Aestheticizing Identity and Commodifying Place: Chinese Wallpaper and the British Atlantic in the Eighteenth-Century

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ABSTRACT

The vast consumption of Chinese wallpaper in British culture in the eighteenth-century resulted in a substantial amount of this material surviving today as a central component of British heritage. The use of Chinese wallpaper at a time when political, social, economic, and cultural changes were constantly being negotiated in comparison with one another, helped to create an aesthetic that represented what it meant to be English. As a product of cross-cultural exchanges, chinoiserie, as a larger style, popularized and commodified racial, political, and economic interactions in the Eighteenth Century British Atlantic world. Orienting the value of English art and objects within local and global geographies of goods, this thesis aims to understand how Chinese taste became a symbol of British identity, and how the concept of an individual's behavior and interaction with material goods reinforced artistic and fashionable hegemonies of taste. In placing the foreign within a picturesque, painted landscape, the use of Chinese wallpaper offered an aesthetic solution for western gazes; this use controlled the exotic views as contained through the lens of western consumers, domesticated and distant landscapes, and provided the viewer with curated interpretations of the British Empire's colonial interactions. As the British Empire expanded to include new territories and people, English culture became a commodity through which one could negotiate status amongst shifting class relationships. Chinese wallpaper, therefore, allowed one to express an English aesthetic identity through the appropriation of non-English images. This thesis examines Chinese wallpaper in relation to spatial hierarchies within domestic architecture of the British genteel classes to facilitate discussions around placement, use, and cultural meaning of objects. Engaging inter-disciplinary approaches within discussions of architecture, art, material culture, gender, economic, and social histories, this project aims to improve understanding of how Chinese wallpaper contextualized an expression of commodified identity in the transnational and transcultural eighteenth-century British Atlantic.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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Introduction

As a product of cross-cultural exchanges, chinoiserie popularized and commodified racial, political, and economic interactions in the Eighteenth Century British Atlantic world. Orienting the value of English art and objects within local and global geographies of goods, this thesis aims to understand how Chinese taste became a symbol of the British imperial aesthetic and how the concept of an individual's presentation and behavior of English gentility reinforced these artistic and fashionable hegemonies of taste. While there were different contextualized uses on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, Chinese wallpapers offered one the ability to externally signal status, while internally reinforcing gendered hierarchies within the home and engage critically with picturesque landscapes of an imagined East. As imperial, national, and social identities were being negotiated through transnational and transcultural interactions between the local and the global, material objects became ways through which one could signal place and determine position. The anxieties about positioning place within this paradigm were materialized through the consumption of chinoiserie, which inwardly offered one a place within British society while externally dictating England's place as an imperial power.

As eastern fashions, styles, and objects became available to emerging British markets in the Atlantic, the Chinese aesthetic began to signal an attachment to membership within British society. Originally objects that were associated with the aristocracy, Chinese wallpaper became popularized by England's landed gentry and growing middle-classes as a commodity of gentility. These foreign styles began being reproduced and appropriated by the European manufacturers to make these goods more affordable and widely available to those who wanted to signal an attachment to a British aesthetic. While the consumption of Chinese wallpaper by the middle

class allowed its homogenization within tasteful eighteenth-century British culture, these interiorized landscape wall-hangings allowed one to interact and participate within cultural discourses of the picturesque. By placing the foreign within an idealized painted landscape, Chinese wallpaper production offered an aesthetic solution for western gazes. They controlled the exotic views as contained through the lens of western consumers, domesticated distant landscapes and provided the viewer in England with curated interpretations of the British empire's colonial interactions.

The commercial and political interactions between Eastern and Western bodies of peoples has existed for centuries longer than the national and imperial frameworks that will be discussed in this paper. This study of that relationship will draw scholars from various fields into the conversation about larger cross-cultural exchanges, as the consumption of goods links concepts of political and social identities within a global framework. While this paper will largely discuss consumption and identity through the lens of English aesthetics, and the views held by their Colonial counterparts prior the American Revolutionary War, the Europeans' economic and cultural interactions with China pre-date those established by Britain. [1] After Vasco de Gama's sea voyage in 1498 and the discovery of a direct sea route to the East, the Portuguese became the first significant European contact with the Chinese. It was only in the seventeenth-century that the Dutch and the English established their East India Trading Companies to formalize and institutionalize their contact with China.[2] The expansion of the British imperial footprint in India, the Americas, and the Atlantic slave trade gave England a more dominant global presence. As national and imperial identities emerged alongside shifts in

[1] The first recorded economic interactions between the East and West were in the fourth century B.C. Hugh Honour, *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay* (New York: Dutton, 1962), 30.
[2] Honor, *Chinoiserie*, 37-41.

cultural changes, Britons began positioning themselves amongst one another, navigating what it meant to be a citizen of the British empire. Further, the public perception of empire helped to drive the consumer revolution for Asian goods, which provided them access to the East in the form of material products. The constant series of conflicts and competitions with European powers created "anxiety" about England's place and security as a nation. These anxieties were manifested through the consumption of Asian goods and their gendered exotic place in the home, filling a clear place within British society, while both easing and dictating England's place as an imperial power.[3] Although Chinese goods helped to materialize refinement for their consumers, how they were used resulted in different interpretations of gentility and reinforced their diversified signaling of status.

This thesis will examine the ways in which the aesthetics and use of Chinese wallpapers reinforced gendered and social cultural paradigms in very different ways between England and her Atlantic Colonies in the Eighteenth-century. While these goods epitomized genteel refinement in England, often through an association with polite and female society, Chinese wallpaper was appropriated by male colonial elites in order to exercise their place within refined genteel classes. The cultural attitudes towards China that caused predominantly high-status female consumption in England, were replaced by a growing middle-class attachment to refinement and their appropriation of the Chinese aesthetic as an English style. This process of emulative consumption by the middle classes and the ways through which they came to appropriate the tastes of the fashionable elites allowed these once highly gendered, expensive, and exotic wall hangings to become symbols of public masculinity in the American Colonies. English culture became a commodity through which the middling elites could negotiate status

[3] Jeremy Black and Taylor & Francis Evidence-Based Ebooks – VIVA, *The British Empire: A History and a Debate* (Farnham, Surrey, Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015), 71-73.

amongst one another. To do so, the American colonial landed gentry utilized not only British goods and culture, but, more importantly, a British aesthetic to participate within the hierarchical structures of status in the British Atlantic.

Historiography

Studied separately, chinoiserie, the British Atlantic, and genteel consumption have all been extensively explored in scholarship. However, this thesis, while incorporating major thematic trends from these different bodies of scholarship, aims to fill a void in how Chinese wallpaper functioned as an expression of commodified identity in the eighteenth-century British Atlantic. While art historians; material culture historians; and social, economic and politic historians have engaged with the topic of the consumption of Chinese goods, this thesis, looking through the lens of architectural space, examines the ways in which the spatial use of these goods can be contextualized within the discourses of gender, wallpaper, British Imperialism, and a material Atlantic.

The body of scholarship on chinoiserie is extensive, but a few scholars have stood out as particularly important to this research. Stacy Slodoba, an Art Historian, addresss more critical issues relating to gender, politics, and Chinese manufactured goods in the eighteenth-century in her book *Chinoiserie: Commerce and Critical Ornament In Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Slodoba brings together issues of gender, politics, and commerce in order to understand the development of Chinoiserie in England, drawing on arguments from the larger body of chinoiserie scholarship to analyze British culture in the eighteenth-century. Emile De Brujin, from the British National Trust, engages with England's long history with Chinese wallpaper in *Chinese Wallpaper in England and Ireland.* Brujin more closely examines the depth of Chinese wallpaper available in the British Isle from the earliest imports to the latest contemporary fashions. De Brujin's book,

while extensive, limits itself to a material history of the Chinese wallpaper still extant in the British Isles today. The book focuses primarily on the documentation of these papers in various homes, with further regard to the transformation in types of Chinese wallpapers over the course of the seventeenth through twentieth centuries, leaving space for others to address key issues of politics, economics, gender, and larger social tastes and cultural receptions around these wallpapers.

Grant McCracken's book *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* explores where consumer practices and cultural discourses intersect. Tracing consumption from the sixteenth-century prior to the consumer revolution, through the eighteenth-century and continuing to more contemporary consumer practices, McCracken contextualizes behavior, material culture, and social histories. Amanda Vickery and John Styles in *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* use consumption and gender to examine the ways in which people shopped and styles were exchanged across the British Atlantic, synthesizing the links between economies, styles of goods, and consumer choices. It is an extensive collection of essays from different scholars, who thematically encounter consumer practices in the eighteenth-century Atlantic through different narratives. The Atlantic as a topic of interest was introduced by historians Bernard Bailyn, who stands on the shoulders of Fernand Braudel's method of understanding history through movement and connections of the Mediterranean Sea in his book *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*. David Armitage and M. J. Braddick's book *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* further examines how cultures interact over bodies of water, by examining the Atlantic through Cis, Trans, and Circum Atlantic integrations. [4] They define the body of the Atlantic as larger and

[4] David Armitage and M. J Braddick, *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 16-21.

smaller nodes, characterized by a shared cultural exchange based on a dominant center, but with distinct nodal differences. This project will utilize Armitage and Braddick's analysis of the Atlantic in our understanding of how consumption in these epicenters and peripheries was both similar and distinct, and, more importantly, how specific fringe geographies differed from the central body of consumer culture in relation to particular contextual circumstances.

Methods

This project on Chinese wallpaper comes from an interest in cross-cultural aesthetic discourses about interior architectural styles and material culture. I began my research by exclusively examining English homes in the British Isles, where there are over 150 known examples of extant Chinese wallpaper. However, as I came to understand the ubiquitous nature of Chinese aesthetic within the homes of the landed gentry as synonymous with British culture, I expanded my research to the larger British empire in the American colonies, where the number of known examples of Chinese wallpaper is less than thirty. Although there are not many surviving examples, this analysis of how the colonial public engaged and interacted with Chinese wallpapers helps interpret how differing methods of consumption in the American colonies, within a shared aesthetic, reinforced and challenged local and global British identities. The analysis of the intersection of behaviors of use, consumption, and display offer new ways to look at chinoiserie as a commodity of social identity. The house became a key component for social performance in the eighteenth-century, acting as a stage through which to display worldly goods and cultural behaviors. Chinese wallpaper helps to contextualize these relationships of public and private hierarchies within spaces of eighteenth-century domestic architecture through visual analysis. Therefore, 'seeing' and 'viewing' are fundamental to this research, which required me to engage directly with these spaces, conducting my research at houses, museums and historical

societies in England and America. This research addresses notions of viewing ‘othered’ spaces by examining identity through an Anglo-Atlantic lens. By looking at the larger culture of English gentility and material goods in the British Atlantic before the American Revolution, this project connects consumer practices, material culture, architectural spaces, and identity discourses.

Chapter 1: Consuming Gentility: Taste, Fashion, and Chinese Material Goods

The character of the British Atlantic world in the eighteenth-century can largely be characterized by the constant exchange of goods, peoples, and ideas. The regular shifting of these paradigms caused people to construct their identities in relation to changing circumstances, and construct hierarchical relationships amongst one another from these cross cultural and social interactions. *(See Figure 1)* As a new public identity emerged through the idea of collective participation in commodities, individual identity became dependent on not only how one positioned themselves amongst local surroundings, but also on the ways one addressed social status in relation to the larger Atlantic society. Further, as the new middling elites engaged with new and ever-changing notions of modernity, they entered the cosmopolitan life of the eighteenth century forced to make social, political, and aesthetic choices. One's ability to choose correctly amongst "a multitude of newly available luxury goods" expressed their values of taste and facilitated their entrance into genteel culture, "redefining their socioeconomic status."[5] In subscribing to these larger social currents of fashion and the decorum of use, the consumer contextualized meaning, having to adapt to Atlantic tastes while maintaining local customs and standards.[6]

The British consumer revolution began in the sixteenth-century, as Elizabethan nobility engaged in competition amongst one another through the purchasing of goods. The elite families had begun to realize that objects, especially those that were novel and expensive, could

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[5] Charlotte Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender, and British Slavery, 1713-1833* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2000), 44.

[6] John Styles and Amanda Vickery, *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture In Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (New Haven, CT: The Yale Center for British Art, 20060, 16.

communicate both an individual's and a families' social, political, and economic authority.[7] This expression of individual and group status through goods blossomed through the exponential growth in commercialization of materials from the sixteenth to the eighteenth-century in England and its colonies. As the British imperial footprint expanded and the middle-classes began to establish prominent economic positions,[8] the connection between the economic and imperial access to non-Western territories helped to reinforce the domestic and national relationships between goods and identity. The imperial projects grew to gain new territories, which allowed the wealthy middle classes in England to access this expanding world of goods, reinforcing their political and social positions in the British Empire through their economic exploitations.[9] Imperialism emerged alongside the rhetoric of eighteenth-century British national discourses as concepts that engaged the public's discussion. Identities were being formed as fluid, binary relationships between England and its territories. England, as conceived of by the public opinion, was "no longer regarded by its citizens as an Island State with dependent colonies and possessions, but as a single, world-embracing whole, [that had] great self-governing parts."[10] The incorporation of different bodies of people as 'English' heightened these anxieties about what it meant to be British, and, more importantly, which groups had authority. England began constructing a much larger colonial footprint in the 1700s through the establishment of India as an English colony, the expansion of the African slave trade, and the colonization of the Americas. Alongside the development of these global outposts, England was also fiercely

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[7] Grant David McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 11-12.
[8] Armitage, *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800, 113.*
[9] Maxine Berg and Ebook Central - Academic Complete, *Luxury and Pleasure In Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford New York : Oxford University Press, 2005, 2005), 19.
[10] Felix von Oppenheimer Freiherr, *British Imperialism* (London: A. Owen & Co, 1905), 11.

engaged in European conflicts. [11] While the military and governing bodies concerned themselves more with the European theater, the public perception of empire focused less on these European competitions and was more intrigued by the territories of the East and the Atlantic basin, largely due to the differing culture and landscapes the regions provided. [12] This public perception of the imperial footprint helped to drive the consumer revolution of foreign goods. Furthermore, the constant series of conflicts and competitions with European powers created uncertainty about England's place in the world and security as a both a both a nation-state and global power. These anxieties were materialized through the consumption of foreign goods and their eventual gendered, exotic place in the home, inwardly offering it a clear place within British society while externally easing and dictating England's place as an imperial power.

Goods became the physical embodiments of these social anxieties. As McCracken, in *Culture and Consumption* brings forth, the consumer revolution was so prominent in Eighteenth-century English culture, that the material consumption of goods extended beyond fashion, creating "new opportunities for the purchase of furniture, pottery, silver, mirrors, cutlery, gardens, pets and fabric".[13] This exploding consumer revolution was, at its core, a reflection of the changes in social beliefs and cultural paradigms. McCracken's research shows how, as the British Empire's periphery expanded and new economic opportunities arose, the changing dynamics of new territories, new goods, and new people, required one to navigate their place in a fluid environment and in competition with one another, therefore creating a "consumer revolution [that] was driven by the viciously hierarchical nature of eighteenth-century

[11] Black, *The British Empire: A History and a Debate*, 71.
[12]Black, *The British Empire: A History and a Debate*, 73.
[13] McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*, 16.

England."[14] Furthermore, if an individual was uncertain of their social and national identity, one could establish themselves as English, and therefore refined, through commonalities in the types of items they selected in the consumer revolution. Accordingly, in the vast expanse of the Anglo Atlantic world, elite merchants in Boston were able to signal equal status with other Anglo gentlemen and women in the British world, whether they were in London, Bristol, Charleston, or the West Indies.[15] This process of emulative consumption created groups of middling people for those that may not have had geographical similarity, but who were linked through a common culture of consumption of goods that were associated with an English aesthetic, and wanted to position themselves in this hierarchical world of English culture as genteel and refined.

Taste and Decorum: Trickle Down Gentility in Materials Goods

Because the performance of genteel culture was often reflected through one's material goods, as more people engaged in conspicuous consumption, goods signaled social, political, and economic identities. In the American Colonies, both the values of the gentility and these processes of cultural refinement were being imported from the eighteenth century British construct of "politeness."[16] These English customs became important for those who desired social mobility within the prominent Colonial elites, as well as the British Atlantic gentry. Politeness and taste required one to consume these goods, and necessitated behavioral changes that mandated one to understand the proper use in order to exemplify polite society. Politeness,

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[14] McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*, 17.

[15] Stephen G. Hague, *The Gentleman's House In the British Atlantic World, 1680-1780* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 115.

[16] Lawrence E. Klein, "Politeness for plebes. Consumption and social identity in early eighteenth-century England" in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London, New York: Routledge, 1997), 362.

therefore became a performance that emphasized material goods as essential to the presentation of status, "good breeding, refinement, sociability, [and] manners."[17] Although objects often have larger social significance within group politics, it is "necessary for people of that group to arrive at their own interpretation."[18]Accordingly, England's colonies engaged within the social tastes of the imperial hegemony of its culture, adapting their own local standards within it, communicating local and global identities simultaneously. Thus, while the middling elites consumed gentility by emulating the fashionable gentries' standards of goods, the manner in which these objects functioned in daily use and within the different social contexts was not always proportional.

As the culture of the Atlantic continued to shift and the Colonies experienced significant changes in cultural trends, goods and spaces became typologies through which one could connect with the culture of gentility. Gentility was central in establishing the presence of exotic, foreign, and desirable expensive commodities in England, a presence that became institutionalized in the American colonies in the 1700s. As the culture of gentility in the British Atlantic world penetrated the consumer revolution, the possession and acquisition of material goods was not the sole contributor to exercising good taste; rather, taste was a result of the careful use and nuanced understanding of how objects and materials should be used, dictated by cultural standards of etiquette. Because the exercising of good taste is innately dependent on cultural contexts, the social climate in the colonies, although it conversed with British material culture and looked to England for these material ques, was inherently different and required unique approaches. [19] The Colonial elites used this shared language of goods to signal status to one another within British

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[17] Klein, "Politeness for plebes. Consumption and social identity in early eighteenth-century England", 362.

[18] Ann Smart Martin, *Buying Into the World of Goods: Early Consumers In Backcountry Virginia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 98.

[19] Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 313.

and vernacular standards, "[striking] a balance between expression of cosmopolitan awareness and affirmations of locally recognized cultural norms. "[20]The associations of a shared English culture in the colonies and the English Atlantic was driven by the rising merchant elite and their desire for cosmopolitan status regardless of geographic region.[21]

Networks of Goods and Social Status of the Middling

The nature of public identity continued to develop and shift throughout the eighteenth-century within different groups of people. The 'public' represented an emerging class of people separate from the clergy and the aristocracy. This third group of people, outside of those religious and genteel bodies that had established power, began to gain wealth and authority through the rise of mercantilism in this period. Their new wealth provided them with the means to access public social positions and represent themselves amongst the rest of the landed gentry.[22] The formation of 'the public,' during this period did not solely represent an emerging new class of people, but also an adaptation in the collective performance of this class of people, as they began to communicate with one another through their participation in cultured society. The public's social performance was juxtaposed against the performance of their private family values; simultaneously, the public sphere emerged defined by cultural performances and shared values. The performance of a public identity based on one's participation in cultural beliefs and values created distinctions between those who had access to culture and those that did not. The social capital offered by mercantilism allowed those in the wealthy middle classes to establish

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[20] Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, Peter J Albert and United States Capitol Historical Society, *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life In the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994), 34.

[21] Hague, *The Gentleman's House In the British Atlantic World, 1680-1780, 145.*

[22] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991), 8.

themselves as a status figure through their participation in the consumption of particular stylish goods. The commodification of status allowed these groups to use one another for access and establish themselves against the lower classes, asserting their authority as public figures in the religious, political, or economic spheres. Furthermore, one's position in the elite was achieved through their performance in spaces amongst those who had cultural capital. Anyone with financial or social access to goods could attempt to communicate their status within the rising middling elite through their aesthetic and cultural choices. As a result, identity became a visible commodity that was meant to be understood and gained through accessible means. This constant reorganization of social status amongst the newly wealthy fed directly into the consumer revolution, where tasteful choices and "politeness constituted an oligarchical culture for a post-courtly and post godly society with a growing metropolis."[23]

Examining how one shopped and what one had access to is fundamental in understanding the consumer practices of that era. Most of the population, including the wealthy landed gentry in England and its colonies, obtained goods through the "consignment system," which necessitated shoppers to exploit their social, political and economic networks in order to obtain the newest fashions.[24] Shopping through the proximity of acquittances and social circles therefore made social connections an essential facet of consumer practices in the eighteenth-century. These connections become more explicitly important when discussing the consumption of Chinese goods in the eighteenth-century. The fashions imported from England were not always current, as the colonies were often delayed in receiving goods and styles that were curated through an English lens.[25] These incoming fashions served as symbols that members of

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[23] Klein, "Politeness for plebes. Consumption and social identity in early eighteenth-century England", 362.
[24] Smart, *Buying Into the World of Goods: Early Consumers In Backcountry Virginia*, 43.
[25] Susan A Borchardt, Mickey Crowell, Ellen K. Donald, Barbara A. Farner, Gunston Hall Room Use Study, http://www.gunstonhall.org/mansion/room_use_study/credits.html.

the community recognized but did not necessarily regard, evaluate, or act upon all in the same manner. Often one's access to Chinese goods influenced what one received and how they received it, all while reinforcing their positions within these social networks. Although shopping through proxies existed in both England and the American colonies, in England, these social and economic networks provided access to the East, while in the colonies, networks allowed access to English goods. The differences in location between England and its colonies demanded these networks of exchange to be fundamentally different; however, regardless of location, the consumer had to take advantage of familial, economic, and political relationships to acquire goods. This process of shopping through others often restricted access to material goods that were considered rare or foreign, thus making them more elite by the nature of their limited availability through certain social circles and merchants.[26]Shopping and consumption were also curated by the elites, who defined the fashions through their own use and provided a model for conspicuous consumption for the middle classes. This shopping through others played perfectly into the consumer revolution in the eighteenth century in England, which was characterized by a "trickle-down effect," where tastes of the upper classes made their way down to the newly wealthy middle classes.[27] However, as these goods traveled down this chain, their meaning, quality, aesthetic, and use were adapted and changed into the newly defined social stratas. Even though there were key differences in materiality and use, the emulative consumption of Chinese wallpaper reinforced the hegemony of British national identity in the 1700s and the hierarchical nature of English society.

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[26] Helen Clifford, "Chinese Wallpaper Case Study: An Elusive Object', *East India Company at Home* (February 2013), 9.

[27] McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*, 18.

Consumption of the East-Birthright Goods

Chinoiserie, as a style, is defined as a European good with an Eastern aesthetic. These goods originated from Chinese markets, where Asian artists capitalized on the growing western market, [28] but eventually came to be reproduced in the West, reflecting a "European idea of what oriental things were like, or ought to be like."[29]These imitation goods were incorporated into the world of authentic Chinese goods, eventually becoming an independent style after a significant amount of social stimulation about the fantasies of the East spread throughout Europe, beginning as "imitation" and "developing further and further away from its prototypes with time."[30] Ultimately, the creation of chinoiserie was an economic response to the social phenomenon of consumers' desire to produce Chinese goods at a lower and more accessible cost for those not in the aristocracy or merchant classes.[31]

As the global economy became more closely tied to the Orient and the spread of these goods across Europe became associated with elite patronage and access, Chinese goods, and eventually chinoiseries, became indicators of status. In the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, only those associated with rich merchants or the aristocracy associated with rich merchants or the aristocracy had access to Chinese goods in some way, signaling a relationship between this style and affluence and power. As these highly illustrious goods became associated with elite society in England, writers and artists simultaneously perpetuated fantasies of the East through popular culture, literature, which was further reflected by the material goods in the chinoiserie style.[32] The rise of literature and culture that emphasized the allure of these goods, along with accounts

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[28] Robert L. Thorp and Richard Ellis Vinograd, *Chinese Art & Culture* (New York: Abrams, 2001), 359.
[29] O. R. Impey, *Chinoiserie: The Impact of Oriental Styles On Western Art and Decoration* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 9.
[30] Impey, *Chinoiserie: The Impact of Oriental Styles On Western Art and Decoration*, 10.
[31] Honour, *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay*, 44.
[32] Honour, *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay*, 2.

from missionaries and merchants who traveled throughout China, served as a means of curating and cultivating English perceptions of the East.[33]The experiential knowledge gained by visitation to the East was a gendered privilege afforded to merchants, diplomats, and missionaries, all of whom were typically male. Therefore, consumption of these goods became a way in which one could experience the otherworldliness and ephemerality of the East that they read about in books, and, for women, provided their sole access to these foreign places. The general population back in England had little to no concept of the realities of Eastern culture. This lack of understanding coincided with a fascination with the exotic, creating fantasies surrounding goods that fed into an underlying desire to access the East. The compelling evidence that chinoiserie had higher popularity in countries that did not have immediate access to the Chinese market or had a delayed or indirect exchange[34] highlights how distance and lack of direct association mattered greatly in the production of Chinese imitation goods and the perpetuation of unrealistic fantasies.

Chinoiserie has such a significant chronological footprint in England because of its adaptability and common aesthetic principles with other popular arts and fashions. Chinoiserie, by definition, is the "European manifestation of mixtures of various oriental styles with which are mixed rococo, baroque, Gothick."[35] The other fashions of the Gothick, Palladian, and Rococo were products of imaginative and allegorical recreations of fanciful distance from a space or time. In a poem by James Cawthorn in 1756, the image of China replaced this desire with other styles: "of late, tis true, quite sick of Rome and Greece, We fetch our models from the wise Chinese, European artists are too cool and chaste, For Mand'rin is the only man of taste."[36]

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[33] Thorp and Vinograd, *Chinese Art & Culture*, 363.
[34] Honour, *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay*, 45.
[35] Impey, *Chinoiserie: The Impact of Oriental Styles On Western Art and Decoration*, 10.
[36] James Cawthorn, *Poems ; By the Rev. Mr. Cawthorn*, (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Library, 1771), 115-116.

Chinese ornament was not a re-creation of the past, but a reinterpretation of a space that was still inaccessible to most Europeans, the East. While the allure for chinoiserie spoke to a desire for ancient civilizations and the exotic other that was not available in contemporary English society, it was also deeply contemporary, as it embodied consumer novelties and a globalized economy; additionally, an "aesthetic philosophy reoriented taste and judgement within physical, particularly visual, experience rather than solely mental experience."[37] The taste for Chinese goods in England embodied not only a highly materialistic and deeply involved global economy, but also the belief that "aesthetic culture reinforced the culture of the dominant political and social ideologies; and it re-presented and reconstructed the notion of a national identity."[38] Nationalism and social identities related to the idea of a nation were being created in this period in conjunction with the consumer revolution, allowing for national identity to become "aestheticized."[39] The consequences of developing aesthetic tastes that were directly and indirectly linked to imperial projects resulted in a sense of nation that emerged out of the consumption of the other.

The use of Chinese wallpapers reflected a response to social decorums that required an adherence to accepted social positions relating to politics, gender, race, and social status. The place of these wallpapers within the Anglo Atlantic world was reflective of these political, gendered, and social attitudes. The earliest examples of Chinese wallpapers being brought into Europe are associated with gifts for the aristocracy, but as the East opened up economically, merchants brought these goods back for more than just those with noble birthright. Scholars have

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[37] Stacey Slodoba, *Chinoiserie: Commerce and Critical Ornament In Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Manchester University Press, 2014), 62.
[38] Dana Arnold, *Cultural Identities and the Aesthetics of Britishness* (Manchester, UK, New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 1.
[39] Arnold, *Cultural Identities and the Aesthetics of Britishness*, 3.

speculated that Chinese wallpapers had been originally used as diplomatic and mercantile gifts, solidifying their importance as imperial and economic objects of power in Europe.[40] It is likely, their social significance in the Anglican world as objects of power are partly a result of their earlier association with only aristocratic access. As merchants and the East India Trading Companies made Chinese goods more accessible, *(See Figure 2)* it became increasingly easier for people to participate in the consumer revolution with access to eastern markets.[41] Previously in Europe, sumptuary laws prevented the common classes to participate in any ostentatious display of wealth of commodities, in order to "reinforce social divisions and to maintain social stability."[42] However, the consumer revolution and the rise of a wealthy middle class allowed for new people to use goods to identify themselves as people of status. Chinese wallpaper served this purpose well, providing legitimacy to those who lacked the requisite birthright through conspicuous consumption, as "Asian products had an amazing capacity to satisfy a new luxury market which was both growing rapidly and increasing in social diversity."[43] This fascination with the exotic resulted in the high prices that were asked for these goods,[44]adding to the allure of owning oriental objects and creating a desire to display them for the performance of status. Chinese goods were luxury goods, not utilitarian, and so showed status and refinement. These goods brought forth a new set of behaviors, manners, and activities that were required of genteel society. A better understanding of the consumption of Chinese wallpaper in the context of the rising middling elite in the British Atlantic, requires a close analysis of England's global

[40] Gill Saunders, *Wallpaper In Interior Decoration* (London: V&A, 2002), 64.
[41] Berg. *Luxury and Pleasure In Eighteenth-Century Britain*, 5.
[42] Berg. *Luxury and Pleasure In Eighteenth-Century Britain*, 25.
[43] Berg. *Luxury and Pleasure In Eighteenth-Century Britain, 25.*
[44] Clifford, "Chinese Wallpaper Case Study: An Elusive Object", 7.

paradigms, as well England's hierarchical nature, domestically and nationally, revealing global, gender, and interpersonal identities.

Chapter Two: Commodification of "Viewing"

Visual Imperialism and Chinese Wallpapers in English Houses

The previous chapter examined taste through larger structures of economic and imperial changes in the eighteenth-century: what people had access to, and why they made certain choices when buying Chinese goods. This chapter's aim is to contextualize the cultural and individual reception of Chinese wallpaper in English society. In doing so, I will examine how the consumption of Chinese goods helps to identify how social behaviors and customs formed in relationship to social status, imperial paradigms, and constructs of gender identity in England. The chinoiserie style spoke to a global "cosmopolitanism" that brought together modern, novel fashions, while crucially signaling to the maintain hegemony of social class traditions.[45] The consumption and presence of these Chinese goods materialized cultural, political, and economic attitudes of the eighteenth-century. The popularity in the consumption of Chinese wallpapers cannot be singularly understood as the result of the access and economic opportunities emerging, but rather as an examination of the material evidence that can be contextualized within arguments about gendered cultural, visual, and aesthetic attitudes in England. As a commodity that covered a large span of a room's space, these exotic wallpapers' spatial and visual impacts engaged the viewer's experience in these domestic spaces, materializing concepts of empire and foreign travel. These wall-hangings offer openings for an inter-disciplinary analysis, forging connections between the stylistic value and the social and political value of Chinese wallpaper. These connections draw into conversation the formation of national and imperial identities within changing social and economic structures in the eighteenth-century.

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[45] Sloboda, *Chinoiserie: Commerce and Critical Ornament In Eighteenth-Century Britain,* 81.

The capacity to analyze the nuances of the gendered social and political reception of these wall-hangings is facilitated through an understanding of how domestic architectural spaces functioned in England as physical representations of hierarchy. Domestic landscapes held immense social significance in the British Atlantic for class associations in this period. The homes of the gentility became stages in which to perform status, through the mediums of styles, material goods, and behavioral literacy. These spaces had a hierarchical vocabulary, where one had to decipher where one should be allowed, what one should be doing in that space, and what it did to reinforce reputation.[46] *(See Figure 3)* Further, homes of the social and political elites became a place of distinctly drawn boundaries and those who entered would be aware if they fell above or below these lines with further regard to what was public and private, refined and crude, male and female.[47] Apart from the physical socialization that these estates fostered, the country house also played a part in the displayed wealth of the gentry through a cornucopia of goods. Members of the landed gentry and wealthy mercantile classes could display their worldly collections in their homes,[48] often giving the illusion of costly and sophisticated travel. Foreign material goods were understood not only as desirable objects that physically represented material wealth of the owner, but one's capacity to exemplify refined tastes while participating in the consumer revolution.[49]

Object placement within a room has different social meanings depending on where they are placed, what they are placed with, and how they are used. The social meaning of wallcoverings

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[46] Mark Girouard, *Life In the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 128.
[47] Girouard, *Life In the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History*. *128.*
[48] Jocelyn Anderson, *Touring and Publicizing England's Country Houses In the Long Eighteenth Century* (New York, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsburg Publishing, PLC, 2018), 1.
[49] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Europa Publications, 1982), 1.

comes from how they are used in the home and the nuances between their different British contexts. The manner in which spaces of the home were used to convey strict senses of hierarchy demanded that interior furnishing and material culture were extensions of that hierarchy of identity and space, where design and space manipulated and controlled one's vision. This visual materiality of space creates two types of viewing experiences: the private and the public. Chinese wallpapers maintain an odd position in the eighteenth-century Anglican world of status and identity, as they functioned both publicly and privately, as a commodity and a spectacle. Using the hierarchical home as a lens through which to analyze the Chinese wallpapers, the remaining research will address the social significance and cultural attitudes towards Chinese wallpaper based on where they were positioned in the home and how their composition reinforced the process of seeing 'othered' spaces. Chinoiseries visualized binary tensions in the eighteenth-century: domestic and foreign, male and female, high art and craft, interior and exterior, exotic and domestic, and the established gentry and rising merchant elite. The placement in the home, as well as the popularized English reception of these wallpapers is dependent upon whether these exotic spaces were considered the material production of the commodification of empire, or were treated as gendered spectacles of that imperialism.

Visualizing Empire

Thought of as often superfluous, Chinese wallpapers came to represent the material excess of the eighteenth-century's fashionable elite.[50] However, given the painterly quality of the wallpaper it would be difficult to disregard them in the context of other artistic traditions in this period. Whether paper, silk, or panels, Chinese wallpapers functioned outside of their ontological

[50] Sloboda, *Chinoiserie: Commerce and Critical Ornament In Eighteenth-Century Britain*, 59.

purpose of interior decoration, making a place for them within larger picturesque landscape painting studies. The wallpaper, therefore, was a medium through which to create and consume ephemeral visions of the 'other' within the larger artistic phenomena of imperial landscape painting, which was "the mental construction of a visually comprehended space."[51] that occurred in the eighteenth-century in relationship to the British Empire, materializing the expression of imperial anxieties.

As Crowley presents in *Imperial Landscapes*, topographic scenery was vitally important to British visual culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The creation of landscapes through an imperial lens, which often represented the picturesque and sublime, were important components for the formation of British global identity as civilizing and cultured. British material culture in conjunction with political and economic history is an important framework of analysis to raise questions about how these landscapes depended upon understanding the visual and collective interpretation of space. More importantly, these scenic and idealized depictions of the East provided the viewer in England with curated interpretations of the British empire's colonial interactions.[52] These new economic and imperial projects in the East had an impact on not only the types of goods being consumed in the West, but how these goods were used to visualize foreign spaces and reinforce status in England. While there may not have been an exact precedent for Chinese wallpaper in the East, the West had already created a method to use art and artistic practices to understand the world through the production of stylized landscapes, both in paintings and gardens. *(See Figure 4-5)* Indeed, the rise of landscape painting "is deeply involved with the rise of the western empires," where the "local, regional, or national genre is

[51] John E. Crowley, *Imperial Landscapes* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2011), 2.
[52] Crowley, *Imperial Landscapes, 12-13.*

extracted from a globally disseminated medium and inflated into a universal and natural sign [as] a fundamental gesture in the discourse of imperialism."[53]

The picturesque gardens and paintings that were popular in the Eighteenth century can be imagined as "a mode of seeing….and a way of perceiving and a way of representing" [54] nature, but also controlling it. However, the issue of artistic precedent and manipulation of economic opportunities, puts Chinese wallpaper in an uncertain position. Chinese wallpaper was a mixture of art, decorative art, and economic wealth—it combined the novelties of the new global market and synthesized them into a product that could convey social affluence and position. The Chinese wallpapers, with their depictions of Chinese natural life and anthropomorphic activity, provided accessible references for those in Europe to understand the periphery of the empire in terms that were culturally relevant to them. Unlike Landscape painting, whose production is within British identity with some regard, the painted Chinese wallpaper was produced in workshops in Canton.[55] While very little is known about the production centers and the artists, these wallpapers' production can be framed within other chinoiserie goods, such as the fabrication of export porcelain and textiles. Chinoiseries were produced not for Chinese use, but were specifically created as products for the West and the East India Trading Companies of the British and Dutch, where Chinese artists would create Western aestheticized goods.[56] The images seen in the wallpaper do not represent Chinese vernacular practices, but represent how Chinese artists and workshops took advantage of the West's material obsession with their goods and

[53] W.J.T. Mitchell, "Gombrich and the rise of landscape". Bermingham, Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London, New York: Routledge, 1997), 104-105.
[54] Mitchell, "Gombrich and the rise of landscape", 104.
[55] Margaret Jourdain and Soame Jenyns, *Chinese Export Art In the Eighteenth Century* (London Spring Books 1967), 35.
[56] Jourdain and Jenyns, *Chinese Export Art In the Eighteenth Century*, *35.*

began producing chinoiserie goods.[57] These workshops were creating images that communicated picturesque places within a western imagined gaze, profiting from these cross-cultural interactions. By placing the foreign within a picturesque painted landscape, Chinese wallpaper production offered an aesthetic solution for western gazes, controlling the exotic views as contained through the lens of western consumers. *(See Figure 6)*

The experience of 'seeing' was vitally important to unraveling the material commodification of the Chinese aesthetic as well as understanding how reception of a stylized object influences how one chose to use it. Wallpaper, although it can be considered an aestheticized interior cover, is in the unique position of being able to alter the experience of 'seeing' in the home as it transforms the visual space so decidedly into one fashion. Chinese wallpaper, and other 'panoramic and landscape' wallpapers'[58] *(See figure 7)* involved the viewer in a way that other styles of eighteenth- century wallpaper did not. Interpreting wallpaper as commodified art engaged the viewer in seeing the images and scenes of the wallpaper as something more than aesthetically pleasing. Through the consumption and use of Chinese wallpaper, the viewers position themselves through an imperial gaze as a way to interpret and appropriate the Orient as the object of spectacle. One could further distort and reimage the gaze of these exotic landscapes by personalizing them. Many of these papers came with additional pieces of birds and flowers that the owner could place where he or she deemed fit and pleasing.[59] This is illustrated at Houghton hall, where the Chinese wallpaper *(See Figure 8)* shows scenes of nature with birds, flowers, and trees, and includes additional patches of birds in the order allowing the owner to

[57] Thorp and Vinograd, *Chinese Art & Culture*, 359.
[58] Françoise Teynac, Pierre Nolot and Jean-Denis Vivien, *Wallpaper, a History* (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 102-103.
[59] Research visit to Houghton Hall, June 2018. Room use study and interpretation were available to visitors for the Chinese bedroom, which had been the Cabinet Room.

create their ideal design. The manner in which these were produced gave agency and the authority to participate in oriental landscapes partly to the consumer. The ability to personalize placed the viewer in a strange position between reality and imagination. While their composition was often fictional, many of the birds and plants in the wallpapers were scientifically and biologically accurate to species in China.[60]The tantalizing natural and biological realness in conjunction with the mystic and aestheticized composition, placed the viewer within a false reality. This distorted representation reinforced these eighteenth-century western attitudes of Chinese culture. The British disposition towards China, much like that towards other antiquities, was distant, untouched, and timeless—positioning Chinese culture in a refined, but imagined past.

Gendered Spaces

The Chinese aesthetic came to be associated with refined femininity in British culture. As exoticism became attached to the female gender, the aesthetic of femininity, although refined, was subordinated to other fashions and places in the home. The explicit pairing of female spaces with the Chinese wallpaper, where chinoiserie represented the exotic, beautiful, and lesser female other, embodied larger cultural anxieties concerning British identity in the eighteenth-century. The economic and political relationship between Chinese goods and British imperialism cannot be separated from social consumption when analyzing the cultural gendering of consumer practices in England. In his *Essay on Tea*, Jonas Hanway explores the relationship between the

[60] Jourdain and Jenyns. *Chinese Export Art In the Eighteenth Century*, 29.

popularity of tea, feminization of British culture, and the detrimental decline in English society.[61] *(See Figure 9)* He states:

> "Even the custom of sipping tea, affords a gratification, which becomes so habitual, as hardly to be resisted. It has prevailed indeed over a great part of the world; but the most effeminate people on the face of the whole earth, whose example we, as a wise, active, and warlike nation, would least desire to imitate, are the greatest sippers; I mean the Chinese, among whom the first ranks of the people have adopted it as a kind of principle, that it is below their dignity to perform any manly labor, or indeed any labor at all: and yet, with regard to this custom of sipping tea, we seem to act more wantonly and absurdly than the Chinese themselves."[62]

Much like porcelain and other Chinese imported goods, Chinese tea consumption in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries became closely associated with British culture and polite societies.[63] Hanway sees the consumption of tea as not only detrimental to the health of English people, but as a drug, with the additional harming effects of sugar on our teeth and bodies. However, it was not solely bodily health that concerned Hanway, but rather that Chinese goods impeded the moral and cultural health of England as a result of the associations with the effeminate Chinese culture. His essay represents how larger social discourses, surrounding Chinese goods and culture and gendered imperial paradigms, influenced the manner in which Chinese goods made their way into the homes, with women as the main consumers.[64] While many fine homes in England had these Chinese imported wallpapers, most of the spaces in which

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[61] Jonas Hanway, *An Essay On Tea: Considered As Pernicious to Health, Obstructing Industry, and Impoverishing the Nation : With a Short Account of Its Growth, and Great Consumption In These Kingdoms : With Several Political Reflections : In Twenty-Five Letters Addressed to Two Ladies* (London: H. Woodfall, 1756).
[62] Hanway, *An Essay On Tea*, 231.
[63] Hanway writes, "Lord Arlington and Lord Ossory, were the persons who brought it from Holland in 1666: their ladies then became passionately enarmored with its as a new thing: their example recommended it to the fine women of those days, and yours must put it out of countenance." Hanway, *An Essay On Tea*, 215.
[64] David Porter, *The Chinese Taste In Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 57.

they were used in the early to mid-eighteenth-century were places that women occupied more frequently or were private bedchambers.

One of the great homes that I visited was Houghton Hall, Sir Robert Walpole's Palladian styled house that sits in the beautiful Norfolk countryside. *(See Figure 10).* While expensive French flock wallpapers were placed in rooms that were public, the Chinese wallpaper, which was imported and hand painted from China, was tucked further away *(See Figure 11)* in the "cabinet room." The cabinet room is called such because it was originally used as a private post-dinner meeting chamber for Robert Walpole, the 2nd Earl of Orford and Sir Robert Walpole's eldest son, and his male guests to discuss politics after dinner. The room did not have Chinese wallpaper at this time, but was fixed with green velvet and portraits. When Robert Walpole died in 1745, the estate passed to his son George Walpole, the 3rd Earl of Orford, who refashioned the interior to meet contemporary tastes. The Chinese paper was purchased and placed in the house sometime at the end of the eighteenth century as a room became 'ladies' chamber. Currently situated adjacent to public halls and spaces, such as the "white drawing room" with ornate silk embroidered panels and the "saloon" with red velvet flock, the Chinese wallpaper posits a more private and feminine place in the estate. [65] The analysis of the Chinese wallpaper's spatial use is important its placement in the home is tied to the room's social meaning. While gender is a widely discussed topic in the study of chinoiserie in Europe, Chinese wallpapers are largely left out of this discussion. Scholars have thought critically about the gendered consumption of Chinese goods, one scholar stating "While both men and women admired and purchased china, surviving household inventories make clear that chinaware in eighteenth-century country houses were concentrated in women's rooms, a conclusion corroborated by indications in contemporary

[65] Research visit to Houghton Hall, June 2018. Room use study and interpretation were available to visitors for cabinet room, saloon, white drawing room.

design books that these precious goods were intended primarily for women's bedrooms, dressing rooms, and closets."[66] Unlike porcelain, folding screens, tea ware, and tables, wallpaper, as larger commodity, was less portable and impacted the view and style of the room more noticeably, fortifying the alignment of exotic topographic landscapes with gendered use and consumption.

In the 1760s, Arthur Young, an English writer, took a trip around the English country side and recorded his travels and his observations. On his tour, he visited a Chinese room in Grimsthorpe Castle. *(See Figure 12)* He describes the room with Chinese wall hangings as the "breakfasting closet" which he goes on to say is "extremely elegant; quite original, and very pleasing."[67] This space, as small and intimate, was a great place for the "fine India paper," accompanied by gothic ceiling framework and painted ornament on the doors and floors.[68]While Young considers this room to be in "good taste,"[69] one can infer that the taste to which he is referring is an expression of its gendered use, rather than solely its aesthetic. The mistress of the house, inferred through Young's account, exemplified polite society through the use of these fashionable products in spaces that were appropriate for its material qualities. Having discussed the taste and culture in the eighteenth-century as highly dependent on normative social decorum, the pleasing nature of the space was understood as proper taste. One had good taste and expressed gentility when one understood social custom and behaved within these constructs of

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[66] Porter, *The Chinese Taste In Eighteenth-Century England*, 57.

[67] Arthur Young, *A Six Months Tour Through the North of England: Containing, an Account of the Present State of Agriculture, Manufactures and Population, In Several Counties of This Kingdom* (The 2d ed., cor. and enl. ed. London: Printed for W. Strahan; [etc., etc.], 1771), 88.

[68] Young writes, "out of this room, you enter the breakfasting closet, which is extremely elegant; quite original, and very pleasing. It is hung with fine India paper, the ceiling in arched compartemts, the ribs of which join in the center in the gilt rays of a fan, the ground is prettily dotted with coloured India birds; the window shutters, the doors and the front of a drawers (let into the wall) all painted in scrolls and sestoons of flowers in green, white and gold; the sofa, chairs, and stool frames of the same. Upon the whole, it is in real taste." Young, *A Six Months Tour Through the North of England*, 88.

[69] Young, *A Six Months Tour Through the North of England, 88.*

dominant social attitudes. Young visited Wentworth House as well, a large Palladian estate, in the central North of England. His account records several encounters with Chinese wallpaper and chinoiserie on the walls in the home. The first is called the "India apartment" which includes a bedchamber with matching dressing room.[70] The second more private use of the paper was found in the Lady's dressing room. A larger room of "25 feet square," it had "blue India paper" with elaborate woodwork with natural motifs and a "bird closet, in which are many cages of singing birds."[71] Arthur Young understood Grimsthorpe's and Wentworth House's Chinese rooms as tasteful because of the positioning of the exotic 'other' within a femininized sphere of influence in the home, adhering to the hierarchical social conventions of gendered aesthetics.

Becoming A British Aesthetic

Over the course of the eighteenth-century Chinese wallpapers became synonymous in England with polite society and refined taste. These papers, having first been used only in elite circles, made their way into the homes of the newly wealthy and rising middle classes. These elite fashions trickled down to the middle classes through exposure from domestic tourism, British wallpaper manufacturers, and design and pattern books. Thomas Chippendale, whose book "*The Gentleman and Cabinet-makers Director*" *(See Figure 13)* provided the British world with chinoiserie designs that became of one of the ways the British population consumed domestically made Chinese goods. At Nostell Priory, a significant eighteenth-century Palladian

[70] Young, *A Six Months Tour Through the North of England*, 285.
[71] Young writes: "her ladyship's dressing room is extremely elegant, about 25 feet square, hung with blue India paper; the cornice, ceiling and ornmanents, all extremely pretty; the toilette boxes of bold, and very handsome….her ladyship's reading closet is exceptionally elegant, hung with a painted fattin, and the ceiling in Mosaics festooned with honeysuckles; the cornice of glafs/glass painted with flowers: it is a sweet little room, and must please every spectator. On the other side of the dressing room is a bird closet, in which are many cages of singing birds". Young, *A Six Months Tour Through the North of England*, 143.

home in the North of England near his birth place, Chippendale had not only "supplied eighteen sheets of fine India paper and had his men hang it in the principal bedroom and two adjoining dressing rooms" in 1771, but had also designed chinoiserie furniture for rooms.[72] *(See Figure 14)* Other books emerged during this period that incorporated into their designs Chinese goods with English goods, including Sir William Chambers in 1757 and the Halfpenny Brothers in 1752.[73] *(See Figure 15-16)* The use of chinoiserie in relation to culturally elite English spaces allowed for the aesthetic of the Chinese to become marketable as English goods. Through authors like Chippendale, Chambers, and the Halfpenny brothers, the Chinese aesthetic became widely available to not only other social classes, but allowed for larger global and Atlantic reaches.

The middle-class exposure to Chinese wallpaper through domestic tourism in England, the availability of pattern books, and the rise of mercantilism allowed for the middlle classes to not only access Chinese wallpapers, but inherit these learned behavioral customs surrounding their use as fashionable items. These phenomena led to an appropriation of the Chinese aesthetic in less expensive reproductions by English manufacturers. The use of these cheaper versions allowed the middle class consumers to be able to signal genteel status through a shared aesthetic with the elite. These wallpaper reproductions, while containing similar oriental iconography to that of the expansive imports, they lacked a compositional maturity and quality. *(See Figure 17-18)* While these wallpaper reproductions responded to the growing desire of middling consumption of elite British tastes, they lacked the nuances of imperial landscapes. London

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[72] Emile de Bruijin, *Chinese Wallpaper In Britain and Ireland* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers Ltd, 2017), 110.
[73] Thomas Chippendale, *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director.* 1754. ; William Chambers, *Designs of Chinese buildings, furniture, dresses, machines, and utensils…to which is annexed A Description of their temples, houses, gardens, etc.* 1757 ; William Halfpenny, *New Designs for Chinese gates, palisades, staircases, chimneypieces, ceilings, garden seats, chairs, temples, etc.* 1752.

manufacturers took advantage of these middling desires and these wallpapers were sold throughout the English middle class in England and the American colonies.

Objects and art have contextualized meanings that reflect their position in particular cultures and moments in history. Chinese wallpaper in England, although part of the larger phenomenon of the consumption of chinoiserie in Europe, came to represent social associations with mercantilism and aristocracy, as well as modernity. As the imperial footprint grew and England became increasingly more global, the display of Chinese wallpaper became more prominent as it came to represent elite access to distant spaces, mercantile and imperial wealth, and distinct representations of imperial topographic landscapes. While those that purchased these products may have done so in an effort to participate in modern fashions and elite practices, the presence of these picturesque representations of the 'other' signaled the beginning of larger issues relating to the formation of social and political relationships of identity in a global England. These scenic wallpapers provided imagined realities of Chinese culture and life, creating a visual context for British empire within the home. The aesthetic of Chinese wallpaper, as a product of global exchanges, commodifies these racial and ethnic cross-cultural interactions within the English empire. More importantly unlike landscape painting, the gendered and specific spatial placement of Chinese wallpaper in the home, in private and feminine spaces ultimately consciously, or subconsciously represented how British citizens placed China and its culture in relation to British society—owning it, appropriating it, domesticating it, and controlling it.

Empire as a commodity became a major component of the formation of civic and national identity within a modern and globalized world, "[permeating] Georgian culture at a number of levels: literature, theater, music, painting, leisure pursuits, gardening, philanthropy, fashion,

religion, politics, and graphic and literary propaganda."[74] Chinese wallpaper commodified these imperial projects and economic growths and was used by British citizens to signal placement in an opening world where hierarchy had to be determined and solidified your place. As the empire expanded to include new territories, what it meant to be a citizen became materialized through navigating the world of goods with propter taste and decorum. An attachment to a British aesthetic offered a way to signal place within the British Atlantic world, "The need for a single public culture—the creation of an authentic identity—is fundamental to our understanding of nationalism and nationhood."[75]

[74] Kathleen Wilson, "The good, the bad, and the impotent. Imperialism and the politics of identity in Georgian England." in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London, New York: Routledge, 1997), 238.
[75] Arnold, *Cultural Identities and the Aesthetics of Britishness*, 1.

Chapter Three: Seeing the East Through the Lens of the English

Chinese Wallpaper in Eighteenth Century Colonial America

The globalization of British Atlantic markets allowed for Chinese imports and wallpapers to make their way into the homes of colonial elites, as a commodity that expressed an attachment to an English aesthetic refinement. Their exotic appeal was contrived through a British lens as physical symbols of power, affluence, and travel that expressed an attachment to local and global identities. As British tastes and fashions made their way across the Atlantic, so did the taste for the Orient. However, the translation of culture across the Atlantic Ocean, while still linked to the use of Asian goods to signal status, altered the use of Chinese wallpaper within the colonial context to reflect local circumstances. Unlike England, the American Colonies had very few people who had access to foreign travel. They, therefore, depended on European manufacturers', designers', and builders' access to an array of pattern books and English fashions for Chinese goods and reproductions. While the English gentility understood Chinese wallpapers to signal gendered refinement and status within the paradigm of British imperialism, the Colonial gentry, in their effort to replicate English styles, used it to signal status within a male public. Much as in the British use of embodied anxieties about imperial projects and ways to engage with 'other' feminine spaces, the colonial contextual use of Chinese wallpaper illustrated anxieties about a male public social identity. The dynamic social climate in the Colonies created a platform for those of rising wealth and distinction to separate themselves from other men of different ethnic and socio-economic positions. To do so, the American colonial landed gentry signaled their gentility through a specific attachment to British goods and a British aesthetic.

While a large portion of Eighteenth-century Chinese wallpaper survives in England today, there are not as many surviving period original examples in America, and what is left is often not in its original location, which makes its contextual understanding more difficult for analysis. This could be the result of two things: one is that the colonies limited means of access and affluence prevented a larger scale consumption, and the other is the possibility that a more utilitarian use of space in colonial homes resulted in a shorter shelf-life of the papers. Spatially, England used Chinese wallpaper in different manners that reflected particularities of their context: space in the home, social formality, wealth, and refined cultural access. In England, Chinese wallpaper had its own particular reference points to imperialism, a global economy, and gendered and political hierarches between Europe and Asia, where consumption played into these discourses of hierarchy, power, and privilege. The incorporation of Chinese wallpapers in the American Colonies illustrated a different narrative about status. The attachment of the Chinese aesthetic to cultural refinement in England positioned Chinese wallpapers in the Colonies as an English commodity, that could then be used by men to participate and perform their cultural refinement. The rise of the public male identity in the Colonies and the obsession with the performance of culture through goods, caused Chinese wallpaper to be appropriated by male, public spaces. Therefore, the taste for the Chinese in the American colonies in the eighteenth-century was not necessarily reflective of an obsession with the East, but a cultural attachment to the British aesthetic world.

British connections

Before America began manufacturing wallpaper domestically in 1784, they depended on Europe for their styles and products.[76] Prior to the East opening up to America, George

[76] Richard C. Nylander et al., *Wallpaper In New England: Selections From the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities* (The Society, 1986), 92.

Washington, like the majority of colonists, had to place orders through a London stationer. Washington, as a colonial gentleman, who adhered to genteel sociability, looked to English fashions for an embodiment of his position. Washington had asked for "70 yds of Chintz"[77] and "claw fire screens Indian Paper on both side"[78] from Robert Cary & Company in August of 1759. There were a few ways for one to obtain these Chinese papers, either from a relative or associate in England directly, or from a merchant or stationer that was in the business of English imports.[79] Often these wallpapers were found near or associated with British port cities in the Colonies: Philadelphia, Charleston, and Boston. Charleston had a particularly strong attachment to a British identity in the 1700s.[80] As commodities that reflected an English style, Chinese goods were often placed within public sphere and discussion. While no longer extant, the James Reid House, was considered highly tasteful and well fashioned amongst Charleston elites, having been "built...after the Chinese taste" in 1757.[81] The advertisement of the Chinese room within newspapers epitomizes the nature of the Chinese style as a public spectacle, affording Reid a social currency. Charleston's position as an English Atlantic city would have allowed for a British taste for the Chinese to be a prominent social marker for those seeking social mobility.

The Jeremiah Lee House in Marblehead, Massachusetts, built in 1768, *(See Figure 19)* was one of the most remarkable homes in colonial America due to it lavish adornment of English wallpaper styles in the interior. Jeremiah Lee was one of the wealthiest merchants in New

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[77] "Invoice from Robert Cary & Company, 6 August 1759," *Founders Online*, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/02-06-02-0178, 9Original source: *The Papers of George Washington*, Colonial Series, vol. 6, *4 September 1758–26 December 1760*, ed. W. W. Abbot. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), 332–337.
[78] "Invoice from Robert Cary & Company, 6 August 1759," *The Papers of George Washington*, 332–337.
[79] Catherine Lynn and Cooper-Hewitt Museum, *Wallpaper In America: From the Seventeenth Century to World War I*. W.W. Norton, 1980), 99.
[80] Maurie Dee McInnis, *The Politics of Taste In Antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005.), 6-8.
[81] Ellen Denerk, *After the Chinese Taste: China's influence in America, 1730-1930* (Salem, Mass.: Peabody Museum of Salem, 1985), 7.

England and, because of his position as an affluent merchant, he had access to England and its wallpaper fashions. The chinoiserie wallpaper that exists in the house today remains in the same location as it had when it was placed in the eighteenth-century, a rare occurrence in the American context. *(See Figure 20)* Lee did not just own Chinese inspired wallpapers, but had a plethora of English imported wallpapers on display. The Chinese wallpaper was secondary to the British print rooms, panoramas, and the scenic murals that took precedence in Lee's most public rooms, with the chinoiserie wallpaper in subordination to the private spaces. *(See figure 21)* As stated earlier, English decorum had dictated that the fashion of Chinese wallpapers be used in more private and feminine spaces, mainly the bedchamber apartments and drawing rooms. Although "two of the seven English paper patterns had Chinese motifs,"[82] which was a significant enough proportion for a colonial home, Lee used the Chinese papers in secondary spaces. The use of Chinese wallpaper in the Colonies in bedchambers is a rare oddity, given the value of its public commodification: why did Lee use them in this manner? Perhaps the placement of these papers in less public spaces would be the result of his merchant exposure to the English use of these papers. Given the less sophisticated composition of the English manufactured import chinoiserie wallpapers in the colonies, which lacked the mature and non-repeating bird and flower landscapes that were present in hand-painted papers in England, Lee could have valued his other wallpapers as more splendid and refined. It is also important to take into consideration that the Lee house was expansive enough to perform the stylized hierarchy of British aesthetics, while the majority of colonial homes in this period lacked the number of rooms to do so. There are no surviving records from the Lee family, so the decision to place chinoiserie wallpaper in these spaces will remain unanswered. It does reveal that there existed

[82] Judy Anderson, *Glorious Splendor: The 18th-century Wallpapers in the Jeremiah Lee Mansion Marblehead,* (Massachusetts. Donning Company Publishers, 2011), 54.

variability in consumption and display of goods, forcing scholars to remember that these were individual consumers making choices that reflected their own identity, personality, and position.

While Boston and Charleston were major port cities, where one was in more direct contact with British fashions, Virginia was a much more rural landscape, where access to English imports and styles required a different method of access and consumption. Gunston Hall, which was the home of George Mason, built in 1757, sits just south of Mt. Vernon on the Potomac River. *(See figure 22)* Although the Chinese wallpaper, currently in place, does not have eighteenth-century provenance, the 'Chinese Room' designed by William Buckland, an English builder and designer, would have included a Chinese-effect wallpaper in its design.[83] *(See figure 23)* Buckland's design for this room was so singular within the contexts of eighteenth-century Chesapeake society that it stood apart from other contemporary homes. In a report from 1988 on the refurbishing of the Chinese room, Susan Borchardt commented on Gunston's Chinese room. Stating:

> "[while] other colonists probably did create rooms in the Chinese style; but, more than likely, they achieved a Chinese effect through the use of wallpapers, fabrics, ceramics, and furniture. Adorning a room with Chinese-inspired woodwork motifs in 18th century America appears to be highly unusual, even when the design elements were classicized and rather restrained, as they are at Gunston Hall."[84]

The wallpaper that is currently in situ at Gunston Hall is not the original paper, but an interpretation of an English pattered chinoiserie paper that was thought to have covered the walls.[85]The chinoiserie wallpaper in conjunction with the Chinese carved work would have been an extraordinary display of the Chinese taste in colonial America. Buckland, an English émigré carpenter, would have been well versed in the language of British fashions and Chinese designs.

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[83] Borchardt, et all, Gunston Hall Room Use Study.
[84] Susan A Borchardt, *Chinese Room Research Project* (Gunston Hall: April 9, 1988), 2.
[85] Borchardt, et all, Gunston Hall Room Use Study.

This extraordinary example of chinoiserie decoration for the Chesapeake context at Gunston Hall, along with his other designs, gave Buckland, and as an extension, George Mason, a position in Colonial society as refined gentlemen and prominent public figures. In a portrait by Charles Wilson Peale in 1774, Buckland, a once simple English carpenter, was presented as a gentleman with status and cultural affluency.[86]*(See Figure 24)* The public nature of the Chinese room, clarified in a report done by Borchardt on Gunston Hall in 1988, concluded that the Chinese Room should be interpreted as a dining room. This placement acknowledges both William Buckland's and George Mason's ability to ascertain and execute the refined tastes of British styles as a public display of wealth, supporting Mason's position as a prominent public male figure.

The Public Male-Positioning Chinese Wallpaper in the Performance of Culture

The consumer revolution in the Colonies occurred alongside intellectual discourses of emerging public identities in the eighteenth-century. The purchase and use of Chinese wallpapers must be understood contextually within this framework of the literacy and performance of cultural identities. This public domain that emerged, defined by the historian Jurgen Habermas, was characterized by cultural performances and shared values. 'The public' as an identity was an eighteenth-century concept that depended on a separation from the aristocracy and the clergy's hold on power and where the rising middling elite, having largely gained wealth through the rise of mercantilism, began to position themselves amongst one another in shared cultural performances.[87] The performance of a public identity based on one's participation in cultural

[86] Charles Wilson Peale, 1741-1827.. 1774.. William Buckland, Oil paintings., Portraits.. (Place: Garvan Collection (Yale University), https://library.artstor.org/asset/CARNEGIE_4210004.
[87] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, 37.

beliefs and values created distinctions between those who had access to culture and those that did not. This public image was a highly gendered space, where the exchange of wealth and power was bargained amongst men through public performance and economic exchanges. Social capital offered through mercantilism allowed the wealthy middle classes to establish themselves as status figures through their participation in the consumption of particular stylish goods. The commodification of status allowed these groups to use one another for access and to perpetuate themselves against the lower classes and assert their authority as public figures, be they religious, political, or of economic power.

Colonial elites not only have access through acquittances in England, but also through domestic networks. An important part of genteel culture was the performance of status, which was often expressed through sociability in one's home. The new gentry houses that exhibited the neoclassical fashions in Europe, allowed owners to delineate both public and private space within the home, allowing the architecture itself to facilitate and help one perform the culture of refined sociability. As members of the colonial elites traveled amongst each other throughout the Colonies, partaking in the hospitality of gentility, the acts of visiting and remarking on other's homes was vital to this culture. Although Thomas Hancock's House in Boston is no longer extant, *(See figure 25)* there are records of the purchase of Chinese wallpaper for one of his rooms. In a manner similar to the other gentleman's methods of acquiring these papers through personal connections, Hancock looked to other elites to style his home, having seen Chinese wallpaper in the house of an acquaintance. In a letter written in 1738 from Boston to Mr. John Rowe, who was a stationer in London, he exemplifies not only the manner in which the gentry were connected and dependent of one another for style, but also the nature in which Hancock understood the allure and use of the Chinese wallpapers. He states:

> "sire, inclosed you have the dimensions of a room for a shaded hanging to be done after the same pattorn I have sent per Capt. Tanner who will deliver it to you. Its for my own house & intreat th efavour of you to get it done for me to come early in the pring or as soon as the nature of thing will admit. The pattorn is all was left of a room lately come over here & it takes much ye town & will be the only paper-hanging for sale here wh. Am of opinion may answer well. Therefore desire you by all means to get mine well done & as cheap as possible, & if they can make it more Beautifull by adding more Birds flying here & there, with some landskip at the bottom should like it well. Let the ground be the same colour of the pattorn. At the top and bottom was a narrow border of about 2 inches wide wh. Would have to mine. About 3 or 4 years ago my friend Francis Wilks, Esqr. Had a hanging done in the same manner but much handsomer sent over here for mr sam waldon of this place, made by one Dunbar in Aldermanbury where no doubt he or some of his successors may be found. In the other parts of these hangings are great variety of different sorts of birds, peacocks, macoys, squirrel, monkys, fruit & flowers, etc. But a greater variety in the above mentioned of Mr, Waldon's and should be fond of having mind done by the same hand if to be mett with. I design if this pleases me to have two rooms more done for myself. I think they are handsomer and better than painted hangings done in oyle, so I beg your particular care in procuring this for me, and that the pattorns may be taken care off and return'd with my goods."[88]

This account from Thomas Hancock not only exemplifies these commodified social relationships that allowed him access to Chinese wallpaper, but signals to his larger desire to participate within the culture of the British picturesque. Hancock's clear description of an imagined landscape, one in which he dictates the contents and organization of the imagery, is a cultural phenomenon that was present in the English understanding and fashioning of Chinese iconography in the home and garden. The colonial elites mimicked England's genteel discourses about Chinese nature in

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[88] R. T. Haines Halsey and Elizabeth Tower, *The Homes of Our Ancestors: As Shown In the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York, From the Beginnings of New England Through the Early Days of the Republic; Exhibiting the Development of the Arts of Interior Architecture and House Decoration, the Arts of Cabinetmaking, Silversmithing, Etc., Especial Emphasis Being Laid Upon the Point That Our Early Craftsmen Evolved From the Fashions of the Old World a Style of Their Own; With an Account of the Social Conditions Surrounding the Life of the Original Owners of the Various Rooms* (De luxe ed. Garden City, L. I: Printed by Garden City publishing co., inc., at the Country life press, 1937), 141-42.

relation to the picturesque movement, by engaging in conversations of the exotic Chinese nature within domesticated landscapes both within and outside the home. The consumers of Chinese wallpaper signaled their status through their desire to participate within the consumption of these picturesque gardens and sceneries, exemplifying their cultural refinement.

These social networks amongst prominent men not only provided references for how and where to access Chinese wallpaper, but also provided a platform expression of status as they were in conversation with one another. The performance of culture as a public commodity depended upon these connections, establishing those that had access and those that did not. Shopping as a behavior in the early to mid-eighteenth century American colonies was largely dominated by the white land-owning men, who had the ability to interact with other men within public spaces.[89] Taverns in particular were places of merchant agreements, discussion, and exchanges. The Gadsby tavern in Alexandria, Virginia had Chinese wallpaper in an alcove on the first floor of the tavern. *(See figure 26)* Taverns were not only spaces of social interaction, but were places where sociability was dominated by men, and where merchants bargained and exchanged with other merchants and social men. While the use of Chinese wallpaper in a tavern is an odd example, it highlights the significance of social attitudes about Chinese goods' ability to civilize and refine space. As commodities of male mercantilism and public power, Chinese wallpaper in a tavern exemplified not only the merchant association, but also spoke to a desire to appear genteel in the unrefined circumstances of these boisterous taverns. Chinese wallpaper became a method through which colonial male elites performed acts of cultural status within the context of a public sphere that used social interaction and styles to negotiate business and reputation.

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[89] Styles and Vickery, *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture In Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (New Haven, CT: The Yale Center for British Art, 20060, 162.

These wallpapers were a method through which American Colonists could access fashion and taste and put themselves in a position to communicate with the other Atlantic landed gentry. They became so intimately synonymous with the desire to perform wealth, that later eighteenth-century "Chinese wallpaper became associated with a vulgar parade of wealth, rather than with elegant and refined taste" it previously had.[90] American colonists understood the allure, as well as the social significance and influence that one gained from participation in British culture; however, at the same moment of wanting to belong, these colonial elites understood decorum and were forced to make judgements of consumption and display regarding what was appropriate for rank, class, region, and gender in the colonial context as well as what was accessible to them.[91]

[90] Saunders, *Wallpaper In Interior Decoration,* 67.
[91] Styles and Vickery, *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture In Britain and North America, 1700-1830,* 17.

Conclusion

With only a few surviving examples of wallpaper still extant within homes and limited records of peoples' interactions with them, the scope of the spatial analysis of the use of Chinese wallpaper in the eighteenth-century American colonies remains smaller than its English counterpart. However, the information available does reveal how and why these papers were selected and sheds light on the larger attitudes toward Chinese goods within social discourses. In England, these goods belonged within a hierarchy of other fashions and their use reflected the political, gendered, and economic paradigms of the British Empire. This hierarchy was not always translated to the Colonies, where, in a less formal context, these products were used and bought these products to reflect their regional identities in relation to England. It is clear that access to English markets and designers was key to the incorporation of this style in the British and American home, whether or not the style adhered to English standards of decoration. The fascination with this style as commodified gentility attracted colonial elites who consumed the Chinese aesthetic to partake in refined English culture and outwardly represent themselves as patrons of fine tastes. The manner in which they used the wallpapers removed any contextualized political and social significance of Eastern and Western interactions, that these wallpapers may have had in England. Chinoiserie, therefore, came to exemplify transnational and transcultural art, through which one could express an English aesthetic through non-English imagery. Branding an English identity through the appropriation and colonial production of Asian aesthetics commodified identity, further expanding what British, American, and Chinese objects looked like and meant in the 1700s.

After the American Revolutionary War, a set of hand painted Chinese wallpapers was discovered tucked away in an attic in Marblehead, Massachusetts. The wallpaper was "ordered from China by Robert Morris…a prominent Philadelphia banker." [92] Morris had financial investments in the Chinese trade and a receipt of purchase for wallpaper was found on "the Empress of China, which in 1784 was the first American vessel to sail to China."[93] Although this purchase of wallpaper appears later than the timeline examined in this study, it is indicative of the popular cultural reception that these wallpapers had in America over the course of the eighteenth-century: from their importation from England, to their colonial reproductions, and finally to a direct Chinese imported good. After the Revolutionary War, the formation of a distinct American political body remained attached to Chinese goods, having been so closely associated with the Colonies' attachment to British global identity in the 1700s. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries direct American trade with China opened up,[94] allowing for the popularity of Chinese wallpaper as a symbol of wealth and authority to continue its social significance. The use of Chinese wallpaper as a status marker migrated from an English attachment to a rising American global presence. This trajectory is fascinating as it shows how a commodity first materialized British national identity, eventually becoming one of the key identifiers of what it meant to look and act English within the British empire, to later becoming a post-colonial American attachment to an imperial aesthetic. Chinese wallpaper, imported from China, attracted elites such as George Washington, who in a letter from October 1787, after seeing Robert Morris's paper, stated "it is possible I may avail myself of your kind offer of

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[92] Nylander, *Wallpaper In New England: Selections From the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities*, 93.
[93] Nylander, *Wallpaper In New England: Selections From the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities*, 93.
[94] Lynn, *Wallpaper In America: From the Seventeenth Century to World War I*, 106.

sending for India Paper for my new Room, but presuming there is no opportunity to do it soon; I shall not, at this time, give you the dimensions of it."[95] A few years later, an advertisement in a New York City newspaper from 1790 showed this new trend of importing directly from China, stating, "landed this day from Canton, India Paper hangings of the exquisite beauty, fit to adorn the most superb saloon in America."[96] The Chinese aesthetic had become so deeply entangled with national and imperial identity in the 1700s that it was used to reinforce a later American genteel aesthetic as equal to that of England and Europe. As a commodity of global status and power, these objects made their way into the interest of American elites, who understood how aesthetic choices reinforced social, political, and cultural practices.

This discussion of object placement allows for more interdisciplinary approaches within Architectural history, as consumption, identity, and aesthetics engages broader academic discourses outside of wallpaper and the British Atlantic. Commodities materialize transcultural and transnational arguments in helping to understand how people engage with their environment, spaces, and society. Simply put, objects matter: more importantly, it was how the behavior around the use, appropriation and interpretation of objects became a cultural commodity that is most engaging. The aestheticizing of imperial, national, and social identity allowed for Chinese wallpaper to connect with and distinguish vastly different meanings based on different cultures, geographies, and time periods within a shared aesthetic and culture of 'othered' picturesque landscapes.

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[95] "From George Washington to Robert Morris, 2 October 1787," *Founders Online*, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/04-05-02-0325, (Original source: *The Papers of George Washington*, Confederation Series, vol. 5, *1 February 1787–31 December 1787*, ed. W. W. Abbot. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 350–351.

[96] Lynn, *Wallpaper In America: From the Seventeenth Century to World War I*, 102.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

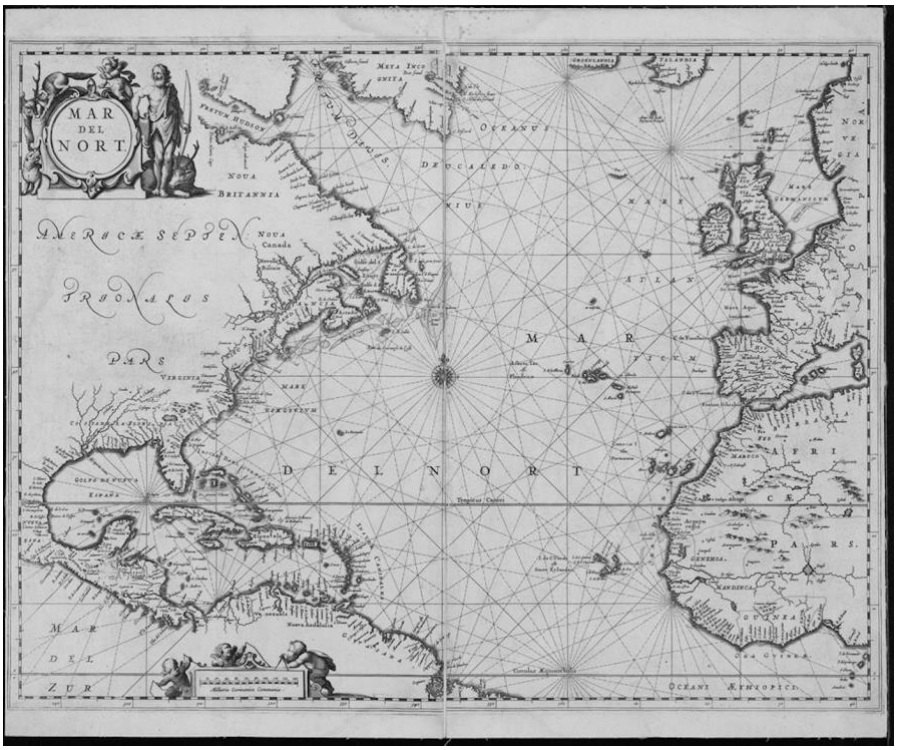


Figure 1: Map of the Atlantic Ocean 1650. Jansson, Jan (1588-1664).

Figure 2: This painting "Porcelain arriving at Canton warehouse " from an unknown painter from 1770-1790 shows the commercial exchange of the East India Trading Company in Canton.

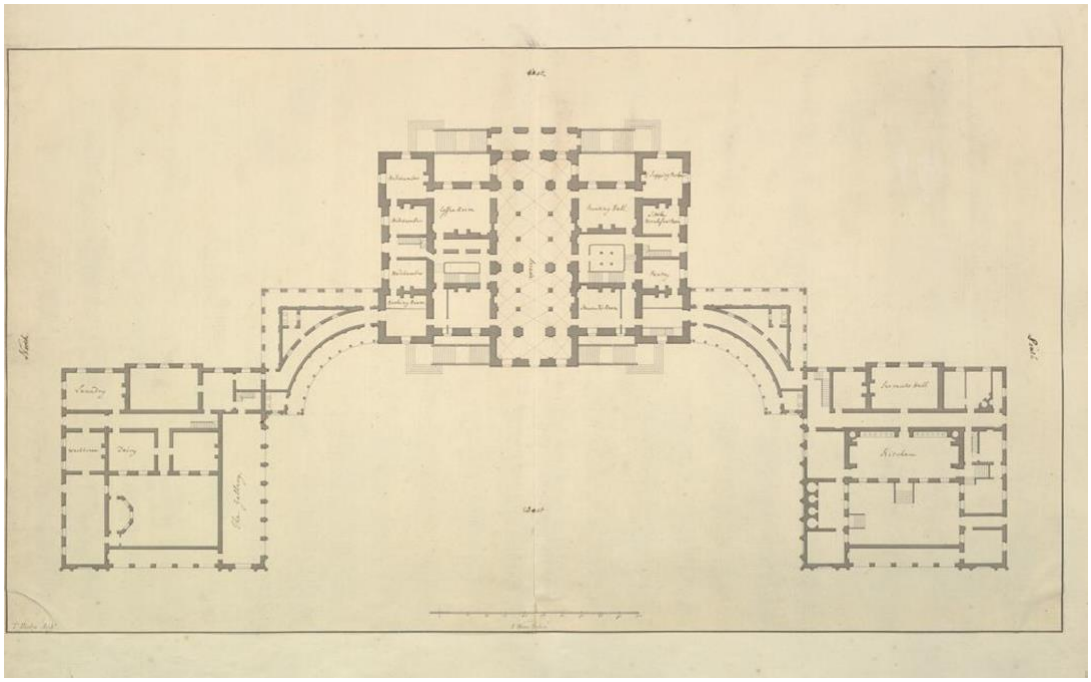


Figure 3: Plan of Houghton Hall.by Isaac Ware 1735. The drawing shows the ground floor. The plan of Houghton Hall showing highly structured architectural space in the eighteenth-century home.

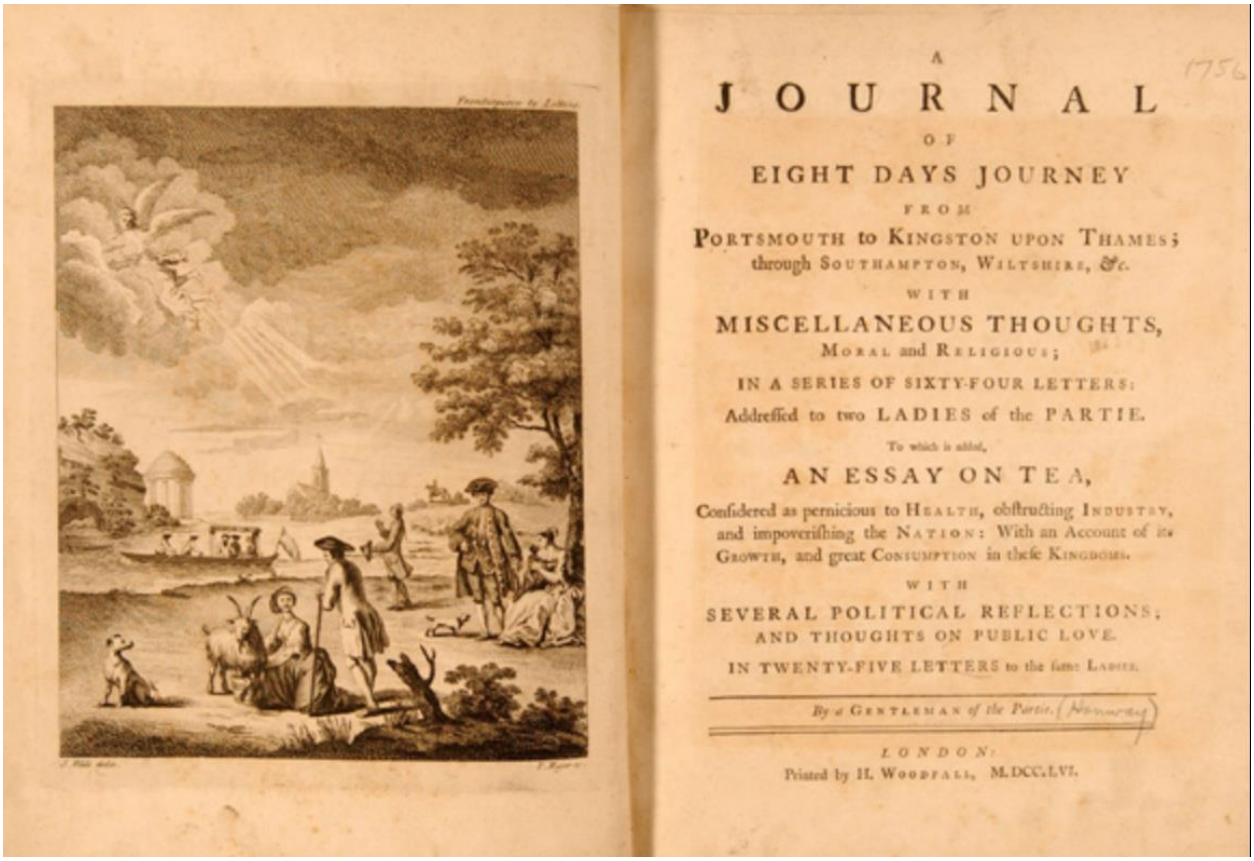
Figure 4: Chinese painting tradition. Anonymous artist. 18th century "Woman Standing on a Bridge, from a series of Ten Famous Women painting Place"

Figure 5: Chinese painting tradition. Shen Quan. 1682-1758. “Peach Tree, Peonies and Cranes; Two Cranes and a Celestial Peach Tree”

Figure 6: Chinese Porcelain production and traditional Chinese painting. Unknown Chinese, mid to late 18th century. about 1770. Teapot

Figure 7: Image taken of Wrest Park upstairs Scenic wallpapers.

Figure 8: Houghton hall Chinese wallpaper in ‘Cabinet Room’. The room has not only Chinese wallpaper, but other chinoiserie furniture.



A

JOURNAL

OF

EIGHT DAYS JOURNEY

FROM

PORTSMOUTH to KINGSTON upon THAMES;
through SOUTHAMPTON, WILTSHIRE, &c.

WITH

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS,
MORAL and RELIGIOUS;

IN A SERIES OF 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: With an Account of its
GROWTH, and great CONSUMPTION in theſe KINGDOMS.

WITH

SEVERAL POLITICAL REFLECTIONS;
AND THOUGHTS ON PUBLIC LOVE.

IN TWENTY-FIVE LETTERS to the ſame LADIES.

By a GENTLEMAN *of the Partie.*

LONDON:
Printed by H. WOODFALL, M.DCC.LVI.

Figure 9 : Jonas Hanway *A Journal of Eight Days Journey…to Which is Added, an Essay on Tea. 1756*

Figure 10: Image of Houghton Hall Front Façade. Colen Campbell, James Gibbs, and William Kent. 1722-c. 1740

Figure 11: Houghton Hall Chinese wallpaper closeup from ‘Cabinet Room.’ The seam show the four to five continuous panels of wallpaper that were placed in the room.

Figure 12: Grimpsthorpe Castle ‘Birdcage Room’. The house is 13th century with subsequent Baroque and neoclassical additions. The decorations of this room date from 1760 .

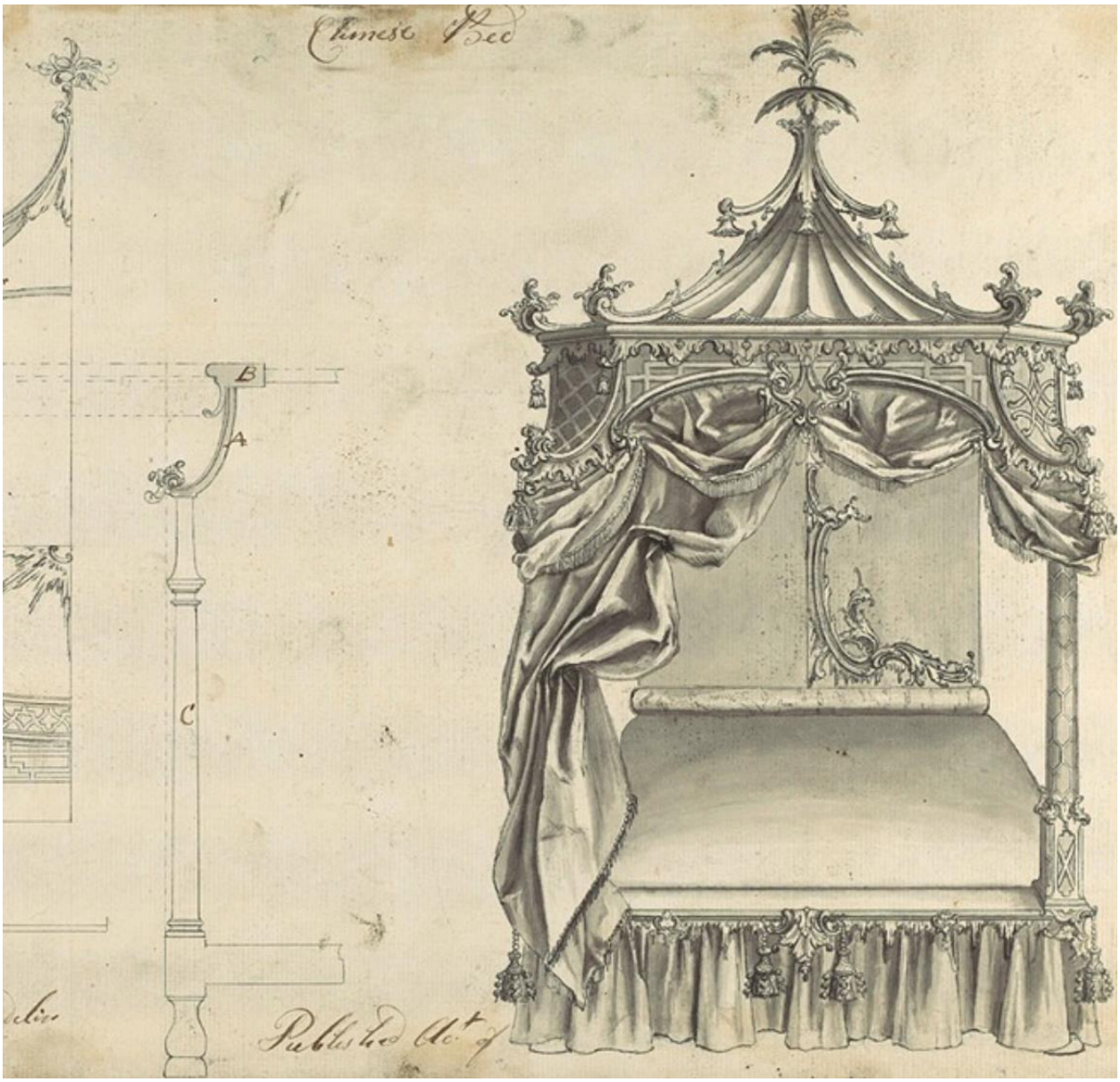


Figure13: Chinese inspired designs from Thomas Chippendale's *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director*. Thomas Chippendale (British, baptised Otley, West Yorkshire 1718-1779 London). ca. 1753-54. Chinese Bed, in Chippendale Drawings, Vol. I. Drawings, Ornament & Architecture

Figure 14: Image of one of the rooms at Nostell Priory with Chinese Wallpaper. This is the first room in a progression of three Chinese rooms. Thomas Chippendale helped in the acquisition of the wallpaper as well as designed chinoiserie pieces for the room.

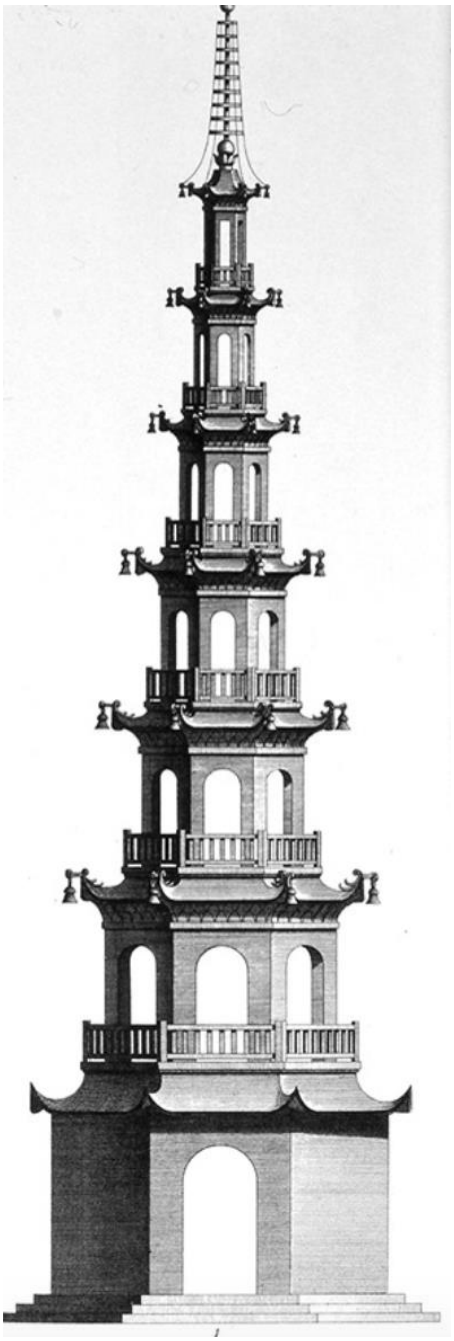


Figure 15: Chinese inspired designs from William Chamber's *Designs of Chinese buildings, furniture, dresses, machines, and utensils…to which is annexed A Description of their temples, houses, gardens, etc* 1757. *A Description of their temples, houses, gardens, etc.* Chambers, William, Gender: male, United Kingdom; British, Earliest: 1723, Latest: 1796,

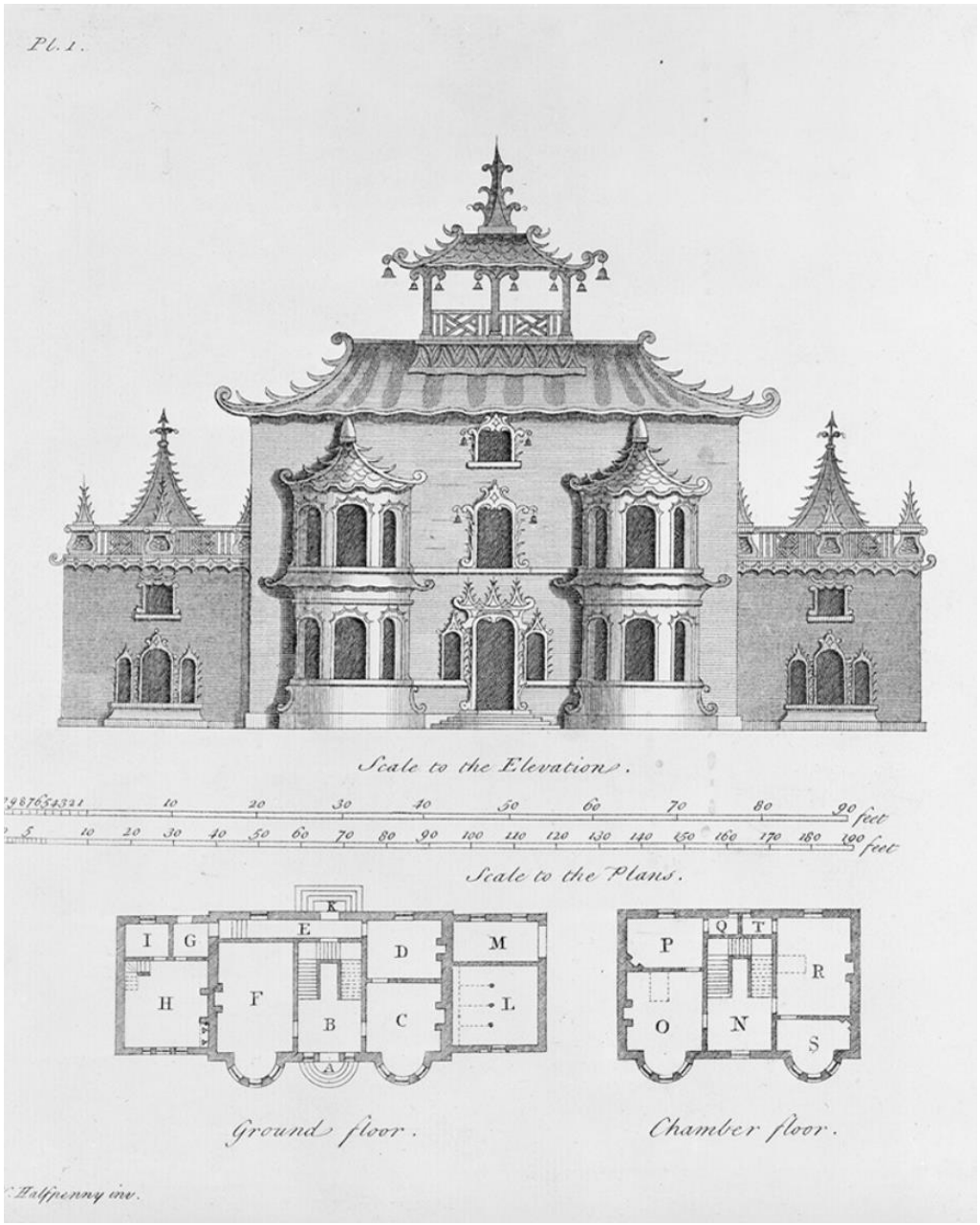


Figure16: Chinese inspired designs from William Halfpenny's *New Designs for Chinese gates, palisades, staircases, chimneypieces, ceilings, garden seats, chairs, temples, etc* 1752. . William Halfpenny (British, active from ca. 1722, died 1755),

Figure 17: English Chinese Wallpaper reproduction circa 1700, unknown maker. Victoria and Albert Museum. Found in Ord House, Berwick-on-Tweed, Northumberland. Chinese inspired designs with flowers, birds, and people.

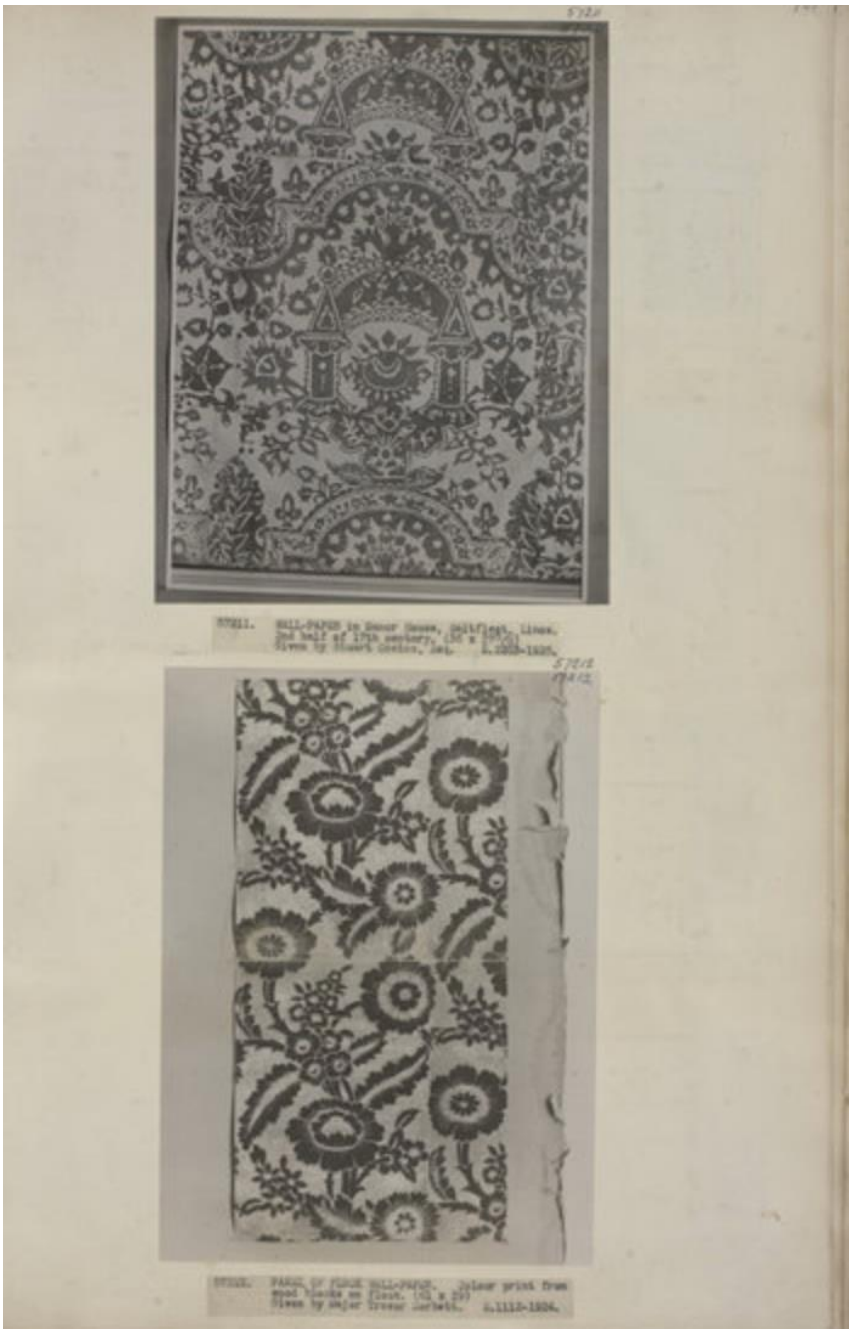


Figure18: English Chinese wallpaper reproduction circa 1720, unknown maker. Victoria and Albert Museum. Colour woodblock print and green flock, on paper. Green flock and floral pattern.

Figure 19: Image of the Jeremiah Lee House in Marblehead, Massachussetts. A significant Georgian home in Colonial America, reflective of Lee's position as a wealthy merchant.

Figure 20: Image of Chinese wallpaper reproduction that was in Jeremiah Lee House. Reproduction done by Adelphi Paper Hangings. Wallpaper shows pagoda and flower motif.

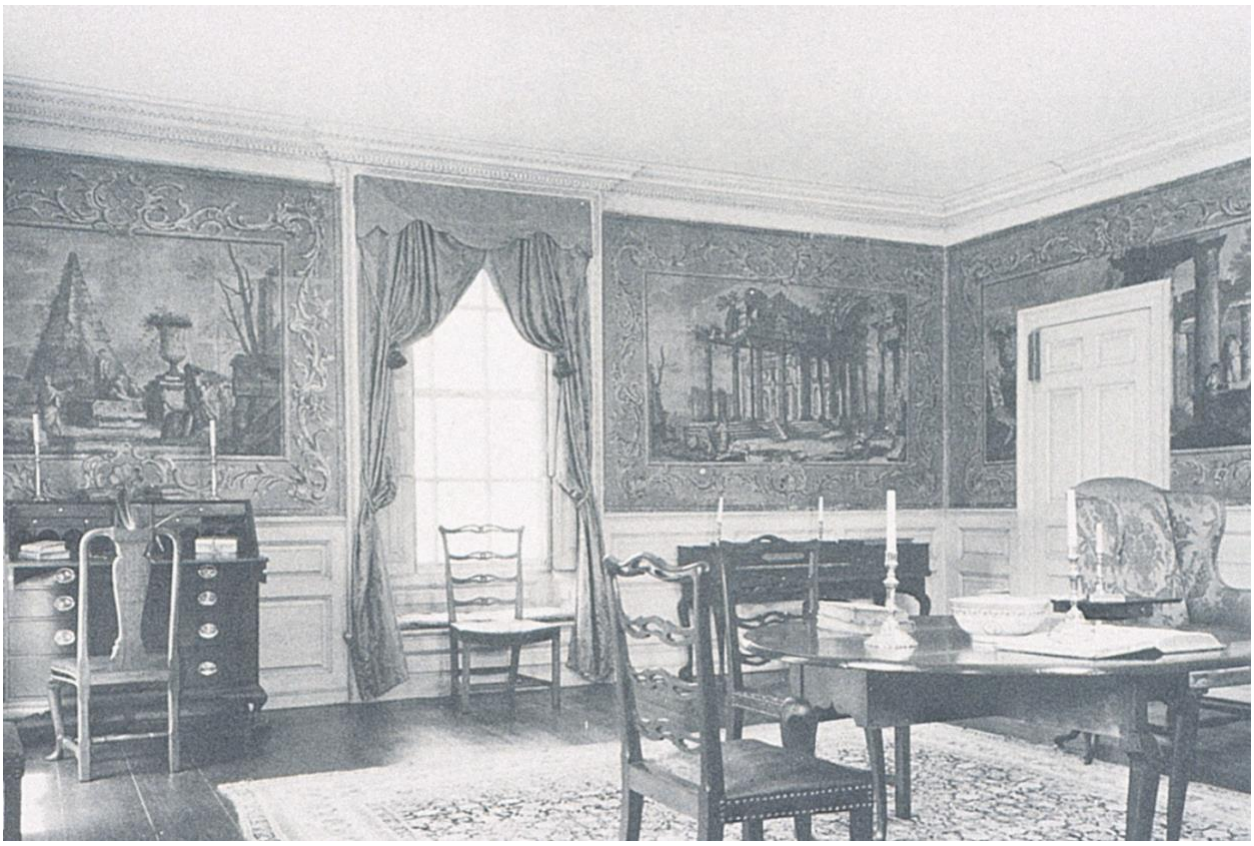


Figure 21: Jeremiah Lee House scenic and panoramic wallpaper. 1767-9.

Figure 22: Image of Gunston Hall, the home of George Mason. Designed and executed by William Buckland and William Bernard Sears. 1755-1758

Figure 23: Image of Chinese room at Gunston Hall. The chinoiserie wood carvings were done By William Buckland and William Sears. The wallpaper is a Twentieth-century reproduction based on what was believed to have been there.

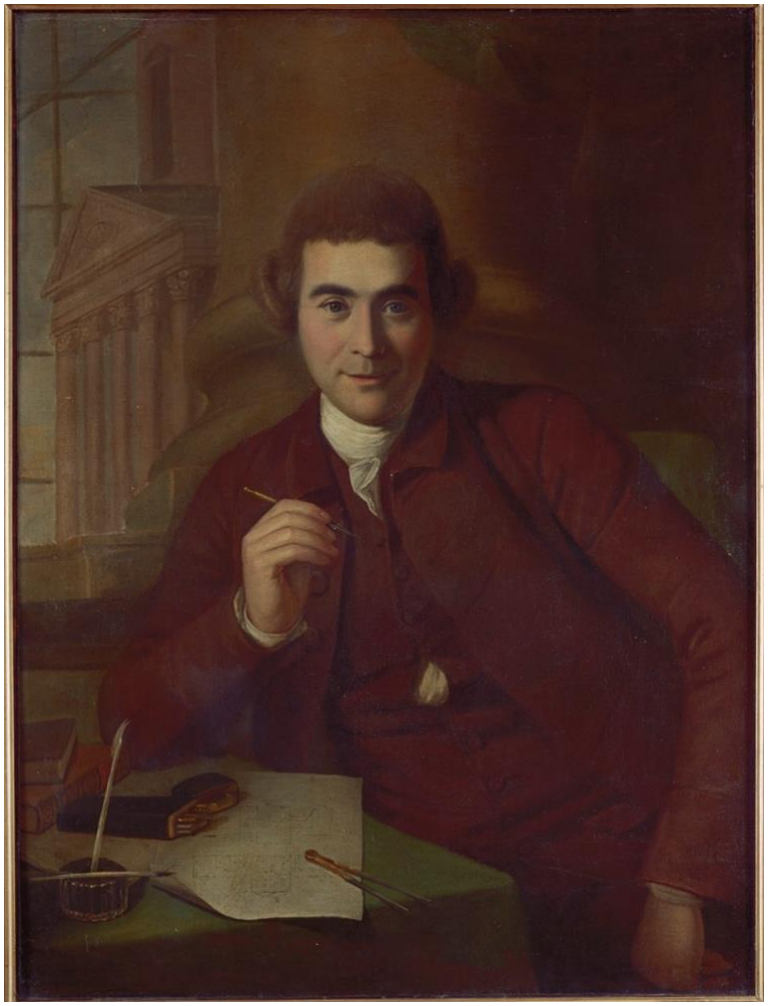


Figure 24: William Buckland portrait.1774 Peale, Charles Willson, 1741-1827. Buckland is shown in conversation with classical architecture, genteel culture, and middle class values.

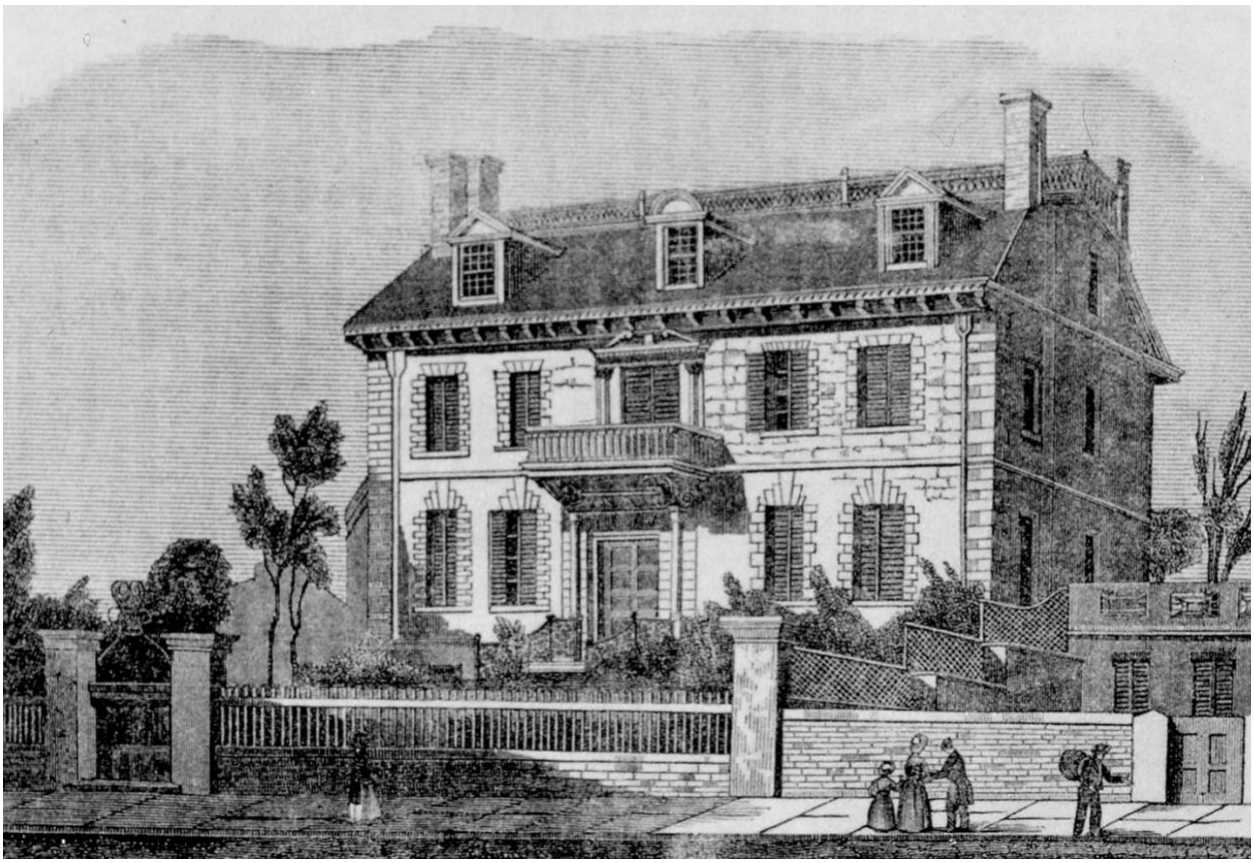


Figure 25: Engraving of Thomas Hancock house. 1737 in Boston. The house was destroyed in the Nineteenth-century. It was considered as one of the magnificent Georgian homes in Boston.

Figure 26: Plate XIII from the Metropolian Museum of Art 1926 exhibit on American heritage. The engraving shows an eighteenth-century alcove with Chinese wallpaper from Gadsby's tavern, Virginia.