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The Impact of Marketing on the Development of Bourgeois Culture in Eighteenth Century Britain, and the Case for Tea

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Abstract

This thesis considers the dual rise of marketing and the bourgeois in eighteenth century England and analyzes what impact the two may have had on each other. It first examines the larger context of the debate around the consumer revolution, highlighting the discussion on when specifically a consumer society began. It then goes on to look at the specific causes of the rise of the bourgeoisie in England in the eighteenth century. This section looks at the rise of wage labor, urbanization, the culture of politeness and increasing income levels in determining who the bourgeoisie were.

With this context, the piece then transitions into a focus on marketing and advertising. It looks at the main advertisement methods of the age including trade cards, trade catalogues, fashion dolls and newspaper advertisements. It also looks at new marketing methods that were in development, with a look at retailing, the techniques in use by Josiah Wedgwood and Matthew Boulton. The thesis considers both the effectiveness of the new methods as well as the impact that the techniques could have had on development of the culture of the middle class.

Then, tea is examined as a case study in order to see the effect on a given product. Tea was chosen because of its major importance on eighteenth century society, its relative obscurity at the beginning of the century, and its plethora of available advertising. Tea is studied from the perspective of the marketing mix and is examined in terms of price, product, place and promotion in order to view it collectively to understand its meanings and the effects marketing may have taken on its popularity.

It is important to understand the origins of marketing and advertising, particularly in considering the origins of the modern middle class, and the modern consumer experience. The eighteenth century provides a picture of some of the earliest examples of branding, retailing, marketing plans, and sophisticated advertising. Considering the middle class was just in its infancy, there are signs that marketing and advertising may have influenced the habits, ideas, products and culture that formed their lives. The implications for modern society are that Western culture has been influenced by marketing and advertising for several centuries, and that the eighteenth century may have been the start of a consumer culture.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Arbeit betrachtet das gleichzeitige Aufkommen von Marketing und Bourgeois in England des 18. Jahrhunderts und analysiert die möglichen gegenseitigen Auswirkungen aufeinander. Zu erst wird der größere Kontext der Debatte um die Komsumrevolution behandelt, dabei wird besonders die Diskussion wann genau eine spezifische Konsumentengesellschaft begann, beleuchtet. Weiters werden spezifische Gründe für den Aufstieg der Bourgeoisie im England des 18. Jahrhunderts untersucht. Dieser Abschnitt betrachtet das Aufkommen der Lohnarbeit, der Urbanisierung, der „Kultur der Höflichkeit“ und der steigenden Vermögensebenen um zu bestimmen wer die Bourgeoisie war.

Mit diesem Kontext fokussiert sich die Arbeit dann auf Marketing und Werbung. Die Arbeit betrachtet die wichtigsten Werbemethoden dieser Zeit, wie Handelskarten, Handelskataloge, Modepuppen und Zeitungswerbung. Es werden aber auch neue Marketing Methoden die in Entwicklung waren beleuchtet, mit Blick auf den Einzelhandel, die Techniken die von Josiah Wedgwood und Matthew Boulton verwendet wurden. Die Arbeit betrachtet sowohl die Effektivität der neuen Methoden, als auch die Auswirkungen die diese Techniken auf die Entwicklung der Kultur der Mittelklasse gehabt haben könnten.

Dann, wird Tee als ein Fallbeispiel herausgearbeitet um die Effekte auf ein bestimmtes Produkt anzusehen. Tee wurde wegen seiner großen Wichtigkeit für die Gesellschaft des 18. Jahrhunderts ausgewählt – seine relative Unbekanntheit zu Beginn des Jahrhunderts, und das Überangebot an möglichen Werbungen. Der Tee wird aus der Perspektive des Marketing-Mix betrachtet und wird hinsichtlich Preis, Produkt, Ort und Promotion untersucht, um die Inhalte und die möglichen Auswirkungen des Marketings auf dessen Popularität insgesamt ersichtlich zu machen und um diese verstehen zu können.

Es ist wichtig die Ursprünge von Marketing und Werbung zu verstehen, besonders in Anbetracht der Ursprünge der modernen Mittelklasse und der modernen Konsumerfahrung. Das 18. Jahrhundert bietet ein Bild mit einigen der frühesten Beispiele von Markenbildung, Einzelhandel, Marketing Strategien und ausgeklügelter Werbung. Berücksichtigt man, dass die Mittelklasse damals noch in ihren Kinderschuhen steckte, gibt es starke Anzeichen dafür, dass Marketing und Werbung möglicherweise ihre Angewohnheiten, Ideen, Produkte und die Kultur die ihr Leben geformt hat, beeinflusst haben. Die Schlussfolgerung für die moderne Gesellschaft ist, dass die

westliche Kultur seit einigen Jahrhunderten von Marketing und Werbung beeinflusst werden, und dass das 18. Jahrhundert wahrscheinlich der Start für die Konsumkultur war.

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1. Introduction

Contemporary western marketing is frequently discussed as the source of cultural habits, tastes, problems and ideas. The impact that marketing has played the way that society spends its time and money is frequently assessed. Marketing is often blamed for giving us ideas of idealized beauty, unattainable happiness and defining how we *should* spend our time and money.

In Britain in the eighteenth century, are the very beginnings of this process. In this time it is possible to see the earliest examples of merchants having an impact on the public through visual imagery, branding, retailing and creating fashions. This thesis attempts to put together what impact this may have had on the still-developing bourgeois society.

The earliest attempts by English shopkeepers towards marketing were actually not in the eighteenth century, but in the sixteenth and seventeenth. In these periods, there are the earliest newspaper advertisements, for instance. These were generally rather ineffective, however. This was first because newspapers were crowded with advertisements, and second, because there was not a large enough population that could afford to buy non-necessity items for advertising to make much of a difference.

The third chapter will discuss the drastically different conditions of the eighteenth century that allowed marketing to be a practical method of addressing customers. It will start with an examination of the beginnings of consumer culture, and address the debate on when a true Western consumer culture began. There are several schools of thought on the idea, and while marketing is relevant to the debate it is really only a small part of it. A full argument on the issue would need to be made with further research on other areas of consumer culture as well.

Another discussion in the third chapter will be the changing conditions in eighteenth century England that allowed for the growth of marketing, and the development of a bourgeoisie. This section will discuss the rise of the proletariat, the general rising of wealth and the developments that followed in society and cultural life.

The rise of the bourgeoisie and the rise of marketing can be seen as directly impacting each other, so this is a very important section to contemplate. Marketing could not have come into prominence without a section of the population that was able and willing to purchase goods beyond their basic necessities. Income raises, new wage laborers and a democratizing of the population (through the culture of politeness that ensued) allowed marketing to be successful. The bourgeois, in turn, developed their culture, their habits and their interests around the new products and ideas that marketers projected for them.

As will be examined in the first section of the fourth chapter, marketing new products was very important in this time frame because the new middling class was often unfamiliar with the products that were coming to the market. Britain's endeavors with colonialism in particular led to a wide range of products that were previously unfamiliar to its citizens. These products were largely portrayed as exotic luxuries and had to be marketed for customers to understand how they should use them, and why they should be considered important. Colonialism was not the only source of new products, this was also the time of the enlightenment, and new science and technology also brought new products to the market that needed to be explained to consumers. In short, this was an exciting time for consumers. Previous centuries had seen very few new innovations and imports and now there were constant new products, new fashions and new ideas and merchants and shopkeepers made sure that the bourgeois, the fastest growing consumer group was well aware of what the new products were and why they needed them.

In response to all of the societal changes, marketing also made several advances, which will be discussed in detail in the second through fifth sections of chapter four. The new use of imagery in marketing (specifically on trade cards and in trade catalogues, though arguably this is also true for the fashion dolls that are discussed in section 4.4) was especially important and was a major breakthrough for marketers.

One of the most successful marketers, Josiah Wedgewood will also be given some analysis, as his methods were well ahead of his time. Quite apart from being an excellent potter, Wedgewood's foresight into how to manipulate society was remarkable. Beyond copies of his pottery, his marketing techniques were also borrowed by other retailers (such as Matthew Boulton, who was also found the techniques to be very effective for his line of buttons). From the detailed studies that exist about Wedgewood, there are some of the earliest examples of branding.

The section on fashion dolls is very brief, but it also gives an opportunity to reflect on the dynamism existent in eighteenth century fashion. Quite unlike the centuries before, the eighteenth century shows a much faster pace of change for those following the latest fashions. This is a product of both marketing and a new interest in fashion because of rising wealth in general. Fashion is a crucial piece in understanding eighteenth century consumerism because it was so connected with taste and the culture of politeness that defined the bourgeois class. The ways in which it was marketed were also new and available to a much larger audience.

The last element of marketing that will be examined was the radical changes applied to the shops in England, and particularly in London. The eighteenth century has at times been referred to as

the rise of the shop, even though this was not the period when shops actually came into existence. It was, however, the period when shops came into prominence and were beginning to consider more closely how goods were sold and displayed. The new attention paid to display, show and lighting really impacted the likelihood of consumers to make purchases as well as helped to make shopping a part of their culture. The collective activities of marketers in making shops so enjoyable created the culture of shopping for the bourgeois. It is an element of middling class life that exists even today.

The last section of chapter four will examine the parallels to modern marketing that can be found in the eighteenth century and briefly considers whether this period can be called the birth of modern marketing. Elements like retailing, branding and visual culture are very important developments that modern consumers can relate to in studying the eighteenth century. The major element that is missing is the market size. While the bourgeois class made for a significantly larger market than centuries before, it is still smaller than the mass consumerism that defines the modern west.

The fifth chapter will analyze a specific product, tea, from its entrance into English society through to the end of the eighteenth century in terms of its marketing and popularity. Tea was not an accidental choice, it is one of the most important products of the eighteenth century and its popularity and growth over the course of the century was substantial. Most importantly, tea was really made popular by marketing.

It is important for readers to erase their modern ideas about tea and recognize that on its earliest importation into England, tea was not a significant product and had no reason to become one. It was expensive, it was relatively unknown to the culture and there was no benefit to drinking it above other types of hot beverages that were already drunk (various tea-like drinks were made from mint and chamomile leaves among other things).

It was advantageous for merchants for tea to become popular. New shipping methods meant that the once very-high costs for tea were coming down. Tea maintained its perception of an exotic luxury because it was foreign and originally had cost so much, but was now affordable to a much larger public, and was very profitable for those selling it.

Tea will be analyzed from the four points discussed in the consumer centric approach to marketing; Price, Promotion, Product and Place. Each of these elements helped to shape tea as a product and each of these is important to understand in determining its widespread popularity by the end of the century.

The sections on price and product will especially discuss tea's associations with luxury and the exotic and how the association stayed despite its drop in price and increasing commonality. The section on place will examine where tea was sold but also where it was consumed. This was also changing over the course of the century and changed the idea of tea and what pieces of society it was associated with.

Finally, in the section on promotion, several trade cards that include tea imagery will be analyzed for the messages that were portrayed and what ideas they might have given to eighteenth century consumers. These trade cards are from over the course of the century and can be connected to several of the elements discussed around tea (wealth, exoticism, health, gentility), but also often apply to other products as well.

Tea was a very important product in another concept that will be discussed, the culture of gentility, which will be introduced in chapter three but is really crucial to understand throughout. The culture of gentility or politeness, was a change in the behavior and purchasing patterns of individuals that was noted throughout the century towards increasing commonality between the middling classes and the elites. This culture simultaneously was driven by commerce and drove the economy. New fashions (increasingly associated with good taste), morality, and being proper generally involved buying new goods, which was a major driver of the growth seen during the century. The culture of gentility also meant that shopkeepers were on a new, more equal ground with their customers and were able to sell more to customers increasingly concerned with having the latest, most tasteful goods and using them in the correct way. It was one of the most important changes in the population in creating a market for new products and was especially important because with the increases in wealth and the growth of the bourgeois, the appearance of connection with polite society was now widely available.

Overall, this thesis aims to analyze the impact that marketing had on the eighteenth century English consumer. In determining this, it looks at the question from three angles, first, the consumer and the growth in their numbers and interests, second, marketing and the newest techniques and ideas that were available and third, the products, through the example of one of the most popular and successful products of the eighteenth century, tea.

2. Theory

Marketing in eighteenth century England had a great impact on the development of bourgeois culture. Still in its development phase, marketers were able to incorporate their products into the habits and rituals of the new middling classes. Marketing itself was coming into prominence and its ability to make such a direct impact is quite remarkable. It is even possible to find parallels to modern Western society.

Middling class society in eighteenth century England was still forming. There was still major growth in wage laborers and wealth over the course of the century. Those with new incomes were making decisions as to how to spend their time and money and marketers helped them to make those selections.

Shopkeepers were able to convince their customers of the value of this product over that and the social status that it would bring to their customer. They were able to create an environment that made customers want to spend their time there instead of some place else. Most importantly, they were able to influence this new group to be interested, curious consumers.

The middling classes developed habits that kept consumption alive. They took up shopping with a passion. They followed the trends with fervor. They tried their best to adapt to the patterns of the elite classes. They adapted the elite class' love for tea and made into something of their own, which also involved having ornate serving sets.

The interests of the bourgeois were also determined by marketing. Science and technology were fashionable, but also profitable avenues. Interest in the foreign and the exotic meant that customers wanted to take part and seem cosmopolitan. Merchants wanted customers that were interested in what the newest things on the market were and would be willing to purchase them.

Finally and most obviously, marketing had a major impact in what customers consumed. The products that advertising and marketing made familiar were the ones that got the most attention and were brought into the lives of the middling classes. Marketing made customers aware of what was available, how products were used and why they should be using them.

Marketing, then, left a drastic impression on the lives of eighteenth century consumer. It helped to define their lifestyles, their choices and their ideas. Its impact was wide spread and is still relevant to consumption patterns today.

To be clear, modern consumer culture includes many elements beyond marketing, which were not yet in place. It is also important to recognize that there are significantly more promotions and advertisements for modern consumers and that techniques have since improved and adapted to

new mediums. This can be seen as the birth of marketing and consumer culture, which are always changing and growing and it would be nearly impossible to pick a starting point after the eighteenth century as growth and change has been so rapid.

The main techniques in use during the eighteenth century have remained constant. The use of imagery in advertising, and its potency over text is quite clear to modern marketers. The concepts of the money-back-guarantee, free giveaways, branding, direct marketing were already in active use.

3. Theoretical Analysis

3.1 Consumerism in History

There is evidence that places the beginnings of Western consumer culture in eighteenth century England, though this historical starting point has been widely debated as a whole. Much of the debate began with the publishing of a book in 1982 by McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb called The Birth of a Consumer Society. The main premise of this book is that a consumer society, unique to those that had come before it developed in the eighteenth century and went on to be the driving force in the industrial revolution and led the west into contemporary consumer culture. This idea of a consumer society meant that English society internalized the desire for self-expression, the importance of conspicuous consumption, and the association of pleasure with consumption. The authors frequently note the tendency for historians to focus on increased consumption from a supply perspective and focusing on increased production and imports. Their argument is that this is ignoring the needs and demands of the consumers and that in the eighteenth century a *consumer revolution* took place that was the precursor for the industrial revolution in the next century.

The authors make the argument that a consumer revolution took place in the eighteenth century based on several pieces of evidence. The most important element to this thesis is the presence of increasingly effective and sophisticated marketing techniques. Other reasons include more political attention to commercial activity, increasing familiarity with consumption, a wider population of people able to consume, and that merchants were beginning to sell to a wider geographic area.

Especially given the difficulty of collecting data at that time, the theory of the consumer revolution is quite contentious. To begin with it is tricky to define what constitutes a revolution.¹ What percentage of the population has to be involved for a social change to be considered a revolution? What evidence needs to present itself to indicate the strength of social change and how can it be measured? These questions are nearly impossible to answer, and are particularly difficult to define and measure in the case of the consumer revolution.

The questions regarding the consumer revolution as the cause of the industrial revolution range even wider. Theories abound on why the industrial revolution took place when it did, why it took place in Britain and most relevant, what were the most influential factors in its beginnings. If looking at a supply side economic history is too narrow, it is likely that looking at demand focused history is as well.

Fine and Leopold also found significant problems with the consumer revolution model. First, they find that the model is not economically sound, providing the following explanation:

“The most simple underlying economic model employed is the notion that increases in demand represent a shift out of the demand curve and more output at a higher intersection with a given supply curve.”²

The article goes on to explain that within the model proposed by McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, the industrial revolution would have been self-defeating as any supply side growth would have deflated the economy.

There are also questions as to how ‘modern’ the consumer society can be considered in the eighteenth century. In a discussion of Stearn’s work by Trentmann, consumerism is defined as a “society in which many people formulate their goals in life partly through acquiring goods that they clearly do not need for subsistence or for traditional display.”³ This definition makes it difficult to concisely describe when modern western consumer culture began, particularly how would it be possible to measure or determine the goals of people from centuries past; but it also leaves a question of mass society compared to just a society. Perhaps it can be said that bourgeois culture was a consumer society, but England as a whole was not.

Stearns has put forward the idea of a two-stage process to modern consumer society. The first stage, he argues is the early modern stage. The eighteenth century fits into this stage, although he describes it as the seventeenth *and* eighteenth centuries. Unfortunately, it is not possible to

¹ Ben Fine and Ellen Leopold. “Consumerism and the Industrial Revolution,” *Social History* 15 (1990): 154

² Fine and Leopold. “Consumerism and the Industrial Revolution,” 158

³ Frank Trentmann. “Beyond Consumerism: New Historical Perspectives on Consumption” *Journal of Contemporary History* 39 (2004): 376-7

differentiate from his work which elements he feels are most important in including the seventeenth century as a starting point, but most of his points are still relevant.

Stearns argues that the first stage of the development of a consumer society can be placed in the early modern period due to three clear pieces of evidence. The first piece is the geographic spread and rising importance of the shop (it should be noted that Stearns' work considers Europe as a whole and not just England, though most of his evidence can be said of England in this period as well). Secondly, Stearns argues for the importance of the establishment of innovative credit arrangements. Lastly, and most relevant, is the importance that in this period there was a drastic expansion of marketing and advertising.⁴

There are other elements of evidence that show an increased importance in consumerism in this time period as well. Stearns describes accounts of the disruption of the class system due to increased consumption by lower classes. There is also evidence of the development of a sense of self among consumers, which can be seen in a desire for self expression through fashion, and generally interest in fashion increased during the period.⁵ Increased consumption was also recognized and discussed at the time and was frequently commented on. This must be viewed as both a point towards the evidence of a consumer society and against as much of the commentary was negative and viewed consumerism as overindulgent, wasteful and disrespectful (whereas in later times, consumption became more ingrained into the culture, but this will be discussed in the next section).⁶

There are also other problems with considering the early modern period as a starting point for consumer culture. First, and this goes back to the initial question of whether this period can be defined as a revolution, is in determining the amount of people that really were able to participate in consumer culture at this time. The vast majority of the population was still peasantry, and consumer culture was also limited geographically to large cities (and to some degree only in the metropolis center of London).⁷

The next problem is the way that English society itself saw consumption. Consumer culture was seen in the terms that prior centuries had regarded luxury spending in the past. Commentators bashed the new consumer practices as indulgent and immoral. Of particular interest was the

⁴ Peter J Stearns. "Stages of Consumerism: Recent Work on the Issues of Periodization," *The Journal of Modern History* 69 (1997): 106

⁵ Peter J Stearns. "Stages of Consumerism": 106-7

⁶ Peter J Stearns. "Stages of Consumerism": 108

⁷ Peter J Stearns. "Stages of Consumerism": 108

backlash by the protestant church (which would not change its views towards consumption until much later) in a time when religion was still relatively important.

There is also no sign of a significant shift in values in favor of consumption. In later centuries there are definite trends towards acceptance of consumption and consumption directly impacting culture and events. Of course, lack of this kind of evidence is not entirely enlightening and it should also be noted that it is very difficult to determine whether a society's values and mindsets have been shifted.

On a similar note, Stearns points out that consumption did not have the ingrained meaning and priority for those that could afford to make purchases that it does for consumers today. This again is very difficult to prove, and it is unclear from Stearns' article how this determination was made.

The time period suggested by Stearns for the second stage of the development of a consumer society is the late nineteenth century. This period is also frequently discussed as the beginning of western consumer society. It is especially considered important in association with the beginning of women's consumption with the introduction of the department store.

The department store is widely discussed as a liberator of women as it was a space that women could be in apart from the home.⁸ This has been seen as a major advance in terms of women as consumers, although it seems to neglect male consumer patterns (there is also evidence that women went to shops and had begun developing consumer lifestyles in the eighteenth century so it is not clear that it is relevant). The department store is, however a very notable development in terms of the growth of retailers.

In general during this period there was a shift in the breadth of products that were available. In the eighteenth century consumer products were mostly only clothing or fashion accessories and household products. In the late nineteenth century the variety of goods for purchase expanded dramatically to products such as bicycles and sporting equipment, travel luxuries, and music halls.⁹

Also during this period the shift in thinking that was determined to be missing during the early modern stage appears. Consumerism ingrained itself into Western culture, going so far as to

⁸ Frank Trentmann. "Beyond Consumerism: New Historical Perspectives on Consumption" *Journal of Contemporary History* 39 (2004): 375

⁹ Peter J Stearns. "Stages of Consumerism: Recent Work on the Issues of Periodization," *The Journal of Modern History* 69 (1997): 109

form new holidays (such as Mother's day, which was created at this time) and to heavily commercialize older ones. Religious views towards consumerism also softened.¹⁰

Advertising also changed during this period and was becoming more and more familiar to society. Children were targeted for the first time as consumers. While there is clear evidence of marketing for toys in the early modern stage, it was directed towards adults who would buy the toys for children. Marketers in the nineteenth century appealed directly to children. Advertising also became much more direct about products' ability to induce pleasure, and became, in relevant cases, more sensual.¹¹

It is also important to note that industrialization had led to a wider market of goods and that there were definitely more people during this time able to afford small luxuries whereas in the century prior the majority of the population was only able to address necessities. One frequent critique of the early modern period (or of the consumer revolution theory put forward earlier) is that while a consumer society may have existed, it was not present in a mass society. In the late nineteenth century the beginnings of this *mass* consumer society were in place.

Marketing is a major point of argument for those who say that the eighteenth century was the beginning of modern consumer society. It is clear that marketing had an impact on eighteenth century consumers for those that could participate and the impact of marketing on consumers plays a significant role in consumer societies, so it is a very relevant piece in the discussion.

However, marketing's significant advances in the eighteenth century in comparison to the seventeenth century are important regardless of the actual start time of a consumer society. Beyond defining the time or whether or not it was a revolution, the evidence that new marketing techniques existed and were in practice is clearly new in the eighteenth century. It is an extremely important development in the timeline of the development of a consumer society regardless of whether all of the elements were in place or not. It was also very important in defining the lifestyles of those participants in the consumer society, and their development of a new culture.

3.2 *The Emerging Bourgeoisie*

The Bourgeoisie or the middling classes were just starting to become a prominent part of English society in the eighteenth century. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Tudor and Stuart

¹⁰ Peter J Stearns. "Stages of Consumerism: Recent Work on the Issues of Periodization," *The Journal of Modern History* 69 (1997): 109

¹¹ Peter J Stearns. "Stages of Consumerism": 109

monarchs, intent on downplaying the power available to continental European powers often made political decisions that benefitted the English gentry. Two-thirds of the peerage between 1560 and 1640 were engaged in some kind of financially viable enterprise, from colonial power, to trade or industry.¹² With ever-increasing income came power and the gentry was able to maintain this through the years between the revolution and the reformation when Britain underwent periods of threat of absolute monarchy (under Charles I) and popular revolt.¹³

The eighteenth century saw a rise in the importance of financial wealth in terms of political power. It was suddenly possible to purchase titles, commissions in the army, positions in parliament, etc.¹⁴ This “commodification” of political power points to a shrinking significance of power that can be attained only by birth. It also shows an increasing familiarity with consumption.

Conditions were very favorable for an increase in consumption. The population of people that received an income as well as the levels of those incomes were increasing, as was the population. There was also more productivity in general (leading to more jobs and more products to buy), and improvements in transportation (leading to more availability to transport goods and people).

The growth of wage labor was very important in the development of a consumer class. An increasing population dependent on income rather than subsistence had choices of how to spend their money. In the 1520's, only a quarter of the British population was wage-laborers. By 1688, one third of the population of Britain was dependent on wage labor. This was already a major development, but over the course of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the 19th, wage labor became the norm and subsistence economy faded away. Four Fifths of Britain's population were proletariats in 1851.¹⁵ There was also a recognition relatively early in the century that this new labor class was a valuable market of potential consumers that could boost the English economy. Complaints were even levied against taxing them so that they would be able to better engage in buying things and contributing to the economy.¹⁶

There was also a growing trend of women in the workforce. With wives employed, there was a new need to purchase things that had previously been made at home such as clothes, beer and

¹² Colin Mooers, *The Making of Bourgeois Europe* (London: Verso, 1991):157

¹³ Colin Mooers, *The Making of Bourgeois Europe*:158-160

¹⁴ E.P. Thompson. “Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?,” *Social History* 3 (1978): 138

¹⁵ Robert A Houston. “British Society in the Eighteenth Century,” *The Journal of British Studies* 25 (1986): 458

¹⁶ Jonathan White, “The Laboring-Class Domestic Sphere in Eighteenth-Century British Social Thought.” in *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830*, ed. John Styles and Amanda Vickery. (New Haven, CT Yale University Press, 2006): 250

candles. It also meant that women had purchasing power and more influence in how money was spent within households.¹⁷

Urbanization was another significant trend that impacted the growth of a bourgeois culture. In 1600 the population of London was 200,000. By 1800 the population had expanded to 900,000. According to one estimate, one sixth of the adult British population had lived in London at one point in their life. This meant that within London there was a major opportunity for marketers and shops in the city.¹⁸

Improvements in transportation meant both a greater ability for merchants to sell their goods to wider markets (particularly from London to the countryside), but also significantly improved communication. New ships, freshly dug canals and improvements in road conditions meant that information about consumer goods could pass more easily to the country side or to other countries.¹⁹

London became the center for fashion, shopping and the bourgeois lifestyle. There were other centers of consumption (Bath grew into a shopping center as travellers frequented the city), but none compared to London. Cities were attractive to the middling classes as they were filled with all of the new elements that defined their new lifestyles: pleasure, refinement, knowledge, technology and of course, shopping. Around 170,000 members of the bourgeoisie lived in cities in 1700, and that number had increased to 475,000 by 1801.²⁰ This is not to say that there were not middling class members living outside the cities, but it is not where the culture was developed.²¹

It is important to recognize that while a significant population in London and urban areas, the bourgeois were not the majority. London's poor, or those living under the level of the middling classes still made up 75 percent of its population.²² This is the main argument against the idea that a *mass* consumer society existed, even in London itself.

The minimum income for a person to be considered middling class was approximately £40 to 50, which constituted approximately one to two-fifths of the population. Gilboy reported that wage

¹⁷ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 23

¹⁸ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 21

¹⁹ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1994): 245

²⁰ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005):, 211, These numbers include London as well as other urban areas.

²¹ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 208

²² Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 208

rates increased for much of the 1700's.²³ While much of that income was spent on food there was a moderate amount left for shopping. Around 60 percent was spent on bread, flour and animal products, 15 percent on rent and fuel and 21 percent was spent on purchased goods such as candles, clothing, soap, tea and sugar.²⁴

Towards the second half of the century, there was a shift towards greater overall wealth and roughly 25 percent of the population had incomes between £50 and 400 (around a ten percent increase). The predominant gains in the bourgeois class were from merchants, lawyers, administrative and military personnel and financiers.²⁵ The rate of growth for the middling classes was proportionally larger than that of the upper or lower classes, however, there was also a growing income disparity. The middling classes were diverse and growing in influence.²⁶

England was an ideal place for a consumer class to grow. It was widely commented on that the class system was not as strict as it was in other parts of Europe, allowing for some level of imitation of the upper classes by the middling classes. It was more possible in England to strive towards a higher rank than in other places.²⁷ One sign of this can be seen in looking at the early repeal of sumptuary laws in England. Sumptuary laws prevented conspicuous consumption from taking place in other countries in Europe by punishing the lower orders for purchasing luxury items. These laws were repealed in England in the 17th century (much earlier than in most other areas). The increase in available commodities, particularly from colonization, was especially important in overturning them.²⁸

The bourgeois class was very influential in changing the perception of these new commodities. Initially these imports were only for the elite, and were negatively associated with their over-indulgent display of wealth, and it was considered hurtful to the British economy as it was imported. The middling classes, however, helped to establish the new commodities as cosmopolitan and fashionable.²⁹

²³Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 23

²⁴ Elizabeth Gilboy. "The Cost of Living and Real Wages in Eighteenth Century England," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 18 (1936): 136

²⁵ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005):, 208, 212

²⁶ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 195, 203

²⁷ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*:20

²⁸ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 25, 29

²⁹ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 20, McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb. *Birth of a Consumer*, 13-14 It also helped that the English economy began to flourish partly as a result of manufacturing products based on colonial resources.

The bourgeoisie, still in its early phase of growth, was still developing its culture, habits and defining characteristics. One of these characteristics has been called a ‘culture of gentility’ (also called civility or politeness, but they mostly refer to the same things). The culture of gentility was a collection of habits, products, rituals and fashion that members of the middling classes used to identify each other, define themselves, and distinguish the new class from others (particularly the lower classes).

The culture of gentility extended across the elites to the middling classes. Georg Foster described coming back to England after ten years away and observed a “revolution in manners” and a much-improved demeanor of the population.³⁰ It began with this series of behaviors, people began to act more polite like the elite classes, and led into areas like taste, styles and designs. It was believed at the time that through the consumption of fine goods, the laboring people could be civilized, and that through consumption of luxury items, people would be driven to be more industrious so that they could better afford more and more products.³¹

The culture of gentility meant that the middling classes had a familiarity with some degree of luxury. Those wishing to show their connection with middling class culture need to show off activities connected with leisure, rather than work and consumption rather than production.³² While in theory everyone could participate in the behaviors associated with politeness (and it was a powerful movement that was desirable for people to participate in), the culture of gentility also meant style and taste, which required some degree of wealth and time.³³

Langford stated openly that spread and promotion of commerce was the key to the process of extending this culture.³⁴ It was even difficult to differentiate the purchasing patterns of the bourgeois from the elite. Of course, the culture of the elites and the bourgeois still would have differed to some extent (and the elites could afford to purchase more, generally), but politeness provided an underlying commonality that made it possible for a shopkeeper and an aristocrat to communicate on a more similar level. Shopkeepers actually trained themselves in the behaviors that would be considered polite so that they would be able to interact more successfully with their

³⁰ Paul Langford. “The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002): 322

³¹ Jonathan White, “The Laboring-Class Domestic Sphere in Eighteenth-Century British Social Thought,” in *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830*, ed. John Styles and Amanda Vickery. (New Haven, CT Yale University Press, 2006): 251

³² Lawrence E Klein. “Politeness and the Interpretation, of the British Eighteenth Century,” *The Historical Journal* 45 (2002): 874, 888

³³ Paul Langford. “The Uses of Eighteenth-Century”: 314

³⁴ Paul Langford. “The Uses of Eighteenth-Century”: 320

customers.³⁵ This was very important for sales techniques and because it was so important that shopkeepers present themselves as trusted, fashionable and knowledgeable so that they would be able to assist their customers in following the latest fashions.

In general, there was a trickling down of wealth, certain behaviors, styles and taste. After the restoration, clothing styles became simpler even for the elite, making it more accessible for the middling classes to imitate. By the end of the century even working women were able to afford printed gowns.³⁶ Even the servants of the wealthy class were well dressed either because they were given clothes from their masters or because they were able to purchase decent clothing styles. This can be seen as an example of vicarious consumption.³⁷

These new imposters on culture and civility were not without controversy. Some members of the aristocracy felt that the ability of the lower orders to buy luxury goods and clothing and have a 'polite' status implied the ability for social mobility to be bought. The British Magazine wrote in 1763 "The present rage of imitating the manners of high life hath spread itself so far among the gentlefolks of lower life, that in a few years we shall probably have no common folks at all."³⁸ These debates brought forward new notions of class and propriety, with non-elites arguing that their new social status was not being bought, but was earned through hard work.³⁹

Indeed the English were able to afford more things than other societies at least according to accounts at the time. Studies by John Demos presented evidence that people in seventeenth century England had very few personal possessions, while a century later commentators were discussing how even beggars had white shirts and in general everyone seemed to be dressed nicely.⁴⁰ It is also apparent that in the final 15 years of the 1700's products that were in high demand (like soap, candles, tobacco, printed fabrics and beer) rose in consumption at a rate that was twice as fast as the growth of the population.⁴¹

Consumption played a very significant role in the culture of gentility. It was crucial for members of the middling classes not to show that they were able to buy many things, but that they were

³⁵ Lawrence E Klein. "Politeness and the Interpretation, of the British Eighteenth Century," *The Historical Journal* 45 (2002): 880

³⁶ Lawrence E Klein. "Politeness and the Interpretation": 881-3

³⁷ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 58, Vicarious consumption means that it was spending by the rich for the poor. It is not as clear whether the authors meant that this spending was done to better the lives of their servants or to show off their servants in nice clothing, which seems very different motivations.

³⁸ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*:25

³⁹ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 20

⁴⁰ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 96

⁴¹ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 27, 29

able to buy the *right* things. To be considered a member of the middling classes, the products that a person owned had to have the right message. People were willing to work harder and longer in order to afford the luxuries that would keep them within these classes, or go without what might otherwise be considered necessities.⁴²

The concept of conspicuous consumption, the consumption of a product to enhance or maintain one's social standing, recognized by Veblen in the late nineteenth century was very much a part of the lifestyle.⁴³ Conspicuous consumption as a concept is also not without its critics and some have said that Veblen's theory lacks a clear motive behind this kind of consumption. By appearances it seems likely that conspicuous consumption is intended to raise the social status of those who participate in it, others argue that this is not a finite explanation for behavior. It also suggests that buying products and participating in the right behaviors leads to acceptance, which is not so linear in reality.⁴⁴ With this in mind, imitative patterns are in existence and in terms of consumption were still driving a large consumer movement.

One important element of conspicuous consumption in this time period was tea. Tea is taken as an example later in this piece as it is so relevant to eighteenth century gentility. Tea drinking was a major part of all of the middling classes' daily rituals by the 1760's. This was in opposition to the elites, for whom tea drinking had been part of a mostly masculine tradition for business transactions or sports. Tea drinking for the bourgeois was an opportunity to display their tea set, which was crucial in showing off their taste and their membership that class. The tea set flaunted wealth and would have been part of the 'staging area' of the house for guests.⁴⁵ This area, reserved for articles of conspicuous consumption, would have made clear the social status of a middling class family, and tea taking was the most important ritual that took place there.

Clothing styles were also very important and fashion was much more widespread in the eighteenth century. Middling class families spent about a quarter of their annual spending on clothing.⁴⁶ Keeping up with the latest fashions implied that middling class members had taste. It is important to differentiate between modern conceptions of fashion, which could possibly be

⁴² Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 26-27

⁴³ Ronald D. Michman and Edward D. Mazze, *The Affluent Consumer: Marketing and Selling the Luxury Lifestyle* (Westport, CT: Praeger 2004): 45

⁴⁴ Colin Campbell, "Understanding Traditional and Modern Patterns of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century England: A Character-Action Approach." in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. by John Brewer and Roy Porter. (London, Routledge, 1993): 40-41

⁴⁵ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 229

⁴⁶ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 239

associated with impulsiveness or irrationality. Fashion's association with taste however created associations with reason and morality.⁴⁷

Klein discussed that there were also limitations to the concept of politeness. It is not possible to see any cultural patterns as a unified or concrete, and politeness is no exception. To some degree, it must be understood that this was only a part of the lifestyle and cultural beliefs of eighteenth century middling classes.⁴⁸

The bourgeois class, while in its growth phase, is the one seen as making drastic changes to consumer habits in the eighteenth century. They were defining the culture of shopping and their own social status. They bought for pleasure and they bought impulsively. It would be difficult to argue that bourgeois society was *not* a consumer society, and this is particularly true when looking at marketing.

4. The Role of Marketing in Creating a Bourgeois Consumer Culture

As a whole the ability and propensity to purchase goods and services changed drastically in the eighteenth century, and the impact of marketing was immense. Eighteenth century London can be thought of as the very beginning of the modern conceptions of marketing and advertising. Here are the introductions of the trade card (which would one day become the modern business card), the concept of the loss leader, the beginnings of retailing, branding and the money-back-guarantee.

The seventeenth century had seen very few developments in terms of marketing. Merchants, for the most part, were still selling their wares from carts in large markets. The market was not yet ready yet for the kind of shops and consumer experiences in the eighteenth century, as there was not a significant enough population with any disposable income. Once there was enough demand, shopkeepers became creative and really began to strategize and implement new ways to reach their customers.

Merchants and shopkeepers were beginning to understand their customers in new ways. They were beginning to understand what drew customers to their stores and how they would react to particular stimuli once inside. They were also beginning to be conscious of the market as a whole and how to manipulate society into transforming wants into needs. Once merchants understood their customers they were able to approach them in new ways to attract them to their

⁴⁷ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 250

⁴⁸ Lawrence E Klein. "Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century," *The Historical Journal* 45 (2002): 872

stores. They were able to manipulate the shopping process to their advantage and to create impactful memories and ideas about their shops even before a customer encountered it. It was a much different world than the seventeenth century cart.

Customers as well were undergoing major changes in reaction to the new retail scene. Consumers were beginning to shop on a more regular basis. They were incorporating shopping into their lives by participating in the latest trends, by using shopping as a social outing, and by relying on their favorite shopkeepers to enlighten them on the latest in fashion and taste.

These customers, the beginnings of the middling classes were defining what it meant to be bourgeois. Still in its formation stage, their actions, their tastes, their rituals became the new norms. The legacy of this is still visible in modern Western society.

It is easy to draw parallels from the middling classes in London in the eighteenth century to modern Western society in terms of consumption but more importantly in terms of marketing. There are direct lines in terms of the value of imagery in advertising, in consumers expecting to be amazed by merchants by all the possibilities of goods on display, the element of fantasy and desire in advertising and the importance for retailers of developing a satisfactory customer experience.

4.1 Marketing and New Products

It is important to consider the context in which marketing came to be so much more important in the eighteenth century. In addition to rising wages and increasingly urban populations of bourgeoisie, the products that were available were changing, as was the way that they were coming to the market. Colonization had begun centuries before, but the exotic products from these conquests and trade practices were largely considered to be luxuries that were only available to the highest classes. As time went on, and larger quantities were brought the products became more affordable and were able to be sold to a much larger market. Through successful marketing, these products became associated more with the concepts of gentility and suited to a bourgeois lifestyle.⁴⁹

The world was becoming closer to British citizens through the products brought in by colonization and the population that could afford to adopt these products did so with interest. The bourgeois class was interested in the world, and interested in what role the British were

⁴⁹ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 21

playing in it.⁵⁰ Purchasing the products of these foreign lands was a way that the bourgeois consumers used to show that they were cosmopolitan and worldly.

These special new products to the British market came with a challenge. Prior to colonization and a large enough consumer market to import goods for, the products that sellers had on display were familiar to consumers (and generally speaking, there was not that much to purchase). Products like bread and beer were familiar to customers and needed no explanation. When a product like tea came to the market, however, there was a need to explain the product to the consumer. In its earliest advertisements, it was explained that tea was a drink, that it could be used for medical purposes, that it is good tasting, and its exoticism and associations with high-class society. More specific examples will be shown in the section on tea, but this idea is true for many other products as well.

New products were constantly appearing in shop windows and were being advertised to consumers because shops needed to educate their consumers on what was available. New products can be seen as a major driver in marketing's development because it had never before been so necessary to explain the function, interest or desirability of products. This was not only a result of colonization, but also a drive to create new products and fashions within Britain.

Science, at the height of the enlightenment was also bringing new technologies to the market, and similar to the worldliness of owning foreign products, purchasing these technologies made consumers feel that they were in on the new sciences. The owners of these new products wanted to show other members of society that they too were involved with these new progresses.⁵¹ The sellers of these products also needed to make clear to consumers their function and their importance.

New fashions and designs are also of considerable importance. Fashion began to change much more rapidly and the need for businesses to express to consumers that they were now selling the newest fashion was crucial if they were to be successful. Fashion and gentility were intricately linked to one another, and consumers wishing to show their gentility trusted in shopkeepers to make sure that their products were as fashionable as possible.⁵²

John Styles, speaking to the nature of the importance of these rapidly changing fashions wrote; "Your gentility was judged by whether you owned the right items, whether they were sufficiently

⁵⁰ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 332-333

⁵¹ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 234

⁵² Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 233

genteel in their design, and whether you were capable of using them in the right way.” Thus, the eighteenth century shopkeeper played a very important role in keeping their bourgeois patrons at the height of fashion. They were to not only be aware of what designs were the most recent, which products were most important to be seen by society, but also how to use them appropriately.⁵³

Staying on top of eighteenth century fashions was considerably more challenging than it would have been for shopkeepers’ seventeenth century counterparts. The concept of fashion in society was becoming much more complex as there were now multiple tiers of society that were able to participate and the new influx of wealth meant that consumers could afford to buy more products more frequently. Where a particular fashion had previously lasted perhaps a lifetime, by the eighteenth century, fashions could be as short as a single year.⁵⁴

Participation in fashion prior to the eighteenth century was extremely limited due to scarcity, its general unavailability to the market outside of London and sumptuary laws.⁵⁵ As income levels rose and London became a center of bourgeois society, fashion came into prominence in the eighteenth century.⁵⁶ London became a center of English fashion and its newest products and designs diffused into the countryside through new marketing techniques (please see more on this in the sections on fashion dolls and trade catalogues).⁵⁷ The speed with which fashion changed increased over the course of the century and by the 1770’s these changes were annual for the majority of the bourgeois population and monthly among the super-fashionable.⁵⁸

When we look at satires from the eighteenth century, it is possible to visualize the reactions to the fashions at the time. There are many, many contemporary satirical cartoons commenting on fashion. There are cartoons mocking the fashions themselves, which were becoming more and more extreme (particularly in response to French Queen Marie Antoinette’s ever growing hairstyles and padded dresses, though this can also be interpreted as a response to increasing luxury), there are critiques of the rapid changes in fashion. Significantly, there are also critiques of the lower classes becoming involved in fashion. Fashion’s place in society was clearly becoming more and more prominent, and its commentary was plentiful.

⁵³ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 6

⁵⁴ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 1

⁵⁵ Sumptuary laws are laws against the peasantry owning fashionable or high-class products. These laws were repealed in Britain in the seventeenth century (though were still in effect in other parts of Europe much later).

⁵⁶ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer* 35

⁵⁷ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer* 41

⁵⁸ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer* 51

An example of a satire piece commenting on fashion at the time can be seen in Image 1, “The Bum Shop”. Here are a group of women trying on false bottoms. The notable elements in this piece are that the women appear to be shopping alone (showing their independence and that shops were becoming a place for women). Also important is the shopkeepers tending to them. Their attention is completely focused on helping their customers despite the comical nature of their product. They also appear well dressed, as the culture of gentility would have dictated for shopkeepers at the time.⁵⁹

To be clear, while dress styles were one important feature of fashion, it was not the only type that was changing rapidly. Product design in general became significantly more important.⁶⁰ Already in the eighteenth century product designs were marketed as exclusive and marketed directly toward specific classes (often later followed by a series of copied designs that were marketed towards lower classes).⁶¹

For shopkeepers, selling the latest product designs was extremely important, for instance the quality of the tea set that a family used was a very visible display of their status and fashionability (see the section on Wedgewood’s marketing techniques). It was also important to be consuming the right products. Tea was an extremely fashionable product that was an essential part of the lifestyle for anyone hoping to increase or flaunt their status, fashion sense or gentility. In fact, Berg, speaking on the importance of taking tea and its incredible importance in showing a family’s status spoke to the spread of tea-drinking and fashionable tea wares; “a good set of chinaware was just as important to those just getting by as to the better off.” Middling class families looked for the most fashionable tea-serving equipment they could possibly afford.⁶²

Fashion emerged as a critical element in marketing in the eighteenth century as it was driven by both the consumer and the producer. While fashion was exciting and appealing to the consumers, it was a profitable marketing avenue for producers. There are numerous examples of producers who were able to use fashion to their considerable gain (Wedgewood and Boulton are some examples, but there are many others) and it was an extremely important consideration for shopkeepers in attracting and maintaining customers.⁶³ The more the fashions changed, the more

⁵⁹ Image 1 can be found on page 59

⁶⁰ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 6

⁶¹ Matthew Craske. “Plan and Control: Design and the Competitive Spirit in Early and Mid-Eighteenth-Century England,” *Journal of Design History* 12 (1999): 188

⁶² Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 232

⁶³ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 255

reason consumers had to return to shops and producers for more products to fit in with the changes.

Fashion in the eighteenth century was irresistible to consumers. Fashion was ‘sensually arousing’ as Berg describes it. Not only because it was important for their social standing, but because it was attractive in all the same ways that fashion is to modern consumers.

Fashion attracts first through the senses: colors, tastes, smells, textures. Next, fashion is about novelty and a consistent interest in what is new and different. Lastly, fashion is connected with imitation.⁶⁴ Of course, this is what makes fashion so cyclical, in its earliest stages it is exclusive to the most elite and then trickles down into the middling classes. For modern consumers, these patterns are familiar and engrained into contemporary Western society, but this would have been drastically different for the eighteenth century population. In the generation before even cooking wares would have been handed down from generation to generation, and generally households had very, very few consumer products.⁶⁵ So rapid product innovation, accessible fashions and having personal items was a major change. That these new personal items were constantly changing colors, textures and improving designs, would have made fashion all the more enticing. These changes even impacted wealthy families. While they may have been well enough off to afford to buy products before the eighteenth century, fashion changes and the need to keep up with modern taste made families feel *obligated* to make new purchases.⁶⁶ This is in addition, of course, to the presence of more products on the market in general, meant that consumption was making a major jump forward.

In total, there are three major production side elements of marketing improvements (which all had an impact on each other as well). First, colonization and British trade generally bringing in products that were foreign to British consumers. Second, the enlightenment and the new technologies that followed, which similarly needed to be explained to potential customers in terms of their worth and uses. Lastly, fashion, which was pushed both by the demands of the market and by consumers themselves. Each of these can be seen as an important element in marketing’s progress over the course of the eighteenth century. Very little advertising can be seen before the eighteenth century partially because there was very little market for products to be sold to, but also because the products that were available were straightforward. There was no need to

⁶⁴ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 250

⁶⁵ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 27

⁶⁶ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 28

inform consumers of the use of products that their parents and grandparents had owned, and there was no fashion to speak of to flaunt as a selling point of a particular shop (for that matter the 'shop' in the modern sense of the word was also developed in the eighteenth century, which will be discussed in the section on retailing). Marketing, as with many products of the eighteenth century, was an invention that came from new needs.

4.2 Imagining a Product: The Use of Imagery in Advertising

In modern Western society, consumers are bombarded with images of products and imagined uses, results and benefits of these products. The origins of these techniques are in the eighteenth century developments of trade cards and catalogues. Producers and retailers used imagery to entice their customers in much the same way that their modern counterparts do, though on a smaller and perhaps less defined scale.

One of the most common advertising practices in eighteenth century Britain was the trade card, the very early forerunners of the modern business card. The trade card is a very meaningful development considering in the century before the primary method of advertising would have been word of mouth. There is evidence that trade cards initiated among the most educated merchants around the 1630's. The trade cards of eighteenth century Britain, however, were much more ornate and much more focused on imagery and drawings, which is more effective than text.⁶⁷

The use of trade cards really became widespread in the second half of the eighteenth century. This was partially due to advances in printmaking that made it cheaper to make trade cards, in addition to better print work.⁶⁸ Another, more important cause was a new regulation in London against hanging signs for shops in 1762 as the signs were considered a menace (the system was converted to a more modern numbering system).⁶⁹ The signs had been beautifully decorated, and it was undoubtedly considered a challenge for the shops at the time, but the portability of the trade cards that replaced them was much more valuable.

This is not to disregard advertising on trade cards in the beginning of the century. Samuel Johnson's observations in the mid 1700's are familiar to modern consumers overwhelmed and

⁶⁷ Business Historical Society. "A Short History of Trade Cards," *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* 5 (1931): 3

⁶⁸ Troy Bickham. "Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth Century Britain," *Past and Present* 198 (2008): 82

⁶⁹ Business Historical Society. "A Short History of Trade Cards": 3

skeptical of advertisements. He complained “advertisements are now so numerous that they are very negligently perused, and it therefor becomes necessary to gain attention by magnificence of promises and by eloquence sometimes sublime and sometimes pathetic.”⁷⁰

Trade cards could come in basically any shape or size, and generally included some kind of directions to the shop, in addition to prominent imagery.⁷¹ Trade cards were frequently given away with purchases to patrons of the shop as a reminder of their purchase there, or were very rarely even given out in the streets (probably more so after the costs of printing them came down). The woodcuts that were used to print the trade cards could also be used on a shop’s letterhead or billheads, serving as an additional reminder to customers of their experience in the shop.⁷²

This specialized attention to those who were already shop patrons can be seen even as a very early form of direct marketing.⁷³ It was already clear to shopkeepers that the use of newspaper advertisement, which was only available in the form of text and which could easily get lost in a slew of other advertisements for shops and products was much less effective.⁷⁴ Another problem may also have been the literacy level of the consumers. Only about sixty percent of the population was literate in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁷⁵

The use of any kind of direct marketing, which even today is an elusive form of marketing that is considered to be one of the most effective, is quite advanced for eighteenth century Britain. While it is difficult to judge its effectiveness in that time period, it is significant that merchants were able to continue their connection with customers after the shopping experience, particularly in a visual way. Even the recognition of a target market over a general market is interesting as it is such an early stage in the development of marketing.

The images that were used on trade cards were diverse, and they were used in a multitude of ways. Trade cards could show the exotic backgrounds of goods, the actual products themselves, or they could show the luxurious interiors of the shops that sold them. Shops were able to engage

⁷⁰ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 272

⁷¹ Troy Bickham. “Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth Century Britain,” *Past and Present* 198 (2008): 83

⁷² Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 272

⁷³ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 272, *Direct Marketing* as defined by Karl Moore and Niketh Pareek in *Marketing, The Basics*, is “A marketing strategy to build stronger, more personal relationships between the buyer and selected customers directly. In other words there are no intermediary promotion or distribution channels between the buyer and the seller.”

⁷⁴ Claire Walsh. “Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London,” *Journal of Design History* 8 (1995): 171

⁷⁵ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1994): 251

their customers on an entirely different level than they had previously known. The unique ability of imagery to allow consumers to imagine a product as theirs, or to imagine the experience they would have using it or shopping for it, was a major advance for marketers that eighteenth century sellers profited from.⁷⁶

One example of a trade card displaying a shop is shown as Image 2. This ornate trade card for a clockmaker shows the possibility for customers to imagine the experience of shopping there. The shelves are neatly organized, the customers well dressed and happy, and the shop is warm from a nearby fireplace. Below this image, the card directs customers to the shop, noting they can find it under the shop sign (indicating this card was before the ban in London).⁷⁷

Trade cards were in themselves a cosmopolitan product. Some trade cards used multiple languages, not only to show that the shops were able to help customers from other countries, but to show off their sophistication.⁷⁸ They showed off the products of the world in glamorous ways that allowed customers to create a kind of fantasy around the product (see the section on tea for examples of trade cards with especially exotic prints). Often times they were extremely ornate, full of Rococo style writing and imagery suggesting very luxurious products.

It is probably derived from this imagery and the fascination they inspired that trade cards themselves became a commodity. There is evidence that trade cards were collected; accounts exist of Samuel Pepys collection from the 1760's and 1770's and Viscount Torrington. This is in addition to the fact that there are thousands of eighteenth century trade cards available in museums and archives.⁷⁹ The collection of trade cards is also significant as it means that customers were looking again and again at the cards in their collection, serving as a constant reminder of the experience they had in the shop, or the products they had bought there. The cards could then serve as a type of long-term advertisement for those customers who collected them.

Trade cards can be found from across a wide spectrum of commercial markets. There are trade cards in existence from wallpaper manufacturers to razors to grocers, each marketing their products in different ways. Just as modern consumers are always interested in the newest

⁷⁶ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 273

⁷⁷ Image 2 can be found on page 60. While the card is undated it is signed by the engraver, the famous painter William Hogarth, who died in 1764.

⁷⁸ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 275-6, James Bernardeau, a razor maker was the example that Berg used, though there are lots of examples of foreign cultures and languages showing off the multicultural background of shops or goods.

⁷⁹ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 274

technologies, eighteenth century consumers were as well. Thus there were a large number of trade cards advertising the variety of novel products on display in their shops.⁸⁰

Trade catalogues also came into existence in the eighteenth century and were another form of illustrated advertisement used by merchants. They were particularly useful for textile manufacturers for showing off new patterns. Similarly, in the 1730's there was a rush of new pattern books emerging showing the new rococo styles in furniture. Trade catalogues again served as a type of direct marketing that showed off the products in a visual way. Perhaps more importantly, trade catalogues allowed merchants to expand their market by sending it to long distances within Britain, or to overseas customers (for instance in the American colonies, where British goods were widely consumed), provided they were not perishable.⁸¹

It is significant to consider the effect of the use of visual imagery in advertising because modern studies have shown that the most impactful elements of ads are in the images. Pictures or visuals are more likely than text to be remembered and therefore are able to stick with a potential customer for a much longer time. For example in one recent study, the time fixated on images, branding and text were measured and compared to brand recognition tests by the viewers of the ads. The amount of time that the viewer spent looking at the imagery and the brand was correlated much more in relation to their likelihood to remember the brand than the text. Viewers also tended to look at the imagery for longer amounts of time than the text or the brand.⁸² While branding was not a significant phenomenon (with a few exceptions such as Wedgewood china, Packwood's razors and Boulton's buttons but the concept of branding was still in its infancy), the ability to use imagery in attracting attention was very important.

The use of imagery can be seen as a substantial improvement in marketing and advertising because in the eighteenth century trade cards and trade catalogues were just beginning to wield this power of recognition and memory. The ability of shops or producers to use an image to attract attention to their store or create a memory or an idea of their shop was a completely new concept to this era that was successful and which has descended into our modern marketing techniques.

⁸⁰ Matthew Craske. "Plan and Control: Design and the Competitive Spirit in Early and Mid-Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of Design History* 12 (1999): 184

⁸¹ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 279-280

⁸² Michel Wedel and Rik Pieters. "Eye Fixations on Advertisements and Memory for Brands: A Model and Findings," *Marketing Science* 19 (2000)

Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to prove the impact of marketing. It is somewhat difficult to prove even in modern times with the many techniques available to those doing market research, but to look at the historical impact is nearly impossible. This being said, looking at the eighteenth century consumption patterns, there are remarkable similarities to contemporary Western societies, which makes it plausible to consider that the effects of advertising were also similar. It is also likely that the brains of eighteenth century Britons functioned similarly in terms of processing of images and memory as do modern the brains of modern consumers (though this is not necessarily a given, considering that modern brains have had significantly more access to advertisements than eighteenth century brains).⁸³

4.3 *The Wedgewood Model*

It is impossible to discuss eighteenth century marketing without reflecting on Josiah Wedgewood. A brilliant potter born in 1730 (the twelfth son of a mediocre potter), Wedgewood's skills at pottery were perhaps only exceeded by his brilliance in business, and especially in marketing. It is certainly not possible to attribute his successes solely to his talent as a potter, as there were others with similar skill levels. He did invent several new techniques, but these too would have been easy enough to copy and had his marketing skills not been considerable this also would not have kept his business growth at the levels it was.⁸⁴

While pottery may seem a strange product to be of such importance to modern consumers, it is important to think about humble products when considering the birth of the industrial revolution and indeed the modern commercial era. Wedgewood china is joined by such trivial items as buttons, toys, pens, linens and needles in terms of products that led the changes in marketing and advertising.⁸⁵ These were products that were in some form or another familiar to most of society.

Some of Wedgewood's success is due to luck and circumstance. It was good fortune that during his lifetime the roads improved considerably in Britain, making it easier to disperse his products over the countryside. It was circumstantial that tea drinking and in particular tea drinking from

⁸³ Troy Bickham. "Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth Century Britain," *Past and Present* 198 (2008): 83

⁸⁴ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 103-4

⁸⁵ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 53, 100

ornate tea sets, became so important by the end of his life it was deeply entrenched into the culture of the middling class.⁸⁶

Much more important was Wedgewood's strategies. He kept pricing high to attract a high-class market and to position his goods as luxury products. Wedgewood china was two to three times the normal cost of china.⁸⁷ This again reflects a very strong awareness of his target market, or even in some cases a niche market.

In order to maintain this pricing and to successfully reach this market, not only did his products need to be of excellent quality, they needed to be at the very height of the fashion market. Wedgewood was in tune with every change in fashion and considering how to adjust his patterns to suit them. His partner, Thomas Bentley kept him informed of fashion changes, and there are numerous examples of his changing his patterns at the hands of fashion. Sometimes these changes were with pleasure. His black basalt tea ware complimented beautifully the latest fashion for women to bleach their hands with arsenic in 1772. Others, such as a fashion for very plain pottery that he felt he could not charge high prices for he found less appealing, but it was absolutely necessary regardless to stay at the height of fashion.⁸⁸ Wedgewood and Boulton were so good at keeping up with fashion, that within their fields they were considered the 'legislators of taste.'⁸⁹

What was most effective for Wedgewood though, was his ability to sell to the nobility, and then sell cheaper, similar versions to a 'mass' audience. He first needed to attract the nobility, which he did through direct sales and through his great efforts at becoming the potter to the queen and to other members of the royal family. Once he had this royal patronage, he immediately began to advertise it, also working on bringing in other customers that would attract attention. He continued to serve the royal family and eventually many other royals from throughout Europe during the course of his life, even when their orders were very difficult or so complicated that other potters refused the work.⁹⁰

Once Wedgewood had a large enough patronage of wealthy and elite customers, he went after a bigger, more profitable market. By marketing his connections and the use of his pottery by the

⁸⁶ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 104

⁸⁷ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 105

⁸⁸ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 75-6

⁸⁹ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 206

Boulton was a button maker whose work will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁹⁰ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 109-110

aristocracy, his china was unbeatably popular. Wedgewood went so far in this strategy as to use the names of the various owners who had already bought from him, forming his lines like Queensware, Oxford and the Russian Pattern.⁹¹ Imitation, as one of the most important aspects of fashion (discussed above), was a tendency of the market that Wedgewood recognized and discovered how to incorporate into his own strategies.

Wedgewood was constantly advertising and was aware of the power of advertising, frequently in competition with Boulton.⁹² He also worked to be in the news, indicating that he was aware of the importance of public relations, though he sometimes paid for articles to be written about his wares as well.⁹³

In time, Wedgewood's talent and prestige and most importantly his name spread to other parts of Europe. This was not least because he often made gifts of his pottery to the wives of ambassadors. He made sales in Venice, Turkey, Russia, and France and to basically every important house of Europe, his styles were known as far as America, China and India. He was very careful to differentiate the styles that he used for these to make sure that they suited the cultures of those countries; his styles for France were in the Rococo designs, his styles for Venice included small cups for drinking coffee.⁹⁴

Despite building his name through his patronage of the elites, Wedgewood made the majority of his money through his useful wares. The royal customers and the extravagant royal designs were really an elaborate, and very successful form of branding. By the end of his life, this was what Wedgewood had really created: an extremely successful *brand*.

Wedgewood used a multitude of what would normally be considered modern marketing techniques that were way ahead of his time. For instance, Wedgewood established his name as one of the first real brands. He had strong name recognition throughout Europe. He also used giveaways, auctions, catalogues, advanced credit, market research, and recognized his market as segmented.

Wedgewood would not be the only one to use this system of imitation. Matthew Boulton, who made buttons (and eventually manufactured the steam engine, which is generally considered his

⁹¹ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 112

⁹² McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 73, Though they were not selling the same wares, they were in competition with each other as they were both selling to the same group and were competing for attention for their advertisements.

⁹³ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 125

⁹⁴ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 103, 132

greater accomplishment, though his contributions to marketing are also significant), used a very similar technique. Boulton's strategy was slightly different as he generally created a mass quantity of an item with small profits whereas Wedgwood had sought a high profit margin.⁹⁵

Boulton carefully considered the effects of timing. He used special promotions, much like an annual sale or promotion in contemporary times. He manufactured special lines just for the birthdays of the royals that he would make sure all of the nobility would feel obligated to wear.⁹⁶

His main sales took place at Easter time, at the very end of the London Season. This allowed all of the excitement and news of the latest button styles to be brought back with the wealthy families and servants (servants were a very important source of news as they spread it to a wider audience once in the countryside) to their various homes. It is clear that Boulton recognized the importance of both the concepts of exclusivity and dispersion and was able to use both to sell his buttons.⁹⁷ Boulton was also selling on an international scale; and reflecting on his need for a truly mass market commented, "It would not be worth my while to make for three countries only; but I find it well worth my while to make for all the world."⁹⁸

Boulton also was a master advertiser, and was very aware of the placement, quantity, and effectiveness of his ads. On the release of a new line of his products made from ormolu, he gave special instructions to Christie's (London Auction House) as to how the line was to be marketed for a week and include the names of all of his high-class clientele in order to create excitement around the new products. He then monitored the public's response and felt that there was not enough talk around his products and ordered that the advertisement be improved.⁹⁹

Others were also beginning to use these methods. Richard Twining was already beginning to use the idea of branding. He used the symbol of a golden lion with his name on his shop sign, on wrapping paper for his products and on his bill headings.¹⁰⁰ There are also other examples of using dramatic, extravagant displays to show off talent and then making money off of the common consumers. Hairdressers for instance, would gain reputations for creating the

⁹⁵ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 73-74

⁹⁶ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 72

⁹⁷ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 74

⁹⁸ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 76-77

⁹⁹ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 72, Ormolu is a copper-zinc alloy used to imitate gold, which must have been excellent for his bourgeois consumers

¹⁰⁰ Hoh-Cheung Mui and Lorna H. Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth Century England*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989): 227

exaggerated tall hairstyles popular in the eighteenth century and would then be well known for lesser services.¹⁰¹

Wedgewood and Boulton's brilliance lay in their ability to correctly interpret how society incorporates fashion into their lives and to sell their china and buttons in highly strategic ways that profited off that knowledge. It was extremely effective, and at his death in 1795 Wedgewood died a very wealthy man. His system of branding and marketing was so effective that the legacy of Wedgewood China remains. Boulton eventually left the market to work with James Watt on the steam engine.

4.4 Fashion Advertising

Before leaving the topic of advertising, another dynamic area of advertising in the eighteenth century was in fashionable clothes. The French had invented the fashion doll far before the eighteenth century, it first went to the queen and then made its way through the most fashionable houses in London. The French dolls were life size and came with full dresses, complete sets of the latest styles in undergarments and with fashionable hairstyles. It was a brilliant and extremely early form of marketing but targeted towards an extremely narrow few.¹⁰²

When the English created a fashion doll in the eighteenth century, it had a significantly wider audience. The English dolls were made from flat cardboard and were only about eight inches high. They also came with complete underpinnings but instead of coming with only one dress, they came with six, so that a variety of the new styles could be shown.¹⁰³

By 1790 the dolls were printed by the thousands and were making their way into the hands of women across England and into its colonies. The dolls were not expensive, so afterwards they could be given to children as toys, ensuring that the next generation also became interested in fashion. Eventually the dolls were marketed separately to children as toys in addition to their initial intended use.¹⁰⁴

The fashion doll is another example of how merchants were beginning to think differently about how to approach customers. First, they were beginning to think about a wider customer base, not just the elites, but also the growing middling classes that had incomes to spend. Second, they

¹⁰¹ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 64-65

¹⁰² McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 44

¹⁰³ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 44-5

¹⁰⁴ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 46

were aware of how to segment the fashion market. The French doll still came to those elites who could afford it, but for the middling class gentlewoman that wanted to participate in fashion as well, there was another seller that would be willing to provide wares to her. Third, and perhaps most important, sellers were looking to distribute their message beyond their stores and into society in the form of something physical and visual. All of these indicate a very modern approach to advertising that was in place in eighteenth century Britain.

The developments in fashion and the Wedgwood techniques in imitation and branding had a significant impact on the lives of eighteenth century bourgeois. Consumers had a wide range of what they perceived to be available to them, and were developing new interests and tastes. Middling class members were beginning to have access to styles more similar to the elite classes and were thus able to identify with them more. The fashion industry and the techniques used by marketers and merchants were really creating the needs of the new bourgeois class in order to fulfill them.

4.5 The Shopping Experience

Another element of modern marketing that was beginning to be common in eighteenth century Britain (and most especially in London) was the attention paid to the shopping experience by retailers. London shops looked dramatically different in the eighteenth century than the seventeenth century, and shoppers responded by changing the way that they shopped.

Sophie von la Roche, a German novelist visiting London spoke of her amazement in visiting London's stores, saying she was

*"Struck by the elegant arrangement and system which the love of gain and the national good taste have combined in producing. Particularly the elegant dressing of large shop windows, not merely to ornament the streets and lure purchasers, but to make known the thousand inventions and ideas and spread good taste about, for the excellent pavements made for pedestrians enable crowds of people to stop and inspect the new exhibits."*¹⁰⁵

The basic elements of shopping in terms of legal, court and financial terms were in place in the early seventeenth century. Actually Wallis argues that the idea of the rise of the shop in the eighteenth century is somewhat exaggerated, and points out that there were retail shops in place as early as 1300. It is safe to say, however, that this was not the norm and that even by the seventeenth century the shop was not fully developed.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 264

¹⁰⁶ Patrick Wallis. "Consumption, Retailing, and Medicine in Early-Modern London," *Economic History Review* 61 (2008): 29

The shopping experience in the eighteenth century was quite different. Initially, this was because there were more products available to buy, and more shops to buy them in. There were actually more shops per person in London in the late eighteenth century than there are now.¹⁰⁷

There are many accounts of London shopping to indicate that the shops were now full of exciting products available for purchase. Accounts speak of a wide product range including pineapples, trunks, pens, fans, feather beds, books, many random beauty products, clocks, fish hooks, toys and tobacco.¹⁰⁸ Apothecaries went so far as to carry products that they almost never used (they are not mentioned in medical recipes from the time) in creating medicines such as pieces of crocodile and puffer fish just to give the impression to the consumer that they had exotic, widely arrayed products available.¹⁰⁹ English poet Robert Southey commented on London's many offerings; "If I were to pass the remainder of my life in London I think the shops would always continue to amuse me. Something extraordinary or beautiful is forever to be seen in them."¹¹⁰

The range of products was not the only change made by shopkeepers. The physical presence of the shops was also being evaluated. Shops were becoming more elegant and beautiful so that customers would want to stay in them longer or visit them more frequently. It was noted by Walsh that particularly as branding was not particularly well developed, the design of a shop was crucial for customers to remember the experience.¹¹¹

The size of shops was expanding. Generally they were becoming longer and thinner. Space was important and particularly retail space was important. Accounts indicate that a merchant's workshop and retail space were separated by partitions of some kind indicating awareness that they wanted customer space to be special and attractive. Other stores merely sold goods that they had purchased elsewhere.¹¹²

Some of the accounts describe new counters for display; several others discuss the use of more and more candles for lighting. Candle lighting was used in nearly every shop except for

¹⁰⁷ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005);, 260-1

¹⁰⁸ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 81-2, The wide collection of beauty products, which included false padding for everywhere that one could want it (including for a woman's cheeks!), seems especially interesting considering the breadth of the beauty market for women today.

¹⁰⁹ Patrick Wallis. "Consumption, Retailing, and Medicine in Early-Modern London," *Economic History Review* 61 (2008): 41 Considering that it was often hit or miss with medicine at the time the importance of building a trust relationship with customers by apothecaries should not be underestimated!

¹¹⁰ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer*: 78

¹¹¹ Claire Walsh. "Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London," *Journal of Design History* 8 (1995):

¹¹² Claire Walsh. "Shop Design and the Display,": 160

goldsmiths, who shunned it in order to show customers the look of their products in natural light (it is important to recognize that different products had different needs and so what applies to one may not apply universally).¹¹³ It was recognized even at the time that lighting was used to manipulate customers, and contemporaries also complained of trick lighting.¹¹⁴

Lighting is important not only to better display products but because of the mood that it creates. Modern studies have indicated that when it is lighter, people feel happier. Shoppers could begin to associate that happiness with the experience they had in stores, and it very likely influenced their return.¹¹⁵ While it is very possible that this element was not understood at the time (it seems very likely that shopkeepers were solely intending to be able to show off their products better), the result is the same.

Lighting was also becoming more popular for those wishing to window shop at night. By 1779, shops were lit at night until ten in the evening so that passerby could still browse and enjoy the possibilities of what they might purchase the next day. When considering that gas lighting was not invented until 1792, this is especially interesting!¹¹⁶

The shops became larger, and more intricately decorated themselves with mirrors, paintings, tables, chairs and display cases. The concept of window shopping came into being in the eighteenth century after shop signs were banned from the streets, and window displays took over as the visual element drawing customers into stores.¹¹⁷ Once inside, products were on display in glass cases and shelves, designed to highlight the products. Shopkeepers were especially interested in displaying a multitude of goods to show off their wide selection for consumers.¹¹⁸

Merchants were well aware of the importance of advertising even within their shop. In some shops if a purchase had been made by a member of the royal family, a sign was put up saying that shopping was “by appointment,” highlighting the exclusivity of the shop.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ Claire Walsh. “Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London,” *Journal of Design History* 8 (1995): 167

¹¹⁴ Patrick Wallis. “Consumption, Retailing, and Medicine in Early-Modern London,” *Economic History Review* 61 (2008): 29

¹¹⁵ Julie Baker, Michael Levy and Dhruv Grewal. “An Experimental Approach to Making Retail Store Environmental Decisions,” *Journal of Retailing*. 68 (1992):

¹¹⁶ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 78

¹¹⁷ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005):, 261, 263

¹¹⁸ Claire Walsh. “Shop Design and the Display,”: 164

¹¹⁹ Helen Berry. “Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth-Century England,” *Transactions of the RHS* 12 (2002): 383

Shopkeepers were aware of the intensity of competition and were anxious to keep up with the trends. It was important to attract customers of the right class and to keep their patronage. The lower classes were still segregated and would have brought down the reputation of the shop. This was an unspoken rule at the time, but a clear one. Increasingly, the look of the store was important in attracting the right customer base.¹²⁰

London itself was changing in response to the new trends. The Lighting and Paving act of 1760 widened the streets around the shopping areas in order to create more room for people to stroll past shops. This was also a draw as the streets were then less crowded and again more conducive to window-shopping.¹²¹

Shopkeepers were also more aware of their own role in the shopping experience. They were also just coming into polite society and were very aware that they would be judged in terms of their acceptance of gentility and politeness. They were well dressed, sociable and expected to give their customers advice and be knowledgeable about the latest fashions and technologies.¹²² At times customers would even order products by mail and had the shopkeeper select the most stylish patterns or goods.¹²³

In some cases, particularly when the customers were of a higher status, it was even customary for salesmen to sit down with shoppers over a cup of tea. The customer and the salesman could chat briefly (presumably over what the customer was shopping for), often times in a more private room. This trend continued into the early nineteenth century and the beginning of department stores.¹²⁴

There are even accounts of shopping as a social experience where making a purchase is not the ultimate goal. Shopkeepers recognized this and understood that regardless of whether shoppers' intentions were to purchase or to browse exposing them to their wares was still beneficial.¹²⁵ The idea that there was pleasure in looking and that visual connection with products was important is also connected to the visual elements discussed above.

¹²⁰ Claire Walsh. "Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London," *Journal of Design History* 8 (1995): 161

¹²¹ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 261-2

¹²² Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 270, This was so true, in fact, that shopkeepers were often made fun of in satires for being overly flirtatious and overdressed.

¹²³ Hoh-Cheung Mui and Lorna H. Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth Century England*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989): 224

¹²⁴ Helen Berry. "Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth-Century England," *Transactions of the RHS* 12 (2002): 387

¹²⁵ Claire Walsh. "Shop Design and the Display," 172

Additionally, shopkeepers exploited the other senses of their consumers, allowing customers to hold and try items on. They understood that imagining ownership of a product could increase the likelihood of their sale as well. So customers that were coming in 'just to look' were still recognized as important and catered to.¹²⁶

Shopkeepers were aware of the importance of knowing their customer. They needed to be able to read their needs in terms of what their social status was, what they would be able to afford, what the appropriate method of sale would be for them and whether or not they would be worthy of credit. The more time a salesman had with a customer, the more they could determine about their needs.¹²⁷

There is some evidence to suggest that women in particular were the main shoppers of families. Particularly among the higher classes, women did their shopping after breakfast and before their afternoon calls.¹²⁸ It is however important to recognize that this is a contested idea. Berg argues firmly that there is not enough evidence to clearly differentiate men's spending from women's. She describes men's interest in fashion through their very specific wishes for what should happen to their clothing after they die.¹²⁹ It does seem, however, that this is not sufficient to disprove the idea that women were more prevalent shoppers than men. In any case, there is more evidence that in the nineteenth century the department store became a social outing for women and that it was a much more significant development for women's consumption.

Women's consumption and patterns of shopping can be considered important as a space outside the home that women could inhabit and have social relations in. Considering that at the time many social relationships would have been chaperoned, but this was not necessary in shops, it must have been a very exciting place for young women. It is also commented that shopkeepers knew this and often used flirtation as a sales method.¹³⁰

Shopping was becoming an integral part of bourgeois culture. It was a pleasurable way to spend an afternoon or an opportunity to gather with friends. In centuries before the only shopping that had been available was at the Royal Exchange, which was really only for the most luxurious of

¹²⁶ Claire Walsh, "Shops, Shopping, and the Art of Decision Making in Eighteenth Century England." in *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830*, ed. John Styles and Amanda Vickery. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006): 170

¹²⁷ Helen Berry. "Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth-Century England," *Transactions of the RHS* 12 (2002): 388

¹²⁸ Helen Berry. "Polite Consumption: Shopping," 380

¹²⁹ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 235-8

¹³⁰ Claire Walsh, "Shops, Shopping, and the Art": 160,162

products and only the elite could afford them.¹³¹ This was no longer true in the eighteenth century. The bourgeois culture adopted shopping into its favorite past times and it became a social outlet for them. They made purchases based not on need, but on impulse and pleasure. Retailers, in turn, recognized that the shopping experience was based on not just what was selling, but on mood, social interaction and acceptance.¹³²

This is a very significant development, because the bourgeois class was shaping its habits. These retailers were successful in shaping the culture of the middle class. As the bourgeois was defining themselves, shopping became a part of how they identified themselves and how they identified each other. This is true both in terms of their dress, their products and their services and in terms of how they used their time.

Looking at these trends and comparing it to modern Western culture it is possible to draw parallels. Wallis commented on this as well;

*“Deliberate retail design to reassure as well as attract customers has often been linked to ‘modern retailing’ in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet it is clear that early modern shops attempted to achieve many of the same goals, albeit on a smaller scale.”*¹³³

Stores have studied and perfected the use of design, lighting and customer experience. Shopping is definitely a past time and a pleasurable, social experience. It is possible for the descriptions of the shops described above to feel familiar to modern Western consumers because the elements of retailing that are so prevalent in today’s society were already in place by the beginning of the nineteenth century.

4.6 Parallels to the Modern Consumer

What does all of this marketing say about the eighteenth century consumer? What is seemingly most interesting is that it was not a drastically different experience than one might imagine in contemporary western culture. There are numerous parallels in eighteenth century marketing that can be drawn to a modern, especially Western consumer experience. The techniques created in the eighteenth century have of course been updated and perfected in the course of the last two centuries, but they remain some of the most impactful tools in marketing. They were also very successful at the time. Wedgwood, Boulton and Twining were very wealthy men.

¹³¹ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 265

¹³² Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*: 266

¹³³ Patrick Wallis. "Consumption, Retailing, and Medicine in Early-Modern London," *Economic History Review* 61 (2008): 30

Wedgwood's techniques earned him name recognition that remains valuable even in the minds of the modern consumer.

Marketing unquestionably impacted the eighteenth century consumer. He or she was impacted by what to buy, when to buy, how frequently to buy and how to buy. Marketing helped to define the bourgeois class by constantly coming up with new fashions to increase their spending, by delighting them constantly with new products and new ideas, and by creating an experience that was almost irresistible and became a part of their daily routines. The remnants of this process are still visible in modern middle class Western society. The novel concepts of advertising, marketing and shopping of the eighteenth century are so engrained into the lives of the 21st century consumers, that it is nearly impossible to imagine Western society without them.

It is possible in this way to see the eighteenth century as significantly more modern than any centuries prior. While the industrial revolution is commonly thought of as the beginning of modern Western society, the eighteenth century cannot be ignored as a source of some of the earliest gains in the consumer world. Considering the importance of consumption in defining modernity in the west, and the importance of marketing and advertising in impacting consumption, it seems the eighteenth century has been unfairly put aside in contemplating when consumer society began.

Understanding marketing in the eighteenth century is a valuable source of understanding the development of a consumer culture in the West (as we can see that the techniques started in Britain diffused to much of the world, though of course they are most prominent in Western society). The reflection of the modern Western world in terms of the impact of retailing and merchants on consumers and society that is visible in eighteenth century Britain should be considered as a sign of the modernity of the eighteenth century consumer and as a kind of starting point in the development of the modern Western middle class.

5. Product Study: Tea

Tea is an excellent example of the influence of marketing on a product's perception and popularity amongst the eighteenth century bourgeois in England. Tea's path from the shelves of apothecaries to the tables of the most elite to the staging areas of middling class homes, shows early examples of product development, advertising, perceived value and meaning in products and the impact of the consumer revolution.

Tea is an especially important product to consider in eighteenth century England because the marketing used to attract the new bourgeois class was tremendously successful at gaining new customers. Tea was a relatively rare product at the beginning of the century and by the end was an absolute necessity in every middling class home. It is a clear example of marketing's success in widespread purchases, but also in changing the rituals and behaviors the bourgeois class. In order to consider tea's changing impact on English society, first it is important to consider its origins and initial introduction. From there, it is possible to reflect on tea from a marketing perspective, and look briefly on each of the four aspects of the customer-centric approach to marketing: product, price, place and promotion (which will focus heavily on product and promotion). This concept of the "marketing mix," allows for a complete picture of tea's placement by merchants.¹³⁴ From looking at these four aspects, particularly over the course of time, tea can be seen as a dynamic product that changed with the times and with changing consumer demands. In this way, tea is one of the first products of the consumer revolution. Tea entered the English marketplace as a complete unknown, and thus the general public had no preconceptions, connotations or attachments to it. Marketers first had to explain tea's function and use, and then build up the perceptions of tea, and then incorporate it into the daily lives of its users. This was a long-term highly dynamic process that took course over the entire century (and arguably well into the next).

From looking at tea from a full marketing perspective, it is possible to understand tea's place in British society, including the meaning that it held for consumers. This is important in looking at the consumer revolution and the changing roles and meanings of commodities, foreign goods, luxuries and food items.

5.1 Brief History

The British had been drinking flavored teas, teas made from chamomile, sage, mint, sloe, strawberry, and black current leaves long before the introduction of black and green teas from China and continue to do so, but the Chinese imports quickly grew in popularity. Tea had been known to the Chinese since around the fifth century, but did not make its first appearance in

¹³⁴ John Groucutt, Peter Leadley and Patrick Forsyth, *Marketing: Essential Principles, New Realities* (London: Kogan Page, 2004): 17 While this book discusses the marketing mix, it is a commonly used concept in marketing designs and is also called the SIVA approach, which stands for Solution, Information, Value, Access

Europe for about ten centuries.¹³⁵ The first imported Chinese tea into Britain was from Holland, and is disputed between 1591 and 1612¹³⁶. The Dutch were acquiring tea from the Chinese through their connection to Java, where the Chinese brought tea shipments to trade, rather than dealing directly with the Europeans.¹³⁷ In any case, importing tea from the Dutch would have been very expensive, limiting tea to only the very wealthy.

Tea at this time was mainly used for medicinal purposes and was sold by apothecaries.¹³⁸ By the middle of the seventeenth century there was already some minor endorsements of tea in newspapers, as shown in a medical advertisement by Thomas Garway made in 1657 (made for tea's sale at Garway's Coffee House) and an advertisement from 1660, announcing "That excellent and by all Physicians approved, China drink, called by the Chineans, Tcha, by other Nations Tay or Tee."¹³⁹ It was believed to be a cure for many ailments, as seen by a list published in 1686 by T Povey (a member of parliament) translated from Chinese and nearly described tea as a cure-all, listing it as curing multiple ailments.¹⁴⁰ While tea has some medicinal value, it is likely that this was not an extremely effective marketing point as the main uses changed rather quickly.

China refused to allow the tea plant to be exported, and London did not receive direct access to Canton until 1699. Canton was the main port for tea dealings, and China's limitations led to a relative scarcity of tea in Europe, causing prices for tea to be generally high. While European movements within Canton were heavily restricted by the Chinese, imports of tea continued to increase steadily.¹⁴¹ China's market domination on tea ensured that it would entangle its fate with Britain in addition to a clear association in British minds between tea and China, later exploited by marketers to become one of the reasons for tea's sense of luxury (in combination with its high cost).

¹³⁵ John Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures: A Social History of Drinks in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1999): 49 The initial tea-drinkers in Europe were the Portuguese, there are records of tea's use on Portuguese ships and by Jesuit priests from the mid-sixteenth century

¹³⁶ John Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures*: 50 Another source cites the first import shipment of tea into Holland in 1610, so the latter date seems most likely.

¹³⁷ Ross W. Jamieson, "The Essence of Commodification: Caffeine Dependencies in the Early Modern World," *Journal of Social History* 35 (2001): 283

¹³⁸ Kenneth Pommeranz and Steven Topik, *The World that Trade Created: Society, Culture and the World Economy 1400 to the Present* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe 1999): 85

¹³⁹ Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *Green Gold: The Empire of Tea* (London: Ebury, 2004): 66, Incidentally, Tea in Chinese is 茶 pronounced Cha. For further information on Tea's medicinal uses and promotion, see Woodruff Smith's *Complications of the Commonplace*

¹⁴⁰ Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *Green Gold*: 66

¹⁴¹ Ross W. Jamieson, "The Essence of Commodification: Caffeine": 283

By the middle of the seventeenth century, tea was available (though unusual) in coffeehouses in London. These coffeehouses were generally strictly for aristocratic men and sold tea alongside coffee, beer, and other beverages. Tea was served as beer would be, brewed in advance from large barrels, without any of the ceremony it would later become known for. The coffeehouses were especially popular among Parliamentarians, and were known for their political chatter.¹⁴²

Widely credited with the introduction of tea into British society is Catherine of Braganza, the Portuguese wife of British King Charles the second, who married and settled in England in 1662. Catherine was 22 at the time of her wedding and brought with her a large dowry, including a chest of tea. Tea subsequently became the most fashionable drink at court, served from blue and white porcelain from China. At this time tea was served as it is in China; green, without the inclusion of sugar or milk, and drunk from small cups without handles.¹⁴³

This “introduction” (though as already mentioned this was not the first time Britons had used tea) would prove to be very influential, leading to a long legacy of British tea drinkers and developing one of the most important products in Britain. Tea’s association with the court, royalty and the aristocratic politicians who drank it from coffee houses would later prove very beneficial in marketing tea as an affordable luxury product. With that in mind, focusing on product, price, place and promotion, we can examine this market to understand the spread and the role of tea in British society.

5.2 Product

In terms of basic use and function, tea has not changed much over the course of the last 15 centuries. Although arguably, there were product changes in the switch from green tea to black (black tea is made from the same leaves as green tea, but is processed differently). The conceptual use of tea as has, however, changed substantially over time. Tea was a very attractive product for merchants as trade and shipping grew to prominence. As it came to the market without any preconceived ideas it also allowed marketers to define it.

¹⁴² Bennett Alan Weinberg and Bonnie K. Bealer, *The World of Caffeine: The Science and Culture of the World's Most Popular Drug* (New York: Routledge, 2001):159-160, 162, The coffeehouses were so popular amongst the politically active that Charles II, fearing a possible uprising, banned the frequenting of coffeehouses in a proclamation made in 1676. This did not last long (a mere 11 days), and Charles rescinded his statement, claiming compassion for his subjects though the influence of the loss of taxes he received on most of the beverages may have also been a consideration.

¹⁴³ Weinberg and Bealer, *The World of Caffeine*:161-162

The stage was well set for tea to make its debut in British markets. The shipping industry was becoming an appealing option for investors as ships were just in the early stages of developing more reliability and safety. Entrepreneurs were finding financing options significantly more available. This provided a source for revenue, but the profits had to come from desirable tradable goods, which was found mostly in food items.¹⁴⁴ Actually, the majority of British imperial trade was in grocery items; especially tea and sugar.¹⁴⁵

The British had entered a new time where food scarcity was less of a fear for society as a whole. Especially within the middling classes, food took on new meanings in society. Foods, rather than being associated with sustenance, became associated with the meanings that society attached to them: class, luxury or poverty, healthy or unhealthy, social, feminine, masculine.¹⁴⁶

To begin with, (from around 1669 to 1685), tea was only an occasional import, but after noticing an interest in tea the directors at the East India Company started importing it on a regular basis.¹⁴⁷ By 1693, the British were still importing less than 1/10th of an ounce of tea per person.¹⁴⁸ These early tea imports could only be drunk by the wealthiest parts of society, creating the idea of tea as an extravagance.

From the beginning then, tea was a product of conspicuous consumption. It was not a necessity, as the wealthy classes could afford to drink whichever drink they chose: beer, ale, wine, etc, which were already part of the market. Tea's scarcity and therefore high prices allowed it to maintain an association to wealth and in this sense, class. So tea was chosen for its *perceived social value*. Thomas Short, writing during the mid-eighteenth century discussed the "public value" of drinking tea, recognizing tea as a part of the culture of gentility discussed earlier.¹⁴⁹

Conspicuous consumption, while importantly reflecting the importance of using a product to show wealth or luxury to others, is also a method of consumption that reinforces a sense of self achievement. As Fromer wrote, drinking tea placed users in an "imagined community of tea drinkers" that was well-respected, affluent and socially desirable.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *Green Gold: The Empire of Tea* (London: Ebury, 2004): 74-75

¹⁴⁵ Troy Bickham, "Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth Century Britain," *Past & Present* 198 (2008): 72-73

¹⁴⁶ Troy Bickham, *Eating the Empire*: 9

¹⁴⁷ John Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures: A Social History of Drinks in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1999): 52

¹⁴⁸ Kenneth Pommeranz and Steven Topik, *The World that Trade Created: Society, Culture and the World Economy 1400 to the Present* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe 1999): 85 Just to give an idea of the increase in 100 years, tea imports had risen to more than 1lb of tea per person by 1793.

¹⁴⁹ Ronald D. Michman and Edward D. Mazze, *The Affluent Consumer: Marketing and Selling the Luxury Lifestyle* (Westport, CT: Praeger 2004): 45

¹⁵⁰ Julie Fromer, *A Necessary Luxury: Tea in Victorian England* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2008): 12

The elements that made tea so popular can be seen as just one example in a cultural shift in understanding and valuing of products and commodities that occurred during the process of the consumer revolution. A general increase in wealth among the population changed the perception of need, particularly in foods, and luxuries became affordable for a wider range of people, both because of increasing wealth and increasing supply from Britain's ever-expanding empire.¹⁵¹ Even amongst the lower classes, as they developed more of a disposable income, luxury goods including tea were increasing in importance even if they had to work longer hours to acquire them.¹⁵²

Woodruff Smith found it interesting that tea was able to maintain its fashionability among the rich and the middling classes simultaneously. Woodruff Smith cited Simmel, who theorized that items which are in fashion among elites are only fashionable because of the perceived value of scarcity. Basically, Simmel argues that the underlying principles of fashion are in a product's exclusivity. Once a product is lowered to the level of the masses (or in the case of the high elites of the 18th century even the middling classes) it can no longer be fashionable at a high level because it is no longer a scarcity, it has lost its exclusive appeal. Tea, however, managed to maintain its importance (albeit with some periods of decline) for both levels of society and become a larger trend.¹⁵³ Burnett refers to this property of tea as a democratizing consumption, but it is not. It was still not available to the majority of the population.¹⁵⁴

The very rich, on tea's introduction into British society held tea ceremonies based in some small part on the traditions of Chinese tea ceremonies. Though the ceremony itself would change around the beginning of the eighteenth century to a more English version.¹⁵⁵ By adding ritual, the upper classes put an even greater value on tea. For these consumers, tea was no longer valued at the level of the commodity but as a part of their lifestyle. The daily, ritualistic taking of tea and the way it was served or drunk reflected the identity of its consumers in this way.¹⁵⁶ It deepened tea's associations with the people who drank it; associations of class, high society and

¹⁵¹ Troy Bickham, "Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth Century Britain," *Past & Present* 198 (2008): 106

¹⁵² Troy Bickham, "Eating the Empire": 76

¹⁵³ Woodruff D. Smith, "Complications of the Commonplace: Tea, Sugar and Imperialism," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23 (1992): 266

¹⁵⁴ John Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures: A Social History of Drinks in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1999): 52

¹⁵⁵ Woodruff Smith, "From Coffeehouse to Parlor: The Consumption of Coffee, Tea and Sugar in North-Western Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology* ed. by Jordan Goodman, Paul E. Lovejoy and Andrew Sherratt (NY: Routledge 1995): 149

¹⁵⁶ Julie Fromer, *A Necessary Luxury: Tea in Victorian England* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2008): 8

money. As wealth became more widespread and the middling classes were more able to afford luxury goods, they too, in imitation of the elite classes took up drinking tea.

Tea's ability to maintain its presense with both the elite and middling classes simultaneously was due to the culture of gentility that made it so popular. Tea was part of the commonality between the two classes that allowed them to communicate. Stephen Mennell described British acquisition of tea and more generally the increase in luxury food items as a 'civilizing of the appetite.' The elite class had shown off their wealth through having an excess of food and drink available, which was considered disrespectful and extravagant. Now, luxury foods and drinks like tea were served instead. Luxury items were becoming available to a much larger population, and the methods of showing wealth were becoming somewhat subtler and becoming more similar between the middling and elite classes.¹⁵⁷ Burnett as well describes new drinking habits as "Instrumental to the civilizing process experienced by Western Europe in the 17th Century."¹⁵⁸

Tea was promoted as a product that fit into the very moral culture of gentility. It was believed to be beneficial to one's health, would not cause inebriation and was therefore considered concientious. Drinking tea gave off the impression of character, morality, health consciousness, respectability and in another sense, domesticity.¹⁵⁹

Health was of particular importance when examining why tea was associated with respectability. Tea was thought to be a drink that showed moderation; partially because it contained bitter and sweet elements. From this, tea was associated with exerting self-control and balance, which was translated into self-control in other areas of life.

Tea's ability to stretch its popularity accross both the elite and middling classes is a very interesting development towards a democratization of consumption (though again, it is clear that it was still quite limited). It was simultaneously an exotic luxury drink that made it popular for the elites, and was a choice that showed responsibility, health consciousness, and patriotism and therefore showed the drinker in a favorable light.¹⁶⁰

For those participating in the culture of gentility, tea transfomred from a luxury product into a necessity. It is joined, in this respect, by such other products as tobacco, perfume, and chocolate.

¹⁵⁷ Troy Bickham, "Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth Century Britain," *Past & Present* 198 (2008): 79

¹⁵⁸ John Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures: A Social History of Drinks in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1999): 50-51

¹⁵⁹ Julie Fromer, *A Necessary Luxury: Tea in Victorian England* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2008): 10

¹⁶⁰ Woodruff D. Smith, "Complications of the Commonplace: Tea, Sugar and Imperialism," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23 (1992): 275-276

The culture of politeness was drastically important in changing the perception of consumer goods.¹⁶¹

In looking at the promotion of tea, it is important to understand some of the history of the quality of tea, as many early marketing campaigns were aimed at sellers differentiating their teas in terms of safety and quality. The quality of tea underwent changes over time, but its clearest documentation came after the mid eighteenth century. With the Commutation Act in 1784, came a major increase in demand from the English East India Company, which put a great deal of pressure on their suppliers in Canton. Subsequently, several incidents of fraud occurred. Tea was sometimes passed off with high-quality tea on the top of a package but lower or mixed quality underneath. Some packages were even sold to the EIC containing other contents. In order to assure quality consumer products, inspectors were sent to maintain quality and keep tea merchants from selling below the expected level of quality, though this was still not necessarily a perfect system. Tea was then sold in a catalog, divided by quality and sold on a nine to eleven class scale, specifying the Chinese dealer (or the ‘Chop’ as the dealer was called), the ship it sailed on, the time of arrival and the price.¹⁶²

The Chinese merchants were not the only suppliers creating deceptions. Adulteration of tea in Britain was common, and was referred to as “Slouch”. Slouch could be made of leaves of Sloe, elder, ash and sometimes included used tea as well. Several laws were passed against the false sale of tea (there were laws formed in 1724, 1730 and 1776), but this did not curb the infiltration of the market.¹⁶³

These adulterations and the continued press about it, created another need for marketing to ensure customers that products were safe. Branding (such as by Twinings) was one method towards this end. It also connected with the shopping experience and the relationship that shopkeepers had with their customers as consumers looked to be able to trust their merchants.

Also on the topic of products, were the accessories that were used to drink tea. Those who could afford to display their wealth served tea out of fine china dishes with silver spoons. For the middling classes there was a wide variety of options available, but having the best tea set possible was very important. The market for china benefitted significantly from tea’s success, making it a

¹⁶¹ Patrick Wallis. “Consumption, Retailing, and Medicine in Early-Modern London,” *Economic History Review* 61 (2008):, 29

¹⁶² Hoh Cheung and Lorna H. Mui, “The Commutation Act & the Tea Trade in Britain 1784-1793,” *The Economic History Review* 16 (1963) :240-243

¹⁶³ John Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures: A Social History of Drinks in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1999): 60

highly desirable commodity that women of the middling to upper classes could not get enough of. Fashion dictated new styles of China constantly and pottery became very important.¹⁶⁴

As a physical product, tea has remained mostly the same as it has for hundreds of years. It is significant to consider that tea came into the market without connotations or pre-conceived ideas. What makes it so interesting is that the perception of tea was truly developed over the course of the century to represent luxury, pleasure, exoticism and respectability.

5.3 Price

Price is an important part of whether any product is consumed. It is an important aspect to review in why tea became such a consumer favorite, though it is never the only factor. Lowering costs cannot sell a product unless customers know what the product is and why they would want to use it. Cost does, however, influence which consumers can use a product and to some extent price also determines the perceived value of a product (though it would be wrong to say that this is the only determining factor as well). Fluctuating prices were also an influencing factor in determining tea's path, from initially excluding large segments of the British market to eventually attracting a new target group.

On tea's first arrival in London, it cost £3.10 shillings per pound. Ten years later, it had dropped to £2 per pound. Tea's existence as a luxury item for its first 100 years in Britain should remain as no surprise then.¹⁶⁵ Despite this, it had a thriving popularity with the very rich, and in the last 15 years of the eighteenth century, tea's use would increase by 97.7 percent (consider the earlier notes about the last 15 years of the century, this was a time of major growth for the bourgeois class), compared to just a 14 percent population increase.¹⁶⁶

Increasingly during the century low price was used as a selling point, though tea was still not cheap overall.¹⁶⁷ In general foods made up around half of the average British household budget, with tea making up about 10 percent of the total budget.¹⁶⁸ From this it is clear that even as the

¹⁶⁴ Karen Harvey, "Barbarity in a Teacup? Punch, Domesticity and Gender in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Design History* 21 (2008): 210-211. We will look at the role of Women in tea's spread in British society later on in the text.

¹⁶⁵ Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *Green Gold: The Empire of Tea* (London: Ebury, 2004): 69

¹⁶⁶ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984): 29

¹⁶⁷ Hoh-Cheung Mui and Lorna H. Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth Century England*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989): 236

¹⁶⁸ Troy Bickham, "Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth Century Britain," *Past & Present* 198 (2008): 73. Consumption records are often measured by looking at the financial records of thousands of shops in London as well as tax records.

market for tea developed in the middle classes, it was still likely to have been a luxury item for them.

The expansion of the tea market and its increasing profits were not lost on the British government, who was losing increasing tax revenue to smugglers. Smugglers were an extremely efficient element for consumers as they kept taxes in check and were a cheaper way to purchase tea in most cases. When taxes were raised, the government actually lost money because of the increases in illicit tea trading.¹⁶⁹ While this was an important loss for the government, it was also a problem for those merchants trying to sell legal tea.

With the Commutation Act in 1784, the duties on tea lowered significantly, effectively removing the market for smugglers. This gave the English East India Company a monopoly on the tea trade (and the British government a better assurance of taxes). The act required that the EIC import sufficient amounts of tea for the entire British domestic market, maintain in its stock a one-year back up supply, hold one public sale every quarter, sell at reasonable prices and to sell tea to the highest bidder.¹⁷⁰

The Commutation Act, in addition to increasing regulation about tea purchases (which will be discussed in the promotion section), also brought tea to more reasonable prices for the growing market by increasing the amount of tea available. The Commutation Act also ensured, however, that tea could be efficiently taxed, which would prove to be a more slippery aspect for consumers looking for stable tea prices (particularly once tea became involved in the Opium Wars, though this was not until the early years of the nineteenth century).

Debates around the taxation of tea reflect some of the frustration felt by the wealthier classes that tea was becoming available to the population of wage laborers. In 1745, Simon Mason, particularly concerned about laborer class women drinking tea said

*“These poor Creatures, to be fashionable, and imitate their Superiors, are neglecting their Spinning, Knitting and spending what their Husbands are labouring hard for while in their houses their children are in Rags gnawing at a brown Crust.”*¹⁷¹

It is interesting to consider whether this is because it clashed with their view of tea as a luxury item or whether they really felt that it was too much of an expense for English laborers. It also

¹⁶⁹ Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *Green Gold: The Empire of Tea* (London: Ebury, 2004): 75

¹⁷⁰ Hoh Cheung and Lorna H. Mui, “The Commutation Act & the Tea Trade in Britain 1784-1793,” *The Economic History Review* 16 (1963) :234-235

¹⁷¹ Jonathan White, “The Laboring-Class Domestic Sphere in Eighteenth-Century British Social Thought.” in *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830*, ed. John Styles and Amanda Vickery. (New Haven, CT Yale University Press, 2006): 253

reflects the general concern of watching the lower classes become more and more familiar with fashionability.

Between 1720 and 1770, the British-Chinese trade relationship had been silver for tea. Generally this relationship was not as beneficial for the British as it was for the Chinese. The silver was imported from the British colonies in the America's, creating significant problems with the rise of American animosity towards the British in the mid 1770's. With rising demand for tea, inflation raising the costs of silver, and declining silver availability due to the relationship with the Americans the British tea trade was under significant pressure in the 1770's.

It is important to consider this from the perspective that foreign luxury goods had been negatively connotated with the wealthy classes in previous generations and tea now had to overcome this as well. It is undoubtable that at this time tea was not a profitable product for the British economy. It had, however, been so important in the development of the culture of the bourgeois, that it still continued to grow in popularity during this period.

The price of tea did fluctuate significantly and lower generally over the course of the century, but price can only explain a fraction of the growth of the tea market. In economic terms value is much more than just the actual financial cost of a product and tea developed value beyond its price. In some ways price did help to determine value by its initial exclusion of non-elite consumers, but it is clear that even with high prices and through difficult financial situations, there was a determination to purchase tea, based on the perceived value of the product.

5.4 Place

How a product is consumed is very important. Earlier it was mentioned that shopkeepers were responsible for making sure that consumers knew not just what the most fashionable products were but how to consume them. One major piece of how a product is consumed, is the place of consumption. Place sets the expectation for what consumption will be like and gives context to patterns of use, meaning, and social understanding. In tea's case the place that tea was consumed was crucial as it defined who could consume tea (men vs. women, families vs. individuals), which was shifted over the course of the century.

As discussed earlier, tea was originally sold in apothecaries and then was sold in coffee houses, which were popular from around 1660 to 1720. It is crucial to note here that coffee houses were limited to male consumers. One possible reason why civility is connotated with tea and coffee is that while in taverns, even among the upper classes men were expected to become a bit rowdy

here and there, this was not acceptable in coffeehouses. The expectation was that coffee and tea were drinks meant for quiet, meaningful consumption over polite conversation and perhaps business arrangements.¹⁷²

After the introduction into high society by Catherine of Braganza, tea expanded into a more domestic market when women began to take tea at home.¹⁷³ By bringing tea into the domestic sphere, and further into the pleasure gardens, tea became a gender-neutral drink.¹⁷⁴ Pleasure gardens were a gathering point for the upper and middling classes to gossip, enjoy walks and music and connect with their fellow aristocrats.¹⁷⁵

Marketers were able to see a wider market and appealed to it to the fullest. Because tea was so much weaker than spirits or beer, it was considered a very appropriate drink for children as well.¹⁷⁶ Twinings took advantage of this larger market and opened the first teashop in 1717.¹⁷⁷

This meant that tea's market suddenly expanded exponentially as women and children began to also consume tea. This is also important because when the consumers of tea changed, there were also changes in meaning and perceptions of tea.

Teahouses became an external space where families could spend time. They were a safe place for women to meet. This was not only an important development for tea, but an important development in terms of expanding the social lives of women and children, neither of whom were expected to visit coffeehouses or taverns as had been the popular choices for men previously. This can be seen as another example of marketing creating a new ritual and habit for bourgeois consumers.

Tea was becoming the fashionable social drink, and made its way into in the domestic sphere. Ladies made tea a part of their social rounds by serving tea to entertain guests, which became a ceremony that displayed the gentility of the hostess at the same time allowing her to show off her china and silver.¹⁷⁸ The earliest ceremonies reflected on the tea ceremonies of Chinese aristocrats, because in early modern Britain, the Chinese elites were perceived to be more refined

¹⁷² Woodruff Smith, "From Coffeehouse to Parlor: The Consumption of Coffee, Tea and Sugar in North-Western Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology* ed. by Jordan Goodman, Paul E. Lovejoy and Andrew Sherratt (NY: Routledge 1995), 154

¹⁷³ Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *Green Gold: The Empire of Tea* (London: Ebury, 2004): 80, Bennett Alan Weinberg and Bonnie K. Bealer, *The world of caffeine: the science and culture of the world's most popular drug* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 161-162

¹⁷⁴ Tea's association with femininity was strong. One author discussed the presence of rumors expressing that tea's popularity with men was so great that it might negatively impact the British military forces

¹⁷⁵ Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *Green Gold*: 80

¹⁷⁶ Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *Green Gold*: 81

¹⁷⁷ John Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures: A Social History of Drinks in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1999), 51

¹⁷⁸ Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *Green Gold*: 81-82

than Europeans.¹⁷⁹ These ceremonies eventually spread to the middle classes as well, though of course on a less grand scale. The ceremonies were strictly structured, and were a gathering time for the family.¹⁸⁰

Just as the transition from coffeehouses to more gender-neutral places of consumption like teahouses and pleasure gardens, the transition to a domestic sphere also had implications for the perceptions of meaning and value of tea.

Respectability could be associated as well with tea drinking at home because men who appeared to be respectable in public needed to portray similar responsibility at home. Tea drinking at home showed the same values associated with tea drinking in coffeehouses, but was additionally spending time with family.¹⁸¹

It was expected that any strife or conflict would not be mentioned during tea time, so it was considered a very important family gathering of the day. To some extent it can be seen as part of the identity of being a family as one of the primary, ritualistic meeting times that would have been expected of families.¹⁸² Tea became a very intimate part of people's daily lives and a time during the day that because of social structuring was a positive, family oriented experience.

In the context of drinking tea at home, women were the dominant figures. Women were expected to preside over tea time, and pour the tea (symbolically nourishing their families). Thus, the conversation needed to be more polite and appropriate for women to be a part of. It was also a time of day when women held some moment of power in their lives, even if it was limited to just this task.¹⁸³

It's also important to look at place in terms of a broader context. Tea drinking throughout the British empire was also a way of showing patriotism (and of course, extremely important at home). It was well known from the trade cards of grocers that the British East India Company imported tea, and that sugar was also taken from British colonies. Drinking tea, unlike coffee or

¹⁷⁹ Woodruff Smith, "From Coffeehouse to Parlor: The Consumption of Coffee, Tea and Sugar in North-Western Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology* ed. by Jordan Goodman, Paul E. Lovejoy and Andrew Sherratt (NY: Routledge 1995), 149

¹⁸⁰ Woodruff Smith, *From Coffeehouse to Parlor*: 158

¹⁸¹ Woodruff Smith, *From Coffeehouse to Parlor*: 158-9

¹⁸² Woodruff Smith, *From Coffeehouse to Parlor*: 159

¹⁸³ Woodruff Smith, *From Coffeehouse to Parlor*: 161

cocoa, showed support for the British empire. France and Holland had connections to coffee, which made drinking coffee both more affordable and supported their trades.¹⁸⁴

Place can show us the social context of tea, the implications and the role that tea played in people's lives. Its places of consumption are especially important in considering gender-related accessibility, which would have been a strong determinant of use. The way in which place, price and product all came together was in promotion. Without promotion tea would have none of the perceived characteristics that came to define its role in society, and would likely have failed as a product.

5.5 Promotion

Tea was an one of the first products to be promoted in a modern way. Tea's spread through multiple levels of society gives an interesting look at marketing techniques designed to appeal to a broader audience. It was advertised in newspapers, and was one of the first products to be marked with a brand. Its popularity and universality amongst Britons, made it an important sales piece for coffeehouses and later for grocers.

Tea created a unique need for marketing and advertisement as it was a new product for the British markets and not entirely obvious in its use. Unlike beer, bread, meat or cheeses, tea came in the form of small dried leaves that resembled something like dirt. Explaining to the public that this expensive, over-taxed non-dirt had some merit was the first task of tea dealers.¹⁸⁵ As explained earlier, this was common for colonial products and was one of the driving forces behind the need for new marketing techniques.

Tea holds the distinction of being the first commodity to be advertised in a London newspaper for its health properties.¹⁸⁶ In the earliest advertisements, the medicinal properties of tea were used in advertising as a way to draw in customers for grocers or coffee shops.¹⁸⁷ These early conceptions of tea as a health product built up the product for the later culture of gentility (as it was considered moral to look after one's health), and gave tea a long lasting selling point.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Troy Bickham, "Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth Century Britain," *Past & Present* 198 (2008): 19, 22, Chocolate was very popular in Spain due to its connection with South America.

¹⁸⁵ Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *Green Gold: The Empire of Tea* (London: Ebury, 2004):95

¹⁸⁶ Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *Green Gold*: 95

¹⁸⁷ Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *Green Gold*: 66

¹⁸⁸ Woodruff Smith, "From Coffeehouse to Parlor: The Consumption of Coffee, Tea and Sugar in North-Western Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology* ed. by Jordan Goodman, Paul E. Lovejoy and Andrew Sherratt (NY: Routledge 1995): 149

Tea was also heavily advertised on Trade Cards. The images referenced on grocer trade cards tended to promote sugar, tobacco or coffee, and predominantly tea. Tea was marketed in many different ways, from its health properties to other displays as an exotic product of the orient, with cards displaying stereotypical Chinese men and women working or enjoying tea, and boxes bearing Chinese-like symbols. To a population just beginning to enjoy the fruits of their empire, this must have been a striking symbol of foreign luxury.¹⁸⁹ The distance that tea traveled, and the entirely unfamiliar culture of the Chinese increased the perceived value of tea for British consumers of every class.¹⁹⁰ By 1760, advertisements for tea already outnumbered those for coffee (tea was more available by this point as well), and considering tea's growth over this time it is possible to conclude that these were relatively successful.¹⁹¹

Sugar was also advertised periodically (largely in connection to tea) and it would have been clear that these products were the result of slavery and imperialism. It is interesting that the cards were made to look so blatantly exotic, because it must have emphasized the importance of the sea trade and Britain's interests overseas, and yet the connotations of trade had changed dramatically.¹⁹²

Tea was an early part of the transformation of eighteenth century retailing techniques, both in how tea was sold, and the way that other goods were sold. Tea was used to attract high class customers by serving them tea prior to their shopping and creating an experience as well as an opportunity for a direct relationship between the merchant and the customer. Along this line, tea branding became important so that consumers could associate merchant names with the quality of their tea.¹⁹³ Tea was one of the first products to be branded, and branding led to a related increase in advertising.¹⁹⁴

In looking at trade cards, it is possible to gain an idea of the images and ideas behind tea in the eighteenth century. A small collection of them can be found in Images 3-13. Below are some ideas of what can be understood from them.

¹⁸⁹ Troy Bickham, "Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth Century Britain," *Past & Present* 198 (2008): 12-15

¹⁹⁰ Maxine Berg, "In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History & British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century," *Past & Present* 182 (2004): 16

¹⁹¹ John Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures: A Social History of Drinks in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1999): 54

¹⁹² Troy Bickham, "Eating the Empire": 19, 22

¹⁹³ Helen Berry, "Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth Century England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002): 386

¹⁹⁴ John Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures: A Social History of Drinks in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1999): 62

Image 3 (for John Guilliford's shop) appears to have generally sold chinaware, but also sold tea with it. Tea motifs can be seen through the designs around the edges, and on the text of the cannisters (he also highlighted tea pots in the bottom corners).

Image 4 (Holmes druggery and tea) is for a shop that shows tea's connection in the minds of eighteenth century consumers and health. Holmes was an apothecary shop that carried tea alongside his other health products. He also highlights tea in the designs around the edges (the cannisters are full of Bohea, a common type of tea at the time) as well as piles of sugar.

Image 5 (for George Farr) is for a shop that sold a multitude of goods including tea. This trade card emphasises the tendency for shops at the time to try to attract customers by offering (and advertising) a wide variety of goods. Also included was a picture of a beehive to denote his location.

Image 6 (Arnaud and Green) is the first shown here to show a Chinese man in association with tea. The Chinese characters used on trade cards served to emphasize the exotic and luxurious nature of drinking tea and this was a common theme on trade cards representing tea. Similarly, on products such as sugar or tobacco, slaves or Native Americans were shown in order to denote the foreign connections with those products.¹⁹⁵

Image 7 (for John Colcraft) shows the tendency for merchants to use the engravings they had made for trade cards for bills or letters for their customers. The small logo in the left also shows tea products.

Images 8 and 9 (for Chas Hill and John Harling, respectively) both again show connections to the China trade. This time even more prominently than in Image 6. Chas Hill has two Chinese men leaning against a sign for his shop and John Harling has a Chinese man standing near a barrel of tea. It is also noted on this card that he will sell for wholesale or retail.

Image 10 (for Robert Cartony) shows that the concepts initiated by Wedgewood also made their way into other markets. Cartony advertised that he was the tea dealer of "His Grace the Duke of York". This particular print of his engraving is again used as the heading for a bill.

Image 11 (for J.T. Stevens) shows again a very prominent man from China but also shows a ship in the background and even a small Chinese building. This image is unquestionably advertising his tea as a cosmopolitan product of trade.

¹⁹⁵ Troy Bickham, "Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth Century Britain," *Past & Present* 198 (2008): 86-88

Image 12 (for W. Evill) shows another Chinese man, this time holding a flower. This shop was in Bath, which was a common place for the elite and middling classes to have holidays. As with many of the cards that show Chinese men, this card shows characters meant to look like Chinese writing, however none of them are correct. They are only meant to look exotic and add to an air of mystery and cosmopolitanism.

Image 13 (for Miles Dent) is also showing the wide variety of products that he offers to his customers. He presents his address information in the middle, surrounded by a circle of products that he offers, prominently displaying tea on the very top. He also highlights tea above his other products by placing four different types of tea cannisters in the four corners of the card.

All of the cards are ornate and prominently displaying tea. This is indicative of the luxury of the shops and the importance that was placed on tea by marketers (which was obviously successful in creating a tea culture). The ideas of tea as a medicine, as exotic, as a luxury, as an item of British trade come through clearly in the imagery of the period, and the number of cards that show it prove that this would have been reinforced by seeing it repeatedly.

Tea culture in Britain was not an accident. There was clearly a desire for tea to enter the market as shipping became a prominent industry. It was marketed heavily with clear messages of luxury and exoticism. Proof of its significance can be seen in the attempts made by the British government to keep supplies coming and cheap (in the Commutation act, in research in India for ways to grow their own tea, and in the Opium wars). It was entrenched into the middling class society as a defining element of their lifestyle and became one of the most important products in Britain.

5.6 Tea in Society

We can see from the example of tea that the patterns of consumption were changing in the eighteenth century. Beyond the obvious example of more products being available for consumers to purchase, the process and meaning changed. Advertising became important. Luxury spread to much lower class levels. Consumers began to make more demands on the products that were available. Products became more meaningful and less based on basic survival. From all of this we can see a shift in meaning, and tea serves as an excellent example.

In this way, we can see tea as a micro-example of broader processes at work, and how products and commodities fit into this mix. Tea's place as a luxury item that became a broad market item shows the decline of the aristocracy and the growth of the middle class (and general growing

population wealth). It shows the willingness of the bourgeois to accept luxury items into their lifestyle and to incorporate it into their rituals. Tea as a gender-oriented drink shows the opening of more flexibility in gender rules. This can again be connected to a changing lifestyle in the middling classes. Tea's pricing decreases (and, arguably, its connections to sugar) show the power of the British empire, and its drastic measures to ensure commodity growth. This created a demand for new, more impactful marketing techniques. Tea's marketing and promotion show the growth of marketing, consumer demand and product development. For this, tea is a great example in terms of marketing, but in general as a real comprehensive product of this period in British history.

6. Conclusion

A well-referenced image shows the importance of material culture in eighteenth century Britain. Hogarth's *The Harlot's Progress* (plate 2), shown here as Image 14, shows much about how important goods were in displaying wealth, in show civility and in the rise of a consumer class. In the image, Moll, the central character of this series of images is dressed in the latest fashions, and is in a very fashionable household of a Jewish merchant surrounded by everything that is important to show taste at the time: fine furniture, paintings, and of course a tea table with a tea set.

There are several themes to pull from this. First, is the status of the merchant, able to show a wide array of fine items in his household (and of course, hold Moll as a mistress). The luxury items that he is able to afford is a bit in contrast to his less-polite activities with Moll and with the other mistress he is taking as he leaves the room, indicated by the breaking of the tea set. Tea was so entrenched into the culture of politeness that it was used to represent it here (as well as in other prints). The image as a whole is a critique on immorality (and thus a call for further politeness) and growing interest in fashion, extravagance and luxury.

The culture of civility, so important to the eighteenth century bourgeoisie and material culture can be seen as intertwined, and they were driven by marketing. The middling classes were defining themselves, adapting to a new culture of wage laborers with an income to spend on products beyond their basic needs. Merchants helped to show them how they should spend their time, what products they need to use to identify themselves as bourgeois and how to use those products in a way that was polite. The bourgeois class was unquestionably then, a small-scale consumer culture.

Consumer culture did not happen in a bubble but was impacted by the enlightenment, colonialism, and political life during the eighteenth century as well. Tea is just one example of products that were brought to the market without preconceptions that consumers were taught how, why and when to use. The increase in a wide array of new products that consumers were unfamiliar with and had to be taught to use and to value was also an important element in the rise of marketing.

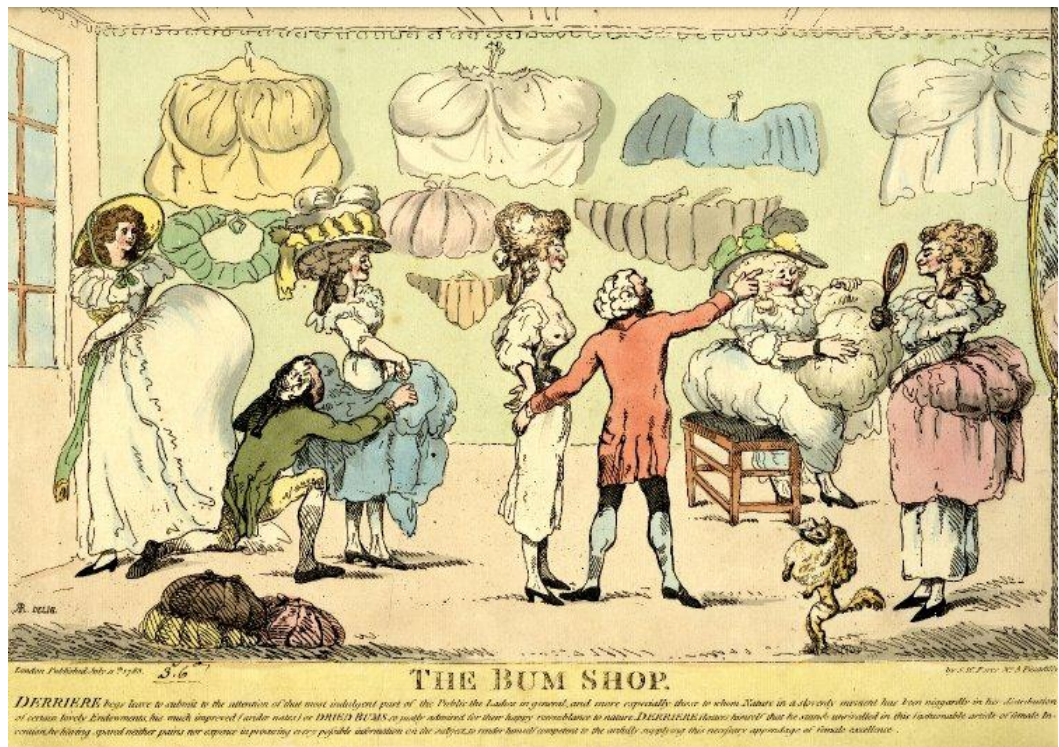
Marketing, products and the bourgeoisie were all in dynamic stages of development in the eighteenth century. The bourgeois was forming through increases in wage labor and wealth, and a decrease in power for the elite classes. There were constantly new products on the market through increased interest and importance of fashion, the enlightenment and colonialism.

Marketing was a way of connecting the two, developing as it brought new consumer goods to an increasingly interested market with more and more money to spend. The developments in visual marketing, in fashion, in retailing, branding, and the emulative designs created by Wedgwood and Boulton brought about changes in the perceived value of objects and helped to create the culture of gentility, increasingly concerned with fashionable products over the course of the century.

Future scholarship should be considered on the impact of marketing in politics, visual popular culture (as some trade cards were created by popular artists) and in building economic growth. The trials to this research are of course centered in the difficulty in analyzing the success or failure of marketing on a society several centuries ago. It is still, however, important to understand that there was an impact and that these elements were shaping the ideas and the lives of this society. In looking at eighteenth century England, it is possible to better understand that marketing has had an impact on the choices made by consumers not just in recent generations, but for hundreds of years. Modern western culture descends from these same ideas and traces of it can be seen in these early cultural ideas of shopping, visual culture and a passion for consumption.

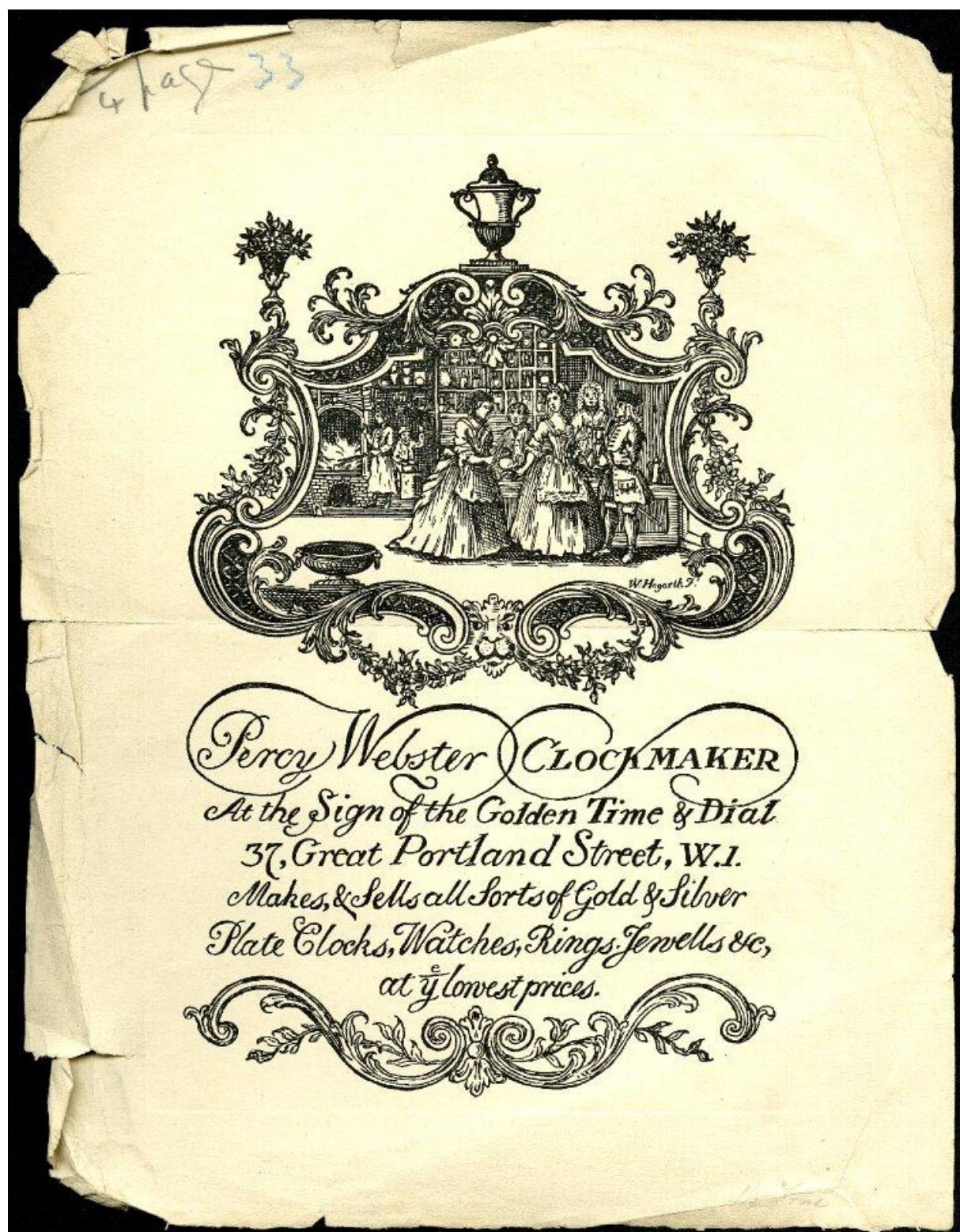
Images

Image 1



R.R. Delin. *The Bum Shop*, Satire Drawing (1785) British Museum

Image 2



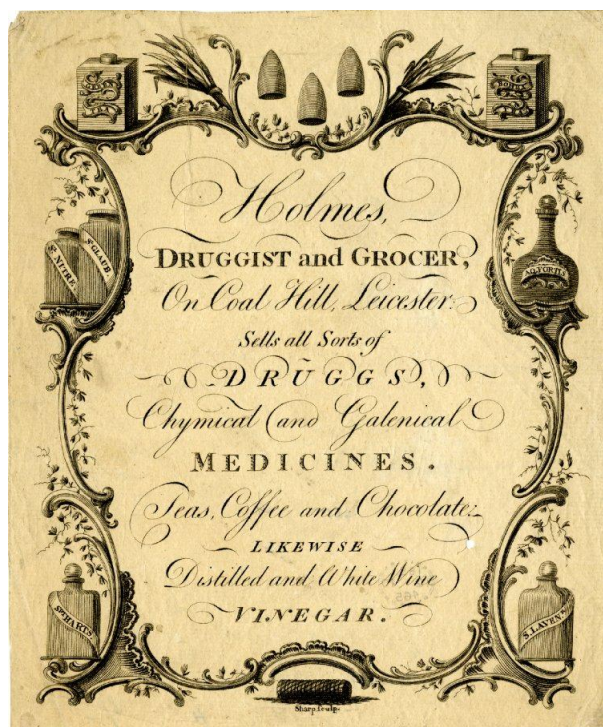
Artist Unknown. Trade Card for "Percy Webster, Clockmaker," Uncolored Etching (undated eighteenth century)
 British Museum

Image 3



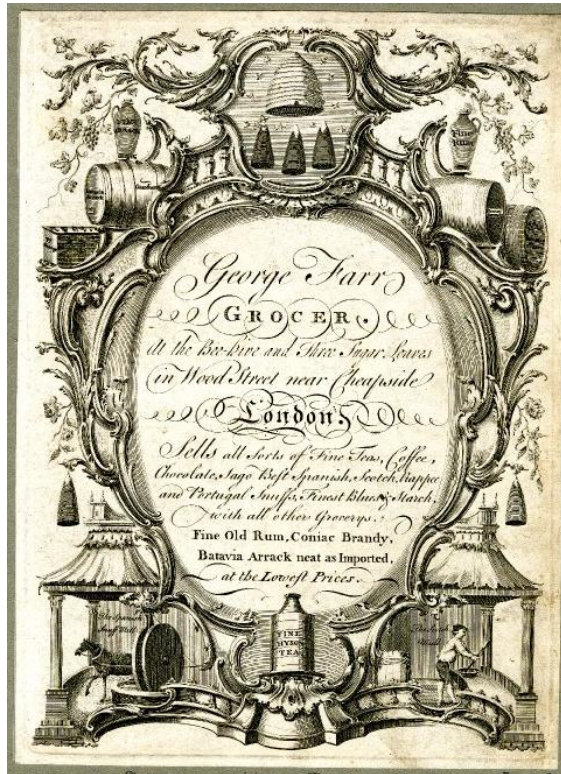
Artist Unknown. Trade Card for "John Guilliford," Uncolored Etching (undated eighteenth century) Victoria & Albert Museum

Image 4



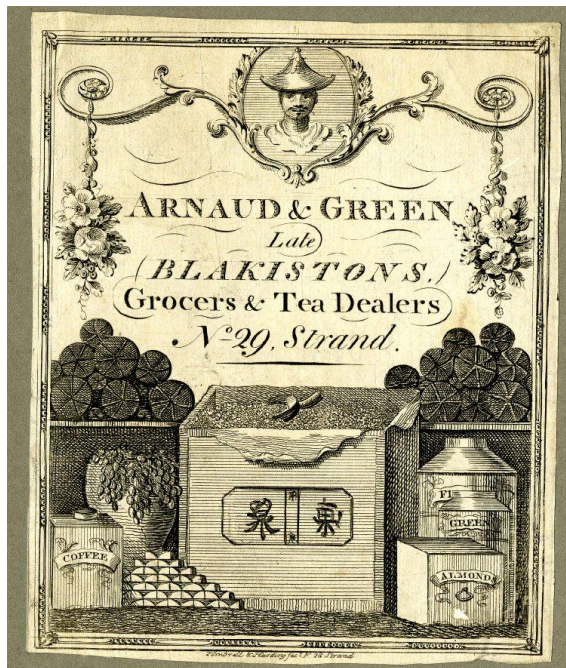
Artist Unknown. Trade Card for "Holmes Druggist and Grocer," Uncolored Etching (1764-1824) British Museum

Image 5



Artist Unknown. Trade Card for "George Farr, Grocer," Uncolored Etching (1764-1824) British Museum

Image 6



Timbrell and Harding. Trade Card for "Arnaud & Green," Uncolored Etching (1792-1799) British Museum

Image 7



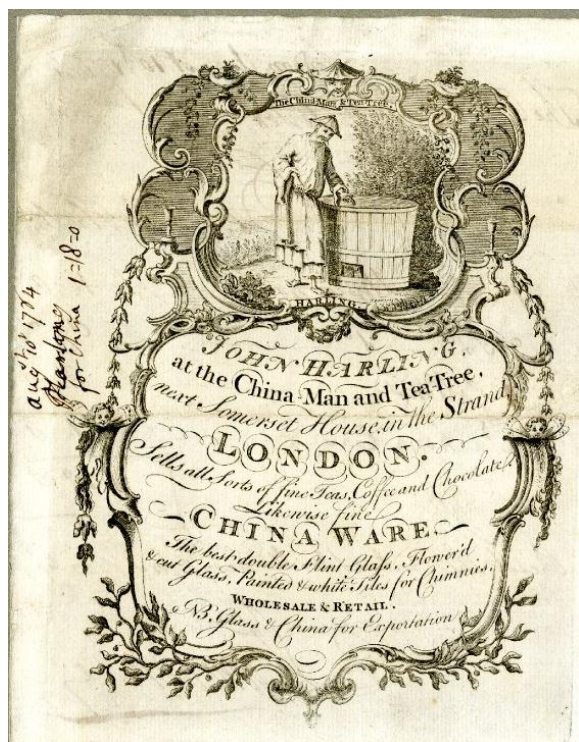
Unknown Artist. Bill head for "John Colcraft, Grocer," Uncolored Etching (1734) British Museum

Image 8



Unknown Artist. Trade Card for "Chas Hill, Tea Dealers & Grocer," Uncolored Etching (1744) British Museum

Image 9



Unknown Artist. Trade Card for "John Harling at the China Man and Tea-Tee," Uncolored Etching (1764) British Museum

Image 10



Unknown Artist. Bill Head for "Robert Cartony, Tea Dealer, China Man and Glass Seller" Uncolored Etching (1763) British Museum

Image 11



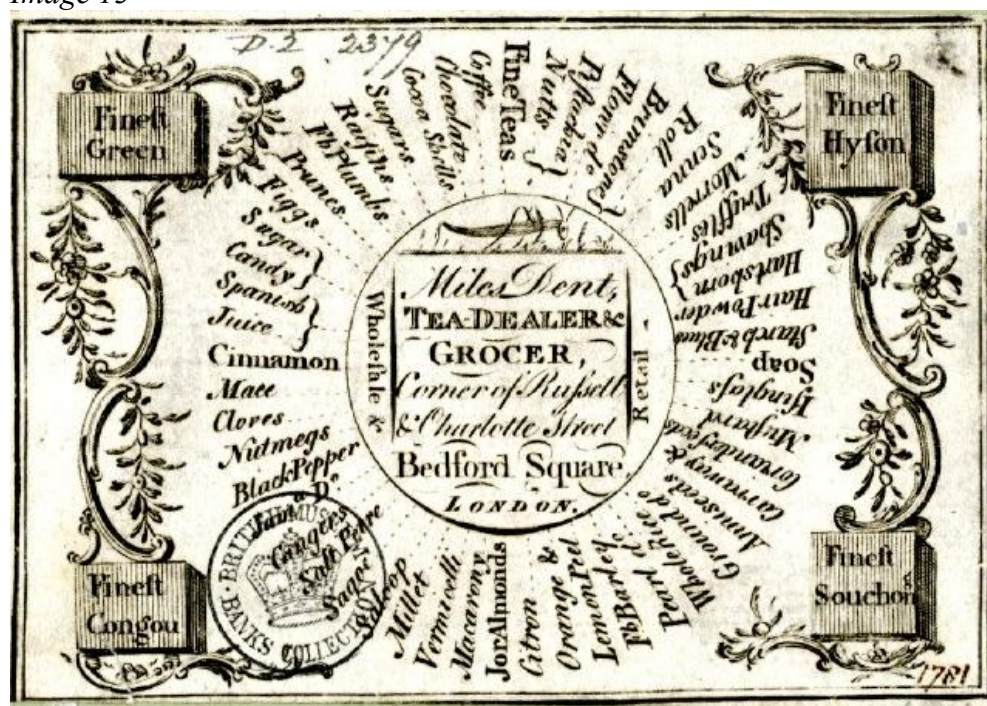
Philipps Engraver. Trade Card for "J.T. Stevens, Grocer & Tea Dealer" Uncolored Etching (undated eighteenth Century) British Museum

Image 12



Unknown Artist. Trade Card for "W. Evill, Tea Dealer" Uncolored Etching (1792) British Museum

Image 13



Unknown Artist. Trade Card for "Miles Dent, Tea Dealer & Grocer" Uncolored Etching (1781) British Museum

Image 14



William Hogarth, Plate II from *A Harlot's Progress*, Etching (1732) Victoria & Albert Museum

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