

63. H. Rheingold, *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), p. 7.
64. A. Quart, *Branded* (London, 2003).
65. N. Rose, *The Powers of Freedom* (Cambridge, 1999).
66. D. Travis, *Emotional Branding: How Successful Brands Gain the Irrational Edge* (Roseville, CA, 2000), p. 10.
67. D. Aaker, *Managing Brand Equity* (New York, 1991), p. 15.
68. D. Keller, 'Conceptualizing, Measuring and Managing Customer Based Brand Equity', *Journal of Marketing*, 75 (1993), p. 1.
69. BBDO, *Brand Equity Excellence*, 2001, pp. 14-15.
70. D. Aaker, *Managing Brand Equity*, p. 16.
71. D. Aaker and R. Jacobson, 'The Financial Information Content of Perceived Quality', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31 (1994), pp. 191-201.
72. J. Beller, 'KINO-I, KINO-WORLD: Notes on the Cinematic Mode of Production', in N. Mirzoeff (ed.), *The Visual Culture Reader* (London, 2002), p. 61.
73. D. Smythe, *Dependency Road: Communications, Capitalism, Consciousness and Canada* (Norwood, NJ, 1981), p. 39.
74. J. Pavitt (ed.), *Brand.New* (London, 2000), p. 23.
75. D. Holt, 'Why Do Brands Cause Trouble?', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(1) (2002), pp. 70-90; M. Ligas and J. Cotte, 'The Process of Negotiating Brand Meaning: A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective', in E. Arnould and L. Scott (eds), *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 26 (Provo, UT, 1999).
76. M. Lazzarato, *Lavoro immateriale* (Verona, 1997); M. Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', in H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills (eds), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London, 1948), pp. 102ff.
77. M. Hardt and A. Negri, *Multitude* (London, 2004), p. 212.

## On the Movement of Porcelains

Rethinking the Birth of Consumer Society as  
Interactions of Exchange Networks, 1600-1750

Robert Batchelor

*Pompey:* Sir, she came in great with childe: and longing (saving your honour's reverence) for stewd prewyns; sir, we had but two in the house, which at that very distant time stood, as it were in a fruit-dish (a dish of some threepence; your honours have seen such dishes) they are not China-dishes, but very good dishes.

*Escalus:* Go too; go too; no matter for the dish sir.

William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, Act 2, Scene 1<sup>1</sup>

It has become a commonplace to describe the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as pregnant moments in the history of consumption in England and Holland.<sup>2</sup> Because of their role in a commercial society, everyday things seemed to have taken on a new importance. Subsequent scholarly labour drew attention to multiple and often unrelated births of this sort around the world, work that highlighted the anachronisms inherent in applying a term like 'consumerism' to the period.<sup>3</sup> Has it all been a tempest in a teacup? The dish mentioned above by Pompey, a tapster in a suburban brothel, was in the judgement of the 'ancient lord' Escalus a digression of 'no matter'. One would be hard pressed employing it to evoke the Baroque 'culture of curiosity', nor is its relation to the broader seventeenth-century porcelain craze clear, of which John Harold Plumb once wrote: '[n]o mania for material objects had ever been so widespread, so general to the rich of all nations'.<sup>4</sup> Yet Shakespeare has the value of the vulgar container and by implication the politics of the tavern and courtroom come into bizarre and comic juxtaposition with world-class 'China-dishes.' If longing for stewed prunes, the pregnant moment of consumption (and constipation), involves nothing extraordinary or even all that conscious, what about the mediation of the episode by a broad system of fashion (the 'Chinese'), one that moves objects vast distances between, across and through traditional social networks with their rather provincial questions of status and authority? Rather than searching for the

birth of a consumer society in England or Europe as a precursor to modern mass 'consumerism', it may be more important to examine how the various habits of the self in this period, which no doubt emerged in complex regional hierarchies and networks of exchange, were also shaped and understood through markedly transcultural systems of fashion.<sup>5</sup> As part of this latter process, the global fashion system of porcelains between the late sixteenth and the mid-eighteenth centuries helped make sense of the interaction of expanding exchange networks, which bore unfamiliar textures, forms and images, as well as everyday things that performed mundane tasks.

The ubiquity of porcelain processes today makes the historical question of the way they highlighted problems associated with exchange in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries difficult to apprehend. Even the paper used to print this book contains kaolin or china clay (*gaolingtū*, ideal:  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 \cdot 2\text{SiO}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ) as both pulp filler and coating, ensuring a smooth, durable and white finish deemed appropriate for the business of scholarly exchange. This material along with some form of 'porcelain stone' (*cishi*, a pegmatite composed of feldspar [ $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 \cdot 2\text{SiO}_2 \cdot \text{K}_2\text{O}$ ] and quartz [ $\text{SiO}_2$ ]) and the development of high-temperature kilns formed the basis of a number of techniques now referred to under the general rubric of porcelains.<sup>6</sup> The results combined plasticity of form with remarkable hardness and durability, while high-temperature glazes allowed for surfaces of detailed texture, painting and writing. After a period of development from Shang dynasty high-fired stoneware (c. fourteenth century BCE) to pre-Tang dynasty white wares (c. 600 CE), porcelains became a significant medium in China from the Five Dynasties (907–60) to the Southern Song (1127–1279). The late sixteenth to early eighteenth century was a particularly important period in the history of porcelains as media not just because of their long tradition as objects that circulated transculturally, but also because as global bearers of fashions they began to mediate or gather together a large number of other media techniques and exchange processes. This allowed for the articulation of 'common differences' among a wide range of geographical locations.<sup>7</sup> Late Ming (1368–1644) production (as well as various regional imitations) also allowed for large domestic and foreign markets. Dutch imports into the Red Sea coffee emporium of al-Mukha for the year 1640 alone amounted to over 80,000 pieces, while conservative figures for the first half of the seventeenth century of imports into Amsterdam tally about three million pieces of Chinese and Japanese porcelain.<sup>8</sup> Especially in the Thames and Rhine estuaries and urban coastal China, the concurrent rapidity of urbanization, the global integration and exchange of currency (including cowries or '*porcelana*' as they were sometimes called), and the spread of

printing all became intertwined with the development of exchange networks utilizing porcelains as a mass-produced and globally recognized medium even if at times these ceramics served largely as the ballast for literate balancing the world silver, spice and textile trades.<sup>9</sup>

New patterns of circulation – 'modern' only in terms of the number of media involved, the extent of participation in exchange and the velocity of commodity movement – opened up performative possibilities for porcelains to articulate differences in a common medium. For a period it served as a visual medium for a wide range of social classes in diverse locations that could gather together more regionalized media like painting which circulated largely within language groupings, as well as coinage, painting styles, calligraphic writing, staple commodities and urban space itself. By the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, porcelains had become a power because they literally made sense of apparent ruptures in temporal and cultural continuity related to larger cities, new technologies and the more rapid globalization of trade. Porcelains addressed three seventeenth-century ruptures in particular – incorporating into daily life the commodity that seemed to be a hybrid of nature and culture (materiality and inscriptibility) comprehending the overlaps between various systems of symbols occurring because of exchange processes, and finally reconciling the multiple perspectives raised by the previous two ruptures. At stake in all three of these ruptures was a heightened sense of parallax, where everyday questions of exchange that should have been answerable through inherited tradition were constantly infused with visions of obscure, transcendent and disruptive systems and fashions, notably those of the 'Chinese'.<sup>10</sup>

### The Hybrid Objects of Everyday Life

Porcelains circulated along with other commodities in the markets of Chinese coastal cities and the Eurasian, African and American emporia, but they had their own dynamic of difference. This held especially true in the emporia of seventeenth-century Europe like Amsterdam and London, where widespread usage was relatively novel. Writers satirized and complained about problems emerging from repetitive encounters with porcelains, a way that their intrusions into everyday life could impinge upon the habits of the self in ways difficult to comprehend. Arbiters of taste demanded less opacity in porcelains, mixing a complex nostalgia for a former age with Venetian glass and commercial values with the optical and Enlightenment pursuits of the new era. Porcelains, more than textiles, printing, coinage

stimulants (coffee, tea, sugar), both repeated and represented the movements of technical processes and fashion systems reaching beyond the boundaries of contemporary knowledge, the *episteme* itself.

Thus rather than simply being consumed or incorporated into domestic settings in these emporia at the western edge of Eurasia, porcelains engaged and even held bodies in the traces of past or unseen exchanges. In London Joseph Addison felt they almost mystically inverted the relation between owner and property, so that when a woman was 'visited' with a passion for 'China ... it generally takes Possession of her for Life'.<sup>11</sup> Alexander Pope worried about the possibly infinite character of this problem. In his moral epistle 'To a Lady: Of the Characters of Women', dedicated to the famous collector of porcelains and lacquer-ware Henrietta Howard, he suggested that women should abandon sensual pleasure for virtue and character and remain 'Mistress of herself, tho' China fall' (l. 268). Jonathan Swift compared the fetish for porcelain to that for print, writing to Hester Vanhomrigh on 30 June 1711 that he had seen a bookseller purchasing an old library and his 'fingers itched, as yours would do at a china shop'.<sup>12</sup> Here the spatial lure of the fashion system replaced the temporal lure of the book as the record of past ages. In *The Ladies Visiting Day*, William Burnaby satirized the character Lady Lovetoy's love of 'monstrous' porcelain idols as a kind of polite slippage into pagan materialism:

*China-woman*: These are Pagods, Madam, that the Indians Worship.

*Lady Lovetoy*: I am so far an Indian.

*Fulvia*: How ignorant they are, to make a God of a bit of China!

*Lady Lovetoy*: Truly I think it is a genteeler deity than Beaten Gold.

*Fulvia*: So should I, if Religion were a Fashion.<sup>13</sup>

More effectively than a Jesuit confessor, porcelains might even be converting the body – the female body and more generally the social body – away from Protestant textual obsessions through fragmented material repetition of difference (God as 'a bit of China'). Like money itself, the ability of porcelains to capture and preserve moments of exchange remote from the domestic setting through a system of fashion made them more genteel 'than beaten gold' and at least competitors with those massive silver services congealed from the efforts of slave labourers in the infamous American mines of the Spanish empire.

Arguably, the European interest in porcelain derived in part from its ability to resist classification within traditional schemes of objective knowledge (Aristotelian *episteme* or *scientia*), failing to be neatly contained within the 'natural' histories of the collection, curiosity cabinet or even

the more ambiguous painterly still-life. Most sixteenth-century European commentators thought porcelain arose from some kind of natural process. The widely known account by Portuguese chronicler Duarte Barbosa suggested burying pulverized shells for long periods to produce porcelains.<sup>14</sup> Girolamo Cardano and Julius Cæsar Scaliger compared porcelain to Roman myrrhina, both thought to be congealed liquids shaped by the energies of the earth. They debated whether porcelain was a relic of ancient culture debased by mass production or a modern improvement on ancient practices.<sup>15</sup> All accounts initially assumed that Aristotelian natural order controlled the epistemic classification of technical processes rather than the technical processes themselves commanding the conceptualization of nature.

By downplaying the importance of porcelains as an imagistic medium and as objects of mass artisanal production, the burial theory suggested an early European resistance to broader questions about exchange raised by porcelains. One of the first English commentators on the subject, Francis Bacon, tried to sever porcelain from this realm of natural processes. Bacon called the transformation involved in burial 'induration', conceived of as 'a great alteration in nature'.<sup>16</sup> Comparable processes included the transformation or generation of earth apart from any human interference, but others used artificial heat such as brick-making or glassblowing. According to Bacon, porcelain was an 'artificial cement' or 'plaster' buried in the earth for several generations to create an 'artificial mine', a parallel to the natural deposits of silver possessed by the Spanish. Yet, because of artifice, the performance of durability did not transmit those properties to its possessor:

So there is none of them ... but hath a double nature; inheritable and real while it is contained with the mass of the earth, and transitory and personal when it is, once severed ... And this is not because it becometh moveable ... but because by their severance they lose their nature of perpetuity ... for by their continuance of body stands their continuance of time.<sup>17</sup>

Removal from the earth took porcelain from the realm of the pure thing, 'inheritable and real', to the hybrid natural-cultural object, 'transitory and personal'.<sup>18</sup> Porcelains, then, could only serve as a reminder of the durability and temporal continuity of the inherited natural order. This double nature of porcelain – connected self-making material thing and the deterritorialized, technical, consumed commodity object driven by the whims of fashion – required that aforementioned parallax view that was simultaneously everyday and transcendent, where two contradictory aspects are juxtaposed to achieve comprehension of the thing. For Bacon, the demand for a constant reevaluation of the transitory and fashionable object's relation to natural order provokes a

philosophical response that defines territory (land) and commodities as two distinct orders of value, even when the technical boundaries seem unclear as in the case of earthenware and especially porcelains.

Another approach, challenging the burial theory entirely, considered porcelain as a process of refinement related to the circulation patterns of Chinese urban commerce. Gonzales de Mendoza (1540–1617), whose book on China was translated into English in 1588 and became a standard reference, pioneered this approach. He described ‘shops full of earthen vessels of divers making ... so good cheape that for foure rials of plate they give fiftie pieces’. As to the process, ‘they make them of very strong earth, the which they doo breake all to pieces and grinde it, and put it into cisternes with water, made of lime and stone, and after that they have well tumbled and tossed it in the water: for the creame that is upon it they make the finest sort of them, & the lower they go, spending that substance, that is the courser’. The resulting production could be ‘of what colour they please, the which will never be lost: then they put them into their kilnes and burne them’. But, explained Mendoza: ‘The finest sort of this is never carried out of the countrie, for that it is spent in the service of the king, and his governours, & is so fine and cleere, that it seemeth to be of fine and perfect cristall.’ The numerous porcelains ‘made in that kingdome, and ... brought into Portugall, and carried into the Peru, and Nova Espania, and into other parts of the world’ disproved the time-intensive burial theory, suggesting instead hierarchies of ‘the best and the finest’ defined by techniques of production and imperial tastes.<sup>19</sup> Instead of a parallax produced from a temporal break with nature, the split was cultural and global. Regionalized imperial order struggled against market overproduction and a diversity of exchange settings scattered across the planet. Positing spatial orders of exchange from the shop to the court to ‘other parts of the world’ could maintain the thingness of porcelain (‘the finest sort’ which is transparent), while appreciating that mass production and global exchange levelled the commodity into crude opacity, where through repetition ‘forme and fashion [appear] as they do here’. Porcelain was not neatly ‘severed’, but instead a series of sometimes illicit exchanges carried it from its proper destination (the Ming court) and thus diluted its true performative power in a world governed by tribute and gifts. This imperial diffusion theory suggested that hierarchies of value for objects were created regionally, politically, so that true chinaware never really left China and the empire itself was the measure and source of value.

In general, a fashion system like porcelain from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries produced concerns about transcultural and translinguistic mediation by technical processes. Not surprisingly, in places

where porcelains had circulated for centuries the process of comprehending the rapid expansion of these exchanges during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was often subordinated in more general questions about culture, exchange and urbanization. The vast late-Ming and early-Qing accumulation and usage of ceramics in Beijing, the Yangzi Delta region and southern coastal cities of China raised questions there of how mass-produced artisanal commodities like porcelains should be distinguished. This occurred largely through contested notions of the unity and tradition of *wen* (writing/culture) and the manifold nature of *wu* (things/matter).<sup>20</sup> Such questions derived more from the techniques of circulation and exchange spurred by the rapid commercialization and the rising prominence of Chinese urban and suburban populations than the technical methods of porcelain production. Indeed, the distinction between *taoqi* (common earthenware) and *taoci* (high-fired wares, i.e. stoneware and porcelain) held less importance than the variety of uses for pottery products in urban settings and the criteria of their circulation. The ‘Ceramics’ chapter in Song Yingxing’s encyclopedia of industrial craft, the *Tian gong kai wu* (1637), comments on the vast demand for ceramic products – from dishes to bricks. It then addresses how new designs and techniques help maintain a sense of coherent civilization:

Sturdy earth crocks preserve wine to a good age, while clean pottery vessels are instruments for containing the sacrificial offerings of wines and bean sauces. The sacrificial dishes of Shang and Zhou times [c. 1700–700 BCE] were made of wood; was it not because the people then wanted to show great respect [towards ancestors]? In later times, however, ingenious designs began to appear in various localities, human craftsmanship exerted its talents, producing superior ceramic wares beautiful as a woman endowed with fair complexion and delicate bones, sparkling in quiet retreats or at festive boards, a concrete sign of civilized life [*wenming*]. It is hardly necessary to adhere [to traditions] forever.<sup>21</sup>

Ceramics here suggest concretized emblems of social processes, moments of time capturing various changes, with superior quality as the standard of judgement rather than slavish dedication to tradition. Thus while Europeans might perceive porcelains as the epitome of Chinese exchange relations, they were part of broader questions about fashion and civilized life in urban coastal China – precisely the kind of rupture or discontinuity that a fashion system moves objects across.

By the late Ming, porcelains were ordinary things that, like other objects, had been fed into and challenged standard distinctions about value. Song Yingxing makes less of the question of distinction than the everyday, noting that the majority of porcelains were made on the wheel to produce the ‘wares’ (q

'needed for everyday life' (*sheng ren ri yong bi*).<sup>22</sup> The ware was more prosaic than the thing (*wu*), a distinction embedded in practice and descriptive language. Craig Clunas has mined the literature of Ming literati collectors for various terms of judgement about things – *jiu wu* ('old things') often linked with the Shang, Zhou or Han period; *qi wu* ('rare things') such as those found in an elegant production centre like Suzhou with an air of antiquity to them; and *yun wu* ('charming things') having a certain degree of elegance. All were 'concrete signs of civilized life' and formed a web of distinctions and differentiations in *wen* used to comprehend 'things-in-motion'.<sup>23</sup> Enmeshing things in several levels of language addressed the question of change or tendency (their performative character), not unlike how Wang Bi (226–49) described the *Yijing* ('The [Ex]Change Classic') as designed, 'to treat exhaustively the true innate tendency of things and their countertendencies to spuriousness [*qingwei*] ... [to] let change occur and achieve free flow in order to exhaust the potential of the benefit involved'.<sup>24</sup> The *Yijing* in general, as most classical commentators noted, dealt with the production of both the images of heaven and the 'ten thousand things' (*wanwu*) of earth, the latter inspiring the Song dynasty neo-Confucian investigation of things (*gewu*), which carried on into the Ming. Thus, porcelains circulating in urban China also required a kind of parallax view, both everyday and transcendent, but one perceived explicitly through developing yet sophisticated languages of distinction among dense urban networks of changing fashions for various things, rather than the more specific difficulties raised by porcelains in particular as hybrid commodity objects that Bacon and Mendoza tried to confront.

### Fields of Exchange and Pattern Recognition

As the production and distribution of porcelains expanded during the seventeenth century, new and multiple techniques developed in relation to them, exchange and circulation between trading emporia increased, relationships between porcelains and various media grew more complex, and their performative powers proved increasingly influential. The primary production centres at the time were the massive and rapidly expanding complexes at Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province, as well as those at Dehua in Fujian and various *min yao* (private or commercial kilns) sponsored by coastal merchant syndicates in Anhui, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong provinces. Production sites also existed in Korea, Vietnam and Hizen province, Japan, especially after the 1640s. Both Mandarin calligraphic and painting traditions,

as well as writing practices related to local languages – Yue (Cantonese), Hakka, Min, Gan and Wu, and also Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese, inflected these production sites. But in many ways the most important forces shaping the development of the medium came out of urban fields of exchange. Fruitful interference among repetitive products allowed by mass artisanal production that nevertheless were adjusted for a wide range of audiences kept a language for porcelains from solidifying during the seventeenth century. As the Jesuit Louis Le Comte noted, '[t]hose that have Skill do not always agree in their Judgment they pass upon them; and I perceive that in *China*, as well as in *Europe*, Phancy bears a main stroke in the matter'. Each piece showed evidence of the various hands that had produced it, so that 'few Vessels but have some one of these defects; there must not only be found no spots, nor flaws, but notice must be taken whether there be some places brighter than others, which happens when the Pencil is unequally poised'.<sup>25</sup> Porcelains bore traces of uneven techniques of writing, preserving the efforts of hundreds of thousands of artisans to reimagine and to integrate various media in order to facilitate exchanges.

Rather than an essential difference between Europe and China in their approaches to porcelain (mapping versus distinction), three interrelated fields of exchange, each related to dominant forms of the reproduction of writing and the modes of commerce, emerged for porcelain by the end of the seventeenth century – the xylographic urban networks of coastal China (as well as Korea and Japan), the calligraphic emporia of Southeast Asia and Islamic trading systems, and the new typographic emporia of the European Atlantic coast (notably London and Amsterdam). Each field played a constitutive role in reshaping both the imagistic and environmental (form, usage) aspects of porcelains as media. In turn, these interactions pulled porcelains out of the older realm of the courtly tribute trade and into new roles as media that brought together symbolic practices from other seventeenth-century media and from a series of regions or fields of exchange around the world.<sup>26</sup>

The coastal cities of China had close connections with sites of porcelain production and deep cultural connections with traditions of calligraphy, painting and xylographic printing. In the late Ming, this first field of exchange linked porcelains with images from illustrated novels and other woodblock-printed texts. These were largely printed in urban areas like the Yangzi Delta and thus closer to sites of porcelain exchange rather than production. This convergence of print and porcelain occurred alongside three other related phenomena – the increased use of wage labour associated with the rise of urban commerce, the growth of private kilns and commerce

more generally outside imperial supervision, and the rise of a significant population of cultured urban readers drawn from less cultivated merchant and gentry backgrounds who wanted favourite scenes from novels, plays, history, religious stories and folk culture on the surface of their household porcelains.

Thus the parallel developments of woodblock printing and porcelain painting became intertwined from the 1580s. For example, a Ming reprint of Su Shi's (1037–1101) *Chi bi fu* ('Rhapsody on Red Cliff'), a story about the pleasures of a wine-drinking party beneath the Red Cliffs near Wuhan, inspired a series of both high-end and low-end porcelain bowls (see Figure 3). Surviving examples have longer and shorter versions of the story inscribed in *kaishu* (regular script) and adapt with variations a woodcut showing the revellers' boat.<sup>27</sup> Certain aspects of these bowls suggest a Chinese audience, but they circulated as far as the Ottoman collections in Istanbul as well as Paris in the early seventeenth century, where Jacques Linard used one for two separate versions of his painting *Les Cinq Sens* (1627, 1638).<sup>28</sup> As the Linard painting indicates, the bowls might be read based on purely visual and sensual cues as well as in more site-specific cultural and literary ways. Examined more precisely by an urban reader of Chinese, the actual story text on the bowl and the image contrast the river's constant flow with the ephemeral objects it carries – whether boats filled with wine drinkers or fallen leaves – a contradiction embodied by the object itself, which can be seen either as one of many changing things or as part of the changeless aspects of the world. This was also an ambiguity about possession of the bowl and how the possessor (be they Chinese, Ottoman or French) might read it at one or many of these levels, given their degree of literacy and exposure to classical literature.

Chinese commentators were well aware that even readers and collectors in the sophisticated Yangzi Delta had complicated and by no means uniform sets of tastes arising from desires to emulate literati culture, lingering attachments to folk and popular forms, influences from designs used on exported wares, and participation in the urban social spaces of the brothel, the wine shop, the tea house and the Buddhist and Daoist shrine. They employed objects like porcelains to help define themselves and their situation or condition – *kuang* is the word used on the Red Cliff bowl – even if most porcelain did not have as many complex allusions and lessons as these bowls did. Some private kilns also adopted the *xieyi* ('write/desire') style of calligraphy and painting.<sup>29</sup> Sketchy but expressive and unrestrained, not careless but attempting a kind of innocence or naturalness, porcelain painting like this simultaneously tended towards the calligraphic and the popular in its iconic



Figure 3 Blue and White 'Red Cliff' Porcelain Bowl (c. 1620–44), Jingdezhen, British Museum, Asia F.811

Source: Copyright the Trustees of the British Museum.

reduction of brushwork and wide dissemination. Tensions remained during the Ming and early Qing between the traditional *gongbi* (lit. 'skilled writing') wares and the *xieyi* style, but porcelains did not generally fall into clear categories. Calligraphic, pictorial and material variation generated complex and ambiguous positioning of objects within networks of exchange.

Urbanization encouraged a studied virtual tourism among the elite through commodities like porcelains, landscape paintings and woodcuts, which could serve as a meditative replacement for Daoist nature – the virtuous qualities of a wild or natural landscape.<sup>30</sup> But porcelains also connected the household to the urban landscape – the 'floating worlds' of the outdoor drinking party, the wine shop (*jiulou*) and the courtesan districts in Beijing, Nanjing, Suzhou, Yangzhou and elsewhere. Haunted by the stereotypical *kuangshi* ('wild gentleman'), these sites served as informal meeting places for officials, literati and the scions of wealthy gentry and merchants, and social exchanges took place over and among porcelains. Here the narrow visual pleasure associated with objects (screen paintings, porcelain wine cups and decor, general furnishings and social spaces) merged with a broader

sensual pleasure of the body made possible by courtesans, who participated both through managing an environment of objects and language (as the courtesan poets of this period suggest) and as objectified bodies valued in relation to their cultivation. These exchange-oriented spaces both defined the taste of the urban newly rich and in turn were defined by it, generating a demand for decorated interiors and commodified images reminiscent of their ephemeral pleasures.

The broadest cross-section of social groups participated in the markets and streets of urban centres. When Dutch ambassadors visited the Yangzi Delta in the 1650s, the extent of commerce amazed them, especially the public participation of women, and printed accounts included engravings of shopping districts.<sup>31</sup> The retail shop (*men*) and the vendor's stall or booth (*tan*) both fell under a special tax in 1425 – the *mentan shui* – to try to help paper currency circulate. This was lifted in core areas of the Yangzi Delta (Jiangnan) in 1528, spurring commercial growth. An unstable currency system and mass artisanal production made turnover less important than profit, and retail outlets remained ready to close and hoard inventory if necessary due to overvalued money.<sup>32</sup> Shopping architecture thus had a temporary feel, closely tied with the street or traditional market spaces and sensitive to fashions. This flexible and modular system of exchange made the transition to speciality porcelain for Islamic, Japanese, Southeast-Asian and European markets relatively easy. The shop was thus more of a locus of exchange than a stable environment, simultaneously organizing the chaos of things while remaining portable so that it could be set up anywhere and quickly in the spirit of Li Sung's famous painting of the *Knicknack Peddler* (1211), who carried the 'ten-thousand things' on his back.

The ceramic brick walls of the city or a temple yard allowed for this kind of temporariness. Architecturally, they proved of great advantage in setting up 'Chinatowns' in places like Manila and Bantam. Whole urban fabrics of markets, artisans, merchants, restaurants, shopping districts and labouring populations could appear rapidly, developing exchange relationships outside the mainland. These 'Chinatowns' helped define the second major field of exchange in which porcelains circulated – calligraphic emporia. Chinese sojourner merchants quickly built complex urban relationships with local scribal-based administrations. Manila, a silver entrepôt founded by the Spanish in 1571, accumulated 22,300 pieces of porcelain before the first trade galleons sailed to Acapulco.<sup>33</sup> By 1588 alongside the mestizo 'Spanish' population of 355 lived a permanent settlement of 600 Chinese merchants and artisans and a temporary population of about 2,000 more Chinese merchants and sailors. At Bantam the English and Dutch located their factories in

a Chinese sojourner merchant community because of its brick (ceramic) architecture, dense network of artisans and services (from goldsmiths to brewers), well-established merchant connections and supply of wage labour. Typically in this pattern of merchant settlement, a Daoist altar was set up initially, followed later by larger Daoist and Buddhist temples that alluded to sites on the Chinese mainland. These not only pulled together the Chinese community but also helped establish ritual relations with locals.<sup>34</sup> Trade porcelains, often doubling as gifts, frequently used Daoist and Buddhist symbols as translatable signs of exchange, a characteristic inherited by the *kraak* wares carried by the Portuguese and Dutch. Certain designs would often take on roles in local religions, as was the case with the famous Malay kendi vessels.

Not only the sojourner Chinese but also trading middlemen and local buyers played important roles in what kinds of porcelains circulated in emporia and which were chosen for transshipment. Exchange frequently took place as 'point-for-point *ad hoc* settlements'.<sup>35</sup> In the seventeenth century, European factors also made key purchasing decisions in these contexts, often with only vague advice from the metropole. As the English East India Company directors wrote to their factors at Tonquin in 1681, 'that which will turne us best to accompt are cupps of all Kinds, Sizes & Colours and all sorts of small Toyes of severall figures & fashions, the more strange & novill the better and the more variety there is in your parcells the more acceptable they will be'.<sup>36</sup> Even then only 16 per cent of late-Ming exports of porcelain went to Europe, most going to Japan or Southeast Asia, which exerted significant pressure on the types of porcelains brought into the market.<sup>37</sup>

In this complicated transcultural atmosphere, porcelain held a prominent place as both a tribute gift and a trade good. The Malay Archipelago in particular became a nexus of South Asian and Chinese trade, traditionally drawing Southeast-Asian, Chinese, Gujarati, Chetti, Arab and Armenian and later European traders, all of whom had differing approaches to exchange media like coinage and script. Jacob Cornelisz van Neck (1564–1638), who visited Bantam from 1598 to 1600, noted in his journal that the two mosques at Bantam had walls of brick inlaid with porcelain. The Chinese gave a yearly gift of porcelains as part of the pepper and clove trade.<sup>38</sup> Money could be scarce, as the basic economy used a mixture of tribal and slave labour to gather pepper. The English would trade on credit with the Chinese from the earliest establishment of their factories, in part as a mutual measure to subvert the growing power of Dutch commerce in the region.<sup>39</sup> The English also had to give the Chinese credit during the period after the large junks from China arrived early in the year because of imbalances

between Chinese copper 'Cashys' and silver *reals*. Before the junk arrived, few Chinese imperial 'Cashys' circulated in the economy but lots of Spanish *reals* ('royals') did. But since the Chinese sent to China all the *reals* they could obtain, cash was then cheap all year, 'wherefore we [the English] were forced to give them credit, or else wee must loose the principall time of yeare for our sales'.<sup>40</sup> A complicated network of gifts and debts between the Dutch, the Sultan, the English and the Chinese required constant negotiations over who owed whom what, who would pay whom when and who could purchase pepper at what price and with what form of money. It should come as no surprise, then, that when the Dutch felt they had finally circumvented such difficult exchanges, they commemorated the event in porcelain (see Figure 4). This cup design comes from a 1728 silver ryder struck at the Hoorn mint for use in Asia, with the Dutch VOC emblem and the caption 'Concordia res parvae crescunt' ('The concord of things from the smallest grows'). It was emblematic of the triumph of a uniform medium of exchange, as direct Dutch trade at Guangzhou began that year.<sup>41</sup>



Figure 4 Polychrome Porcelain Dish and Saucer (c. 1729), Jingdezhen, British Museum, Asia Franks 797

Source: Copyright the Trustees of the British Museum.

Calligraphic emporia tended to be scribal-oriented, often with a strong Islamic presence, but neither script nor coinage conveyed the image of stability and continuity that porcelains could. Like their namesakes the cowry shell, porcelains mediated across the worlds of gift and exchange as the more symbolic and more sublimated element of a process fraught with tensions and market instabilities. For example, standard *kraak* plate designs of the period (see Figure 5, which derives from these) often had eight petals surrounding a central circular design, which both alluded to Islamic seals such as those of the Mughal emperor and the Sultan of Aceh, as well as the Buddhist lotus flower and eight-fold patterns common to Malay, Hindi and Sufi religious traditions. Designs were both repetitive and closely linked with writing and brushwork – the paper-based world initially created by the spread of Islam as well as more regional palm-leaf writing traditions. Calligraphic elements also constantly called attention to the connection between writing and porcelain painting. Porcelains mediated between diverse script systems through iconic symbols, 'natural' and pattern-based ornamentation, and the actual inclusion of various sacred scripts (especially Arabic, Sanskrit, Latin and Chinese). Multiple visual readings linked together discontinuous scribal or exchange practices by juxtaposing sacred, dynastic and mercantile symbols and substituting the brushwork of painting for the authoritative demands of scribal writing. In this sense, porcelains acted as a force for equilibrium in exchange materially as a commodity, physically as ship ballast and imaginatively as a visual medium.

The currency and commodity exchanges of the Malay Archipelago fed into a broader network of emporia across Eurasia, Africa and even the Americas – the 'country trade' that channelled goods among scribal-based religious and dynastic communities. In many of the calligraphic emporia in Islamic and Christian regions without a Chinese sojourner presence, earthenware cultures developed independently and later supplemented and struggled to survive against imports of Chinese porcelain. Numerous examples of earthenware imitating Chinese porcelains exist from Southeast Asia, the Islamic Safavid and Ottoman empires, eastern Africa and even Mexico. There were also imitations of Islamic blue-and-white earthenware by Mediterranean majolica and Talavera potters and in the famous Medici porcelains of the late sixteenth century. Because most Islamic regions prohibited the representation of human figures, much of the symbolism was floral, along with stylized versions of Buddhist or Daoist emblems and Chinese and Arabic scripts. This older Islamic trade shaped the early parameters for *kraak* ware making up much of the Portuguese and initial Dutch trade.

(108)

(109)



A third field of exchange emerged during the seventeenth century, the typographic emporium, in which local porcelain and earthenware cultures (such as majolica or Delftware) developed in tandem with imports from China, only to be redefined by the expansion of typographic printing, copper-plate engraving and commodity exchange. London and Amsterdam were classic examples. Traders sent designs taken from printed sources, as well as sculpted models designed for new commodity staples like coffee, tea, chocolate, sugar and tobacco, to Chinese and Japanese production centres as a counterbalance to the importation of vast amounts of new images and forms on porcelains.<sup>42</sup> In London, and to a lesser extent Amsterdam, a shopping culture developed around porcelains that paralleled developing networks of book and print sellers as well as textile shops. As containers of global staples from drinks to drugs, porcelains pulled together and defined the texture of much of the early culture of shopping, as well as social settings like the tea table or the coffee house. As much as by more parochial developments in typography and engraving, this was a field of exchange built out of and performed by the exchanges and global fashions for media like porcelains.

Compared with the cities of the Yangzi Delta, where this process had gone on since at least the Southern Song dynasty, both print and large-scale commodity exchanges were relatively new in London and Amsterdam. The china shop, or 'china house' as it was called in Ben Jonson's *The Silent Woman* (1609), became by the early eighteenth century the shopping experience *par excellence*. As Daniel Defoe wrote in 1710:

We see the most noble shops in the City taken up with the valuable utensils of the tea-table. The china warehouses are little marts within themselves... and the eminent Corner Houses in the chief streets of London are chosen out by the town tinkers to furnish us with tea-kettles and chocolate pots. Vide Catherine Street and Bedford Buildings. Two thousand pound is reckoned a small stock in copper pots and lacquered kettles, and the very fitting up one of these brazen people's shops with fine sashes, etc. to set forth his ware costs above 500 l. sterling, which is more by half than the best draper or mercer's shop in London requires.<sup>43</sup>

Unlike the stalls of Chinese metropoli, shops in late seventeenth-century London as well as in provincial towns were increasingly indoors, permanent and thus more capital-intensive establishments. Relatively unique practices of exchange characterized by increased amounts of capital, new forms of credit and debt, and London's emergence as a long-distance transshipment emporium, all allowed small businesses to invest in buildings as well as in more permanent stocks during the seventeenth century. Because of a lack of artisanal mass production, however, these permanent stocks had a certain

hodge-podge atmosphere of collection, layered temporalities of the global exchange system that only in the 1720s and 1730s gave way to more uniform patterns and sets.

Porcelains in many ways converted London, but the results would of course be radically different from those in either the cities of the Yangzi Delta or the Chinatowns of the Malay Archipelago. As their own wares fell out of fashion, artisans turned to decorating 'white' unpainted china and started their own retail shops as 'toymakers' to supplement their income by reselling porcelain.<sup>44</sup> While enamellers, ironmongers and silversmiths carried on some of the china trade, 'china women' ran many shops. In the mid-1730s, for example, Dorothy Russel owned a shop at the Queen's Head and Anchor, Ludgate Hill, her bills explaining that she 'sells all sorts of Teas, Coffee, Chocolate, Snuff, & China Ware, Glasses & Lacquer'd Ware, Wholesale & Retail at Reasonable Rates'.<sup>45</sup> These entrepreneurs depended on fickle buyers untrained by advertising, who in turn often demanded the variety characteristic of 'old China' rather than the excessive uniformity of pattern allowed by regular shipments from the 1710s and 1720s. Even as early as 1708 Thomas Baker describes in his play *The Fine Lady's Airs* a retail operation resting on top of a pyramid scheme of debt dependent on overaccumulation:

*Lady Rodham:* I'm overstock'd with China, and they say 'tis grown so common. I intend to sacrifice mine to my Monkey.

*India Woman:* Nay, pray, my Lady, buy somewhat of me, you know I'm in great Tribulation, I trusted a couple of Trollops, that were turn'd out of the Play-House, for having too much assurance for the Stage, and set up a little Shop in Spring Garden; and the bold Jades are gone a strolling Fifty Pounds in my Debt.<sup>46</sup>

Attempts to unload inventories of unfashionable patterns pushed the boundaries of the market, encouraging the development of advertising and more aggressive sales to create buyers. In 1734 the East India Company wrote to their supercargo for the Grafton: 'Although there is still great quantities of chinaware left in Town it is only the refuse of many years, very bad patterns, and no variety, therefore could no ways turn to account, and still the loss as there has been such large quantities lately carried to England.'<sup>47</sup> Stores began to cater to distinctions in pattern, advertising and offering one-stop shopping for the world of the tea table. According to his trade cards, Benjamin Payne's shop on Fleet Street from the late 1730s into the 1750s offered 'Chinaware Old & New', glasses, tables, fans as well as a variety of teas and chocolate.

Buyers of porcelains in England used them to create interior spaces that had not previously existed – from the coffee house to the tea and dining table

– in addition to collections that decorated rooms, furniture and mantelpieces, alluding to the complexity of these new realms of sociability. From the 1720s the East India Company put an increasing emphasis on purchasing ‘useful sorts’ of wares, essentially sets designed to supply the markets for tableware and tea settings.<sup>48</sup> Local porcelain manufacturing from the 1740s and 1750s followed suit. From the materials available in a china shop, one could thus assemble an environment, as Elizabeth Montagu wrote to her sister on 3 January 1750 from Sandleford, Berkshire: ‘I saw our friend Cotes the day before I left Town [London] ... She has only a small lodging and I think she might afford a house of her own ... She might furnish it in the present fashion of some cheap paper and ornaments of Chelsea China or the manufacture of Bow, which makes a room look neat and finished.’<sup>49</sup> This autonomy of a ‘house of her own’ may seem to be a kind of ‘reprivatization’ in which the setting becomes ‘predictable and expected’, as Henri Lefebvre has written of consumer culture in the 1950s, or to use Montagu’s words ‘neat and finished’. The creation of new environments through a process of ‘globalization’ seems to be ‘achieved in the mode of withdrawal’, in which control of distribution allows fashion systems to become controlled and predictable.<sup>50</sup> Yet the exchanges and the diverging repetitions of writing and picturing conveyed by porcelain as a technical medium did not end simply because both the emporia of coastal China and those of coastal Europe had the ability to produce their own imaginative ‘floating worlds’. The process of differentiation and play with *chinoiserie* fantasies in the print emporia only raised further questions about the proper critical and cultural perspectives to bring to bear in relation to transcritical and transcultural fashion systems.

### Perspective Problems and Dislocation

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, images with hybrid forms of perspective began to appear on porcelains which did not simply weave symbols together as in the old calligraphic emporia. This was in large part due to the circulation in Chinese porcelain workshops of copperplate prints from Europe – a practice foreshadowed by a small number of Jesuit printing experiments in China during the early part of the seventeenth century. European observers often remarked that Chinese paintings and woodcuts lacked a sense of proper (i.e. Renaissance single-point) perspective, which distorted their human subjects. This critique did not extend to natural objects (flowers, plants, birds, etc.), which were accepted in their more calligraphic mode. In the early eighteenth-century plate shown in Figure 5, Chinese porcelain artists re-rendered Robert and



Figure 5 Blue and White Porcelain Dish (c. 1700–20), Jingdezhen, British Museum, Ionides Bequest, Asia 1963–4.22.18

Source: Copyright the Trustees of the British Museum.

Nicholas Bonnat’s allegorical engraving about love entitled ‘Symphonie du Tympanum, du Luth et de la Flute d’Allemagne’, using traditional Chinese perspective techniques and framing it with various landscape and floral panels.

A piece like this highlighted the question of dual perspectives by juxtaposing traditional landscape technique with the redrawn European print. The human figures bend to adjust to the concavity of the plate and the lines of Chinese-style vertical perspective, while the transformation of the eyes calls attention to perception and difference. The surrounding panels, shaped like the petals of a lotus, move the eye through a series of landscapes framing the music. The original inscribed meaning of the engraving – about the superior pleasures of love to music – shifts towards an almost Daoist sense

(112)

(113)

of harmony in relation to the landscape. Thus the reinscription and reframing on porcelain fundamentally changed how the French print would have been read both in terms of content and in terms of form.

When Erwin Panofsky argued that perspective was a kind of 'symbolic form', he did so on the basis of the difference between the way eyes actually perceive (two not one, in motion not fixed, upon a concave surface rather than a flat one) and the way that Renaissance perspective abstracted and constructed space mathematically.<sup>51</sup> Both European and Chinese painters in this period would have recognized painting as a visual technique of abstraction rather than a replication of the operations of the eye. Chinese painters were acutely aware that the medium shaped perspective, as in this passage from Cao Xuexin's eighteenth-century novel *The Story of the Stone*:

The shape of the paper imposes its own perspectives. You have to make them into a composition. You have to decide which to bring into the foreground and which to push into the background, which to leave out altogether and which to show only in glimpses.<sup>52</sup>

Wu Hung has identified two traditional Chinese methods that create a sense of verisimilitude (*huan*) in painting. In the vertical method, two sets of lines drawn across the edge of figures and angled towards each other from opposite sides of the page create receding pictorial planes. Regardless of their 'depth' in the field of view, the size of figures corresponds so that, as the eye moves to the centre of the image, it feels as if one enters the picture. In the horizontal method, the eye either scanned across a continually scrolling picture (for which the vase is an ideal medium) or across a series of sequential cartouches that worked like the frames of a panel cartoon. This horizontal aspect gave the pictures temporality, while the vertical aspect implied motion.<sup>53</sup> Paintings were thus read visually (*du*, 'witnessed') according to the scanning movement of the eyes, rather than observed through the technique of single-point perspective.

Sir William Temple, writing in his 1685 'Essay on the Garden of Epicurus', called such images 'striking' – literally 'moving' if he followed Thomas Hobbes' theory of vision – in their 'beauty without apparent order'. *Sharawadgi* was the 'Chinese' word he coined for this method.<sup>54</sup> Arguably, their visual challenge to the sense of perspectival order in Europe also encouraged a kind of retreat into colour and more simple, iconic forms characteristic of *chinoiserie* designs in the eighteenth century. The central image increasingly took over from border and panel space to give a single scene or figure and focus rather than multiple images. Japanese porcelain

exported from the port of Imari probably played a role in this simplification, as did so-called *Chine de commande* – the full maturity of cooperation between the Chinese export industry and the European trading companies that permitted orders for the direct copying of designs from copperplate prints using enamel paints. By 1734 the Dutch were systematically ordering porcelain designs (both shape and decoration) made in China to specification and others quickly followed.<sup>55</sup> Certainly not all porcelain coming from Canton was specifically designed for and by Europeans at this point, but it represented a much larger volume and much more predictable designs than had been the case in the seventeenth century. Moreover, in the 1740s, and especially the 1750s, new domestic porcelain manufacturing enterprises in London and subsequently across England, following upon earlier continental enterprises like Meissen, cut down further on the amount of transcultural 'experimentation'.

Displacing visual impact through *chinoiserie* and the strict regulation of production must have seemed a kind of solution to perspective problems generated out of the manifold collisions of scribal practices, exchange relations and visual techniques. Indeed, most scholarship tries to separate and distinguish this stage of *chinoiserie* as pure consumption abstracted from the process of translation and exchange, indeed from any kind of broader pattern of difference and repetition in fashions performed through the process of exchange of media like porcelains on a global scale. This approach reduces the mania for things Chinese to a purely 'Western' phenomenon of exoticism and views it as a kind of corruption once it subsequently returns to influence the xylographic field of exchange in urban China.<sup>56</sup> The mistake here is to ignore the relation between the development of *chinoiserie* fantasies and the broader problem of exchange. The parallax view and multiple perspectives generated by broadly transcultural systems of fashion like porcelains are thus sublimated into insignificant rococo play. Only during the eighteenth century does the field of exchange centred on the print emporia of Western Europe develop enough maturity of practice, density of writing, quality of technique and quantity of transaction to fully enter into the long-developing play of repetitions in porcelains. In ways not very different from how porcelains performed in the coastal cities of China or the calligraphic emporia of the Malay Archipelago, the cup and saucer with the Dutch ducatoon as an emblem of '*Concordia*' and the plate with the French engraving as an emblem of symphonic *harmonia* contract the movements of broader and deeper processes of exchange. They give record as unique snapshots in the complex history of exchange of illusory hopes for some stable privileged point or singular perspective. The primary question, then, should not be what

(114)

(115)

these objects represent in terms of Europeans' fantasies about themselves and others, as if such views were possible without subjective illusions, but instead: what complex and dense movements of exchange produced such unbelievable things?

The three sections of this chapter have tried to answer this question by examining three overlapping roles that porcelains have performed in the history of exchange from the late sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries. First, as porcelains circulated through urban exchange networks across Eurasia and the Americas from the late sixteenth century, they appeared to various possessors to embody hybrids of nature and culture or materiality and writing. The circulations of such hybrid objects raised the attractiveness of physical attributes of porcelains such as preservation, durability or concreteness. In this sense, they both participated in and promised respite from the seventeenth-century flux of things and scripts. Second, porcelains converted complex questions about exchange and the multiplicity of media into dream-like juxtapositions of symbols and calligraphic visions of nature. They turned the daunting task of engaging with the multifaceted transactions occurring among the great emporia of Eurasia into the more accessible question of pattern recognition across the shapes and surfaces of porcelains. The world in this sense became increasingly 'Chinese' in terms of fashion, while over time regional variations of media and commodity usage made such fashions relatively autonomous – fantastic *chinoiseries*. Finally, this kind of reduction in turn raised the question of proper perspective, not only upon the world of exchange and fashion but also upon the hybrid objects and shifting patterns of writing that porcelains embodied. By the early to middle eighteenth century, especially in Europe but even in China (as well as points in between), a demand for unbelievable things with a harmonious aesthetic took the place of an earlier fashion for hybrids that had been more 'concrete signs of civilized life'. Instead of offering an authoritative perspective and making the processes of exchange transparent, the now ubiquitous porcelains ultimately helped to render them invisible.

The very ambiguities of porcelains as things suggest that the historian cannot simply resort to either micro- or macro-histories to understand complex seventeenth-century processes of exchange, let alone to a particular birth or lineage of 'modern' consumption. Instead, approaching these problems requires not only a practice of translation but also methods both transcritical and transcultural. The meshing together of various exchange networks around the world through popular media like porcelains meant not only changes in the ways that exchanges took place, but also an increasing everyday sense of parallax – that sometimes disconcerting recognition, often

embodied in the rather prosaic wares themselves, or a new reality exposed through a multitude of differences and transactions. Porcelains as a system of fashion in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries revealed through their textures, signs and perspectives not the birth of consumerism as a social phenomenon but more specific engagements with the challenges raised by new transactions and translations, reflecting upon the techniques, limits and measures of exchange.

### Notes

1. *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories and Tragedies* (London, 1623), p. 65.
2. For the birth metaphor see N. McKendrick, 'The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England', in N. McKendrick, J. Brewer and J.H. Plumb (eds), *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England* (London, 1982), pp. 3–5.
3. For the concept of a 'fashion system', see R. Wilk, 'Miss Universe, the Olmec and the Valley of Oaxaca', *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 4(1) (2004), pp. 86–7, and K. Flannery, 'The Olmec and the Valley of Oaxaca: A Model for Inter-Regional Interaction in Formative Times', in E. Benson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference on the Olmec* (Washington, DC, 1968), pp. 79–117.
4. J. Plumb, 'The Royal Porcelain Craze', *In the Light of History* (Boston, 1973), p. 57.
5. The groundwork for the reworking of the narrative of the rise of consumerism can be found in F. Trentmann, 'Beyond Consumerism: New Historical Perspectives on Consumption', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39(3) (2004), pp. 373–401. My reading of this essay as well as a rich mix of exchanges with the seminar participants at Caltech were greatly influential for this paper, as were more specific comments by John Brewer, Kirti Chaudhuri, Jessica Harrison-Hall, Robert Nashak, David Sabeau, Haun Saussy, Nigel Thrift, Frank Trentmann and Richard Wilk.
6. The Jesuit d'Entrecolles (1664–1741), in letters dated 1712 and 1722, described the use of kaolin and feldspar in the production of porcelain. *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères par*

- quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus, v. 12 and 16 (Paris, 1717, 1724). Porcelain formulas, however, always vary in both technique and materials.
7. For the concept of 'common difference' see Wilk, p. 91.
  8. C.G. Brouwer, 'Al-Mukha as a Coffee Port in the Early Decades of the Seventeenth Century', in Michel Tuchscherer (ed.), *Le Commerce du café avant l'ère des plantations coloniales: espaces, réseaux, sociétés (XVe-XIXe siècle)* (Paris, 2001), p. 282; T. Volker, *Porcelain and the Dutch East India Company as Recorded in the Dagh-Registers of Batavia Castle, Those of Hirado and Deshima and Other Contemporary Papers, 1602-1682* (Leiden, 1954), pp. 25, 39, 42, 59, 227.
  9. On the coinage question see V. Godinho, *L'Economie de l'empire portugais au XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1969), and R. von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000 to 1700* (Berkeley, 1996). For studying these phenomena in 'conjunction' see K. Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton, 2000), pp. 191-4.
  10. On 'parallax' see K. Karatani, *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx*, S. Kohso (trans.) (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 2-3, 44-8.
  11. J. Addison, 'The Lover', no. 10, in T. Tickell (ed.), *The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison*, vol. 4 (London, 1721). Since research has shown that men took part equally in the daily use and collection of porcelains, this stereotype of the female china consumer suggests a mythic dimension working to explain intrusions of transcultural fashions into everyday life. Cf. E. Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1997) pp. 52-69; L. Weatherill, 'A Possession of One's Own: Women and Consumer Behavior in England, 1660-1740', *Journal of British Studies*, 25 (1986), p. 140.
  12. J. Swift and G. Aitken (eds), *The Journal to Stella* (London, 1901), p. 251.
  13. W. Burnaby, *The Ladies Visiting Day* (London, 1701), p. 14.
  14. G. Ramusio, 'Libro di Odoardo Barbosa', in M. Milanesi (ed.), *Giovanni Battista Ramusio Navigazioni e Viaggi*, vol. II (Turin, 1979), pp. 694-5.
  15. G. Cardano, *De Subtilitate Libri XXI* (Paris, 1551), pp. 100v-101r; and J. Scaliger, *Exotericarum Exercitationum Liber Quintus Decimus, de Subtilitate, ad Hieronymum Cardanum* (Paris, 1557), pp. 135v-136r.
  16. F. Bacon, 'Sylva Sylvarum or a Natural History', in J. Spedding, R.L. Ellis and D.D. Heath (eds), *The Works of Francis Bacon*, vol. IV (Boston, 1861), pp. 210-11.
  17. F. Bacon, 'The Argument before the Judges in the Exchequer Chamber, Touching the Clause of Impeachment of Waste', in *Works*, vol. XV, pp. 37-9.
  18. 'Hybrid' is borrowed from B. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, Catherine Porter (trans.) (Cambridge, 1993), p. 117.
  19. G. de Mendoza, *The Historie of the Great and Mightie Kingdome of China and the Situation thereof: Together with the great riches, huge Cities, politike government, and rare inventions in the same*, R. Parke (trans.) (London, 1588), pp. 22-3.
  20. B. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, 2000), pp. 45, 165.
  21. Song Ying-Hsing [Song Yingxing], *T'ien-Kung K'ai-Wu [Tian gong kai wu]: Chinese Technology in the Seventeenth Century*, E-Tu Zen Sun and Shiou-Chuan Sun (trans.) (Univeristy Park, 1966), p. 145; Song Yingxing, *Tian gong kai wu*, *Minguo* 44 (Taipei, 1955), p. 185.
  22. Song Yingxing, *Tian gong kai wu*, p. 196.
  23. The phrase is from A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 5, cited in C. Clunas, *Superfluous Things* (Urbana, 1991), p. 2. See also T. Brook, *Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley, 1998), pp. 129-38, 167-71, 222-8.
  24. Wang Bi, 'Commentary on the Appended Phases [Xici zhuan], part 1', in R. Lynn (trans.), *The Classic of Changes* (New York, 1994), p. 67.
  25. L. Le Comte, *Memoirs and Observations Topographical, Physical, Mathematical, Mechanical, Natural, Civil, and Ecclesiastical, Made in a Late Journey Through the Empire of China And Published in Several Letters* (London, 1697), pp. 155-6.
  26. For this longer history see R. Finlay, 'The Pilgrim Art: The Culture of Porcelain in World History', *Journal of World History*, 9(2) (Fall 1998), pp. 141-87. On the role of the tribute trade see T. Hamashita, 'The Tribute Trade System and Modern Asia', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tokyo Bunko*, 46 (1988), pp. 7-25, and A.G. Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley, 1998), pp. 113-17.
  27. A. Spriggs, 'Red Cliff Bowls of the Late Ming Period', *Oriental Art*, n.s. VII(4) (Winter 1961), pp. 182-8. For a low-end bowl see British Museum OAF.810 and examples excavated in Sulawesi in S. Adhyatman, *Zhangzhou Ceramics: Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries Found in Indonesia* (Indonesia, 1999), p. 100. For the OA F.811 inscription see Jessica Harrison-Hall, *Catalogue of Late Yuan and Ming Ceramics in the British Museum* (London, 2001), pp. 366-7.

28. For the Ottoman pieces see J. Ayers and R. Krahl, *Chinese Ceramics in the Topkapi Saray Museum Istanbul*, vol. II (London, 1986), pp. 788–9, nos. 1529 and 1530. The Linard paintings are in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg, and the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Tours. Cf. Spriggs, figures 19–20.
29. B. Keguan, *Chinese Folk Painting on Porcelain*, Peng Ruifu (trans.) (Beijing, 1991), pp. 60, 93.
30. Wu Hung, *The Double Screen* (Chicago, 1996), pp. 129, 135–7.
31. J. Nieuhof, *Die Gesandtschafft der Ost-Indischen Gesellschaft in den Vereinigten Nederlandern an den tartarischen Cham und nunmehr auch sinischen Keiser* (Amsterdam, 1666), p. 288. The first London edition appeared in 1669.
32. Brook, *Confusions of Pleasure*, p. 109.
33. W. Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York, 1985), p. 27.
34. W. Gungwu, *The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 57.
35. The phrase is from descriptions of Jesuit translation practices in H. Saussy, 'In the Workshop of Equivalences', in *Great Walls of Discourse and Other Adventures in Cultural China* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 31–2.
36. 'To Our Chief and Factors at Tonqueen', London, 12 Aug. 1681, British Library, India Office Records, E/3/89, f. 211.
37. C. Ho, 'The Ceramic Trade in Asia, 1602–82', in A. Latham and H. Kawakatsu (eds), *Japanese Industrialization and the Asian Economy* (London, 1994), p. 39.
38. J. Keuning (ed.), *De tweede schipvaart der Nederlanders naar Oost-Indië, onder Jacob Cornelisz. van Neck en Wybrand van Warwijck, 1598–1600: journalen, documenten en andere bescheiden*, v. 42 ('s-Gravenhage, 1938).
39. E. Scott, *An Exact Discourse of the Subtilties, Fashions, Pollicies, Religion, and Ceremonies of the East Indians, as well Chyneses as Javans, there abyding and dwelling* (London, 1606), unnumbered, November 1604.
40. Scott, *Exact Discourse*, unnumbered, April 22.
41. See also the teapot in the same pattern described by D.F.L. Scheurleer, *Chinese Export Porcelain: Chine de Commande* (London, 1974), p. 149, fig. 267, and T. Volker, 'Early Chine de commande', *Bulletin Museum Boymans-van Beuningen* (Rotterdam, 1958), p. 18.
42. Broadly considered, word and image had different relationships in Chinese and European printing. Cf. C. Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Princeton, 1997), pp. 29–38.
43. D. Defoe, *Review*, v. 7, no. 43 (4 July 1710).
44. See, for example, 'Estimate of a Cargo to be provided in China for the Ship Townshend Burden 400 Tons', 17 November 1725, British Library, India Office Records, Despatch Book 1725, vol. 103, f. 132.
45. B. Horn, 'Ceramic Accounts Found among the Seafield Muniments', *Transactions of the English Ceramics Circle*, v. 18, no. 1 (2002), p. 190.
46. T. Baker, *The Fine Lady's Airs: Or, An Equipage of Lovers* (London, 1708), pp. 9–10.
47. 'Letter to the Supercargo of the Grafton', 18 October 1734, British Library, India Office Records, R/10/37, f. 83.
48. 'China Ware must be all of useful sorts, most Blue and White.' ['Estimate of a Cargo to be Provided in China for the Ships Caesar and Houghton Burden 880 Tons', 21 December 1724, British Library, India Office Records, Despatch Book 1724, vol. 102, f. 395.] But the orders go on to say that 'any other odd and useful pieces, the newer the pattern the better, but in this Article your own fancys must be chiefly rely'd on'.
49. Elizabeth Robinson Montagu to Sarah Robinson Scott, 3 January 1750, Huntington Library, MO 5716.
50. H. Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life: Volume II Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*, J. Moore (trans.) (London, 2002), p. 90.
51. E. Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (New York, 1991), p. 31.
52. Cao Xuexin, *Story of the Stone*, vol. 2, D. Hawkes (trans.) (New York, 1977), p. 338.
53. Wu Hung, *Double Screen*, pp. 50–7.
54. W. Temple, 'Upon the Gardens of Epicurus', *Miscellanea II* (London, 1690), pp. 131–2.
55. T. Volker, *The Japanese Porcelain Trade of the Dutch East India Company after 1683* (Leiden, 1959), pp. 78–9.
56. The examples are too numerous to cite but consider these recent ones: 'For chinoiserie is western, it is a purely European vision of China; a fantasy based on a China of the imagination, the fabulous Cathay invented by the medieval world' (D. Jacobson, *Chinoiserie* (London, 1993), p. 27); 'Chinoiserie, in other words, was an aesthetic of the ineluctably foreign, a glamorization of the unknown and unknowable for its own sake' (D. Porter, *Ideographia: The Chinese Cipher in Early Modern Europe* (Stanford, 2001), p. 134).