TEA CULTURE AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE, 1600-1900

by

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ABSTRACT

BRITTANY CAROL ASHBY. Tea culture and the British Empire, 1600-1900. (Under the direction of DR. DAVID JOHNSON)

At the end of the fifteenth century, the consumption of tea remained predominantly in the East, and only a few wealthy western aristocrats knew of the tea plant. Only one hundred years later, tea sparked the interests of many nations and consumption rose in large quantities worldwide. Great Britain became one of the first western nations to import tea in large quantities. By mid- seventeenth century, Great Britain also led the world in the consumption of goods in many forms. Many consumer goods coming out of the British Empire drove the early consumer revolution, where some items became so important to the British that a culture surrounding the commodities began to appear in the ways people consumed the goods. By the Industrial Revolution, the masses in Great Britain began consuming certain goods for the popularity and desire of it. No longer did the consumer solely focus on whether the object of desire was appropriate or good, but an attention to the popularity of the object played a major part in the actual consumption. The British consumption of tea is a striking example of the ability of the consumer revolution to completely transform a good from an object to a cultural pastime. For the upper class, social status and power were inseparable and tea culture provided a means for which to determine social distinction. Witnessing this practice, the lower classes adapted tea drinking, but made it into an extremely important part of their day. Tea was, and continues to be, one of the most popular imperial goods the British would ever encounter. This paper describes the cultural consumption of tea by the British upper and lower classes, and how they each made it their own.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Next to water, tea is the most consumed beverage in the world. Annually, global tea consumption continues to rise. Of course, that could also show for the steady increase in population, especially in Asia where population growth and tea consumption lead the statistics on both accounts. In 2005, a study conducted on the properties of tea showed that worldwide tea consumption reached almost 3.4 million tons. Of that 3.4 million, India consumed almost 800,000 tons and China almost 700,000 tons. Yet, tea consumption is not confined to Asia. The consumption of tea continues to rise in the western parts of the world as well.[1]

The tea plant maintains an important place in the lives of billions of people each day, although several centuries ago only those in the east consumed, much less knew of, tea. China and Japan had long perfected the art of drinking tea before western nations knew of the tea plant. Elaborate ceremonies accompanied tea drinking on special occasions, which brought art and beauty into the realm of tea consumption. Japanese tea ceremonies especially laid the groundwork for western tea culture when the British first

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[1] Based on the statics of worldwide tea consumption, world black tea consumption will rise at a rate of 1.6% annually, whereas worldwide consumption of green tea will average at 2% annually. European tea consumption is estimated to rise at a rate of 1.4 % annually. The United States too has seen an increase where in 2000 it was reported that 90 thousand tons were consumed and in 2005 tea consumption reached 100.1 thousand tons. These numbers are reported to continue rising. Chi-Tang Ho, Jen-Kun Lin, and Fereidoon Shaihidi, eds. *Tea and Tea Products: Chemistry and Health Promoting Properties* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, Taylor and Francis Group, LLC, 2009), 6.

experienced the intricate tea ceremony in the mid-1500s. From the first introductions of tea to the British, they became enraptured by the special beverage. Tea drinking accompanied the many instances of diplomatic relations between European representatives and Chinese officials, as was customary for formal meetings in Asia during this time. In response to the intrigue of the tea plant and the specialized ceremonies that accompanied drinking it, British explorers made sure to bring it back with them to Great Britain. This is the beginning of the story on how such a simple beverage stole the hearts of British citizens across the Empire and in doing so shaped the daily lives and social practices of those who consumed tea.[2]

The purpose of this thesis is to illustrate the development and establishment of tea consumption as a British cultural activity and to show how important commodities and consumerism was to the establishment of British identity and class distinction. In doing so, this thesis will examine the draw of tea as a beverage, a form of distinction, a social activity, a cultural practice, and a daily staple. Most importantly, this thesis examines the connection between the consumption of tea and the rise of British consumer culture. Following the framework of Karl Marx's analysis of commodities in *Das Kapital,* this thesis will track the commodity culture and craze that surrounded British tea drinking during the early modern era. This thesis will also illustrate how the commodity culture of tea flowed from the aristocracy down to the working class but also how the working class shaped their own form of tea culture based on their socio-economic status. Previous to working-class consumption of tea, it was seen and performed as a social pastime. The consumption of tea by the working class transformed tea drinking from being a social

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[2] James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660-1800* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 9.

engagement to a daily meal. How did this plant become so entrenched in the lives of the British masses to become a daily staple by the end of the Victorian era, and be seen as an activity synonymous with Britain itself? Through the continued import of imperial goods into Great Britain, what were once exotic and strange became domesticated household items that ceased to be unusual. To get to this point, a transformation in the daily practices of British consumers had to take place.

<div align="center">The British Desire for Commodities</div>

By the seventeenth century, Great Britain had been making advances in many areas of the world. The British Government had established a colony in the Americas and was turning its attention onto China and India. Europeans travelling in Asia desired the exotic goods that seemed limitless in those territories. In particular, Europeans were drawn to the spices, linens, jewellery, porcelain, glass wares, precious metals, stones, and silks.[3] For those explorers, nothing of the same quality could be found within Europe.[4] The exotic commodities of Asia became desired by the British population. This craving also encouraged trade agreements and eventually the official control of some Asian territories by the British government. While Great Britain went into unknown regions for many reasons, obtaining exotic goods became an important part of the objective as the

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[3] James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 2-3.

[4] Thomas Garway, one of the first English dealers of tea, declared tea as " of such known Virtues, that those Nations, so Famous for Antiquity, Knowledge, and Wisdome, doe [sic] Frequently sell it themselves, for its weight in Silver; and the high estimation of the Drink made there with, hath occasioned an enquiry into the Nature there of, among the most Intelligent Persons of all Nations, that have Travelled into these Parts [China].… the Drink is Declared to be most Wholesome, Preserving in Perfect Health until Extreme old age." Thomas Garway, *An Exact Description of the Growth, Quality, and Vertues [sic] of the Leaf TEE, alias TAY, Drawn up for Satisfaction of Persons of Quality, and the Good of the Nation in General,* 1664, in Early English Books Online, *Bodleian Library*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.librarylink.uncc.edu/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=12144105&FILE=../session/1415934734_6318&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&VID=54908&PAGENO=1&ZOOM=&VIEWPORT=&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&HIGHLIGHT_KEYWORD= (accessed on August 1, 2014).

demand for goods mounted. Although the loss of the American colony came with a cost in the late eighteenth century, Great Britain had solidified its control in India and Canada, and was pursuing territories in New Zealand and Australia.[5] The more Great Britain's Empire grew, the more goods that made their way into the hands of the British people. The British experienced many different imperial commodities, but their fascination with tea grew past their interest in most other goods to an extent that wars were fought over their desire for the plant.[6]

Alongside the imperial expansion, a transformation from an agricultural economy to a mercantile one began to take shape in Great Britain. In response to technological and economic transformations, a market economy of consumer goods brought about a rise in consumerism by the seventeenth century. Those at the top of society dictated what was considered fashionable, and in most instances things considered fashionable had a higher price. This early system of consumerism did not allow for most to take part, since only those with considerable wealth could enjoy such goods. In response to the popularity of exotic goods coming from overseas trade, people began consuming the commodities in a systematic and organized fashion. The upper classes consumed some commodities to an extent that a culture of the commodity rose alongside the consumption of it. For the consumer, the commodity became a fixture in their lives and with it the consumption of commodities rose above the mundane act of simply consuming it. The imperial project facilitated the rise of a commodity culture within the upper classes of Great Britain.[7]

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[5] Tom Standage, *A History of the World in Six Glasses*, (New York: Walker and Company, 2005), 175-176.
[6] Robert B. Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Ecological Narrative from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-first Century* (New York: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 112-113.
[7] Sydney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1986).

A major shift in consumption began to take shape by the mid- eighteenth century with the industrialization of Great Britain. No longer did the British market have to rely on large quantities of finished goods coming from elsewhere since the new factories and technological innovations allowed for a majority of items to be created within the British Isles. The Industrial Revolution not only saw revolutionary concepts in machinery and technology, but a consumer and product revolution changed the ways in which people were defined and lived. Faster production and new material uses made the goods much cheaper and accessible to anyone with a little extra spending money. The upper classes were not the sole customers of the markets by this time; the rising middle class could also take part in consumerism. Eventually, the working class also played a role in the consumer revolution by the late-Victorian era, although on a lesser basis.

By the nineteenth century, the commodity became a fixture in the lives of the British masses, and as the capitalist system expanded, consumerism continued to rise. In the eighteenth century, shopping went from a chore to a pastime and a hobby. Consumer culture transformed simple stores based on requirement to bustling markets, exciting arcades, and major department stores.[8] Even so, consumer culture did not just happen in the public sector but it also happened in the home. British people began consuming goods

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[8] The Burlington Arcade is one of the first shopping places of its kind. During the early 1800s, with a rise in industry and consumption in Great Britain, the demand for public shopping spaces rose to new heights. Built in 1819, the Burlington Arcade is the stepping stone to the revolutionary shopping experience that would come at the end of the 19th century with the advent of the Department store. Before this, people would buy goods in the market place or they went from specialty shop to specialty shop for all of their needs. Declaring the plans for the new shopping space, *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1817 published an article describing what was to come of this building.  The article stated "This covered way will contain a double line of shops, for the sale of jewellery and other fancy articles" and was intended "for the gratification of the publick and to give employment to industrious females." *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 122, 1817, pp. 272.

at a high rate, and in many instances they were consuming goods that were for the home.[9]

Food stuffs and table wares coming from the Empire attracted much attention and when

they became affordable enough, or cheaply made within Great Britain, the masses began

consuming them. In this instance, the consumer culture of tea is an excellent example of

the consumer revolution as a whole.

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[9] Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 1-3.
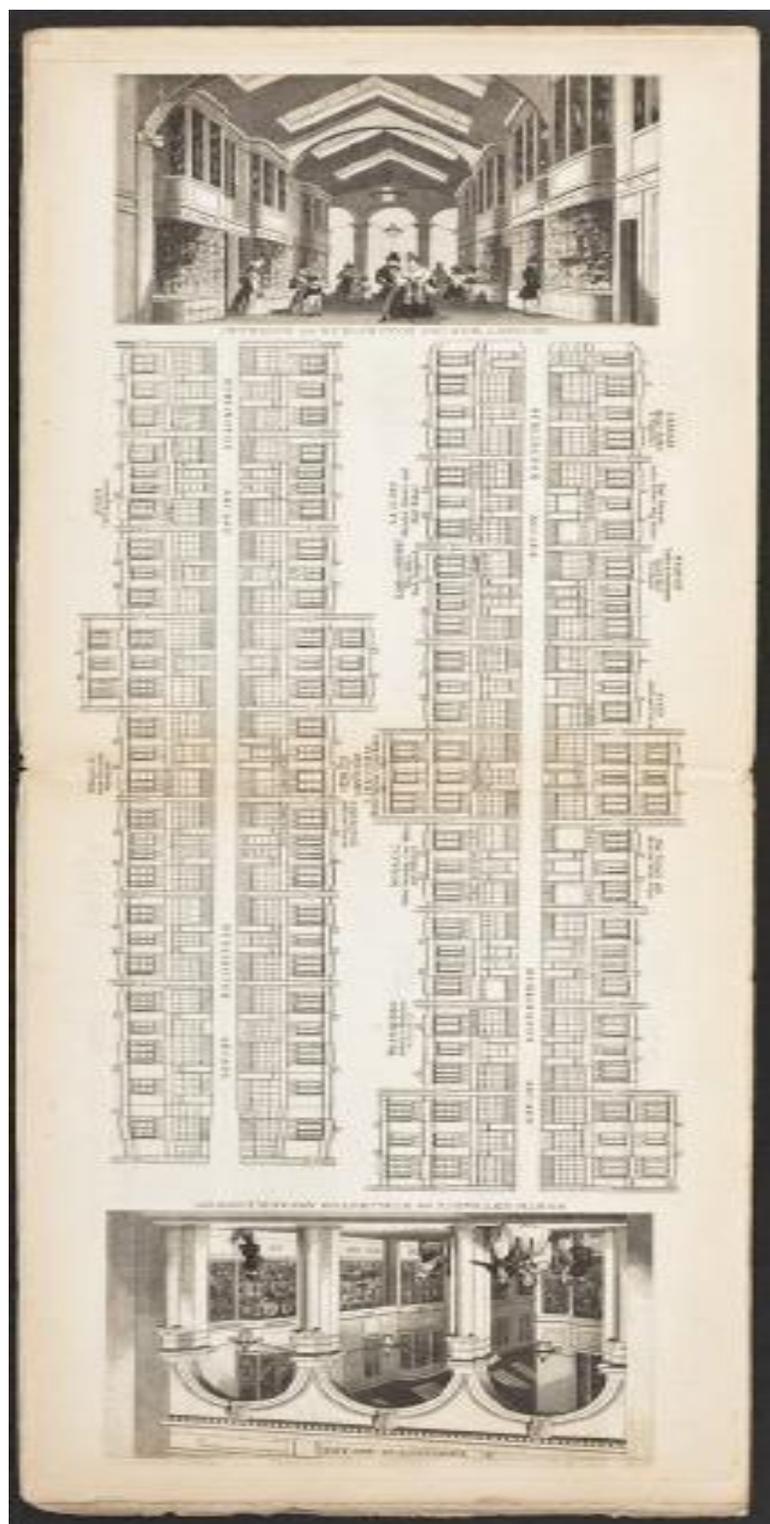
1) Vendor map of Burlington Arcade circa 1838. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 122, 1817, pp. 272.

       Consumption of mass-produced goods gave a spirit to the time unlike any previous period. A special type of consumerism thrived and can be seen in activities such as the world's fairs during the nineteenth century, and specific social activities that revolved around consuming specific goods.[10] This form of consumerism was a complete transformation of the lives of those who purchased goods. By the eighteenth century, a commodity culture surrounding tea began to take form and can be seen in the establishment of special tea gardens, tea shops, tea-ware show rooms, specialized tea furniture, kitschy tea tins, and much more. This was not only an activity performed in the public but was also a cultural practice within the homes of those who drank the beverage. The specialized ways in which people took their tea, to the specific cups and saucers they used contributed to the formation of British tea culture. At times, these goods came straight from the British manufacturers who mass produced the commodities to society's desires, but they also came out of the imperial project. The lower classes watched the upper class develop a taste for tea, and witnessed the elaborate show of elegant tea practices. The working class responded with a hunger for tea and tea goods just as the upper classes had in the years before, but they did so in ways that were shaped by their socio-economic status and by their basic needs as a laboring class. The working class could afford tea and cheaper tea wares, but their tea time became a necessity rather than a luxury.[11] The upper classes used their tea time as a way for social distinction, but the lower classes used their tea time to re-energize and to consume much needed calories, both of which gave them energy for their laborious jobs in the factory. The commodity

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[10] Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England,* 7.
[11] Sydney W. Mintz, "The changing roles of food in the study of consumption" in *Consumption and the World of Goods,* eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London, UK: Routledge, 1993), 265.

culture of tea transformed from a flashy spectacle of beauty and glamour in the upper

classes, to a necessary mid-day meal for the laboring poor. However different the two tea

cultures became by the end of the nineteenth century, the most important similarity

between them was that they provided consumers a space in which to socialize within a

greater context. While socializing did not begin with tea drinking, the consumer culture

of tea became a liberating experience for groups such as women, children, and the

working class family. By the nineteenth century, the upper classes no longer had sole

control over the consumer markets surrounding tea in Great Britain, whereas the middle

and working classes could take a piece of the economy and mold it to their own desires as

well.

<p style="text-align:center">Fashion and National Identity</p>

One of the major motivators of the upper class has always been fashion and taste.

Fashion is the focus of many historical, sociological, and anthropological studies.

Researchers seek to understand the motives, ideas, and desire behind what is considered

stylish at any point in time. In his work *Distinction,* Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist

studying the place of cultural judgments within French society in the twentieth century,

explores the connection between the establishment of culture and taste by the dominant

class and how those judgments are accepted as esteemed by the subordinate classes.

Bourdieu analyzes many aspects of culture from art and music, to food preparation and

decorations. His aim is to exhibit the place of culture and how it influences the decisions

the populace makes. By stating "Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier," Bourdieu

illustrates the power of taste, or fashion, in the perception of society and identity.[12] In a similar analysis, Georg Simmel, a German sociologist, approaches the idea of fashion by analyzing the desires of the upper classes and the subsequent response of the lower classes. Specifically, Simmel describes a constantly transforming idea of what is fashionable by the elite in response to the lower classes trying to mimic the image of the elite. In his essay "Fashion," Simmel states, "Fashion is a form of… social equalization… but it differentiates one time from another and one social stratum from another."[13] Fashion and taste within society defines the consumer as well as separates one group from another based on the outward show of taste. Tea came to the British as a posh drink that had stimulating effects. Initially, it was a luxury only the elite could afford and so they created and established a fashion and culture surrounding the consumption of it. The specialized form of tea consumption, as well as the simple consumption of something in an expensive way, distinguished the upper class from the lower class. Eventually tea became reasonably priced for the middle class to afford, which gave them the opportunity to also take part in tea culture. As a group of rising influence and prestige in society, the middle class strove to appear as cultured as the upper class. By the mid- eighteenth century, the demand for tea had reached a high point and more trade routes opened up, more tea came into Great Britain, legally and illegally, allowing for the working class to be able to afford the drink. The British cultural practices surrounding tea trickled down with the consumption of tea by the lower classes.[14] While the lower working class could

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[12] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 6.
[13] Georg Simmel, "Fashion," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 62, no. 6 (May 1957): 541.
[14] James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 21-22.

not afford, let alone have time for, the stylized version of the upper class tea time, there were major cultural influences that were within the ability of the lower class to perform. Despite that, the elite did not drop tea drinking to move on to the next best thing, but continued to practice their own stylized version of tea culture that promoted a sense of distinction that defined them as separate from the lower classes. Bourdieu demonstrates this disparity of cultural practices between the upper and lower classes, and shows that eating habits are an area where there is a clear difference in structure. He describes this disparity by explaining the difference between the use of form and function. He states, "the taste of necessity, which favors the most filling and most economical foods, and the taste of liberty – or luxury – which shifts the emphasis to the manner (of presenting, serving, eating, etc.) and tends to use stylized forms to deny function."[15] While the general masses took part in tea culture during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was a definite difference in the ways in which they took tea. Even so, the practice of taking tea was seen as a luxury before it was established as a daily staple. Even when the upper classes realized, with some criticisms and outcry, that the working class were beginning to drink tea on a daily basis, they did not move onto the next best consumable. So what was it about tea that was not snubbed by the elite once adapted by the lower classes?

By the 1800s, a shift from wide consumption of imperial goods to goods produced domestically commenced. The domestically produced goods were much cheaper and so those with even a modest income could afford them. This did not mean that exotic imperial goods went out of fashion. British producers made sure to continue that trend by

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[15] Pierre Bourdieu, *Dinstinction,* 6.

keeping with the theme of the British Empire and trade. Maxine Berg illustrates this point in an article on the British product revolution by stating, "These were all commodities new to the eighteenth century.... and all were described with what were then recognizable British attributes. There were "willow" and "Scotch" carpets, Manchester and calico curtains, plated silver tea urns and cutlery, plated buckles and medallions, cut glass, Nankeen and Wedgewood chinaware, patent candlesticks, and mahogany tea tables.... This was no cornucopia of the world's commodities, but a dense description of new goods with "British" attributes."[16] By simply consuming a silver set made in a Manchester factory, the British were, unknowingly at the time, contributing to the British national identity. Manufacturers began creating goods that epitomized the British empire which added to this image of Britishness. Moving away from European associations, the products from the Industrial Revolution helped foster and establish a British national identity that could be brought with British traders into other parts of the globe.[17]

Great Britain had a vast empire across the globe, and in each location the relocated British could continue practicing British culture as they consumed British-made goods. In particular, the commodity culture of tea supported the British national identity, and since tea drinking went wherever the British traveled, British tea culture moved into different locations of the British Empire. Ironically, the British could export their own Britishness through the consumption of a beverage that came from the Empire. Any practice the British established with tea, from the etiquette of tea time to the appropriate clothing and china-ware needed to properly take the beverage, gave British manufacturers

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[16] Maxine Berg, "The British Product Revolution of the Eighteenth-Century" in Jeff Horn et al. eds *Reconceptualizing the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2010), 47.
[17] Ibid, 48.

a template to create tea goods that were highly marketable and sellable.[18] This benefitted

the British in some ways, such as having a highly successful tea related economy. As

such, when the British government was called into question by the British citizens in the

American colonies, the colonist targeted tea as an overtly British article.

The English East India Company, established in 1600, had been importing tea into

the American colonies since the first English citizens inhabited the New World. This is a

fine example of tea culture traveling with the British into the Empire. The citizens of the

colonies were British in nature and did not begin to object to the customary British way

of life until taxation without representation in Parliament generated anger and distrust.[19]

The colonists rebelled against the taxes, particularly the Townshend Act and Tea Act, by

not consuming those goods as best they could (even going so far as to try other tea

options like raspberry leaves or evergreen plant).[20] In many instances, smugglers made

their way into the colonies and so the colonial citizens were still able to continue their

daily practices. A large amount of the money financing the British East India Company

was from the sale of tea, but because smuggled tea did not come with the hefty duty

attached many tea buyers went that route. Even so, hundreds of thousands of pounds of

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[18] Maxine Berg, "The British Product Revolution," 48.

[19] In a letter asking for continued assistance in the war with Great Britain, Jon Trumbull explains the details for which a declaration of independence from Britain had to take place. In correspondences dating before the battle at Lexington and Concord, Trumbull wanted to remain at peace with England and hoped they could come to an agreement and remain under the British Crown. After Lexington and Concord he made it clear he was on the side of the Patriots. Within a letter sent in 1777, Trumbull stated, "By our ancient charters, by the most solemn contracts with our Kings, we were to have, and enjoy, all the liberties, privileges, and immunities of free and natural born subjects of the realm of England. Of these privileges, that which fixes the private property, and exempts the subject from taxation but by his own consent has been always justly reputed the chief; the less of which involved in it, or draws after it, the loss of all the rest. This was the first attacked." Jonathan Trumbull, "Letter to Baron Van Dir Coppellen," 1777, *The National Archives*, microfilm. Jonathan Trumbull, "Letter to the Earl of Dartmouth," 1775, *The National Archives,* microfilm.

[20] Eric Jay Dolin, *When America First Met China: An Exotic History of Tea, Drugs, and Money in the Age of Sail* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2012), 66-67.

tea came into the American colonies by way of Great Britain during the 1760s. In 1768, a

peak year for tea imports, the British imported 873,744 pounds of tea into the American

colonies. After the Tea Tax passed in 1773, a dramatic decrease in importation can be

seen where by 1775 only 22,198 pounds found their way into the colonies.[21] Feeling the

financial hit, Parliament relented and lowered the taxes in 1775, but the damage had been

done, and the fish and sea creatures of Boston Harbor were able to enjoy one large cup of

British tea.[22] According to historian James Fichter, "For patriots, tea signified monopoly

as much as anything else – the monopoly of the East India Company, which engrossed all

of British trade with Asia. And to them monopoly …. was a tool of a dangerous state."[23]

The Boston Tea Party illustrates the power of a British national identity being held in a

commodity. To rebel against the British, the American colonists rebelled against tea.

<div align="center">Why Tea?</div>

Why was tea so spectacularly popular in Britain, and why did it reach such

prominence within British society? What was it about tea that caused the British to

expand in the East even if it led to such violent events as the Opium Wars to ensure

British access to Chinese tea? How did tea transform from a fashion trend and luxury to a

lasting staple for all, even today? Finally, what were the conditions for the working class

spending their meager wages on a beverage previously deemed a luxury by the elite?

These are questions this thesis strives to answer. Historians who study Great Britain

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[21] "Tea exported from England, by importing colony: 1761-1775," Table Eg 1152-1159, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition Online,* http://hsus.cambridge.org.librarylink.uncc.edu/HSUSWeb/toc/tableToc.do?id=Eg1152-1159 (accessed on, August 1, 2014).

[22] Eric Jay Dolin, *When America First Met China,* 67.

[23] James R. Fichter, *So Great a Proffit: How the East Indies Trade Transformed Anglo-American Capitalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 17.

during this period focus their attention on a multitude of subjects. Those who examine

British imperial history have examined the impact of imperialism through the ideologies

of race, class, economics, gender, and culture. Of these studies, the place of imperial

commodities certainly plays a role within the histories; however, much of the research on

imperial commodities is wide ranging and all encompassing. When or if the consumption

of tea is mentioned, its impact upon British society is understated or treated as a simple

beverage of pleasure. At most, tea is grouped with other goods such as coffee, sugar, and

chocolate as popular consumables within Great Britain during the early modern era.

Some studies showcase tea as a predominant imperial commodity, but do little to separate

it from other exotic beverages. Consumerism in Great Britain is certainly not a new area

of study, where volumes of monographs have been dedicated to this research. The macro-

study of consumerism provides context for this research, although the contributions will

be to add historical context for the consumption of tea.[24]

The approach of this research is to study the social and practical significance of

tea consumption on the British population during the early modern era. To achieve this, I

take on a cross-disciplinary approach to this history. Several key themes run throughout

this research, including the sociological analysis' of the previously mentioned scholars,

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[24] There are several volumes of research on consumerism in Britain that grounds the historical context for this thesis. Particularly the volume of articles presented by John Brewer and Roy Porter titled *Consumption and the World of Goods.* While this is a collection of essays on global consumption, many articles connect to the establishment of British consumerism during the early modern era. See John Brew and Roy Porter, eds. *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, UK: Routledge, 1993)., Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, eds. *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe, 1650-1850* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1999). For studies on the comparative analysis of imperial consumer goods see, James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660-1800* (New York: New York University Press, 1997)., Gertrude Z. Thomas, *Richer than Spices: How a Royal Bride's Dowry Introduced Cane, Lacquer, Cottons, Tea, and Porcelain to England, and So Revolutionized Taste, Manners, Craftmanship, and History in both England and America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972)., Tom Standage, *A History of the World in Six Glasses*, (New York: Walker and Company, 2005).,

Georg Simmil and Pierre Bourdieu. Their studies provide a sociological analysis to understand how and why British consumers wanted and drank tea. In particular, the use of Norbert Elias' model of social and cultural transference from his work *The Court Society,* will ground much of my work. Studying the impact of the nobility on society as a whole, Elias argues that court societies were important places for the development of western culture, as a result of the extension and influence of the nobility in power. Since many western civilizations have rich histories of monarchies and courtly societies, he shows their significance to the creation of western culture and social ideologies. To argue this point, Elias shows the importance of the outward exhibition of rank for the wielding of power by the aristocracy. An important element of his work is in his description of "distance" within the court society. He states that rituals and customs within the court society were created to exhibit a distance between the different ranks of nobles residing at court. He states this understanding of distance within the court society is crucial in understanding the ranks of the nobility, which is inseparable from the power of the nobility. Elias also argues that the mannerisms of the court society travel downward to the masses since the nobility are in a public forum and so are bound to uphold the mannerism and fashions that are most appropriate at any given time.[25] This analysis of courtly societies can be seen in the transference of the tea culture down from the upper classes to the lower classes, and the ways in which the upper class could use tea culture to distance them from the lower class. However, my research contributes to the study of tea by examining its consumption across the classes. Elias, Bourdieu, and Simmil analyze the

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[25] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 53-55, 84-85, 162-163.

process by which society separates based on an outward appearance of some form or another. This thesis historicizes their sociological theories, and in doing so approaches the subject of British tea culture and consumption in an interdisciplinary manner.[26]

Many historians who analyze the consumer culture of Great Britain during the early modern era will discuss the upper classes but are quick to move onto the middle-class consumer. The study of the middle class is important for understanding the growth of consumerism. For instance, the rising middle class contributed to the growth of the market economy since they had extra money to spend on non-essential goods. They were also a larger population than the upper class, which gave them a great amount of purchasing power within the markets. As Marx illustrated in *Das Kapital*, the dominant class controls the dominant market, and so as the middle class grew so too did the amount of consumable goods in the market.[27] To understand the growing consumer market during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the middle class in Great Britain cannot be ignored and is why the historiography covers this class predominantly. Even so, this study will focus in large part on the aristocratic class and on the working class. Tea consumption as a cultural practice began as an upper class activity. As tea became more affordable, the middle classes also began exhibiting a tea culture that was similar to the elitist version. The transformation of British tea culture as a social pastime to a mid-day meal happened when the lower working class began consuming tea. This is why a

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[26] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), Georg Simmel, "Fashion," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 62, no. 6 (May 1957): Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983)., Karl Marx, *Das Kapital – Capital – Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Aristeus Books, 2012).

[27] Karl Marx, *Das Kapital – Capital – Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Aristeus Books, 2012).

specific study of the upper and the lower class is vital for understanding the establishment

of a British tea culture. The mention of the middle class will be short within this thesis,

and will come with the discussion of the upper class since they strove to emulate the

cultural practices of the elite.

Historian Thomas Richards, in his work *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England,* analyzes the commodity culture that sprang from the Industrial Revolution. He

begins his analysis by detailing the 1851 World's Fair in London, and how the spectacle

of the consumer object drew people to the exhibition. He argues that this period saw a

major shift towards a culture revolving around consuming goods, and this transformation

can be seen in the Great Exhibition as well as the advertising surrounding the goods.

While his work does a marvelous job in detailing the spectacle that consumerism had

become, much the same as the ways in which people consumed tea goods, his work

centers around the spectacle of the World's Fair and Queen Victoria. His work also lacks

analysis of the upper classes as well as the lower classes. Like many historians analyzing

the consumer revolution, his main focus is on the rising middle class.[28] Because he

focuses on the advertising, and in large part advertisers were trying to seek out the group

with the largest amount of purchasing power, he states, "Most of the advertisements

analyzed in this book come from middle-class periodicals aimed at middle-class

audiences…. Advertising was for many years the self-definition of one class rather than

the subjugation of another. The working class eavesdropped, fascinated by the

phantasmorgia…. But the primary concern of advertisers was not influencing a working-

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[28] Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 1-3.

class clientele."[29] As such, consumerism did not begin right as the middle class rose to

prominence in society, nor were they the creators of a consumer culture. The upper class

in British society played a dominant role in the development of consumerism, and

specifically that of tea as a British national drink. By the time the middle class took up tea

drinking, the cultural practice had already developed within the aristocracy. Then, as tea

became affordable, a shift in consumption happened where the lower classes were able to

purchase tea and tea goods. The working class also played a vital role for tea culture

since it was this group making tea goods in the factories, and in large part, was able to

perform their work by using the calories and caffeine provided by tea.[30] The working

class transformed tea drinking based upon their socio-economic status as a laboring body.

In this way, Sydney Mintz's explanation of the 'intensification' and 'extensification' of

the usages of goods addresses the way in which the working class began consuming tea.

He states that the usage of goods typically begins in the upper classes, since they are

those who can afford its early production and who establish the market for the eventual

mass consumption. As with the consumption of goods, it is common for specific practices

to commence in the consumption of them. As the goods travel down to the lower classes,

sometimes the cultural practice travels with the good and intensifies, so it remains

relatively unchanged regardless of class, or the culture extends and becomes something

different based on the socio- economic status of the consumer. As for tea consumption

and cultural practices, the middle class consumption of tea follows along Mintz's

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[29] Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, 7-8.
[30] One of the most prominent studies of the working-class tea consumption resides in an anthropological study of sugar consumption by Sidney Mintz, titled *Sweetness and Power*. While much can be learned from this study, it is predominantly about the impact of sugar globally. Sydney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*.

description of intensification, whereas the transformation of working class tea practice is more closely in line with extensification.[31] Without the discussion of the impact of the upper and lower classes for tea consumption, the importance of tea within Great Britain cannot be fully understood. This thesis will go beyond looking simply at high tea culture and high society. It will also analyze the impact of the lower working-class on tea consumption by describing the ways in which the working class created the heavier tea time that turned into a form of meal.

This thesis is both thematic and chronological. Chapter 2 describes the beginnings of tea consumption in Great Britain and the manner in which the upper class utilized tea as a means of inclusion and exclusion. This chapter shows the development of Britain's culture of tea drinking and the means by which the upper classes made it a fashionable pastime. While the majority of this chapter is focused on the elite (gentry and aristocracy), this chapter also addresses the ways in which the middle class adopted elite tea culture. This chapter will establish the importance of tea culture as a means of social distinction for the upper classes. The third chapter, "Low Tea," examines the manner in which the working classes adopted tea consumption and in the process transformed the practice of drinking tea. This chapter illustrates the desire of the working class to take part in the budding consumer culture, specifically of tea, but the chapter also shows how tea consumption became an enhancer for their everyday lives. Both chapters describe the transformation of tea as a pastime to something much more complex and important within the daily lives of both the upper and lower classes. The accounts of those who

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[31] Sydney Mintz, "The changing roles of food in the study of consumption," in *Consumption and the World of Goods,* 265.

drank tea, wrote for or against the use of tea, or studied its properties during the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries will be the basis for the upper and lower class response to tea drinking. The paper will follow the development of the British interest of tea to the establishment of a British tea culture in all socio-economic classes.

While I do not utilize the terms 'high' tea and 'low' tea in a specific context throughout the paper, I use the term high and low to represent the higher and the lower cultural forms in connection to class status, and not their common function of a high or heartier meal as compared to a low or lighter meal with tea. Either the upper or the lower classes could take high or low tea, depending on their social engagement or on the ability to have more food available. For example, a factory worker might take high tea meaning he or she could have bread, butter, meat, and cheese to go along with their tea. In contrast, Queen Catherine could take low tea with simple biscuits and small sandwiches with her tea, as was proper for a simple tea time gathering of acquaintances. The working classes created the practice of high tea as a midday meal. Because they would commonly take tea during their breaks at work, the workers would eat heartier foods in order to gain as many calories as they could. High or low tea changed with the situation, but I utilize the terms as their social representation over their quantitative representation.

The current thesis looks beyond an all-encompassing British history of upper-class leisure or working-class hardships by focusing on how tea culture appeared differently depending on one's social rank. It shows the connection between this culture and the ways in which the elite delineated themselves from the lower classes through their exclusionary practices of drinking tea, but also how the lower classes adopted the high class tea practice and made a version just their own. In comparing the very different

tea practices, I will illustrate the importance of tea culture for breaking through the established social molds of class and gender. In doing so I will illustrate how through the continued import of imperial goods into Great Britain, what were once exotic and strange became domesticated and normal. Tea and tea goods, things that originated across the globe, were gradually assimilated into the lives of the British, where daily chores and activities carried out in the British Isles revolved around a commodity from Asia.

CHAPTER 2: 'FANCY A CUPPA?': THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BRITISH
COMMODITY CULTURE OF TEA

Charles Grey, the prime minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and

Ireland who served in the mid-1800s, had many titles. He led the world's largest nation

during a point of major transition. Before becoming prime minister, he rose to

prominence as a Whig M.P. and was an early architect of the Reform Act of 1832.[32]

Other than earning the title prime minister of one of the most powerful nations in the

world, his other titles included that of viscount and earl. He was also a member of the

prestigious Order of the Garter and Privy Council to the United Kingdom.[33] Although he

moved to abolish slavery in the British kingdom, end the East India Company, and saw

the Reform Act of 1832 pass, this prime minister is more commonly known for his

particular taste in an extremely popular beverage of his time. Much the same as a

growing number of British citizens during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the

prime minister was a tea enthusiast.[34]

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[32]The Reform Act of 1832 increased the ability of male voters in Great Britain by 50%. Although only 1 in 5 male Britons could legally vote with this Act, it widened suffrage on a grander scale than previous acts of Parliament. The proposal to Parliament was to create a fairer voting system and Parliamentary procedure. James Losh, *Observations on parliamentary reform: To which is added The Petition from the Society of the Friends of the People presented to Parliament by Charles Gret, esq. In the Year 1793* (London: By James Ridgway, Picadilly and Emerson Charnley, New Castle upon Tyne, 1831), 26-29.

[33] Amanda Foreman, *The Duchess* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2008), 368.

[34] Beatrice Hohenegger, *Liquid Jade: The Story of Tea from East to West* (New York: St. Martin Press, 2006), 201.

By the eighteenth century, the upper classes in England had been consuming goods at a vast rate. During this period, tea became an extremely popular commodity that eventually surpassed the consumption of other beverages. Few consumables had a culture surrounding their consumption, but once tea made its way into Great Britain, the upper classes were infatuated with everything revolving around the drinking of it. Consumerism began to take shape in the early eighteenth century, and tea was one of the most sought after consumer goods that came into Great Britain.[35] Taking part in the budding consumer culture allowed people to move themselves up in the social hierarchy of class and status. Those of considerable means dictated what was included and excluded within the cultural process and so were the arbiters of this form of culture surrounding commodity consumption. In this way, the upper classes in England were the creators of an English tea culture that included their peers but excluded those that could not afford the practice. While this practice of cultural inclusion and exclusion was certainly not a new concept for the upper classes in England during the early modern era, tea drinking provided a perfect opportunity to exhibit one's wealth and mannerism, and it could be easily transformed and manipulated to make sure the practice remained elitist.

By the early eighteenth century, tea and tea-related goods held such precedence for England that is became a driving force for British society. For instance, tea drove the creation and establishment of new businesses and provided a large portion of revenue for the English East India Company, while also giving upper class women a reason to go to the dressmakers for the latest tea party frock.[36] Tea provided a gateway for women to

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[35] Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England,* 1-3.
[36] James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 16.

socialize in a context that did not require the watchful eyes of their husbands, and politicians used the coffee houses turned teashops as a meeting ground for political discussion. Women like Lady Grey, Charles Grey's wife, threw tea parties that helped support politics. Tea houses, such as the original Twinings shop, allowed for both sexes to attend. Women, men, and children could be seen together in the public tea gardens without upsetting social norms. While the movement of women in society continued to be heavily regulated by men, small changes were in the works that allowed women more freedoms than in previous times. Just as historian Anna Clark points out, "This period [the mid- eighteenth century] saw a shift from a notion of gender as hierarchy to a notion of gender as separate, complementary spheres."[37] While men were still in control of many decisions, women were gaining more control over their own lives and in particular over the workings of domestic life, such as the mechanism of the household and the raising of the children. More specifically, this shift in thought can be seen in the ways people consumed tea. Women were in control of their tea socials, since in many instances tea parties were in their homes, and they were able to consume tea publicly because it was acceptable for women to openly drink it. Although exotic imperial goods were heavily consumed during this time, no other imperial good would prove to have such a lasting impact on society as a whole. The establishment of the upper class 'high' tea culture during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries paved the way for tea drinking as a staple for all in Great Britain.

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[37] Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (London: University of California Press, 1995), 2.

An example of the influence of English tea culture can be seen in one particular story of the above-mentioned Prime Minister, Charles Grey. At some point during his political career, a Chinese official presented Charles with bergamot orange-infused tea. It may have been an accidental infusion, but it was received by society all the same. This tea became popular with the Viscount and his wife because it masked the peculiar tasting water in Howick, England. The Viscount's wife, Lady Mary, began to specially order their tea with bergamot oil.[38] Lady Mary commonly used the tea to entertain her husband's political friends and foes. Since she was the influential wife of Great Britain's Prime Minister, the bergamot infused tea became extremely popular in London's upper class social circles. The prominent Twinings Tea Company began selling bergamot infused tea and adopted the Prime Minister's name as the selling point. Whether the bergamot infusion was intended or accidental, the gift of the Chinese official helped to solidify the Viscount's most endearing title of all, Earl. Twinings sold this popular tea as Earl Grey.[39] This is a prime example of the upper class influence of the consumer culture surrounding tea during the nineteenth century. The English tea culture that developed in Great Britain at the end of the seventeenth century exhibits the importance of the emerging consumer culture for social practices within the upper classes, as well as the eventual establishment of consumerism in the lives of the masses by the end of the nineteenth century.

Just as Earl and Lady Grey desired the specially infused Chinese tea, England was under the spell of all things considered exotic. During the eighteenth century, Great

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[38] Beatrice Hohenegger, *Liquid Jade,* 201.
[39] Ibid, 201.

Britain grew its Empire to gain access to exotic goods. The consumption of goods had

reached an all-time high during the eighteenth century and a culture surrounding

commodities began to appear in the ways people consumed the goods. A survey taken to

show the changing percentage of goods owned in both town and country, focusing on the

consumption of saucepans, earthenware, books, clocks, pictures, looking-glasses, window

curtains, china, and utensils for hot drinks, indicates that from 1675 to 1725, households

on average increased in the number of goods they owned. The most significant growth

for the selected goods was found in the percentages owned of china and utensils for hot

drinks. In the major towns as well as in the rural villages, in 1675 no household surveyed

owned china or utensils for hot drinks, but by 1725, 35 percent of homes in London

owned china and 60 percent owned utensils for hot drinks. Even in the villages there was

a slight increase in china and utensils for hot drinks (4 percent and 6 percent

respectively).[40] This period saw the upper classes beginning to have an almost insatiable

desire for imperial goods such as exotic silks, textiles, spices, and artwork, and so more

and more households owned consumer goods to go along with their new commodities.

These goods also had an added incentive that a person might own something from China

or India which glamorized the commodities that much more. In many ways, a commodity

culture specifically surrounding the consumption of imperial goods from the East

emerged during this period.[41]

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[40] Lorna Weatherhill, "The meaning of consumer behavior in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London, UK: Routledge, 1993) 220, Table 10.4.

[41] John E. Wills, Jr., "European consumption and Asian production in the seventeenth and eighteenth centures," in *Consumption and the World of Goods* eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London, UK: Routledge, 1993), 133.

The western world became enthralled with tea, and an entire culture specifically surrounding the consumption and desire of this plant surfaced. Other imperial goods, such as sugar, coffee, silks, and cotton textiles, were also extremely popular and profitable for merchants, and were components of the emerging consumer culture in England. The popularity of coffee also spurred a commodity culture similar to the culture surrounding tea, especially during the Enlightenment when coffee houses within London numbered in the hundreds. Even so, coffee consumption remained in large part within the public sector, never really branching into home consumption, and the activity was largely undertaken by men.[42] Tea, on the other hand, could be consumed in the public as well as in the home, and it was appropriate for men, women, and children to consume the beverage. Tea was, and continues to be, one of the most popular imperial goods the British would ever encounter. It became a symbol of British class status and the developing commodity culture. It made such an impression on the British aristocracy that a British 'high,' or upper class, tea tradition developed from their enthusiasm of the commodity. The upper classes determined what could elevate people through the consumption of this good and so they decided which goods were integral to the social practices surrounding tea.[43] The elite defined tea culture, and used it as a marker of their

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[42] James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire,* 43.
[43] This idea is taken from Pierre Bourdieu's work *Distinctions.* He describes the making of social distinctions through the idea of taste. He shows it was the elite's enforcement of taste that determined inclusion and exclusion in society. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

high social status.[44]  As Pierre Bourdieu states, "Art and cultural consumption are…. to fulfill a social function of legitimating social differences."[45]

<div align="center">Exotic Desires: Tea Comes to Great Britain</div>

The first imperial goods consumed by Europeans were very expensive. The long distances of travel and difficulty to retrieve the goods added to the price. While some goods that came from China and India, such as textiles and porcelain, were perfect to be shipped for long distances, there were other goods, such as spices and plants, which were perishable over time and so were much more expensive. These items came from far away and were exotic in nature, and so in turn were more desired by the British consumer because of its exclusivity. The English East India Company used this logic to bring their company to the height of the trading world.[46] Through the continued import of imperial goods into Great Britain, things which were once exotic and strange became domesticated household items that ceased to be unusual. These items became standard British goods, even though they originated on the other side of the globe. This transformation of the exotic becoming something common is what epitomized commodity culture during the early modern era.[47]

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[44] Many different sources coming out of the late- seventeenth century had very strong language that indicated the prestige of tea drinking as an elitist activity. In particular, "An Exact Description of the Growth, Quality, and Vertues of the Leaf TEE, alias TAY, Drawn up for Satisfaction of Persons of Quality, and the Good of the Nation in General" published in 1664 by  Thomas Garway, described those he addressed as "all Persons of Eminency and Quality, Gentlemen and others residing in or neer [sic] the Court." The author even goes to describe the people who typically took tea and in what forms, which he stated were "only used as Regalia, in high Treatments and Entertainments, and Presents made thereof to Princes and Grandees." The language used in these types of sources pulls in those of high esteem while forgoing the mention of the working masses.

[45] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions,* 7.

[46] James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 15.

[47] Woodruff D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 75.

During the mid to late seventeenth century, armed European trading companies pushed into the East for commodities. European governments did not have direct control over the dealings of the trading companies, however governmental powers did not try to stop their progress and growth, as they brought goods and wealth into their nations.[48] It was not until much later that European governments began working to try to muffle the control of the trading companies and bring the power back into the hands of national authority. Even so, this shows that at any time the government's true concern continued to be that of gaining access to Eastern commodities, and by any means necessary.[49] Of the trading companies pursuing goods in the East, the English East India Company proved to be the one of the most profitable of all the companies.

There were many goods that the East India Company sought after, but it was tea that led the way for the exponential growth of the company. In the early 1700s, an East India Company representative remarked that tea drinking had influence 'among persons of all qualities.'[50]  By the 1760s, the English East India Company was importing more than 6 million pounds of tea into Britain to meet the demand from the consumers. The company was also importing almost one million pounds of tea to its American colony, where in 1768 it is reported that 873,744 pounds came into the colony.[51] Since this was on the verge of Revolution in America, the revenue of the English East India Company declined in the preceding years. It is important to note that the government estimated that

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[48] Robert B. Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World,* 98.
[49] Tom Standage, *A History of the World in Six Glasses,* 190, 191.
[50] Jessica Hanser, "Teatime in the North Country: Consumption of Chinese Imports in North East England," *Northern History* vol. 49, no. 1 (March 2012): 52.
[51] "Tea exported from England, by importing colony: 1761-1775," Table Eg 1152-1159, Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition Online, http://hsus.cambridge.org.librarylink.uncc.edu/HSUSWeb/toc/tableToc.do?id=Eg1152-1159 (accessed on, August 1, 2014).

almost as much tea was smuggled into the UK through illegal trading channels. In many

instances, importers of tea would send the tea to the European continent to be smuggled

into England by way of less traveled waterways.[52] The profit of the imported imperial

goods, as consumed by the elite, is what helped the continuation of British imperialism

across the globe. During the mid- seventeenth century the English East India Company

used the imperial goods acquired from the East to gain access within the royal court. A

letter written to Madras (now Chennai, India) by a Company director giving clear

instructions on what was desired at court: "Thea is grown to be a commodity here and we

have occasion to make presents therein to our great friends at Court; we would have you

send us yearly five or six canisters of the very best and freshest Thea…. most of a

greenish complexion is generally best accepted."[53] The British Court was where fashions

were created, decided, and then shunned if need be. This is as true today as it was four

hundred years ago. The English East India Company brought tea into the court of Charles

II as a gift of good nature, which gave many aristocrats their first experience of tea.[54]

Although the future wife of Charles would also bring items of fine imperial goods with

her dowry, the introduction of tea to the court of Charles II by both marriage and trade

allowed for the elite to gain access to this delicacy within Great Britain.[55] After this initial

introduction, tea drove the British time and time again into the East.[56]

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[52] Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Groups, 1985), 113.

[53] "Some Account of Canton: Part III," *The Saturday Magazine,* vol 12, no. 385 (June 1838)*:* 252.

[54] Gertrude Z. Thomas, *Richer than Spices: How a Royal Bride's Dowry Introduced Cane, Lacquer, Cottons, Tea, and Porcelain to England, and So Revolutionized Taste, Manners, Craftmanship, and History in both England and America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 3.

[55] James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire,* 15.

[56] Tom Standage, *A History of the World in Six Glasses*, 175-176.

By the mid- seventeenth century, Europeans had been travelling to the East for centuries, and were studying all that was exotic and interesting. Their interests included an abundant amount of information on tea. The Dutch were some of the first Europeans to make significant headway in the East, and were the first to comment on tea and send specimens back to Europe for further study. Like many unknown plants of the East, the medicinal quality of tea sparked the interest of many Europeans. The missionaries, botanist, writers, and diplomats who travelled to the East all seemed to marvel at the ability of tea as a cure-all.[57] Exhibiting the spectacle of tea for the British in the late 1600s, John Chamberlayne stated in his essay "The Natural History of Thee," that "every drinker of it cannot be but sensible."[58] This drink was unlike anything Great Britain had been privy to up to that point and it was exactly that which initially attracted the British upper classes to tea.

British civilians may not have understood the distances that tea had to travel or the process of attaining and distributing tea, but they did read the reports of tea curing headaches, cold symptoms, stomach-aches, and virtually any ailment that troubled them. During the late seventeenth century, British officials traveling in Asia were intrigued by this plant that seemed to be a central staple for meetings and gatherings of many different sorts. In 1664 a publication drawn up for "Persons of Quality" in Britain and France provided a thorough description of the growth, quality, and uses of tea. Thomas Garway,

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[57] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea: The Remarkable History of the Plant that took over the World* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2003), 65-66.

[58] John Chamberlayne, *The Natural History of Coffee, Thee, Chocolate, Tobacco : In four several Sections; with a Tract of Elder and Juniper Berries, Showing how useful they may be in our Coffee-Houses: And also the way of Making Mum, with some remarks upon that Liquor. Collected from the Writings of the best Physicians and Modern Travelers.,* 1683, in Early English Books Online, *Yale University Library*, http://gateway.proquest.com.librarylink.uncc.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:53019 (accessed September 2013), 10.

one of the first English tea dealers, wrote this pamphlet to those who may have not heard

or known too much of the plant. He began the pamphlet by describing the locations

where the tea plant grows best as well as the appearance of the leaves and the best variety

of tea leaf. He stated, "The said Leaf is of such Vertues [sic], that those Nations, so

Famous for Antiquity, Knowledge, and Wisdome [sic], doe [sic] Frequently sell it

themselves, for its weight in Silver; and the high estimation of the Drink made therewith,

hath occasioned an enquiry into the Nature thereof, among the most Intelligent Persons of

all Nations, that have Travelled into those Parts; who after exact Tryal [sic] and

Experience by all ways imaginable, have commenced it to the Use of their several

Countries for its Vertues and Operations."[59]  Several years later, John Ovington, Chaplain

to William of Orange, also wrote about tea as it was getting even wider interest among

people within England. He stated that there were many reasons for Britain to import tea,

but the most important reasons included "curiosity, because of its novelty, or out of

pleasure of gratifying the palate, or because of some medicinal virtue."[60] The mid- to

late- seventeenth century saw the rise in experimentation and exploration of tea and those

who had access to tea were certainly wealthy or in a position of power. Samuel Pepys,

Chief Secretary to the Admiralty under King Charles II and King James II, and famous

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[59] Thomas Garway, "An Exact Description of the Growth, Quality, and Vertues of the Leaf TEE, alias TAY, Drawn up for Satisfaction of Persons of Quality, and the Good of the Nation in General.", 1664, in Early English Books Online, *Bodleian Library*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.librarylink.uncc.edu/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID &ID=12144105&FILE=../session/1415334138_8184&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&VID=54908&P AGENO=1&ZOOM=&VIEWPORT=&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&HIGHL IGHT_KEYWORD= (accessed on August 1, 2014).
[60] John Ovington, *Essay Upon the Nature and Quality of Tea, Wherein are Shown; The Soil and Climate Where it grows; The Various Kinds of it; The Rules for Chusing what is best; The Means for Preserving it; The several virtues for which it is fam'd.*, 1699, in Early English Books Online, *Cambridge University Library,* http://gateway.proquest.com.librarylink.uncc.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:98217 (accessed September 2013), 2.

diarist, mentioned tea in his journals several times. His first impressions of tea came in September of 1660 after discussing a peace with Spain and a war with France and Holland. A colleague of Pepys sent for "a cup of tee," which he called "[a Chinese drink] of which I have never drunk before."[61] Pepys described years later that upon arriving home "there find my wife making tea, a drink which Mr. Pelling the pothecary tells her is good for cold and defluxions."[62] Although Pepys stated he enjoyed drinks that were a bit livelier, such as spirits or coffee, but he described how his wife consumed tea in the hopes it would relieve her continuous cough.[63] This strange and exotic drink did not catch the interest of all, such as in Samuel Pepys' case, but its medicinal qualities did help to attract the attention of others.

Initially, the upper classes of England desired tea for being new and exotic but they continued consuming it for the idea that it would cure anything wrong with them at any given time. Alongside English researchers, European physicians and officials were also studying the effects of tea. In particular, a Dutch physician, Cornelius Bontekoe (alias Dekker), described in his treatise *Tractaat,* the medicinal effects of tea and other imperial commodities. In Bontekoe's professional opinion he recommended the sick to take 50 to 100 cups of tea without stopping until healed, something he stated he performed himself in one sitting.[64] Moreover during this period Europeans tested and discovered other ways in which tea could be used. Doctors tested the effects of tea on the

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[61] Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys- Complete,* ed. Henry B. Wheatley (London: George Bell and Sons, 1893) Kindle Edition, location 4098.

[62] Ibid., location 34797.

[63] Samuel Pepys was known to enjoy visiting coffee houses on frequent occasions. He also typically enjoyed drinking alcohol over other beverages. Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, location 17049.

[64] Cornelius Dekker, *Tractaat van de excellentste kruyd thee,* 1678, http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_opu001193701_01/_opu001193701_01_0012.php (accessed November 10, 2013).

blood as well as meat, where some described tea as a way in which to preserve meat from becoming putrid at a more rapid pace than if left untreated.[65] In his essay, Ovington exclaimed several feats of tea. He stated that tea "will soften flesh…. and render hard meats tender whereby we may judge that it hastens dissolution and thereupon facilitates digestion."[66] Just as Europeans marveled at the medicinal qualities of tea, they also tried to find other miraculous uses of tea apart from simply ingesting it.[67]

Even so, not all Europeans were completely behind tea in the beginning. There were several outspoken doctors that wrote against the plant during the late- seventeenth century. Although he saw tea as a predominantly positive drink, Ovington did describe some adverse effects of the beverage. He stated that tea is "a parent to the cholick [sic] and diabetes though it was very useful upon other accounts," but he argued that sugar is likely to blame in the efficiency of tea to lessen.[68] Some doctors were wary of the plant, describing a possibility of convulsion or epilepsy if consumed. Even so, a majority of doctors or specialists followed behind the popular trend of tea as a medicinal and soothing beverage.[69]

## A Luxury for the Elite

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most upper class British families lived in their lavish country homes outside London. Every year those families made their

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[65] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea*, 68-69.
[66] John Ovington, *An Essay,* 22.
[67] See J. Ovington, *An Essay upon the Nature and Qualities of Tea* (1699), John Lettsom, *The Natural History of the Tea-Tree, with Observations on the Medical Qualities of* Tea (1772), Thomas Short, *A Dissertation Upon Tea* (1730), G. G. Sigmond, *Tea: Its Effects, Medicinal and Moral* (1839), John Sumner, *A Popular Treatise on Tea: its Qualities and* Effects (1863).
[68] John Ovington, *An Essay upon the Nature and Qualities of Tea*, 36-38.
[69] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea*, 68.

way into London to socialize and engage in political activities.[70] London guides

published in the late eighteenth century made sure to note this period of population influx

in London. "The London Advisor and Guide" advised people on the price of goods and

housing during this period, which stated "The dearest season is from Christmas to June,

when families are in town and the parliament sitting; the cheapest, when families are out

of town, and the parliament prorogued."[71] Because parliament was in session for this

period, so many of the social activities fueled the political atmosphere; however, this time

did not only function for politics. The "Season," as it would be termed every year,

allowed upper classes families a chance to exhibit themselves and show their rank and

mannerisms publically. During a time when conspicuous displays of rank were extremely

important for aristocratic power, the Season became vital to the growth of commodity

culture since it was during this time that the fashionable of the aristocracy would

determine the trends for the remainder of the year.[72] Studying the life of the Duchess of

Devonshire, Georgiana Spencer, Amanda Foreman illustrates the pomp and splendor of

the political season during the eighteenth century. According to Foreman, the only

acceptable career that an aristocratic woman could partake in was fashion. Similarly, the

only acceptable job an aristocratic man could have was to take part in politics. However,

it was also acceptable for both men and women to exhibit fashion sense and political

prowess interchangeably. For example, during the Season, women hosted political

gatherings in support of their husbands, as well as they made sure to display the most

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[70] Roy and Lesley Adkins, *Jane Austen's England* (New York: Penguin Group, 2013), 82.

[71] J. Trusler, *The London Advisor and Guide: Containing Every Instruction and Information useful and necessary to Persons Living in London, and Coming to Reside there; In order to enable them to enjoy Security and Tranquillity, and conduct their Domestic Affairs with Prudence and Economy* (London, 1786), 2.

[72] Roy and Lesley Adkins, *Jane Austen's England*, 82.

fashionable tastes of the time. Likewise, the men who engaged in the politics also strove to be arbiters of masculine fashions.[73]  The balance of fashionable image was vital for influence within the upper classes. In this way, the Season provided the space and time for the upper classes and those at court to take part in the trends decided by the elite for the elite.

At the royal court, it was as if it was the Season all the time. For the elite living in the country the Season gave them a period to indulge in the fashion and trends of London society, but for those living in the public domain of the court, it was imperative  to uphold the social identity that went along with their rank. As Norbert Elias addresses in *The Court Society*, the position one held within the court society determined the amount of power one could yield; thus following along with the established codes of conduct amongst the aristocracy was vital in continuing to hold power. An outward appearance of social distinction was of utmost importance, even if that meant, as it often did, that nobles had to spend well beyond their rank to maintain appearances.[74] In many instances, the highest of the aristocracy, the king and queen, were the creators of the established system of conduct within the court society. Even though they were not the sole contributors, they always had a heavy sway in the matter of etiquette and ritual.[75] Especially when it came to fashion, those who could afford the same opulence mimicked the king and queen. Dress, shoe, glove, hat, and lace makers scrambled to get their pieces onto the queen and king, most especially during the political season since the population of those viewing

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[73] Amanda Foreman, *The Duchess,* 44.
[74] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, 53-55.
[75] Ibid, 85.

them grew to greater heights.[76] Young upper-class women making their debuts were

especially drawn to the fashion of the court. Being fashionable could mean interest by a

proper suitor. In particular, the court of Charles II is important to understanding the

beginnings of the fashionable commodity culture surrounding tea in England.

In 1662, Charles II married the Infanta of Portugal, Catherine of Braganza. This

marriage had been an arrangement of political and economic means, which gave England

never before seen access to imperial luxury. Her dowry gave many their first taste of

exotic goods.[77] As custom in many court societies, Catherine's ladies in waiting were

English noble women, but they quickly transformed her from a Portuguese infanta to an

English queen. Uncomfortable with English fashion in the beginning of her reign, Queen

Catherine continued to dress in the Portuguese high fashion but she soon adopted English

dress and customs.[78] The role of the ladies in waiting helped facilitate the transformation,

but they were also there as companions to Her Majesty. One aspect that Catherine wanted

of her ladies was to excel in housewifery, which she felt was lacking in her early reign.

To accommodate the queen's wishes, with the help of the queen herself, the noble women

learned to brew and serve tea as a pleasurable pastime.[79] This was not an activity

undertaken by the English at this point, and through the role of the ladies in waiting and

Catherine's dowry, the court of Charles II came to know tea.

The late seventeenth century saw the propagation of tea drinking by the

aristocracy. As stated by historian James Walvin, "The English royals adopted the custom

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[76] Gertrude Z. Thomas, *Richer Than Spices,* 99-100.
[77] James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 14-15.
[78] Gertrude Z. Thomas, *Richer Than Spices*, 93-95.
[79] Ibid., 93-95.

– the surest and quickest way to spread any social fad among English elite."[80] Tea

provided a calming drink that allowed for a certain degree of etiquette and ceremony for

both men and women to enjoy. Before this period, beer, ale, wine, and cider were the

usual beverages that men and women consumed in a social setting.[81] By the end of the

seventeenth century, coffee came to the attention of upper class men, and coffee houses

sprang up all over London. Because of the political and scholarly atmosphere of the

coffee houses, women were not allowed to attend. Coffee never established a strong hold

in the home. The brewing of coffee needed a specialized knowledge of the process, and

even then the proper brew could still be unattainable.[82] While the options for men were

growing, the only drinks that could be enjoyed in the home by both men and women were

alcoholic beverages.[83] Tea was a beverage the upper class could consume in a ceremonial

way, without the adverse effects of drunkenness if consumed in large quantities.

At a time when society was extremely class-conscious, small gestures were

important mechanisms for inclusion and exclusion. Norbert Elias describes this

phenomenon within the court society as a form of distancing. For instance, a noble would

have to maintain an appearance that was proper for his social standing to ensure that there

was no question of his rank and power. So, in essence, the noble distances himself from

other members of court to demonstrate his rank. Elias argues this system of distance

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[80] James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 14-15
[81] Gertrude Z. Thomas, *Richer Than Spices*, 98.
[82] Commenting on social behaviors of English society at the end of the eighteenth century, Carl Moritz described his inability to brew coffee himself. He stated he could never remember the proper amount of coffee needed per cup and so in many instances the coffee was just brown water, and very weak. C. P. Moritz, "Travels Through Various Parts of England in 1782," in W. Mavor, *The British Tourist's, or Traveller's, Pocket Companion, vol.* 4 (London, 1809), 12.
[83] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea*, 37-38.

within court society extends to society as a whole.[84] The court society created 'high' culture. The high culture exhibited an outward separation from others based on ceremony and etiquette, which flowed to the masses in time. Many different cultural habits from the court society moved into Western society. The consumption of tea gave the aristocracy another way in which to practice of inclusion and exclusion.

Fashion was important to the elite of the time and to remain fashionable was to consume tea in a very specific way. By the early eighteenth century, the East India Company had imported enough tea for the price to drop slightly. In 1700, around 0.01 pounds of tea per capita were imported into England. Even so, the taxes on legally imported tea, at 5 shillings per pound, made it accessible only to the prosperous.[85] In addition, the early tea trade was sporadic since the East India Company did not have direct access to China. By 1713, a direct trade agreement between China and the trading company allowed for a steady increase of tea into the English market, much to the pleasure of the English consumer.[86] This also meant the rise in consumption of all things tea related, such as fine Chinese porcelain, elaborate tea tables, and special silverware all specific to the enjoyment of tea. It was the consumption of these luxuries in a ceremonial practice that certainly included and excluded others.[87]

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[84] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society,* 163.
[85] "Tea imports for home consumption: 1700-99 (annual average)," in Carole Shammas, "Changes in English and Anglo-American consumption from 1500 to 1800," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London, UK: Routledge, 1993) 184, Table 9.4.
[86] Ibid, 183.
[87] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea*, 82-83.

2) Catherine of Braganza at the age of twenty-two just before she married Charles II, King of England. Her dress is in the style of Portugal farthingale in black, trimmed in silver lace. This style of dress epitomized the Portuguese high fashion of the late 17th century. By or after Dirk Stoop, 1660-1661. National Portrait Gallery, London.

There are two important reasons why tea drinking became immensely popular within the court society of Charles II and Catherine. The first was the dowry that accompanied Catherine's marriage to Charles, which included a chest of tea as well as a few pivotal trading posts in the East. The trading posts she brought with her were pivotal in gaining greater interest to the East India Company from Charles II. The East India Company continually brought small gifts of tea for Charles during the mid- seventeenth century and so sparked the curiosity of Charles to the wonders of gaining access to Eastern nations.[88] This allowed for more and more tea to make it into England, to the

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[88] Tom Standage, *A History of the World in 6 Glasses,* 189.

delight of the upper classes. The way in which Catherine took her tea also made an impact upon English tea drinking. In particular, Catherine drank her tea in small cups several times a day. Many times she would do so with her ladies which gave them a chance to socialize in a relaxed setting. This practice became very popular among members of the court.[89] Even so, Queen Catherine was not the only royal who would transform and solidify tea culture. The Duchess of Bedford began a tradition that transformed drinking tea from a simple delight to a daily staple.

Anna, the wife of the seventh Duke of Bedford, enjoyed taking her tea in the afternoon, between lunch and dinner. She complained of a 'sinking feeling' between lunch and dinner and would order cakes and small sandwiches to be eaten with her tea. She also used this time to socialize with those around her. This began the way many aristocrats took their tea on a daily basis. To uphold social etiquette, as well as to arrange for travel ahead of time, people would make arrangements to call on friends and family or schedule appointments with households to conduct business. In a time when travel was erratic and it could be seen as improper to visit someone unannounced, 'visiting-days' were an important way to stay connected.[90] By the eighteenth century, tea time became an excuse to call on others. These gatherings, or tea parties, were the early spaces to set the ground work which created and solidified proper tea etiquette.[91]

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[89] Gertrude Z. Thomas, *Richer Than Spices,* 93-95
[90] Sir Richard Steele, and Englishman and social commentator, uses the term 'visiting-day' to describe the days in which callers came to his residence as well as when he went on calls. He also goes into detail the proper ways in which people should call on others. Sir Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, 1710, *The Tatler, Vol. 3* (London: Duckworth and Co., repr. 1899), 273-275.
[91] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea*, 82-84.

3) Typical china-ware an upper class family would use to consume their tea. They believed the china from China or Japan was the only types of dishes that were acceptable to drinking tea. The delicate porcelain gave the tea a better flavor. Tea-bowl and saucer. England, 1756-57. soft-paste porcelain. Victoria and Albert Museum. Museum no. C.96(&A)-1948.

The afternoon tea party was not only a product of a duchess' hunger, but also reflected an interest in the ancient practice of the Japanese afternoon tea. News, proceedings, and customs were traveling down the trade routes to Great Britain alongside the commodities. The English desired the commodities, but they were also interested in the customs that sometimes went along with the commodities. The famous seventeenth century Japanese tea-master Rikyu described the attitude behind the Japanese tea ceremonies, which the British strove to reproduce, "If the tea and eating utensils are of bad taste, and if the natural layout and planning of the trees and rocks in the tea-garden are unpleasing, then it is as well to go straight back home."[92] This Japanese perfection of tea-ware and atmosphere gave the British upper class a template for their own tea

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[92] Tom Standage, *A History of the World in 6 Glasses,* 184.

practices and mannerisms. It also gave them a justification for utilizing tea as a means of social distinction. Social etiquette was of utmost importance for the upper class in England during the eighteenth century. Regulation of the rules came from those who wielded the power in society, or by those who ranked higher. If anything were to be amiss, it could be grounds for dismissal in some household or unrelenting societal gossip. Sir Richard Steele, a politician and writer who commented on society and mannerisms of the upper class in the early- eighteenth century, described many instances, some extremely amusing, of the role of social mannerisms for English society. In one instance he stated, "There are rules and decorum's which are never to be transgressed by those who understand the world; that he who offends in this kind, ought not to take ill if he is turned away."[93]  He then went on to describe the amusing story of Mrs. Mary Astell. On the occasion that Mrs. Astell spotted a caller who did not arrange ahead, and especially if she believed they did not have the proper ability to discourse on useful subjects, she would go to the caller personally and tell them that Mrs. Astell was not at home.[94] This would surly embarrass the caller. Proper social etiquette gave precedence to social balance in society. Tea culture gave the British another scale and means of keeping such balance among the upper class.

The upper classes in England utilized already established practices of Asian tea culture to create their own versions of tea etiquette and ceremony. For instance, travelers in Asia would return to the United Kingdom insisting that tea should be enjoyed with certain porcelain and utensils to gain the most from the beverage. They insisted it was

[93] Sir Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, *The Tatler,* 273-275.
[94] Ibid., 273-275.

only fitting to drink from the porcelain, as it was said to make the aromas and flavor of the tea better. Since this porcelain was also very expensive, it too remained at the height of fashion. However, not only were the drinking tools important to drinking tea for the wealthy, but also how one drank the tea truly mattered in certain social circumstances. For example, when stirring the beverage, picking up the beverage, or sipping the beverage, a proper British gentleman or woman needed to utilize proper tea etiquette or risk insulting their position.[95]

Etiquette books and essays were popular among the elite during this period. These books provided instructions for the upper classes so they never appeared below their station in any given situation. The manner of eating and drinking were well discussed within these manuals because of the importance and popularity of social engagements that required those tasks. For instance, a popular eighteenth century book titled *Principles of Politeness and Knowing the World* provided instructions for how to avoid appearing low class or impolite: "Eating quick, or very slow, at meals , is characteristic of the vulgar; the first infers poverty, that you have not had a good meal for some time; the last, if abroad [dining out] that you dislike your entertainment: if at home, and eating slowly, that you are rude enough to set before your friends what you cannot eat yourself."[96] Furthermore, the topic of conversation mattered and was critical to keeping up appearances in social engagements. This was more important for situations where the members of the social gathering were not well acquainted. If that was the case, the

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[95] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea*, 82-84.
[96] Philip Dormer Stanhope Chesterfield, *Principles of Politeness, and of Knowing the World: By the late Lord Chesterfield. With Additions By the Rev. Dr. John Trusler Containing Every instruction necessary to complete the Gentleman and Man of Fashion, to teach him a knowledge of Life and make him well received in all Companies. For the Improvement of Youth; Yet not beneath the attention of any* (Worchester: By Isaiah Thomas, 1784), 80.

conversation had to remain with a positive tone. Matters that were controversial or negative had to be discussed in a different setting. Moreover, many times woman ran the tea setting and so the conversation had to remain lady-like.[97] Ones rank also factored into etiquette and ceremony in the tea setting. The greetings, engagement in conversation, and the manner in which members of the party were served depended upon their rank, and it was vital to adhere to those rules so as to not insult the guests.[98]  If the setting was among friends and family, the topic of conversation could vary greatly. Societal gossip was always an acceptable topic among close friends, where the satirist Thomas Brown described tea time with Queen Ann as "A sip of Tea, then for a draught or two of Scandal to digest…. til the half hour's past, and [callers] have disburthen'd [sic] themselves of their Secrets, and take Coach for some other place to collect new matter for Defamation."[99] Some members of society had a reputation for the topics of conversation they generally discussed during tea time, where those who favored society gossip or fashion trends were well received simply because they were more interesting. As an intellectual, Sir Richard Steele did not have much patience for people who could not "speak reason among men," but were well received within society.[100] He called these people the "Order of the Insipids," because they "are the constant plague of all they meet by inquiries for news and scandal, which makes them the heroes of visiting-days, where they help the design of the meeting, which is to pass away the odious thing called time, in discourse to [sic] trivial to raise any reflections which may put well-bred persons to the

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[97] Woodruff P. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability,* 174.
[98] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea*, 82-84.
[99] Thomas Brown, *The Works of Mr. Thomas Brown, Serious and Comical in Prose and Verse, in Four Volumes* (London: Sam Brisco at the Bell-Savage, 1720), 86.
[100] Sir Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, 1710, *The Tatler,* 274.

trouble of thinking."[101]  Sir Richard took tea throughout the day in his home, but he favored the coffee house setting which could account for his criticisms of social gossipers.[102] Nevertheless, if conversation among friends turned to gossip when taking tea, as it commonly did, the host attempted to uphold the proper etiquette of eating and drinking.

The ways in which the upper classes of England drank their tea gave them another social outlet to include those who knew the rules and to exclude those who failed to follow the rules. Those with the wealth and means of employing proper tea etiquette could be part of this exclusive club. The afternoon tea laid the foundation for how Great Britain would continue to drink tea, even to this day. Once tea became profitable enough to drop in price significantly, it already had been established within the upper classes. How the aristocracy kept their tea culture as elitist and separate from that of lower class tea consumption was in their ability to distance themselves with their exclusive practices.

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[101] Sir Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, 1710, *The Tatler,* 275.
[102] Ibid, 275.

4) The Cromwell and Thornhill Families Taking Tea. Charles Philips (1708-1747). Cromwell Museum. London.

## Tea Spaces: The Upper Class Obsession with Tea

By the early eighteenth century, tea imports had reached a point where the price of tea continued to drop. In the first few decades of the century, tea was still too expensive for the middle classes to comfortably afford, except on special occasions. Even so, tea culture continued to grow within the upper class of England. The majority of tea consumption to this point had been in the private setting of the home, but the overwhelming popularity of tea pushed it into the public realm. Consuming tea properly was a way for people to establish themselves within society, and so the public consumption of tea provided another arena in which to exhibit social status. By presenting a proper show of etiquette at tea parties, especially in the company of those socially higher, new members of the upper classes could gain acceptance from the elite,

which could possibly launch their season or make introductions into prestigious households.[103] There were many places for people of respectability to take tea in a public setting. The coffee house began serving tea once it was found to be just as desirable, and fashionable tea gardens attracted the upper classes to a leisurely stroll and enjoyable afternoon. The public tea space added another place where one could exhibit their social status by purchasing and partaking in the commodity culture of tea.

The public consumption of tea did not happen as soon as the people of Great Britain discovered their desire for the beverage. For the most part, the private consumption of tea resided within the home and so tea drinking became heavily associated as a woman's task.[104] The home was the domestic center of life where the woman did her crafts and the children were raised to become respectable members of society. For upper class women, tea time was the first process they could control, even if their servants were the ones brewing and making the tea and food stuffs. In this setting, the host would serve her guest, a task normally reserved for footmen or maids at supper. Tea time could be seen as a type of training for the public or private social setting where attending children could see an example of what was proper in the social relationships between adults. They were taught to interact in a way that was acceptable and proper through their daily consumption of tea. As such, the parlor became a space where women could take part and influence the culture of consuming tea.[105] Many wealthy families began to create specific spaces within their homes for tea drinking, even so much as to have special tea houses on country estates that overlooked gardens or beautiful

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[103] Woodruff P. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability*, 173.
[104] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea,* 81.
[105] Woodruff P. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability,* 173-174.

promenades. It was more common to have a room dedicated to tea drinking, as was evident in the home of Richard Hall. A wealthy business owner, Hall spent a considerable amount of his wealth on consumer goods. He kept a detailed journal and in many instances he listed the things he purchased, which would regularly include the purchase of tea and tea goods. In one particular entry, he detailed the inventories of his home and listed rooms and their functions. The inventory shows that he had a specific room for the taking of tea, with its "fretwork mahogany tea table, a Japan Ditto…. a draft board, sundry stones shells and Fossils and a painting of fruit."[106] The private domain of the home was the first place the upper classes created to specifically consume a commodity. The creation of the private tea space led to the creation of the public one.

The emergence of a commodity culture surrounding the consumption of a beverage began much sooner than the establishment of tea culture. Similar to the early use of tea, the medicinal quality of coffee attracted the attention of upper class consumers. People marveled at the stimulating effects of the beverage where Philippe Silvestre Dufour wrote that coffee "refreshes the heart and the vital beating thereof, it relieves those that have pains in their stomach, and cannot eat. It is also good against the indisposition of the brain."[107] Some sources went even so far as to describe the benefits of coffee for women consumers, particularly in reference to child bearing. Even though English women were not allowed into public coffee houses in London, British observers

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[106] Richard Hall, *The Journal of a Georgian Gentleman: The Life and Times of Richard Hall, 1729-1801, By his own hand and as edited by his descendant Mike Rendell* (Sussex, England: Book Guild Publishing, 2011), 242-243.

[107] Philippe Silvestre Dufour, *The Manner of Making Coffee, Tea, and Chocolate: As it is used most parts of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, With their Virtues, Newly done out of French and Spanish,* 1685, in Early English Books Online, *British Library,* http://gateway.proquest.com.librarylink.uncc.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:56959 (accessed September 2013), 11.

on coffee did not want to exclude any useful information from their writings. In particular, Richard Bradley described several beneficial qualities for women. He stated, "The Arabian Woman drinks the Liquor constantly in their Periodical Visits, and find a good Effect from it," and the coffee "is an effectual Remedy against Worms in Children; so that the Mother drinks frequently of it when she is With Child, the infant will not be troubled with Worms, during its first Years."[108] In most instances, those commenting on the virtues of coffee repeatedly refer to the stimulating effects that vanquished drowsiness. This was by far the largest selling feature of coffee during the Enlightenment in Great Britain.[109]

Upper class men began the intellectual tradition of frequenting coffee houses for lively discussions on everything from politics to philosophy, which paved the way for the emergence of a cultural practice revolving around a beverage. Samuel Pepys, an influential political figure, described the lively atmosphere of the coffee shops that he frequented on a regular basis. In many diary entries, he described the discussions he took part in at the coffee houses, which could range from trivial to the profound.[110] Intellectuals much admired coffee because of its invigorating effects on the mind, making the coffee house an extremely popular destination for politicians, doctors, academics, and anyone who wanted stimulating conversation. Once the price of coffee had fallen to such a level that all classes could consume the beverage, more and more men were frequenting the coffee houses of London. Unlike tea culture, coffee house rituals and customs were

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[108] Richard Bradley, *The Virtues and Use of Coffee with Regards to the Plague, and other infectious Distempers: Containing the most Remarkable Observations of the Greatest men in Europe concerning it, from the first Knowledge of it down to this present time. To which is prefix'd, an exact figure of the tree, flower, and fruit taken from life* (London: By Eman. Mathews at the Bible in Pater-Noster-Row, 1721), 24.
[109] Tom Standage, *The History of the World in Six Glasses,* 139.
[110] Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, E-reader location 17172-17184.

purely intellectual and so distinction among individuals was found within scholarly

conversation and intellectual potential.[111] Moreover, for many reasons, coffee was

considered solely a male beverage. Because of the political and scholarly atmosphere of

the coffee houses, women were not allowed to attend in any fashion. The coffee house

became an important place for manly camaraderie, and so many women disapproved of

the pastime.[112] In 1674, just as coffee came into popularity, "The Women's Petition

against Coffee" cried out against the consumption of coffee, even going so far as to state

that coffee emasculated the consumer.[113] Historian James Walvin points to the male

exclusivity of coffee houses as the possible true reason behind the petition.[114] Coffee

house intellectual culture was the first exhibition of a beverage commodity culture

consumed by the masses in England. [115]

Since a cup of coffee was extremely cheap to purchase and there were hundreds

of coffee houses in London alone, it never became a major consumable in the home.

Even so, by the mid- eighteenth century coffee consumption began to decline while tea

consumption continued to rise. The East India Company continued importing coffee in

large quantities into England during the eighteenth century, but would immediately re-

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[111] James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 41-42.

[112] Ibid., 39.

[113] Because the women who wrote this pamphlet are unknown, it is entirely possible that the petition was first printed as a spoof. There was a rebuttal to address the petition titled "The Men's Answer to The Women's Petition against Coffee." "The Women's Petition against Coffee," 1674.

[114] James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire,* 39-40.

[115] This is survey that was published for travelers in London during the late seventeenth century. It listed attractions, government offices, streets, hotels, and any useful information for a person travelling in London. Within this survey, a list of coffee houses, split into regions, provided the reader with information on the types of business or conversations that were common within that particular shop, as well as options of consumables served in the shop. Specifically, the survey includes descriptions of upwards of 135 different coffee houses located in London, which were only the more important and popular shops around. *The Picture of London, 1808: A Correct Guide to all the Curiosities, Amusements, Exhibitions, Public Establishments, and Remarkable Objects In and Near London* (London, 1808) 355-360.

export most of it into Europe where there was a stronger market for coffee.[116] The

consumption of coffee in England helped establish the ground work for the branching of

tea consumption into the public realm.

During this time, to maintain consumer trends, coffee houses began selling tea.[117]

Thomas Twining owned and operated a successful coffee house in London during the

late- seventeenth century. He knew of the popularity and demand for tea and so opened a

tea-shop next door to his popular coffee house in 1706. Once hearing of this business

venture, other coffee houses followed suit and began serving tea. Twining also sold dry

tea to customers for home consumption, and he even sold dry tea to other coffee

houses.[118] Even with changes to the goods sold in coffee shops, women were still

excluded from attending. Of course women could send their servants to purchase tea, but

they were sometimes hesitant to trust them with the large amount of money required to

buy it.[119] Several years after Twining began selling tea, he capitalized on this exclusion

by allowing both sexes to attend. Respectable women could purchase tea in a public

environment, and even whole families could attend.[120] Before this point, tea was only a

private affair of tea parties and daily tea time. Tea drinking in the public forum of the

coffee house provided a starting point for a wider consumer base for tea culture, but it

was the popular trend of the tea garden that made tea a public spectacle for a growing

number of English citizens.

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[116] John E. Willa Jr, "European consumption and Asian production in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," in *Consumption and the World of Good*s, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London, UK: Routledge, 1993), 142-143.
[117] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea,* 80.
[118] Ibid.*,* 80.
[119] Lockable tea caddies were still used amongst wealthy families to prevent servants from stealing the expensive and valuable tea. Roy and Lesley Adkins, *Jane Austen's England*, 122.
[120] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea,* 82.

A popular activity for the British gentility during the eighteenth century was to promenade through public gardens. Music and entertainment found in the gardens gave them an afternoon of pleasure. Gardens were an acceptable meeting ground for young suitors to socialize without harming their reputation. In 1732, the first garden opened that specifically capitalized on the consumption of tea. Vauxhall Gardens offered bandstands, performers, food and beverages, predominantly tea, and these gardens were commonly referred to as tea gardens. Georgiana, the Duchess of Devonshire, enjoyed frequenting Vauxhall after its opening, and would remain until the small hours of the morning. She would bring with her other aristocrats, where they would commonly instruct the musicians to keep playing, even well after the gardens were officially closed.[121] Richard Hall, a wealthy businessman, also enjoyed attending the tea gardens of London, particularly Vauxhall and Ranelagh. Both tea gardens were elegant in design, with fountains, pavilions, and scenic walking paths, but Ranelagh was more selective than Vauxhall. Richard reported that the gate price for Vauxhall was one shilling, which was a considerable amount at this time. It was also reported that pickpockets were a common nuisance to attendants at Vauxhall and so other tea gardens began to rise in prominence. Ranelagh was more expensive, the entrance fee being half a crown, but coffee or tea was included and concerts were played every night.[122] By the early 1800s, there were twenty-six tea gardens located in London that were popular amusements for the upper and middle classes (depending on the price of admission). For those interested in attending tea gardens, *The Picture of London* described the gardens as "much frequented by the

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[121] Amanda Foreman, *The Duchess*, 88.
[122] Richard Hall, *The Journal of a Georgian Gentleman,* 81, 106.

middling classes, on Sunday especially, and many of them curious from the elegant manner in which they are fitted up."[123] This survey illustrated the particular etiquette of tea gardens. The surveyors wanted to make sure those travelling in the area knew of the particular days which were popular and the purpose of visiting the gardens and so a typical description of a tea garden was included to show what was to be expected. For instance, the Bermondsey Spa in Southwark was "conducted upon a plan something similar to Vauxhall. By paying one shilling the visitor is entitled to the amusements of the evening, which consists of a concert of vocal and instrumental music and frequently of fire works. There are some very decent paintings…. by the late Mr. Keys who was unrivalled in this species of painting. Parties are accommodated with the tea, wines and suppors [sic]."[124]

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[123] *The Picture of London*, 1808, 364.
[124] Ibid., 364.

5) Vauxhall Gardens. Print. Johann Sebastian Muller after Samuel Wale, about 1751. Victoria and Albert Museum. Museum no. W.27BB-1947.

Being in the tea gardens was a way for men, women, and children to be together in the same setting. During this period, there were only a few places where the inclusion of all genders and ages were possible, although typically there was some form of separation of these groups whether it was a physical separation or a separation of activities. The tea gardens allowed for everyone to mingle and take part in tea culture within the public eye. The tea gardens were another arena for the elite to continue to exhibit sophistication and status in society. It was also a way for those with money, but no rank, to exhibit their sophistication to those socially higher. How people acted, dressed, and spoke gave everyone around them an indication of their status. Before tea shops and gardens, tea culture could only be experienced in close social circles of the same class status, but the public domain of tea consumption expanded the commodity culture of tea.

The Beverage of Sobriety: Victorian Standards and the Place of Women

Alongside the Industrial Revolution and the ascension of Queen Victoria to the throne, a rise in the establishment of moral traditions, sound judgments, and family harmony began to transform the image of British society. The elite closest to the queen strove for a heightened sense of moral aptitude. Families of wealth and status were especially pressured to be models of morality since they were in a position of power and public influence. Commodity culture continued during this period with fervor, since consumerism could still promote moral habits and guidelines. Of course, this depended upon the goods consumed since Victorian ideas were placed within the goods themselves. Consumer goods were commonly advertised with the language of social purity. Advertisers frequently used the image of Queen Victoria herself.[125] Since tea was only mildly stimulating, it was the perfect beverage to consume during the Victorian era. The upper class looked down upon alcohol consumption since it did not allow people to be of sound mind and judgments when they drank it. Both tea and coffee were appropriate for Victorian values, as it could sober someone who was intoxicated. Many writers on the effects of tea and coffee praised the beverages as a tool for sobriety. John Ovington described the adverse effects that alcohol had over a person and stated, "Advantage which it [tea] has over wine…. which so frequently betrays men into so much mischief and so many follies." He added "for this admirable tea endeavors to reconcile men to sobriety."[126] While Ovington introduced his essay to an eighteenth century audience, the ideas were adaptable for the nineteenth century. He gave significance to tea in his writing

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[125] Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England,* 97-99.
[126] John Ovington, *An Essay,* 26.

as to stress its importance to the moral standards of the early modern era. As such, he

described tea as an "admirable" drink that could "reconcile," which told the reader that

tea consumption can lead them on a path of moral values.[127]
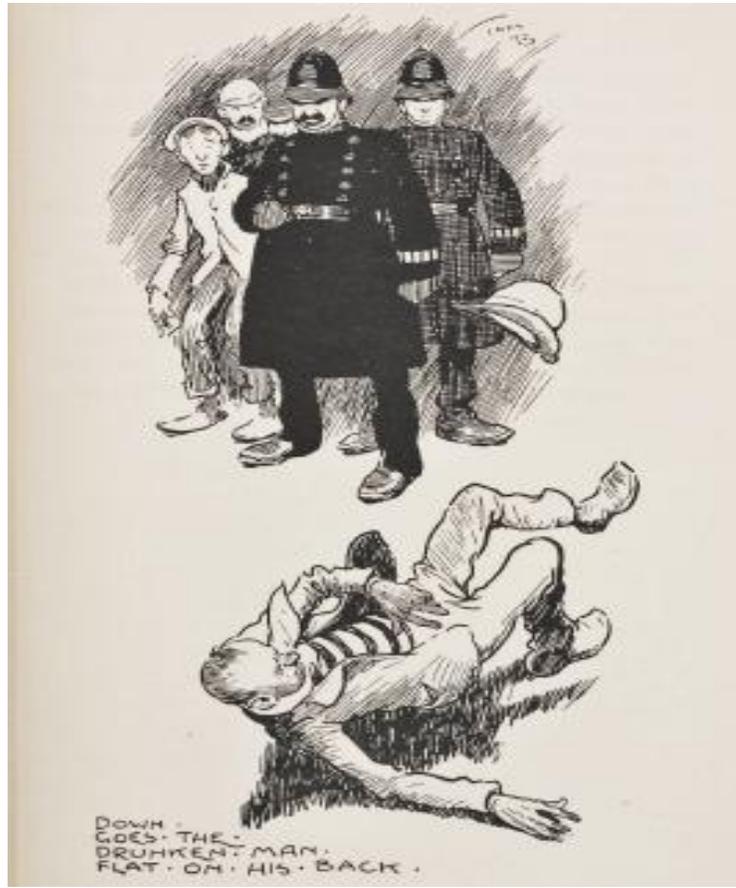


6) An example of a late Victorian comic that shows what society considered to be shameful behavior. The drunken man is clearly the center of attention where the police officers try to conceal the concerned citizens from the man's actions. "Down Goes the Drunken Man Flat on his Back" in *The Night Side of London* by Robert Machray illustrated by Tom Browne. 1902. in London Low Life. *Indiana University*.

Before tea and coffee were available to be consumed on a wider scale, alcohol

was one of the only beverages that could be served during social events. Taverns sprang

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[127] John Ovington, *An Essay,* 26.

up throughout Great Britain and men were drinking more and more alcohol. The Gin Act,

passed in 1751, increased taxes in an effort to deter the widespread consumption of the

beverage. The act was the response of humanitarians to the overwhelming increase in gin

drinking "by persons of the meanest and lowest sort" during the mid- eighteenth

century.[128] Typically, more women than men spoke out against alcohol consumption.

During the Industrial Revolution, working class men drank alcohol on a greater basis

because it was through the technological innovations coming from this time that made

alcohol much cheaper. Advertisements and posters exclaiming proper morals and

common examples of destitute appeared in magazines and on street corners.[129] Especially

strong in the pursuit of morality were middle-class women. These women pushed for

strong morals through groups such as The Temperance Society, which advocated sobriety

for the husbands of Great Britain. Backing the consumption of tea, The Temperance

Society began selling tea with the purpose of supporting their cause. They trademarked a

catchy slogan to get at what was important for the women of England; "Tea and the

Result, A Happy Home. Alcohol and the Result, A Wretched Home."[130] Conservative

morals, growing prosperity, and the continued imperial project gave tea an even greater

place in the consumer culture phenomenon during the nineteenth-century.

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[128] Parliament of Great Britain, "The Gin Act, 1751," in *English Historical Document, 1714-1783* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 552-555.

[129] Tom Browne, "Down Goes the Drunken Man Flat on his Back", illustration in *The Night Side of London* by Robert Machray, 1902, in London Low Life, *Indiana University* (accessed September 2013). See image number 5.

[130] "The Temperance Society's Tea" in *Ally Sloper's Comic kalender for 1879,* 1878, in London Low Life, (accessed September 2013), 19.

ASK YOUR GROCER FOR

The Temperance Societies'

PACKED BY
GEEVES'S
Patent Process,
Direct from the Chest.

FULL WEIGHT
Without the Package.

Warranted Pure.

TEA

*Registered Trade Mark.*
Tea and the Result,
A HAPPY HOME.
Alcohol & the Result,
A WRETCHED HOME.

*Registered Label.*
T with TEA in the
centre.

WHOLESALE WAREHOUSES:
8 & 9 CHISWELL STREET, LONDON, E.C.,
And at CHELTENHAM.
10 lbs. Box or Caddy at Wholesale Price, saving the
Consumer 6d. per lb. *Price List free on application.*

7) Advertisements like this one ran in magazines to influence the masses in more than one way. They strove to sell the good as well as get to the moral fiber of Victorian women. "The Temperance Society's Tea" in *Ally Sloper's Comic Kalender for 1879.* 1878. in London Low Life. *Michael Sadler Collection of Ephemera.* (accessed September 2013).

Women were extremely important for enforcing the ideas of the Victorian era and tea proved to be a central commodity to the continuation of the consumer culture as well as the moral codes of the Victorian era. Even though tea consumption had branched into the public realm of coffee houses and tea gardens, it was more common for tea to be consumed in the home than in any other setting. The notion of the spheres of influence played an important role in the developing society of Victorian England, where women were supposed to remain within the home while the men continued within the public world. While it seemed as though women did not have an abundance of choices concerning their place in Victorian England, they began to take on roles of influence unlike previous times.[131]

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[131] Woodruff P. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability,* 175-176.

Tea made the home a center for social and familial life.[132] Women were able to make decisions in the home, since it was their sphere, and so were able to have some power and control over their lives. This can be seen in the daily consumption of tea. Victorian women were unable to openly contribute to politics but taking tea in public as well as the private space with their husbands allowed for their first taste of public political life. Women aligned tea parties around political events and hosted influential politicians of the time, just as Lady Grey entertained her husband's colleagues using the special bergamot-infused tea. Georgiana, the Duchess of Devonshire frequently contributed to politics by entertaining diplomats and ministers. In one instance, the *London Chronicle* gave a full description of the lavish affair the duchess provided. The newspaper printed, "The Duke and Duchess of Devonshire gave a most elegant breakfast to a select number of nobility at Burlington House, Chiswick…. The company began to assemble about 1 o'clock…. The company were entertained with tea, coffee, chocolate, fruits of all sorts, ices, etc., til four o'clock when they returned to town."[133] Upper class women could also participate in charities that helped the working class or organizations that were concerned with issues such as prostitution. Usually these meetings were hosted in the homes of the women activists and so tea was regularly served. If a husband did not want his wife to participate in such a charity or organization, a wife could simply state that she was hosting or attending a tea time with friends. Even though the separate spheres justified no voting or political activity for women, having tea parties and participating in tea culture allowed for women to get a glimpse of something more.[134]

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[132] Jessica Hanser, "Teatime in the North Country," 55.
[133] Amanda Foreman, *The Duchess*, 114.
[134] Woodruff P. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability,* 176.

8) An example of what Victorian women were speaking out against. With consumption at high rates and incomes becoming disposable, more and more men flocked to the saloon for alcohol and at times prostitution. "The "Victorian" Saloon" in *Paul Pry*, 1848-1859.

Fashion and taste were ways for women to stand out in society, even when they were told to remain quiet. As such, tea parties and festivities conferred social status but also gave women a medium to express themselves. The hostess of the party made sure everything went off without a hitch, and impressions were made with what was served or shown. At these parties the latest society gossip could be discussed or determined.[135] Even in the public realm of tea culture, there were some gardens that gave women permission to make the first move concerning meeting a possible suitor. In society, it was unheard of for women to make the first sign of affection, but as a fun game in the space of the tea gardens, young women could play a part in their own affections for the first time.[136] The daily tea time was also important for elite women during the Victorian era.

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[135] Beatrice Hohenegger, *Liquid Jade*, 87.
[136] Tom Standage, *A History of the World,* 195.

This was a time of day where they could interact with their entire family in one setting. It was customary for issues of the home and life to be discussed, unless those issues were of a negative nature. Most importantly, the daily tea time was a way for women to touch the public life through talking with their husbands. This allowed them to be indirectly active in the political life of their husbands while not upsetting the social norms.[137] The consumer culture surrounding tea allowed Victorian women a space for early liberation. Although it would take a world war for women to finally get the vote, consuming tea gave women a voice in a world where women were generally supposed to only reside in the domestic realm.

## Conclusion

Great Britain during the early modern era changed dramatically from the previous decades. Consumer goods reached the markets unlike ever before. With the opening of new trade routes, the highly desirable imperial goods flooded the markets for the upper classes to enjoy. Many different types of imperial goods were consumed, but tea proved to be the most desirable as well as important good that would make its way into Great Britain. During this period, there was also a rising initiative around consuming commodities in England. A consumer culture arose during this time which the upper classes heralded. The upper class, particularly the aristocracy, began using tea consumption as another form of social distinction, and one which could easily include and exclude based on social etiquette and ceremony. This practice of ceremony and etiquette traveled to the wealthy who could afford the practice, and then was established in the public domain for even greater consumption.

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[137] Woodruff P. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability*, 178.

The Industrial Revolution would bring much more to the growth of consumer culture. The immense growth of the working class, as well as the middle classes, gave more and more people incomes that could be spent on items that were not solely necessities. The middle classes were branching into the world of finery that only the upper classes had enjoyed until that point. As the upper classes brought tea into the public realm and consumed it in their ritualistic fashion, the lower classes were observing. By the 1800s, the East India Company had opened trading posts in China and acquired territory in India. For these reasons, tea came into Great Britain in greater quantities. Contrary to Georg Simmel's claim that the upper classes leave a particular trend behind once it is adopted by the lower classes, a different phenomenon occurred concerning tea. The upper classes did not completely give up tea but kept their own tea tradition alive. The ways they consumed tea shifted with the Victorian traditions of the time, but they still used methods of inclusion and exclusion in their tea culture. The upper classes dictated the fashion, culture, and trends to the lower classes, and, in most instances, would eventually snub the fashions for something new; however, the complexity of the consumer culture surrounding tea allowed the upper, middle, and lower classes to continue the tea culture regardless of social norms. During the Industrial Revolution, the consumer culture grew to massive heights. The consumption of tea also grew alongside the overarching consumer revolution. Not only did the middle and lower classes jump on board with tea culture, but the upper classes kept up with it. With the advances in technology, even more consumer goods to accompany tea were produced domestically. The next chapter will detail the adaption of tea culture by the lower classes and the importance of tea in their daily lives during the Industrial Revolution.

CHAPTER 3: THE WORKING-CLASS CONSUMPTION OF TEA

Josiah Wedgewood, born into a family of potters in 1730, worked a variety of jobs in the family business. He learned many aspects of being a potter, which allowed him to understand what worked and what did not in pottery making.[138] His position gave him the knowledge to revolutionize the pottery industry.[139] Before Wedgwood's improved systems, the pottery making process could take weeks depending on the level of detail and design involved. Although this pottery was very finely done, it was also very expensive.[140] Wedgwood utilized modern technological advancements that came out of the Industrial Revolution, and applied the factory system of divided labor for the pottery making process which produced the wares more quickly. This division of labor allowed Wedgwood to move his products through his factories at a higher rate than other potters thereby lowering the price of his products.[141] This aspect of pottery production not only revolutionized the pottery industry, it also revolutionized the consumer culture surrounding tea.

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[138] Josiah Wedgewood worked a variety of jobs in his family's pottery business because of continuous illnesses that plagued him throughout his youth. He would move through different jobs as his health would allow him, but this proved to be advantageous when he opened his own pottery business. His knowledge of the different positions allowed him to maximize his time and energy which got the pottery out much faster. This allowed for Wedgewood to sell his pottery much cheaper than his competitors. A. S. Turberville, *English Men and Manners in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 394, 398. For an account of Wedgwood's life and career see Brian Dolan, *Wedgwood: The First Tycoon* (New York: Viking Press, 2004).

[139] A. S. Turberville, *English Men and Manners in the Eighteenth Century,* 394.

[140] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848* (Great Britain: Weindenfeld and Nicholson Ltd, 1962), 32-33.

[141] Tom Standage, *A History of the World in 6 Glasses*, 201-202.
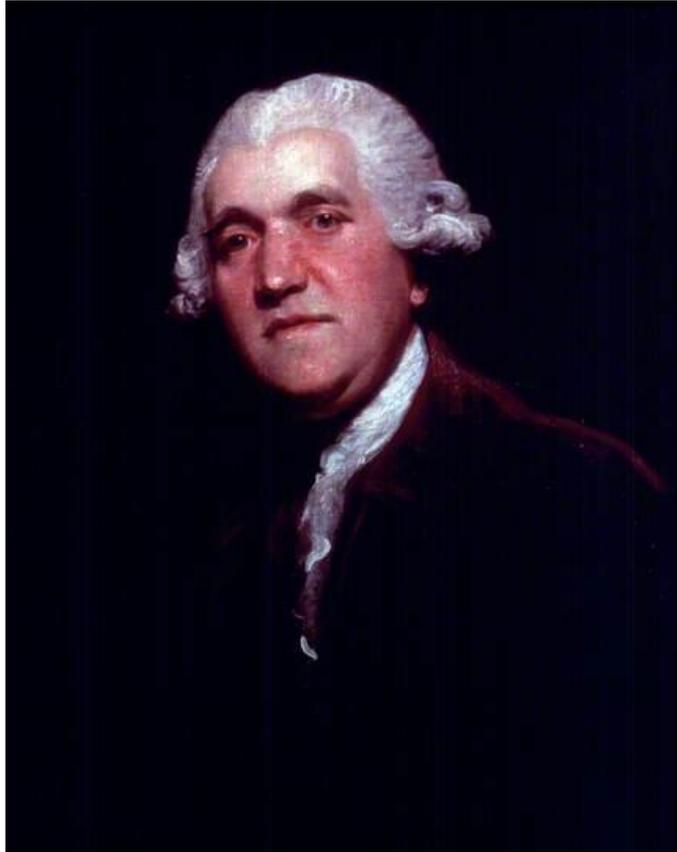
9) Portrait of Josiah Wedgewood by Joshua Reynolds. Oil on canvas. Wedgewood Museum.

Before the late eighteenth century, most high-end tea ware came from the

porcelain makers of the East. The most popular wares came from either China or Japan.

The upper class desired the porcelain because it was far superior to any pottery created in

the British Isles, but they also desired it for its exclusivity. Furthermore, many consumers

of tea believed the specific shape and material of the ceramics from the east were the

finest for enjoying the taste and aroma of the tea.[142] This system of shipping fine and

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[142] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea,* 91.

delicate porcelain half-way around the world was extremely expensive and could only be afforded by the rich.

A survey conducted for goods consumed in London households during the eighteenth century showed that before 1700 utensils for hot drinks and chinaware were least likely to be owned of all household goods. By 1725, 35 percent of households surveyed reported to have chinaware and 60 percent reported to have utensils for hot drinks.[143] This increase not only illuminates the growth in consumption of goods specific to tea drinking, but it also shows the increase in consumerism as a whole. There was a steady increase in ownership of most household goods reported, although tea goods show the most significant increase in the shortest amount of time. Of the categories inventoried, utensils for hot drinks and chinaware were the only goods that had 0 percent listed for the survey years of 1675 to 1685.[144] This is most likely because of the high price of tea in Great Britain before 1720. Also, tea wares were expensive in the years leading up to the mass importation of tea into Great Britain, but as the statistics show, more and more people owned tea goods by the early to mid- eighteen hundreds.[145] Revolutionary technological processes, such as the ones utilized by Wedgewood, would change those numbers dramatically.

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[143] "Changing Frequencies of Ownership of Selected Goods in Towns and Country Areas, 1675-1725," Mary Wiesner, Julius Ruff, and William Bruce Wheeler, *Discovering the Western Past: A Look at the Evidence, Volume II: Since 1500* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008), 106.

[144] The information in the surveys comes from household inventories taken from 1675 to 1725. The surveys come from several Dioceses in England, namely the Diocese of Durham, Carlisle, London, Winchester, Chester, Canterbury, Ely, and Lichfield. Lorna Weatherhill, "The meaning of consumer behavior in the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth- century," in *Consumption and the World of Good*s, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London, UK: Routledge, 1993), 217-225.

[145] The ownership of utensils for hot goods more likely reflects utensils for tea drinking, more so than for coffee consumption, since it was rare for coffee to be found within the home.

Before the eighteenth century, pottery created in the British Isles had been produced from the red clay available in the region. To make the pottery appear white, a thin coating of glaze and paint had to be applied. This pottery looked appealing until the coating chipped or naturally buffed away from continuous use. By the eighteenth century, the process of mixing white burning clay and finely ground flints had been discovered, which made the pottery white through and through.[146] Wedgwood utilized this new technique in his pottery making process, but added advanced processes such as the steam engine for his grinding and stamping machines. Furthermore, he used a division of labor strategy in his workshops. In his youth, Wedgwood experienced potting masters who created most of the pottery and had worked the business their entire lives. These masters created finely crafted pottery but would only make as many wares as they could in the time available to them. This also made the earthenware expensive. Wedgewood improved the timing of this system by utilizing specialized craftsmen to perform one aspect of pottery making, such as a talented designer, and not just a single person who could do everything. This allowed Wedgwood to create pottery that was much cheaper but also far superior to any of the cheaper variety of earthenware coming out of British manufacturing.[147]

Although Wedgwood's pottery led to more affordable tea wares, Josiah Wedgewood originally sought to sell his products to wealthy individuals. Two of his most important and influential clients were King George III and Queen Charlotte. During this period the king and queen searched for talented English manufacturers to promote

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[146] A. S. Turberville, *English Men and Manners in the Eighteenth Century,* 398.
[147] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution,* 32-33.

the economy of Great Britain, and Wedgewood gained their attention from his rise in the

pottery business.  Like most salesmen during this time, Wedgewood wanted to have his

tea wares remain with the fashionable and so when the queen and king approached him to

create a tea service, Wedgewood used it to his advantage. He created a set just for the

queen but then began marketing replicas of this set as "Queen's ware." He even staged

special exhibitions of his tea services so the public would know what the pottery looked

like, and how they could order their own version.[148] Royalty and aristocracy alike kept

orders coming into Wedgewood's manufacturing centers for the Queen's ware, even

King George III wanted a set of his own. Soon, many other potters began imitating the

Queen's ware because of its immense popularity.



10) Wedgewood "Queen's Ware" plate circa 1770. This plate is representative of the design ordered by Queen Charlotte, and others such as King George III and Empress Catherine II of Russia.

Cheap imitations were made in response to Wedgewood's success so that even the lowliest of the population could take their tea like the queen. Just as the upper classes imitated those of higher stations, the lower classes also imitated certain aristocratic practices when they were able to. Even though the tea ware purchased by the lower classes was not comparable to the aristocratic variety, the working class still purchased goods made specifically for the consumption of tea.[149] The pottery-making processes, cheaper imported tea, and technological advances of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, finally opened the door for the lower classes to take tea on a daily basis.



11) An 18th century Wedgewood Showroom. This was a place for the public to come and browse different selections of Wedgewood pottery, and at different prices to appease a diverse population of consumers.

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[149] The upper class typically drank tea from porcelain or silver. The working class more commonly drank their tea from mugs made out of coarse earthenware, copper, or burl wood. Gertrude Z. Thomas, *Richer than Spices*, 105.

By the late eighteenth century, Great Britain was under the spell of the majestic

tea plant. The high importation of tea pushed the price down to a place where the middle

classes could take tea on a daily basis, and the lower classes could even enjoy a cup or

two a week.[150] Discussing the impact of tea in the British Isles in the mid- seventeenth

century, Dutch theologian Duncan Forbes noted that "the opening [of] a Trade with the

East-Indies brought the Price of Tea… so low, that the meanest labouring Man could

compass the Purchase of it."[151] He showed that the growth in tea imports even allowed

for the "very poorest Housewife" to purchase tea and tea goods.[152] Not only were the

lower classes consuming tea goods during this period, but they were also consuming

other imported food stuffs from the imperial project, such as sugar and coffee. The influx

of goods during the latter part of the eighteenth century opened the door for the lower

classes to take part in the British consumer culture. Consumption of imported goods rose

alongside the rise in population and industry where even those with a little extra could

have purchasing power.[153]

This period also saw the rise in industry and millions of workers moving into the

cities where the factories were located. For many newcomers to the metropolitan areas,

imperial commodities were new to them. If work in the factories remained steady, and the

laborers were able to save a little extra, they could possibly purchase goods they had

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[150] Tom Standage, *A History of the World in 6 Glasses*,

[151] Duncan Forbes, *Some Considerations on the present state of Scotland* (1744),
https://archive.org/details/someconsideratio00forbuoft (accessed on January 22, 2014).

[152] Duncan Forbes, *Some Considerations on the present state of Scotland* (1744),
https://archive.org/details/someconsideratio00forbuoft (accessed on January 22, 2014).

[153] Simply in grocery items imported into Great Britain, in the 1550s only 9% of imported goods were food
stuffs whereas by the 1800s, almost 35% of imports into Great Britain were grocery items. This in itself
shows the transformation in consumption by the mass populations of Great Britain by the period of the
Industrial Revolution. "Imports of Groceries as a Percentage of the Total Value of Imports into England
and Wales, 1559-1800," in Mary Wiesner, et all, *Discovering the Western Past,* 100.

never experienced before, such as tea. Even when spare income was unavailable, tea

eventually became too important for the lower class to give it up. David Davies, an

English clergyman and social commentator, studied the conditions of laborers in various

cities and villages in the late- eighteenth century. Davies' concern was with the price of

food in comparison to the wages that laborers received, frequently citing the failures of

the Poor Laws. This meticulous study described the living situation of the poor as well as

their weekly expenses. Of the twenty-nine parishes that he surveyed, tea could be found

in every family account except for one parish where he even took extra note to state that

no tea was found in the parish. In many instances, the family's expenses per year would

exceed the annual income and yet tea was never cut from the family's diet.[154] This fact

alone tells us that the laboring poor saw tea in a different way than the elite. Tea, for the

working class, had become a necessity rather than a luxury or a social pastime. With the

Industrial Revolution, workers could partake in tea consumption just as the upper classes

had in the decades before, but they did so as a staple for their diet.

Even so, the working class observed the practice of tea culture by the upper

classes and in some ways they began to mimic the culture as best they could. By the end

of the nineteenth century, tea drinking had become something inseparable from the

British way of life. In one hundred years, a practice reserved for the elite, even in the

mid- to late- eighteenth century, could be seen in all socio-economic classes by the

Victorian era. Illustrating this transformation, Olive Malvery, a wealthy English woman

and writer, completely absorbed herself into the working class by partaking in their

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[154] David Davies, *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry: Stated and Considered in Three Parts* (1795; repr., Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 131-135.

lifestyle and work. As a social experiment, Malvery wanted to experience the working class as they did. As she was writing about her everyday experience, she commented on several instances where she joined families at tea time. For instance, upon arriving at the location of the lodging where she would work her first factory job, she described the conditions and wares of the tea time she interrupted.[155] She described that "In the centre of the table was an immense dish containing thick pieces of bread and butter. There was also a huge tin tea-pot, and everyone had a cup and saucer."[156] Mrs. Malvery did not illustrate an extravagant tea party, such as the affairs she was likely to experience amongst her peers, but she did describe at least eleven or twelve people seated at a small tea-table in the parlor and each had plenty of bread and tea to enjoy the social gathering. It is also important to note that some of those seated at the family's tea-table were simply described as family friends and neighborhood children. This shows how tea had become such a fixture in the lives of the lower classes that the activity was common and cheap enough to allow friends and young children to partake without exhausting the supply of tea, bread, or tea wares available. As guests, she and her guide were offered beer or tea, from which they took tea, even though they had to "wait until two of the children's [cups] were washed up."[157]

Malvery's commentary illustrates the ways in which even the lowliest of the classes by the end of the Victorian period were able to enjoy the experience of tea that only a few centuries earlier would have been an extremely expensive affair. Of course,

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[155] Olive Christian Malvery, *The Soul Market: with which is included "The Heart of Things,"* Third ed. (London: Hutchinson and Co. Patterson and Row, 1907), 68.
[156] Ibid, 71.
[157] Ibid, 71.

the scene of the working-class family enjoying tea was extremely different than an elite family at tea time. The extravagant tea parties or tea times could only be enjoyed by the upper classes, but with the transformation of the economy and technological advancement, the lower classes could take tea in their own ways.

The most prevalent similarities of the upper- and lower- class tea times were the presence of special etiquette and socializing. The most striking difference is the extravagance which can be seen in the elite households or most prestigious women's clubs of London. That lavishness was much too expensive for a family of modest means. Most importantly, the working class used tea time as a meal to keep them energized during their long work days. For the upper class, tea drinking began in the home and branched into public life as it became more popular. For the working class, the opposite occurred. For them, tea time began in the workplace as a drink to wash down their meals since it was easy and did not spoil over time. The added calories and caffeine provided the working class with something much more significant for their day than food and water. Eventually, as it became cheaper and more popular to consume than other beverages available, they started drinking tea at home. As the demand for tea rose, the price subsequently fell which allowed the masses to consume the beverage on a daily basis. Even as the price rose slightly during periods of inflation, the consumption of tea did not fall alongside the rise in price. This shows how by the nineteenth century, tea drinking became entrenched in the lives of the British masses.[158] The consumption of tea for the British person began to be associated with a certain standard of living regardless

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[158] Carole Shammas, "Changes in English and Anglo-American consumption from 1550-1800," in *Consumption and the World of Good*s, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London, UK: Routledge, 1993), 185.

of economic status and was connected to a better way of life. It was only natural the working class began to consume tea within the home and so was able to drink tea in the context of socialization. In the working class home tea consumption could take on a tone of something more than a mid-day beverage. The working class began purchasing special tea-tables, cups and saucers, and kettles to consume tea in the homes. These tea-wares functioned on a practical level but also provided the tools to take tea as a cultural pastime. The working class did not have the money and time to engage in the elitist version of tea culture, but they were able to take tea with a certain amount of ceremony and etiquette. Just as the upper classes took tea to socialize, the working class also used tea time to socialize with family and friends. In this way, the lower classes still utilized the consumer culture of tea but made it a practice all their own; one that gave them a place to socialize within the home, but it also provide the subsistence they needed during the work day in the factory. For the working class, tea time became a meal time and a social engagement.
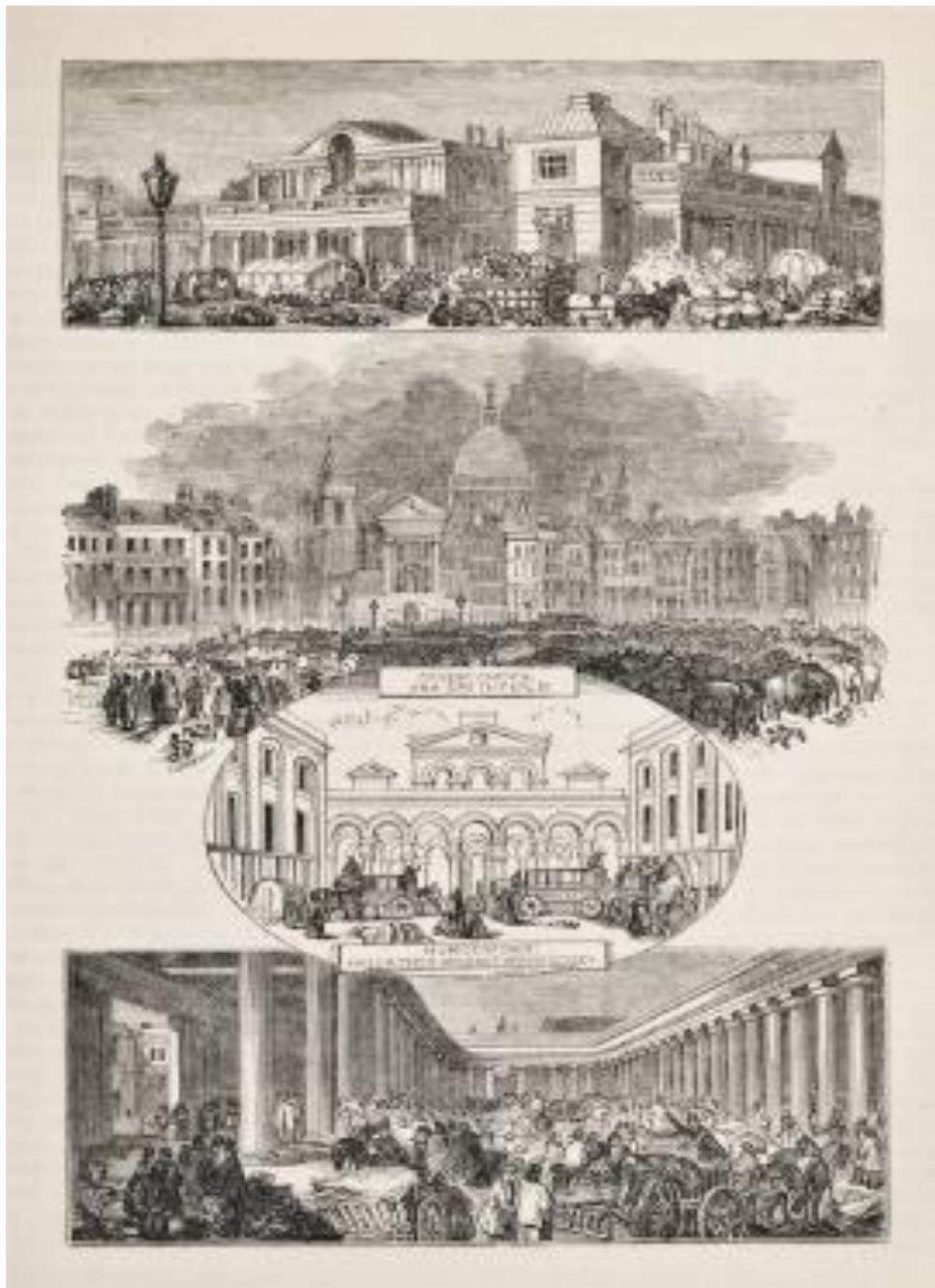
12) "The Crowd's at London's Markets." 1851. Londoner's at the markets. These images show the masses going to the popular destinations of the markets. In Olive Malvery's commentary of the lower classes, she describes the pull and excitement of going to the markets by the working class, and their being able to purchase small gifts and trinkets for enjoyment.

An Industrialized Nation

There are many reasons why Great Britain was the perfect place for an industrial revolution. The abundance of coal, large quantities of waterways, a large unlanded labor force, and access to new world resources were all reasons why Great Britain chose this particular model of development.  Great Britain was not only growing industrially but they had been growing geographically. For decades, Britain had been going out into the world for many reasons, but a primary reason for global acquisitions was the desire for raw materials.[159]

There were also domestic reasons why the Industrial Revolution happened when it did during the eighteenth-century. The agricultural revolution that happened during the previous century allowed for systematic food production on an efficient and greater basis. For this and many other reasons, the population of Great Britain, as well as Europe as a whole, grew to unprecedented levels. The urban areas of the United Kingdom, such as London and Manchester, grew alongside the population boom in the countryside.[160] With the growth of urbanization came the growth of commerce and trade, which in turn stimulated the economy.[161] All in all, the growth of the British population allowed for

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[159] Alfred Crosby, *Children of the Sun: A History of Humanities' Unappeasable Appetite for* Energy (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 69.

[160] In a report conducted to assess the health and populations of towns, it was reported that the entire population of England and Wales grew 47% from 1801 to 1831. As for the major cities- London, Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds and Liverpool- all doubled in population during that period. Birmingham, while not doubling in population, still grew by 73%. " Report of Select Committee on the Health of Towns," 1840, in *Documents of the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850,* eds Richard L. Tames (London: Hutchinson Educational Ltd., 1971), 133.

[161] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution,* 31.

more consumer goods to come into the metropolitan areas and thus gave way to the early

makings of consumer culture.[162]

One of the major transformations towards the makings of the British industrial

economy was the improved agricultural advances facilitated by the enclosure of common

lands in Britain. Previous to the enclosure of lands, people living in the rural areas of

England had access to common land near their villages. Here, they could collect wood for

fuel or even graze a cow. For the average poor farmer, these lands helped provide their

livelihoods. The nobility and landed gentry who had ownership rights to the lands around

villages began enclosing their fields during the sixteenth century. This practice became

much more common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Those who had been

farming the common land, or in some cases those who could not provide deeds to the

land that had been in their family for generations, were forced to cease their farming and

had to look elsewhere for jobs or subsistence. The enclosure of land allowed for more

intensive agriculture development on a large scale, but it did not provide enough

employment for everyone. This practice of enclosure was met with approval by the upper

class, but with open hostility for those who lost access. Even so, this system led to

improved agricultural productions since large swaths of land could be tended by one

person, which proved healthier for the land.[163] It also meant that villagers needed to look

for jobs elsewhere, and in many instances the urban centers were the place that attracted

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[162] "Changing Frequencies of Ownership of Selected Goods in Towns and Country Areas, 1675-1725," Mary Wiesner, Julius Ruff, and William Bruce Wheeler, *Discovering the Western Past: A Look at the Evidence, Volume II: Since 1500* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008), 106.

[163] There were many responses to the enclosure of lands by both those who believed it a positive change as well as those outspoken against the practice. John Middleton exclaimed in an article describing the benefits of enclosure, "The benefits and advantages that would be derived from a general inclosure of commons, are so numerous, as far to exceed my powers of description or computation." John Middleton, "View of the Agriculture of Middlesex," 1798, in *Documents of the Industrial Revolution*, 48-49.

the masses. Many people, not wanting to move to the urban centers petitioned against the

enclosure of the commons. In one example, the writers of the petition begged the House

not to force enclosure because, "The nation has hitherto deprived its greatest strength and

glory, in the supply of fleets and armies, and driving them, from necessity and want of

employ, in vast crowds into manufacturing towns, where the very nature of their

employment, over the loom or the forge, soon may waste their strength, and consequently

debilitate their posterity."[164]

Another prerequisite for the industrialization of Britain, as well as the population

increase in the urban centers, was the dissolution of the putting-out system or cottage

industry. Cottage industry was a system of production where merchants purchased craft

items from non-agricultural labor of the peasantry for sale in the wider market. This was

an early precursor for the industrial capitalism that furthered along the consumption of

goods on a large scale.[165] Whole villages became involved in specific cottage industries,

which gave many people jobs to rely on. As more and more people were buying goods

from the merchants, the merchants were getting wealthier. By the mid-eighteenth century,

those merchants began to invest their money from the putting-out system of production

into the technological innovations that would become the Industrial Revolution. Those

technological innovations allowed for faster production, but it also destroyed the putting-

out system. As a consequence, villages that supported the production of one good would

frequently break apart and the populations would move into the urban districts to find

jobs. This transformation affected thousands of families. Those who were once

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[164] "Commons Journals," July 19, 1797, in *Documents of the Industrial Revolution,* 50.
[165] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution,* 32.

comfortable were concerned about their future livelihoods as well as the future of their children. One concerned citizen wrote a letter to his local newspaper asking "How are those men, thus thrown out of employ to provide for their families;- and what are they to put their children apprentice to that the rising generation may have something to keep them at work, in order that they may not be vagabonds strolling around in idleness?"[166] Because of this, urban areas became overpopulated and job and wage security was not promised at the new factories. While this system allowed for more and cheaper goods in the market, it also meant less job security and lowered wages for the laboring classes.



13) "Over London by Rail," by Gustave Dore. This image depicts the urbanization that happened after the industrialization of Great Britain. Millions of workers moved into the metropolitan areas in the hoped of securing employment. In the distance, the smog from the factories is visible. c. 1870.

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[166] Joseph Hepworth, Thomas Lobley, Robert Wood and Thos. Blackburn, "Leeds Woollen Workers Petition," 1786, in J. F. C. Harrison, *Society and Politics in England, 1780-1960* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 71-72.

The abundance of coal located on the British isle gave the British an advantage over other nations. Utilizing this coal allowed for an increase of manufacturing since coal burned much hotter than wood. Even though the use of wood could keep up with production, the forests were depleting rapidly within Britain by the eighteenth century and there was not nearly enough available for continued exploitation. Coal was abundant and it could burn for much longer and so proved advantageous for Great Britain.[167] This coal usage also led to large-scale technological innovations that improved several mechanical processes, which made the industrialization of Great Britain develop even faster. Coal production skyrocketed in response to inventions such as the steam engine, where production went from 2.7 million metric tons of coal in 1700 to 23 million metric tons in approximately 100 years.[168] By the early 1800s, coal had proved to be the ultimate fuel for the thriving Industrial Revolution, and in turn, another natural resource fueled the workers of Great Britain. Tea, often sweetened by sugar, provided energy for the laboring masses. By the end of the eighteenth century, the working class utilized tea as an enhancer to their long work days and established their mid-day meal practice of high tea.

The Industrial Revolution in Great Britain changed the ways in which tea was consumed. The most significant change to tea consumption came with the adaptations of the lower classes to drinking tea as a result of the cheapening of tea and tea goods. Cheaper tea wares were coming straight from England, thanks to Josiah Wedgewood and

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[167] The movement from a predominant use of wood to the use of coal also benefitted the local forests a great deal, since they began suffering at the onslaught of industrialization. Alfred Crosby, *Children of the Sun*, 73.
[168] Alfred Crosby, *Children of the Sun*, 73.

other producers of factory made pottery. This allowed for the lower classes to have finer tea services and so could conduct the social tea ceremony with family and friends within the home.[169] In this instance the lower class practiced tea culture as a social pastime.

Not only did Wedgewood's innovations transform the consumer culture of tea, but one important innovation in the product revolution was the use of substitute materials to make tea ware. For example, substitute materials allowed for manufacturers to create stunning tea wares without the high price of the competing market. For instance, companies began making silver plated copper goods that were both beautiful and durable, dazzling but cheap. No longer did the upper class control the use of tea as a social practice since anyone with a few extra shillings could purchase tea goods. The product revolution of the nineteenth century allowed for the lower class to take part in tea culture within the home just as the upper class had previously.

Sugar, as well, was extremely important for the laboring poor. Just as tea was too expensive for the common people of Britain to afford before the mid- eighteenth century, sugar also ranked as a luxury for the working class. Once the price declined, tea and sugar became a staple for workers by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The average consumption of sugar grew from around 2 pounds per capita in the 1660s to 24 pounds per capita in the 1790s.[170] Imperial conquest in the Caribbean gave the British an advantage in the sugar trade. The use of slave labor and industrial technology to produce the sugar cane pushed the price of sugar down to the point where it could be consumed

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[169] Alan and Iris MacFarlane, *The Empire of Tea,* 93.

[170] "Sugar Imports for Home Consumption: England and Wales, 1663-1799," in Mary W iesner, et all, *Discovering the Western Past*, 99.

by all. A great amount of this sugar consumed by the British went into their daily tea.[171]

Two hundred years before the Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain hardly a

single Westerner had tasted, much less heard of the tea plant or sugar cane, whereas by

the 1800s almost every man, woman, and child could enjoy a cup of tea daily. In 1795,

David Davies, in his analysis of the laboring poor in Britain, stated this transition of tea

consumption best. "After all, it appears a very strange thing, that the common people of

any European nation should be obligated to use, as a part of their daily diet, two articles

[sugar and tea] imported from opposite sides of the earth."[172]

<div align="center">The Working Class Joins in the Consumer Revolution</div>

The consumer revolution of tea did not happen independently, but happened right

alongside the consumer revolution of most goods. Industrialization and technology

allowed for goods to be produced much faster and more efficiently and so generally,

goods were much cheaper to consume. By the mid- eighteenth century, manufacturers

began marketing to the middle and lower classes since their purchasing power had risen

through the years. Dean Tucker, a writer of travel books for England during the

eighteenth century, addressed the concerns of travelers who might wonder if the market

provided goods only for those of high status. He stated, "England, being a free

Country…. are more adapted to the Demands of Peasants and Mechanics… for Farmers,

Freeholders, Tradesmen and Manufacturers in middling Life and for Wholesale Dealers,

Merchants and all Persons of Landed Estates, to appear in genteel Life; than for the

Magnificence of Palaces, or the Cabinets of Princes... the English of these several

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[171] Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power.*
[172] David Davies, *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry*, 39.

Dominations have better Conveniences in their Houses." By the nineteenth century,

shopping became something more than a chore. The city markets and stores were a

popular destination for the masses of England to spend an afternoon. In some instances, it

was the favorite activity to do, especially by the factory workers that spent their days

cooped in the dark factories. To shop was an activity previously unobtainable by the

working class, and so by the nineteenth century the lower classes could take advantage of

consumerism in Great Britain. Even if a person did not have the means to spend extra

money, it was still common for people to enjoy spending time at the market for the shear

excitement of it. Mrs. Maverly, an upper class English woman writing about the working

class at the end of the nineteenth century, described such an afternoon of a bustling

market in her work, *The Soul Market.*

> Down I went with Mrs. Cruddock that Saturday night, into all the noise and
> light and good-tempered gaiety of their narrow market street, which was
> lined on either side with gay coster stalls on which were displayed every
> variety of foods…. The mere spending of money, be it ever so little, seems
> to give immense pleasure to the throngs of poor women eager for bargains
> at these stalls or shops. The very poorest seem to obtain some comfort from
> the sight of displays of food and the feeling of warmth…. each shopper
> either buying the cheapest wares or watching the more fortunate ones make
> their purchases. The aire [sic] was resonant with hundreds of voices. Costers
> calling their price of their wares, haukers yelling for buyers, busker's
> singing or playing piano-organs with their crowds of dancing children;
> noisy showmen pattering at their doors of penny gaffs [a form of stage
> performance], shrill cries of little children, all delighted to come a-
> marketing with mother; these are the sights and sounds that make up the
> market of the poor.[173]

With the industrialization of manufacturing in Great Britain, goods could be

produced faster and cheaper. This form of production heralded another wave of

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[173] Olivia Malvery, *The Soul Market,* 77-78.

consumerism of goods produced within the British Isles. Factories in Britain began making everything from furniture, tea ware, dining ware, buttons, shoe adornments, and much more.[174] Yet it would not matter if all the British factories continually churned products if there were no consumers to buy them. What made the boom in production extremely successful within Great Britain is the shift in desired goods by the upper class alongside the Industrial Revolution and growth of Empire. As previously stated, the seventeenth and eighteenth century saw Great Britain moving into the East and across the Atlantic to acquire goods that were desired within Britain. Fashion trends shifted towards goods that epitomized the British Empire, and the commodities that came from it. Since those goods were expensive and exotic, they were popular among the wealthy class. Furthermore, the fashions of the European continent, especially from the French court, made a major impression upon the British aristocracy. French style of dress and mannerisms became a fashion within the British courts, and so trickled down with aristocratic influence in Great Britain. By the Industrial Revolution, the imperial and French fashions were still very popular in England and so British manufacturers moved towards making cheap goods that had an Asian or French flare. The masses reacted positively to these goods and more manufacturers began moving in this direction. It is important to note that the British did not buy the British-made goods because they were cheap or because they were mass produced. They bought the goods simply because they were fashionable, even though the lowered prices were a nice incentive.[175] Without this shift, the consumer and product revolution would not have taken place within England

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[174] Maxine Berg, "The British Product Revolution of the Eighteenth Century" in Jeff Horn et. al. eds *Reconceptualizing the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2010), 48.
[175] Ibid, 48; 52.

and subsequently the growth of tea culture would have eventually waned. Historian Carole Shammas discusses this point in an article about the changing trends of consumerism within Great Britain. She states, "For a good to be considered a mass-consumed commodity in any given place, two things must happen. It must be bought by people of varied income levels and they must be buying it on a more or less regular basis."[176] The exclusivity of imported imperial goods such as fine china could not have been consumed by the masses and so tea drinking would have remained a predominantly elite activity. By creating the goods within Great Britain, tea culture had the ability to grow to the unprecedented levels of mass consumption.

Not only was there a shift in consumption during the Industrial Revolution, but also in a growing sense of national pride for Great Britain. Since the British consumed British-made goods all over the Empire, an added sense of national pride arose because the goods epitomized Great Britain itself. The goods had an identity of Britishness, such as a quiet English afternoon etched on teapots and plates. Anyone consuming these goods, either at home or in the Empire could envision the British Isle. Also, since many popular items in Great Britain had an imperial flare, the British-made goods began to resemble goods from the Empire while still exhibiting an image of British culture. These consumables were more accessible since they came without the hefty price of some imported wares from the Empire.[177] Nationalism and consumerism grew together in Great

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[176] Carole Shammas, "Changes in English and Anglo-American consumption from 1550-1800," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London, UK: Routledge, 1993), 179.
[177] Maxine Berg, "The British Product Revolution of the Eighteenth Century," 48; 52.

Britain, and both the upper and the lower classes strove to consume these British made goods.

Necessity or Luxury?: Upper Class Criticisms of Working Class Tea Consumption

Before the Industrial Revolution, the laboring poor either grew or purchased the necessities of life that kept their families alive. For many reasons, at times the poor only made enough money to live on a week-to-week basis, and in some instances, on a day-to-day one. As the populations of the metropolis grew, so too did the demand for suitable jobs. Even when jobs were available, the conditions of many factories were deplorable. In some instances the factories brought new opportunities for hundreds of thousands of workers, but it also created new modes of exploitation and misery.[178] William Cobbett, a radical politician who rallied against the factory system in the mid- nineteenth century, discussed some of the worst factory measures committed for the purpose of profit. In one essay, his main outrage was for the factory workers who had to labor in heat reaching an average of eighty two degrees. After describing several instances where people had died of heat exhaustion on days that reached around eighty degrees, he stated "What, then, must be the situation of the poor creatures who are doomed to toil, day after day, for three hundred and thirteen days in the year, fourteen hours in each day, in an average heat of eighty-two degrees? Can any man, with a heart in his body, and a tongue in his head, refrain from cursing a system that produces such slavery and such cruelty?"[179] This was a common occurrence for factory temperatures to reach very high levels, especially during

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[178] Richard L Tames, eds *Documents of the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850* (London: Hutchinson Educational Ltd., 1971), 89.

[179] William Cobbett, *Political Register*, November 20, 1834, Vol. II, in *Documents of the Industrial Revolution,*91.

the day. The workers in many instances were not allowed to leave their stations during

their working hours, except for their breaks. These breaks were the first places that the

working class brought in the consumption of tea. Cobbett even described "the door of this

place wherein they work, is locked, except half an hour, at tea-time," as the only

moments those workers were allowed fresh air and a much needed break.[180] These

moments were crucial for the worker to get a reprieve from the hard labor they had to

endure. In this way, tea not only gave the factory laborers substance and caffeine to keep

them going, but it also provided their long days of darkness and heat a moment of light

and cool air.

Even so, there were some instances where industrialization improved the lives of

the working poor. If factory work was steady, laborers could move themselves up within

the system. In a study conducted to assess the cotton factories in Lancashire, the average

wages of boys and men grew if they held a steady job within the factories.[181] Employing

children meant a valuable addition to the family wages, although it also meant physical

and psychological struggles within the family.[182] Nonetheless, families were sometimes

able to make enough money which they could live from as well as sometimes have extra

money to buy goods previously unavailable to them. Even though the working class

could only purchase a small amount of objects or consumables, these were the non-

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[180] William Cobbett, *Political Register*, 92.

[181] The study found that boys between the ages of 11-16 could make an average of 4 shillings and 10 dime per week, boys ages 16-21 could make 10 shillings and 2.5 dime per week, and men ages 21-26 could make 17 shillings and 2.5 dime per week. If the worker had reached more advanced work in art, craft, or mastery, their wages could increase between 20-22 shillings and 8-4 dime per week. A. Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufacturers*, 1835, in *Documents of the Industrial Revolution,* 96.

[182] Discusses the diseases that can spread within factories and how children are particularly disposed to certain diseases that adults are less likely to receive. "Resolutions for the consideration of the Manchester Board of Health by Dr. Percival, 25th January 1796- reprinted in Report of Peel's Committee H.C. 1816, III," , in *Documents of the Industrial Revolution,* 313.

necessity objects that allowed the working class to participate in consumer culture. The consumer revolution at the level of the working class seems incomparable to that of the upper or even middle class, but those goods brought happiness for its consumers. Tea drinking continued as a social practice for the upper and middle classes by the mid-1800s, but it became something much more significant for the working poor. As the consumption of tea good grew within the lower class, the upper class grew critical of their adaption of tea drinking and began to outwardly criticize their consumption of tea. This begs the question of whether tea can be viewed as a luxury or a necessity for the working class.

The moment tea drinking became an established daily practice for the working class, there were members of the upper class who grew critical of their consumption of it. Just as there were commentators who opposed tea drinking by the wealthy, as it could possibly harm the consumer or even give them epileptic attacks, critics of working-class tea consumption had their own qualms. By the nineteenth century much was known about tea and the effects it had on the body, but some upper class critics did not want the working class to consume tea on social grounds. Many of the decisions the working class made concerning their daily life became the subject of many social commentators of the time. The spending habits of the lower class were of particular concern to them. During this period, factory conditions were not a secret amongst the population. To remedy this situation, Parliament and upper class missionaries passed several acts and charities created to protect and aid the working classes. This also meant a closer inspection into the

lives of the laboring poor, including what items they purchased.[183] Things such as

alcohol, sweets, and tea were considered unnecessary consumables for the lower class

and could only be looked upon as luxury items. This gave way to much criticism from

those trying to help the laboring poor.

In some instances, there were people who were apologetic for the consumption of

goods like tea by the working class. Commenting on the social environment of tea

drinking by the lower classes, clergyman and social commentator David Davies described

the reasoning behind the consumption of luxury food stuffs by the working poor in the

late eighteenth century. He specifically addressed the public outcry of tea drinking by the

laboring poor. While he defended the consumption of tea by the poor as "the only thing

remaining them to moisten their bread with," he stated explicitly, "I have no pleasure….

in defending this practice of tea-drinking among the lower people, because I know it is

made the occasion of much idle gossiping among the women."[184] Davies agreed with

some of the critiques about working class tea consumption. He stated explicitly, "The

topic on which the declaimers against the extravagance of the poor display their

eloquence with most success, is tea-drinking. Why should such people, it is asked,

indulge in a luxury which is only proper for their betters."[185]  However, Davies remained

apologetic for tea drinking among the poor and proceeded to explain away several

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[183] The Poor Laws of 1834, enacted in Great Britain, were a way for the poor to be taken care of in the urban areas. Workhouses were erected that provided jobs, lodging, and food to the needy. Schooling was also provided for children residing in the workhouses. Even though there were some problems with the Poor Laws, the upper classes saw these institutions as the saving grace for the laboring poor. They did not want the poor to spend their money on things such as tea when they were thought to not be able to feed their children. Parliament of Great Britain, "The Poor Law Amendment Act," 1834, http://www.victorianweb.org/history/poorlaw/plaatext.html (accessed August 1, 2014).

[184] David Davies, *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry: Stated and Considered in Three Parts* (1795; repr., Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 39.

[185] Ibid, 37.

arguments against the opposition for lower-class tea consumption. His main argument is that other substances, such as beer or milk, were too expensive, unsuitable, or unavailable for the lower classes. In this regard, Davies was understanding toward their tea consumption. The one major qualm he did have with their tea drinking is that it may lead to the "idle gossiping among the women." In his opinion, this idle gossip of women is an acceptable argument against their tea consumption, but not enough of an argument to stop the practice among the working poor. Even so, he did not take into account that idle gossip can be a way for women to connect with their neighbors, friends, and families just as the upper-class women had in the years before. This social tea practice was one of the only ways in which women could branch out of their roles as mothers, wives, and workers. By taking part in the social practice of tea, the lower classes were not simply gossiping for fun but forming social support networks.

Before the nineteenth century, luxury items were almost non-existent in the household of a poor farmer or laborer. Because Davies wrote during the early stage of tea consumption among the lower classes, his argument could only be speculation for what was best for the future working class in England. A century later, Olive Malvery's depiction of the tea setting was simply remarked upon but never questioned, as in Davies' analysis. Comparing Davies' and Malvery's descriptions of the laboring classes in England, it is evident that tea culture had become a common part of the lower class life in only one hundred years.[186]

However, there were some social reformers, such as Jonas Hanway, who spoke out against the "wastefulness" of drinking tea by the lower classes during the eighteenth

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[186] See David Davies, *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry* and Olive Christian Malvery, *The Soul Market.*

and nineteenth centuries. Hanway argued that the lower classes were spending all of their money on tea and not feeding their children, which, to him, was a major reason for the decrepitude of the working classes. In his "Essay on Tea," Hanway critiqued the working class' newfound taste for tea by showing that "luxury had introduced an artificial appetite which must needs make great havoc amongst mankind."[187] He even went so far as to suggest tea being a major reason behind the diminishing population, and high death rates to the lower classes, although at this time the population and age of mortality had been steadily increasing within England. In the many examples provided in his "Essay on Tea," he suggested everything from idle hands sipping tea, malnutrition caused by tea, and even poisoning from the copper tea kettles were all causes behind high infant mortality within Great Britain. In one case he even stated, "We see in many familiar instances…. the careless spending of time among servants, who are charged with the care of infants, is often fatal: the nurse frequently destroys the child! …. being left neglected, expires whilst she is sipping her tea!"[188] As a social reformer, he encouraged the rich to take up the burden of helping the needy, even encouraging them to give up tea in hopes that the lower classes could follow suit. On this point he stated, "were the Nobility and Gentry of this nation to leave off tea, the common people would follow them."[189] Not only did he give examples as to why the lower and upper classes should not drink tea, but in every possible instance he gave suggestions on how to remedy the problems he

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[187] Jonas Hanway, "A Journal of Eight Days Journey from Portsmouth to Kingston Upon Thames; Through Southampton, Wiltshire, &c. With Miscellaneous Thoughts, Moral and Religious; in Sixty-four Letters: Addressed to Two Ladies of the Partie. To which is Added, An Essay on Tea, Considered as Pernicious to Health, Obstructing Industry, and Impoverishing the Nation: also an account of its Growth, and great Consumption in these Kingdoms: with Several Political Reflections, and Thoughts on Public Love: in Thirty-two Letters to Two Ladies" (London, UK: printed for H. Woodfall, 1756), 64.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Jonas Hanway, "A Journal of Eight Days Journey," 195.

associated with tea drinking. Declaring only few instances where tea is advantageous, he

stated "I apprehend it can be easily proved that if the custom of drinking tea was

abolished, we should be in a capacity to pay, for the service of the state, in direct view, at

least twice as much, employ twice as many seamen, and preserve five times as many

lives, and please our palates much more."[190] All in all, Hanway strived for the

reformation of England as a whole. He feared the United Kingdom would fall into

disrepair if drinking tea was not given up.[191]

Those responding to Hanway agreed on some points, although they were

vehemently against giving up tea in any way. For instance, Dr. Samuel Johnson, a self-

proclaimed tea lover, wrote against Hanway's famous work "A Journal of Eight Day's

Journey." Particularly, Dr. Johnson focused on Hanway's ideas about tea. Agreeing with

Hanway's declaration that the lower classes should not drink tea, he states "I…. shall,….

readily admit, that tea is a liquor not proper for the lower classes of the people, as it

supplies no strength of labour, or relief to diseases but gratifies the taste without

nourishing the body."[192] Yet he continues by stating that he did not quite agree with

Hanway that tea had led to careless workers, such as the servants stated to have neglected

their charges only to take their tea. Johnson defends the workers by stating "that time is

lost in this insipid entertainment [tea drinking] cannot be denied…. those moments which

would be better spent, but that any national detriment can be inferred from this waste of

time, does not evidently appear, because I know not that any work remains undone, for

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[190] Jonas Hanway, "A Journal of Eight Days Journey," 184.

[191] Ibid.

[192] Samuel Johnson, "Review of "A Journal of Eight Day Journey"" *The Literary Magazine 2* no. 13 (1757).

want of hands."[193] While both Hanway and Johnson agreed that tea drinking should not be taken up by the poor since it was an idle activity, Johnson did not see the ultimate harm of tea drinking. As "a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, who has, for twenty years, diluted his meals with only the infusion of this fascinating plant," Johnson was against almost all points Hanway stated as the ill effects of tea on the English working class.[194]



14) Jonas Hanway looking into the room of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Hanway was famous for being the first British person to carry an umbrella, as seen in the comic. He also was extremely outspoken against drinking tea as he stated it was the reason behind the woes of the working class. Dr. Johnson too agreed that the working class should not drink tea but was sorely against giving up the beverage for any reason. Adrian Teal, *Gin Lane Gazette* (London, UK: Unbound Publishing, 2013).

The eighteenth century critiques of tea drinking by the working class argued many reasons for why the poor should not take tea. Their arguments ranged from tea

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[193] Samuel Johnson, "Review of "A Journal of Eight Day Journey."
[194] Ibid.

consumption only leading to "idle gossiping" by women, such as what David Davies states, or negligence as stated by Jonas Hanway, or no nutritional value as what Samuel Johnson states.[195] The above critiques stem from men of high social standing and so reflect a particular view of the lower classes. In their own personal experiences, Davies, Hanway, or Johnson may have only seen upper-class women idly gossiping, or not tending to the children as the servants do, or might see tea simply as a delightful cup of liquid to wet their meal. It is interesting to note that Hanway urged the upper classes to give up tea so that the lower classes would follow suit. This illustrates the influence the upper class believed they had on the decisions the lower classes made during this period. As such, he was not taking much consideration for the importance of the practice of tea drinking for the lower class as a major part of their day.[196] While Davies and Johnson are apologetic for some aspects of tea drinking by the working class, their critiques of the act fall short of the importance of tea for the working class as a beverage and a social custom.

During this period, there was a clear rise in population and an increase of nutrition for the working class. There are many reasons for better nourishment among the poor. Particularly, families could afford to purchase consumer goods unlike previously. Instead of laboring over making food for their families, wives and mothers could purchase food that could be prepared quickly, such as pre-made bread and jams that could be enjoyed with a cup of tea. This allowed for more time to work as well as more time for enjoyment. The breakfast table could become a place for families to talk and have quality

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[195] Jonas Hanway, "An Essay on Tea," in "A Journal of an Eight Days Journey.", David Davies, *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry.* Samuel Johnson, "A Review of "A Journal of an Eight Days Journey"."
[196] Jonas Hanway, "An Essay on Tea."

time together. That said, the simple cold breakfast of bread and jam could be made to imitate a hot meal with the addition of tea, giving the impression of a warmer and heartier meal than simple bread and the like.[197] They were able to provide themselves with tea as a mid-day meal and in doing so transformed their daily routine. The break in their work day provided a much needed physical and mental break as well as the food and tea ingested gave them a needed boost to complete their work day. As their enjoyment of tea rose within the workplace, the lower class began to drink tea even when they were not working. Warmer familial atmospheres and tea breaks provided more enjoyment to the worker's day.

Tea improved the lives of workers in other ways as well. Because more and more people were drinking tea steeped in boiling water, the chance of water borne illnesses decreased dramatically. Babies were also on average much healthier. Nursing mothers who drank tea regularly transferred the vitamins and minerals found in tea to their children through their breast milk.[198] Overall, the ability to purchase and consume tea and tea goods, such as breakfast biscuits and jams, gave way to a much healthier working class during the Industrial Revolution. By taking part in tea consumption, the lower classes of Great Britain provided themselves with better nutrition than in other times, but they also benefitted from the time set aside during the day for the social interaction that tea provided.

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[197] Sydney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 128.
[198] Ibid., 128-130.

Conclusion

The Industrial Revolution changed many things for Great Britain, but it significantly transformed the lower class. Before the mid- eighteenth century, the lower classes tried to find jobs in a variety of fields, but most of the laboring poor worked in the agricultural sector. Large scale industrialization provided urban jobs for the laboring poor and populations grew in metropolitan cities. This time also saw the growth of consumption by the masses in Europe. Cheaper goods in the marketplace allowed for people with a little extra spending money to take part in consumerism. Also, technological innovations created new ways for goods to be made that were cheaper and previously unavailable. The cheaper food stuff, especially that of tea, added a heartier meal time for the laboring poor.

During the nineteenth century Great Britain established its hold as the world's largest economic and naval power. British merchants and colonist travelled in all areas of the globe and were continually acquiring more land and power. Within Great Britain itself, the Industrial Revolution was in full swing. Millions of workers created goods that were sent around the world to be consumed. These goods exhibited Britishness and the Empire. Consuming these goods meant taking part in being British, which was advantageous for the success of British manufacturing. This also meant the rise in national identity among the British all over the world since those within the Empire could be as British as if they were at home. At this point, the activity of taking tea became synonymous as a British trait. The cheapening of tea and tea goods allowed almost anyone the ability to consume a plant that grew on the other side of the globe.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

Many things change society from wars to technological advancement, governmental coups and new laws. The story of the Industrial Revolution is one that affected the whole world. Specifically, one of the most prevalent changes in Great Britain came with industrialization in the form of clearer divisions of class. This was especially noticeable with the rise in consumerism and the very different ways in which each class lived their lives. The upper classes utilized their wealth and prestige to distance themselves as the elite, while the lower classes either tried to emulate the elite or transform the fashion to fit their needs.

By the early 1800s, the ways in which people lived their daily life was much different than one hundred to two hundred years earlier. In some ways, the transformation of daily life came in the form of a plant. The tea plant carved a place in the lives of all those that consumed the beverage, unlike anything before. The consumption of tea was so much more than a simple beverage. In this way, industrialization helped along a tradition that had already been established in the upper classes. It simply opened the door for the lower classes to transform their life to accommodate tea, and in essence tea transformed their life. The daily life of a British person, whether of upper class or working class, was forever transformed once tea came into Great Britain. Modern advances and fashion trends came and went with the passing of time, but British tea culture remained.

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