due to the fact that one of the competition drawings submitted by the architect when vying for the commission incorporated Ruskinian polychrome decoration vaguely resembling, in tone, the murals later produced by La Farge. See H. Barbara Weinberg, "John La Farge: Pioneer of the American Mural Movement," in *John La Farge*, ed. Henry Adams (New York: Abbeville Press, 1987), 164.

The style of the *Old Philosopher* window can also be explained by La Farge's earlier methods in fashioning murals at Trinity Church in 1876. His incorporation of Romano-Byzantine figures in the mural scheme prefigured his future choice of a similar Late Antique figural model in the *Old Philosopher*. Though the Crane philosopher is much smaller in scale than the painted Trinity figures, La Farge's choice of a classical figure for the Crane commission, itself another collaborative effort with Richardson, harkens back to his artistic selections at Trinity. The classical figure cloaked in drapery, as seen in the *Old Philosopher*, is found all along the walls at Trinity (**Figure 16**). This transmission of analogous male figural types links the memory of Crane to grand ecclesiastical decoration.

As in the *Old Philosopher*, the individual male figure is the most prominent image within the Trinity mural scheme.²⁰¹ Six monumental figures of prophets and apostles decorate the spandrels. Their isolated, floating appearance reveals La Farge's intention to evoke the decoration of Late Antique churches (**Figure 17**).²⁰² Likewise, the figure in the *Old Philosopher* appears awkward in his chair and study room. The flat philosopher lacks depth recession, causing the figure to appear adrift without a firm hold on his surroundings (**Figure 7**). This purposefully awkward treatment of the figure began at Trinity, where the red backdrop embellished the floating quality of the Late Antique figures. One critic commented that "these colossal shapes [lack] effect by being placed floating on the background of plain red."²⁰³ A similar effect must have been present in the Crane windows.

²⁰¹ Hitchcock, 212. La Farge predominantly utilized Byzantine ornamentation for abstract decorative pieces. Concurrently with the *Old Philosopher* commission, La Farge made a window called *Peonies Blown in the Wind* between 1879 and 1881. Ornamental borders, including two with shapes derived from Byzantine manuscript illumination, surround the central flower motif. See Yarnall, *John La Farge*, 100.

²⁰² Weinberg, "Pioneer," in *John La Farge*, 168. He could have been modeling his work off figure murals painted at *S. Apollinare Nuovo* in Ravenna, *Sant' Agnese Fuori le Mura* in Rome, or St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai.

²⁰³ George Parsons Lathrop, "John La Farge," *Scribner's Monthly*, XXI (1881): 514.

In their original placement in a bay across from the entrance foyer of the library, eight other square crimson-toned windows created by an unnamed English artist surrounded *Old Philosopher, Alpha, and Omega* (**Figure 18**).²⁰⁴ Though the *Old Philosopher* and English windows are no longer juxtaposed in the reading room, up until 1908 the crimson windows must have made the faint red hues in the La Farge glass panels stand out to the viewer. Just like the red paint at Trinity Church accentuated the grand Byzantine figures, these English windows called attention to the brilliance of opalescent red in the three La Farge Crane windows.²⁰⁵ Green, a complementary color to red, harmonizes with the red hues and links to the green wreaths on *Alpha* and *Omega* to remind viewers that the three windows are part of one commission to memorialize Crane (**Figure 1**). As discussed earlier, these colors reflect Chevreulian color theories. By way of figure and color, the Crane windows echo the illusionistic effects of the Trinity figure paintings and harmonize the ideal piety of the reinvented Crane in the eulogy with the religious references in *Alpha* and *Omega*. The coordination of the stained glass panels, École precepts, Ruskinian aesthetics, and vestiges of grand ecclesiastical décor allows all of these

²⁰⁴ In his notes, La Farge refers to this artist as “some architect.” Quoted in James Yarnall, “G1880.28 A-C,” La Farge Catalogue Raisonné (unpublished), 2. La Farge made a drawing of the original wall. It contained twenty windows—four horizontal rows and five vertical rows. The top two horizontal rows were all squares, but the bottom two horizontal rows were rectangles. The three La Farge windows were located in the third row down, comprising of three rectangular windows within a five-window row. The top two horizontal rows held the English bookplate windows. The other seven rectangular windows in the bottom two rows had clear glass. This wall was removed in 1907 to make way for a new book stack and lower level children’s reading room designed by William M. Aiken. Today, the three La Farge panels comprising the *Old Philosopher* are relocated from their original 1882 location and placed onto a four bay window at the front wall of the reading room next to the entrance. The English windows are now located in the window bays at the end of the Aiken wing.

²⁰⁵ The decision to include red in the windows was all his own. La Farge did not travel to Italy until 1894, so he did not see the Poet and Muse diptych in person prior to completing the *Old Philosopher*. Instead, he relied on monochrome engravings published by the Arundel Society and a cast copy. On the other hand, there exists the possibility that La Farge saw this particular ivory in the *Bayerisches Nationalmuseum* in Munich, Germany during his first trip abroad in 1856. See Weinberg, “Pioneer,” in *John La Farge*, 173. His ignorance of the carving’s initial coloration also indicates that the choice of green for the philosopher’s drapery was his decision.

things to associate Crane with gentility and refinement, advancing the positive undertones inherent in the pious and scholarly philosopher figure.

Thomas Crane and the Library Legacy

By funding the Crane Memorial Library and the *Old Philosopher* commission, Crane's heirs promoted an image of Crane as a wealthy philanthropist who directed his altruism towards the betterment of society through reading and learning. To a greater extent than ever before, at the end of the nineteenth century, libraries were becoming available to the public free of charge through the support of local wealthy men. At this time, the middle classes encouraged moral reform movements as a means to attain social unity, but wealthy men who had risen up the social scale were more enticed by cultural institutions, such as libraries, as a way of developing individual improvement from within.²⁰⁶ George Peabody, Walter Newberry, and Charles Bower Winn were among those elect financiers and investors that funded libraries following the Civil War. Crane's heirs belonged to this group. At Clarissa Crane's funeral in 1910, it was said that "nothing appealed to her generous nature with more force than the philanthropic institutions that have been established for the education of the people..."²⁰⁷ Crane's wife and two sons were a family united in ambition to honor Crane with a memorial library and window set in his name—their satisfaction with the final product evident through Albert Crane's hanging of a portrait of the library in the reception room of Rock Acre in Stamford, Connecticut, the estate he inherited from his father (**Figure 19**). In the historical moment of their philanthropy, the notion of the family was often a religious metaphor for the relationship between God and man; the donor or

²⁰⁶ Abigail A. Van Slyck, "'The Utmost Amount of Effective [sic] Accommodation:' Andrew Carnegie and the Reform of the American Library," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 50 (1991): 359-360.

²⁰⁷ Eaton, XII.

donors represented “God” and the recipients or patrons embodied “man.”²⁰⁸ As one unit, Crane’s heirs acted as philanthropists bettering others with their gift and acting in correspondence with the altruistic tendencies of Unitarian Universalists that are figuratively represented in *Alpha* and *Omega*.

Like the religious references inherent in the *Alpha* and *Omega* windows, the Crane Library and later libraries built by investors during this time share similar ethical and moral foundations. Men such as Crane and Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), one of the most prominent library philanthropists of the period, personified the stereotypical rags to riches story, and therefore reflected and believed in the tenets of Protestant liberalism. Those tenets taught that all men have an equal chance of attaining success, but that certain special men become rich due to their superior natures. The poor remained hopeless because of their inherent faults and limitations.²⁰⁹ They required wealthy philanthropists to provide them with civic establishments, including libraries, as instruments to use in improving their quality of life. Both Crane’s heirs and Carnegie worked under this ideology.

Carnegie was born in Dunfermle, Scotland to a family of poor weavers. The industrialization of the textile trade in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century caused struggles for those still having to work without machines. In 1848, his father moved the family to Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Carnegie had received five years of schooling while in Scotland, but his removal to the United States meant the end of his formal education, though it did not signal a disinterest in acquiring literary knowledge. Starting at the age of thirteen, Carnegie entered the family profession as a bobbin boy in a cotton mill. One year later, he began work as a telegraph operator in Pittsburgh. Much of Carnegie’s free time was passed reading books in Colonel James

²⁰⁸ Abigail Van Slyck, “Free to All: Carnegie libraries and the transformation of American culture, 1886-1917” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1989), 4.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 15.

Anderson's personal library, which he opened to working boys of the city. This bountiful experience in reading as a boy aided Carnegie in his climb to becoming a member of the sophisticated social elite and a multi-millionaire investor in the railroad and steel industries.

In choosing where to place his surplus wealth and how to positively impact society, Carnegie came to consider libraries tantamount to other civic projects. In a seminal essay, he wrote, "The man who builds a university, library, or laboratory performs no more useful work than he who elects to devote himself and his surplus means to...the building of a memorial arch."²¹⁰ By his estimation, libraries could serve the same purpose as public memorials. The library, in contrast with other public works, could offer enrichment to the public free of charge—a feature that inspired Carnegie's passion for library philanthropy. To him the town library was the place "where treasures of the world contained in books will be open to all forever, without money and without price."²¹¹ Reading, for Carnegie, was a means to learn how to lead a dignified life. He willingly provided a starter kit by offering the charity, but it was up to the recipients to take his donation and build upon it. Carnegie expected "to help those that will help themselves" by expanding the investment on their own.²¹²

Like Carnegie, Crane had a limited education but donated funds to educational institutions, and his heirs chose one to stand in his memory. Carnegie's and Crane's ascents to riches were similarly mythicized, although the legacies of their libraries were quite different.²¹³ Crane's and Carnegie's biographical similarity becomes most visible when studying them as models of capitalist success. In his autobiography, Carnegie acknowledged the library as having

²¹⁰ Andrew Carnegie, "The Best Fields for Philanthropy," *The North American Review* 149 (1889): 697.

²¹¹ Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth," *The North American Review* 148 (1889): 661.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 663.

²¹³ Crane is a small figure in the history of American libraries. Only one has been erected in his name, whereas approximately 2,509 libraries were built in memory of Carnegie. This disparagement aside, Crane and Carnegie have been similarly idealized.

imparted to him a love for literature and good habits.²¹⁴ This idea fed into the Carnegie myth; in the story he tells, Carnegie's rise to greatness from textile factory worker to millionaire industrialist is told as if it was uninterrupted in its progression and entirely true. He tells the story of promotion from bobbin boy to telegraph operator to railroad operator to millionaire industrialist, without revealing the details and pioneering practices of his life that allowed for this supposed meteoric ascent. Crane's story, as told by Adams, is similarly fictionalized. Adams exaggerates the actual account of Crane's rise from poor Quincy stonecutter to New York City granite magnate, telling the tale of a virtuous Crane who beat all odds while leaving out many details of Crane's life that reside between his breakthroughs in the granite industry. Among his competition, Adams writes, Crane "was the fittest to survive...and accordingly survive the rest he did. Worldly prosperity soon flowed in upon him."²¹⁵

Along with existing parallels in Crane's and Carnegie's separate ascents to wealth, resemblances are evident in a comparison between the interests of Crane's heirs and Carnegie's attentiveness to offering funds for personally meaningful public projects. Both Crane's heirs and Carnegie, during the first phase of his library philanthropy, extended donations only to towns with which they had a personal connection.²¹⁶ As mentioned before, in giving funds to Quincy for the library, Crane's heirs recalled his fondness for his hometown and decided that it was the best location for his memorial. Just as Crane's name was linked to the theological school at Tufts—an institution that spoke to Crane's own religious convictions—his heirs associated his name with a library in order to foster an idyllic memory of Crane. Carnegie proceeded in a similar manner. After 1899, he donated to many towns that held no particular significance, but his first phase of library philanthropy comprised of towns and cities for which he felt personal

²¹⁴ Van Slyck, "The Utmost," 364.

²¹⁵ Adams, *Address*, 19.

²¹⁶ Van Slyck, "The Utmost," 360.

affection. The first library he offered, in 1883, was for his hometown of Dunfermle in Scotland.

In his autobiography, Carnegie reminisced about his father, who was among the organizers of the town's first library. Carnegie wrote,

That my father was one of the founders of the first library in his native town, and that I have been fortunate enough to be the founder of the last one, is certainly to me one of the most interesting incidents of my life...I had never heard of a lineage for which I would exchange that of a library-founding weaver.²¹⁷

In giving the funds for the Dunfermle library, Carnegie was providing the opportunity for poor boys to better themselves through reading as he himself had once done. His early philanthropy included libraries for his first American home of Allegheny, neighboring Pittsburgh, and other Pennsylvania communities near the sites of his steel works.²¹⁸ Carnegie actively recreated his personae as a poor immigrant laborer turned industrial tycoon into a humanitarian concerned about the well being of America's youth by becoming a large-scale library philanthropist. In a matching effort to reconfigure one's reputation, Crane's heirs revamped his reputation from his beginnings as an industrial working class laborer to his permanent commemoration in La Farge's stained glass windows, where Crane is remembered as a virtuous and pious man who believed in reading and learning as a means to self-improvement despite having very little formal education.

While the Crane family and Carnegie's backgrounds and philanthropic philosophies are alike, the physical layouts and schemes of their libraries are dissimilar. Carnegie libraries do not include stained glass windows; therefore, *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* in Richardson's pre-Carnegie Crane Library behave as symbols of library philanthropy that anticipate and conflict with the mission of future Carnegie libraries.

²¹⁷ Andrew Carnegie, *Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), 48.

²¹⁸ Van Slyck, "Free to All," 49.

The philosopher figure, a symbol of learning and reading, is a fitting symbol for decoration in a library and embodies the idealized tenets and a public persona which Crane's family sought to link to his memory.²¹⁹ The placement of *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* in a memorial library is a way of associating the reimagined Crane with the beginnings of library philanthropy, a movement which saw its greatest development in the Carnegie libraries of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The figure sits in a chair inside his study with papers and books at his feet, mimicking the act of the patrons in the room in which the *Old Philosopher* resides. Since Late Antiquity, the visual representation of a philosopher had functioned as a preservation and personification of a moment of inspiration.²²⁰ Just as the Richardson and Carnegie libraries operated for the betterment of the masses, the Crane library windows suggest a man who valued learning and reading as activities to better oneself. "Of all the young men who early and late had gone out from the town," wrote a historian in 1884, "Thomas Crane had been the most successful."²²¹ Crane's documented achievements belong only to his business career; but by associating his name with a library and choosing the *Old Philosopher* as his memorial window, Crane's heirs altered his story to accord with that of a high-minded philanthropist.

The layout of the Crane Library signified the benefaction offered by the donors—Crane's heirs and, posthumously, Crane himself—whereas, Carnegie libraries cloaked signs of the donor.

²¹⁹ The motif of the seated figure in the *Old Philosopher* is significant in Greco-Roman history as a literary figure and may allude to Crane as being a lover of learning and reading. The *Old Philosopher* closely resembles the proportions and stoicism of Hellenistic "thinking man" statuary. Athenian sculptors invented this type in the third century B.C.E. The first known example was a full body portrait of Demosthenes of Polyektos, but unfortunately only the head exists today. These sculptures have been deemed "psychological portraits" based on the stoicism and severe intensity of the posed philosophers. See J.J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 69. The expression on their faces indicates powerful self-control and intelligence. Like the bronze sculpture, the philosopher's arm rests horizontally across the lap, closing off the body and turning forces inward so the viewer understands his interior life and thought process, not external action, to be most important. See Pollitt, 66-67.

²²⁰ Shelton, 20.

²²¹ Hurd, 364.

At the Crane Library, users could not enter the book-hall to pick out titles on their own (**Figure 20**). This impasse reminded patrons that access to the collections was according to a hierarchy; they had admission to the polished facility only through the generosity of the donor.²²² In their original positioning, the *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* windows rested in a window bay directly between the gated entryway to the stacks and the reading room. The philosopher figure negotiated these two sides and reminded patrons of the donor: a community man who had provided them with books to use in developing their minds. The *Old Philosopher* symbolized the presence and spirit of Crane, shining opalescent light upon busy readers benefitting from the generosity of him and his heirs.

In contrast to the Crane library, the typical Carnegie library included no commemorative windows and plaques nor gates to block patrons from books. Carnegie transformed the style and function of modern libraries, curtailing existing criticisms for library layouts like those of Richardson's four small town Massachusetts libraries. By the 1890s, patrons were becoming increasingly eager for free access to the shelves. Libraries that did not adapt to these requests were seen as conservative.²²³ To meet public demand, the model for Carnegie libraries was more like "a workshop, a place for readers and students, not a safety deposit building."²²⁴ For patrons, the spectacle of library staff dangerously climbing to get books was a distraction. They did not enjoy the circuitous route needed to obtain books enforced by the stacks gate, nor did they prefer the arrangement of shelving out of hand's reach. By the 1890s and into the early twentieth century, Richardson's alcoved library scheme had become insufficiently large enough to

²²² Van Slyck, "The Utmost," 364.

²²³ John Cotton Dana, "The Public and its Public Library," *Appleton's Popular Science Monthly* 51 (1897): 242.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 242.

accommodate a growing American clientele and expanding book collections.²²⁵ Closed stacks were practical forms of organization that reduced misshelving and theft and assured that access to books was age-appropriate; but Carnegie's library layouts supplied a more efficient system of accessing books without any obstructions or blockades.

The Crane Library isolated readers from books, but the typical Carnegie Library brought readers and books together (**Figure 21**). Carnegie's architects abandoned the compartmental and ornate Richardsonian plan in favor of an open floor, an environment suitable to intimate contact with books. People moved freely along the shelves and made physical contact with texts. In contrast, the Crane Library could be construed as subverting educational aims by not allowing easy access to the shelves.²²⁶ The *Old Philosopher* embodies learning and education, but it was not as strong a symbol of scholarship as Carnegie's open stacks.²²⁷ With books at his feet and positioned originally to the right of the gated entrance to the stacks and behind the portrait of Crane resting on an easel, the *Old Philosopher* teased patrons with immediate access to books

²²⁵ William H. Jordy, *American Buildings and their Architects: Progressive and Academic Ideals at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972), 321-323.

²²⁶ Van Slyck, "The Utmost," 371.

²²⁷ Although, stained glass has served as a substantial symbol of scholarship in libraries since the *Old Philosopher* was installed in the Crane Library in 1882. Though not often seen in Carnegie libraries, poets, seated thinkers, and writers have remained dominant motifs in American library stained glass windows since 1882. For example, Louis Millet designed various pieces for the "Richardsonian Romanesque" Hackley Public Library built in Muskegon, Michigan by Patton and Fisher of Chicago in 1888. Four of Millet's windows in the reading room depict intimate portraits of Victorian canon authors: Shakespeare, Goethe, Longfellow, and Prescott. Piercing the barrier of the twentieth century, the immense Carnaro window from 1906 in the Thompson Memorial Library at Vassar College represents the first conferral of the doctorate degree to a woman, Lady Elena Lucretia Cornaro-Piscopia of the University of Padua in 1678. Founded in 1861, Vassar did not become coeducational until 1968. The window was given by Mary Clark Thompson to adorn the library built in her husband's name. It was completed by John Hardman & Company of Birmingham England. Moving further ahead in history following World War I, the Armstrong Browning Library at Baylor University has since commissioned sixty-two stained glass windows. All of them illustrate the poetry of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Six American stained glass studios have been commissioned. The earliest window project dates to 1924, but the majority occurred in 1940s and 1950s. Since the 1980s, windows have been gradually added to the ensemble. The *Old Philosopher* may appear diminutive and simple in contrast to these more grandiose and numerous modern windows, but with *Alpha* and *Omega* standing guard, the cloisonné panel stands the test of time. Though scales have changed, subjects, motifs, and themes remain constant.

they in fact could not get for themselves, whereas Carnegie's libraries fully satisfied their desire for proximity to literature (**Figure 20**). Yet despite the *Old Philosopher* not delivering on its promise of direct access to books, the glass representation of a scholar with books relates to Adams's 1876 publically-announced ideal that the library of Quincy should create a love of reading in its pupils and assist the town's school system by providing them with books that supply information on subjects they were studying in school.²²⁸

The *Old Philosopher* is an allegorical memorial window for the posthumous donor, but in Carnegie libraries, there were no such images or donor portraits gazing intently at the reader.²²⁹ Carnegie did not stipulate that his name be inscribed on his libraries or that commemorative tablets be added to the walls.²³⁰ Rather his presence was invisible. Everyone knew who the donor was, so perhaps a portrait was unnecessary, yet its absence from Carnegie library interiors created a contrast with the Richardsonian libraries of the 1880s. In mass-producing libraries on an assembly line production scale with prefabricated designs, Carnegie and his designers turned towards the corporation as a model for library philanthropy. Its impersonal procedures and rules removed emotion from decision-making responsibilities and effectively dispelled familial imagery from the library interior.²³¹ With the invention of this new library type, the Crane Library suddenly seemed out of step. The *Old Philosopher* is not a portrait, of course, nor is it a resemblance of Crane; but it is a lasting reminder of one man and one benefactor. As the only figural representation present in the library interior, the *Old Philosopher* correlates Crane with the values of library philanthropy and benevolent education, contemporary alterations to his life story championed by his heirs and concretized in glass by La Farge.

²²⁸ Samuel Swett Green, *The Public Library Movement in the United States, 1853-1893* (Boston: The Boston Book Company, 1913), 306.

²²⁹ Van Slyck, "The Utmost," 380.

²³⁰ Arthur E. Bostwick, *The American Public Library* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1910), 211.

²³¹ Van Slyck, "Free to All," 4.

Both La Farge and Richardson played roles in aestheticizing the reimagined impression of Crane. By adhering to Richardson's European architectural precedents, La Farge effectively mapped the remembrance of Crane onto the spheres of grand ecclesiastical décor, a possible nod to the religious imagery in *Alpha* and *Omega*, and onto the domains of Ruskinian aesthetics and École des Beaux Arts principles. In multiple respects, *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, *Omega*, and Richardson's architecture help to reinvent Crane as if he had never passed away, but lives on in an imaginary educated, cultivated, and sophisticated existence that upheld the tenets of Roman virtue and the teachings of Universalism. Before 1908, the philosopher figure stood guard in front of the entrance to the book stacks and reminded patrons of a version of Thomas Crane that met the wishes of his sons and widow; the window references a religious and virtuous man who provided patrons with books, the tools to use in bettering oneself. With books at his feet and positioning near the gated entrance to the stacks, the *Old Philosopher* embodied the educational purpose of the Thomas Crane Memorial Library.

Conclusion

The stained glass panels at the Crane Library are significant works in La Farge's oeuvre. *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* inspired the method and style of at least two of his future windows and would be influential to the work of La Farge's great competitor in regard to stained glass, Louis Comfort Tiffany.

By the 1890s, Tiffany was the most celebrated stained glass designer. His successful rise to maker of commercial stained glass ran counter to La Farge's career. In fact, La Farge was in jail for bankruptcy three years after the Crane Library commission. At the same time, Tiffany's reputation rose as a result of his impressive showing at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, of his vast output of windows, and of his marketing to the middle classes with practical household objects they could afford, including candlesticks, lamps, and desk items.²³² In his commission for the Morrisson-Reeves Library in Richmond, Indiana, Tiffany oversaw the creation of a memorial window for the namesake of the library entitled *Gutenberg Taking the First Impression from a Moveable Type Press* (1895) (**Figure 22**). *The House of Aldus* (1897) is another Tiffany studios window installed in the library at Troy, New York (**Figure 23**).²³³ The scene portrays Aldus Manutius in a Venetian printing house in 1502 as he proofs a page from the first book, a collection of Dante's works. Like the books lying at the feet of the *Old Philosopher*, these windows use timeless prototypes to associate texts and manuscripts with the scholarly agenda of libraries.

²³² Yarnall, James L. and Julie L. Sloan. "John La Farge's Patent for the American Opalescent Window," *Journal of Stained Glass* 28 (2004): 42.

²³³ It commemorates William Howard Hart, the husband of Mary E. Hart, who put up the funds to raise the building.

The *Education* window scheme at the Chittenden Library on the campus of Yale University is another Tiffany masterpiece echoing La Farge (**Figure 24**).²³⁴ Twenty-three feet in length, the window allegorically and “graphically represents in detail the component parts of education...” Among a conglomeration of figures, “Intuition” appears, symbolized by “an aged seer, gazing contemplatively at the skull which he is holding...”²³⁵ The introspective gaze of the figures and their statuses as metaphors to academic pursuits evoke the functions of La Farge’s philosopher in the Crane Library. An analysis of Tiffany’s library windows would suggest that he was influenced by La Farge’s use of scholarly motifs.

Not only was Tiffany motivated by La Farge’s glasswork, but La Farge found creative stimulus for his own future commissions by looking back to the arrangement of motifs in *Alpha*, *Omega*, and *Old Philosopher*. The Crane triptych may have inspired the emphasis and alignment of his 1897 memorial commission at Wells College in Aurora, New York for the class of 1885 (**Figure 25**). The format of the three windows is a semicircular triptych. In the central panel stands an allegorical figure of woman in contrapposto stance and clad in sumptuous green drapery of a comparable hue to those draping the figure in the *Old Philosopher*. She holds a crimson torch to remind viewers of the school colors. In the two side panels, La Farge repeated his use of the wreath and ribbon symbols first seen in *Alpha* and *Omega*. In the report of the installation, the writer paid particular attention to the wreaths. “On either side of the background,” she said, “are wreaths typifying the graduation and its ceremonies, and the ribbons binding them are of the college colors.”²³⁶ Based on this observation, La Farge assimilated symbol with place, an evolution in his treatment of motifs.

²³⁴ Simeon Baldwin Chittenden, donor of the library, dedicated the window in memory of his daughter Mary Hartwell Lusk.

²³⁵ B.L. Lamprey, “The Yale Window,” *The Decorator and Furnisher* 13 (1889): 140.

²³⁶ “Article 10,” *New York Times*, Jun 13, 1897, IWM5.

If the windows in the Crane Library inspired his competition and love for cloisonné, they also gave creative ideas and energy to La Farge for future commissions. In 1892 he began work on a prized cloisonné panel—the *Peacock* window (1890-1892; re-worked 1907-1908) for the Washington D.C. home of John Hay, a statesman and former private secretary to Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War (**Figure 26**). La Farge's old collaborator, Richardson, designed the home. The *Peacock* was ambitious; La Farge wanted it to be worthy of fitting in a fine interior that included an oil painting by Sandro Botticelli. Despite his labor, the *Peacock* was never installed at the Hay house. It fell short of his expectations, so La Farge kept the window in his studio and perfected it over the next sixteen years. He substituted a more conventional opalescent leaded glass window in the Hay House with the same design as his cloisonné *Peacock*.²³⁷ A fellow artist criticized the surrogate, calling it “exceedingly simple” in its format and much less a “personal thing” than the cloisonné *Peacock*.²³⁸ The *Peacock*, while it did not meet the artists' expectations upon completion, was reminiscent of the Crane windows in both method and style. Both cloisonné windows emphasize a single subject with its form filling the majority of the panel.

La Farge prized the cloisonné version of the *Peacock*. He was “very proud of this piece of work,” wishing “to have [it] placed in a museum because of its rarity.”²³⁹ This comment by La Farge is a curious repetition of one critic's praise for the cloisonné *Old Philosopher* twenty-five years prior. She wrote, “This piece of glass is undoubtedly unique, and its proper place would be in some great museum.”²⁴⁰ La Farge kept his revered cloisonné *Peacock* private until its completion and subsequent purchase in 1908 by the Worcester Art Museum, where it is still

²³⁷ H. La Farge, “Painting with Colored Light,” 214.

²³⁸ Kenyon Cox, “Two Specimens of La Farge's Art in Glass,” *Burlington Magazine* XIII (June 1908): 182.

²³⁹ Worcester Art Museum, Grace Edith Barnes to Merriman, New York, March 24th, 1908. Quoted in Weinberg, “Peacock,” 9.

²⁴⁰ Humphreys, 14.

housed today. In the same year, La Farge wrote to his friend about the window, “Come therefore and look at a piece too dear to buy—Nothing of the kind has ever been and any one such seen anywhere on earth.”²⁴¹ The *Old Philosopher* was his first cloisonné panel. The *Peacock* was his last. La Farge’s first experimentation with the technique at the Crane Library culminated with the completion of his most adored window two years before his death.

In summation, the *Old Philosopher*, *Alpha*, and *Omega* windows are significant for the technique employed in their creation, their unique mixture of motifs, the way in which they reference Thomas Crane, their effective placement within the reading room, the discreet manner in which they blend with the surrounding structure, the similarity between them and Tiffany’s work, and their influence on other commissions within La Farge’s stained glass oeuvre.

²⁴¹ “John La Farge to Russell Sturgis, March 23rd, 1908,” La Farge Family Papers, Yale University. Quoted in H. La Farge, “Painting in Colored Light,” 220.

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Illustrations



Figure 1. John La Farge, *Alpha*, *Old Philosopher*, and *Omega*, Thomas Crane Memorial Library, Quincy, Massachusetts, 1880-1882, (each measures 39 x 22 in.).



Figure 2. H.H. Richardson, Thomas Crane Memorial Library, Quincy, Massachusetts, 1880-1882.



Figure 3. *Vitrail* Panel, Chartres Cathedral, France, ca. 13th century.



Figure 4. Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Virtues*, New College Chapel, Oxford, UK, ca. 1777.



Figure 5. William Morris, *St. Michael*, after design by Edward Burne-Jones, 1872.



Figure 6. John La Farge, *Battle*, Memorial Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, 1880-1881.

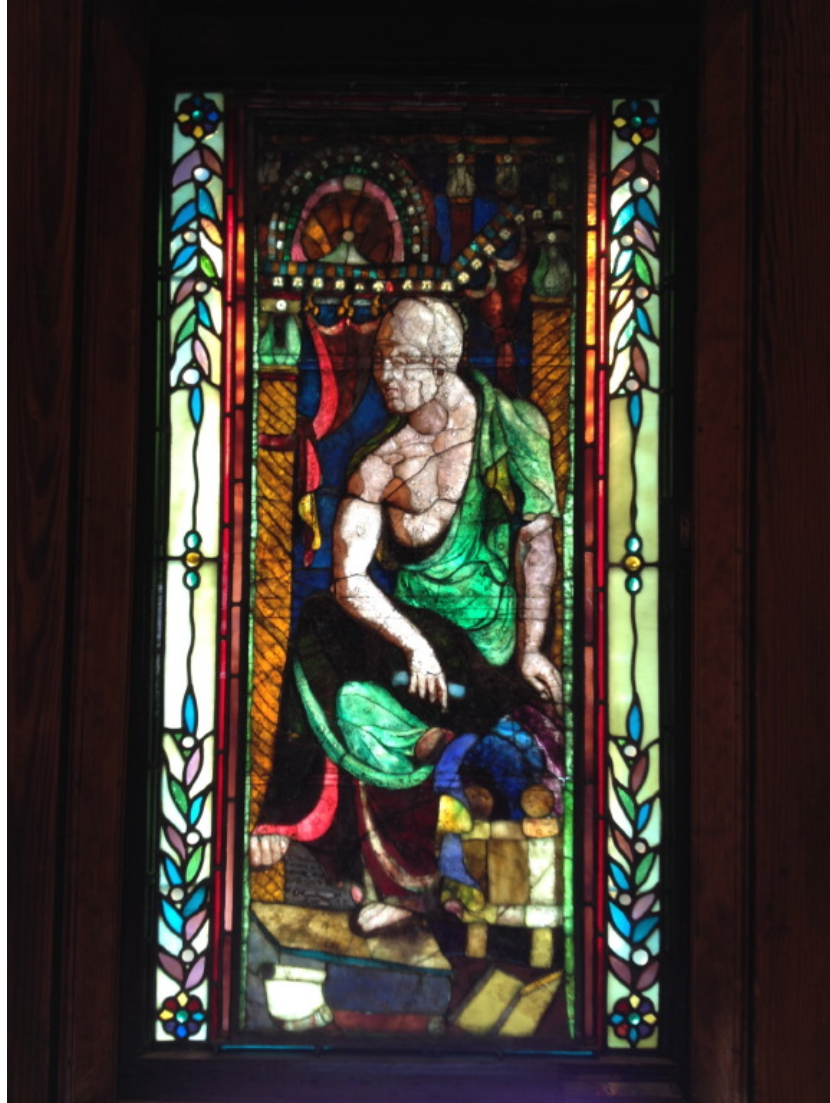


Figure 7. John La Farge, *Old Philosopher*, Thomas Crane Memorial Library, 1880-1882.



Figure 8. Poet and Muse Diptych, Late Antique, Treasury of the Duomo of Monza, Milan, 5th Century CE.



Figure 9. John La Farge, *Angel at the Tomb*, Thomas Crane Memorial Library, 1890.



Figure 10. Diptych of Flavius Anastatius Probus, Byzantine, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 517 CE.



Figure 11. Consular Diptych of Justinian, Byzantine, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 521 CE.



Figure 12. Anonymous Consular diptych, Byzantine, Collection of Marquis Du Ganay, Paris, 6th century CE.



Figure 13. H.H. Richardson, Thomas Crane Memorial Library, Quincy, Massachusetts, 1880-1882.



Figure 14. H.H. Richardson, Thomas Crane Memorial Library, interior, completed by the Evans firm, 1880-1882.



Figure 15. H.H. Richardson, Thomas Crane Memorial Library, interior, ca.1880s.



Figure 16. John La Farge, mural scheme, Trinity Church, Boston, 1876, building designed by H.H. Richardson, 1872-1877.



Figure 17. John La Farge, Spandrel figure, Trinity Church, Boston, 1876.



Figure 18. Anonymous, bookplate window, Thomas Crane Memorial Library, ca.1880-1882.



Figure 19. Portrait of Thomas Crane Memorial Library, Rock Acre, Reception Room, Stamford, Connecticut, ca. late nineteenth or early twentieth-centuries.



Figure 20. Thomas Crane Memorial Library, interior with stacks gate and Crane image, ca.1890s.



Figure 21. Edin Smith and Sons, Wychwood Carnegie Public Library, Toronto, Ontario, ca. 1916.



Figure 22. Louis Comfort Tiffany and Studios, *Gutenberg Taking the First Impression from a Moveable Type Press*, Morrisson-Reeves Library, Richmond, Indiana, 1895.



Figure 23. Louis Comfort Tiffany and Studios, *The House of Aldus*, Troy Public Library, Troy, New York, 1897.



Figure 24. Louis Comfort Tiffany and Studios, *Education*, Chittenden Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, 1899.



Figure 25. John La Farge, Wells Memorial Window, Wells College, Aurora, New York, 1897.



Figure 26. John La Farge, *Peacock*, Worcester Art Museum, 1890-1908.