

# The Art of Tea: Late Victorian Visual Culture and the Normalization of an International National Icon

by  
Emalee Beddoes



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## Abstract

The association between tea and Britishness is a long established concept which has received considerable scholarly and popular attention. How this association came to be normalised as part of a national consciousness, however, has not. This thesis argues that the idea of tea as an icon of Britishness was assimilated as a historical process through the visual and material dissemination of ideology. Focusing on the visual and material culture of tea in Britain in the period between 1850 and 1900, it explores how tea was invested with numerous identities and contradictory ideologies of work and rest; luxury and necessity; and of the domestic, industrial and imperial simultaneously. These ideologies were mediated through material culture which shaped the behaviours of the tea table and the reception of foreign products, and through the visual language of tea which it communicated and disseminated ideological meanings. Looking specifically to the second half of the nineteenth century, when the tea trade was at its most complex, this thesis considers how a proliferation of images of tea in painting and advertising during this period functioned as agents of change in the social codification of Empire that mediate how tea and Britishness were understood.

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In the twenty-first century the association with tea and Britishness is widespread both at home and abroad. This thesis will analyse how this association was forged and normalised in the nineteenth century and it considers the ways in which visual representations of tea in art, but also in advertising, as well as the material culture of tea, enabled this process and shaped the meanings of tea in Britain. It focuses on the period between 1850 and 1900, although it discusses earlier material in order to establish the historical context, in order to explore how tea was established as a symbol of Britishness. It pays particular attention to the formation of Britishness in the context of imperialism, and uses the example of tea to analyse how the asymmetrical power relations involved in imperial trade were presented and normalised through the visual representations associated with commodity culture.

Through the visual and material culture of the British tea table, the imperial and national interests of the tea trade were brought to the attention of the public, but rather than allowing the assimilation of imperial products to jeopardise ideas of domestic security, a system of symbolic nationalisation served to neutralise the fears of a foreign product being consumed within British homes – replacing it with a rhetoric of the empire at home and the ‘national’ drink. In the preface to *The Book of Tea* in 1992, Anthony Burgess discusses the British relationship with tea:

Perhaps tea is so woven into the stomach linings of the British that they cannot view it in a scholarly or an aesthetic manner. It is a fact of British life, like breathing.<sup>1</sup>

This opinion was not new to the twentieth-century, but in 1839 G. G. Sigmond, author of *Tea: its Effects, Medicinal and Moral*, described a similar blindness:

Man is so surrounded by objects calculated to arrest his attention, and to excite either his admiration or his curiosity, that he often overlooks his humble friend that ministers to his habitual comfort; and the familiarity he holds with it almost renders him incapable of appreciating its value.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Burgess “preface” in *The Book of Tea*, Gilles Brochard, Nadine Beauthéac, Alain Stella, Catherine Dozel and Anthony Burgess, Paris, 1992, 19

<sup>2</sup> George Gabriel Sigmond, *Tea: Its Effects, Medicinal and Moral*, London, 1839, 1

In the late 1830s when Sigmond made this claim, the tea trade had undergone significant changes. Following a rapid and consistent growth of tea consumption in Britain, access to the supply of tea under China's control had become a source of considerable tension, and the resulting efforts to undermine China's strong position within the tea trade, culminated in the Anglo-Chinese wars from 1839 to 1842 and then 1856 to 1860.<sup>3</sup> Although China resisted assimilation into the British Empire, these conflicts were debilitating to the country, which was now forced to bend to its will and open its borders and trade to the West.<sup>4</sup> British imperialists had already introduced tea cultivation to India from 1823 onwards, followed by cultivation in Africa towards the end of the century.<sup>5</sup> These alternative sources of supply from British run plantations went some way to relieve the pressure on trade with China. However, such imperial gains were similarly undermined by conflict such as the Indian military revolts of 1857.<sup>6</sup>

Contrary to Burgess' claims, there is a large body of scholarship on tea and its histories, dating from the eighteenth century. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, numerous books and treatises on tea such as John Coakley Lettsom's 1772 text *The Natural History of the Tee-tree*, Sigmond's text of 1839.<sup>7</sup> As well as Samuel Phillips Day's *Tea Its Mystery and History* of 1878, among many others.<sup>8</sup> These variously argue for the vices and/or virtues of tea drinking, as well as describing the natural history of the plant, elaborate mythologies of its origins in China and its reception in the western world.

These nineteenth-century histories glorified the imperial endeavours of bringing the cultivation and trade of tea under the control of the British and established an imperialist rhetoric in the writing of the history of tea that continued into the twentieth century.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Conflicts resulting from attempts by the East India Company's to thwart China's trade laws, most notoriously by flooding the country with opium.

<sup>4</sup> Previously international traders had only been permitted to do business via the port of Canton.

<sup>5</sup> G. Freemont-Barnes, *The Indian Mutiny, 1857 – 1858*, Oxford, 2007, 9

<sup>6</sup> Despite leading to the dissolution of the East India Company. The Indian Military Revolts resulted in the areas of India under the company's control being transferred to the control of the British crown and re-named The British Raj, further solidifying the empire's hold on the country.

<sup>7</sup> John Coakley Lettsom *The Natural History of the Tee-tree With observations on The Medical Qualities of Tea and the Effects of Tea-drinking*, London, 1772

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Phillips Day, *Tea Its Mystery and History*, London, 1878

<sup>9</sup> A number of popular twentieth century texts were written about tea, including *The Book of Tea* by Kakuzo Okakura of 1906, which explores the Japanese philosophy of Taoism. Similarly *The Book of Tea* by Alain Stella and Anthony Burgess, et. al, published in 1992, mirrored its namesake and was typical of tea histories of the

However, this subsequently came under scrutiny: authors such as Alan and Iris McFarland or Roy Moxham have interrogated Britain and the world's relationship to tea with more rigour in order to expose how the colonial relationships of the tea trade saturated the lives of British tea-drinkers. The unifying theme of such recent histories is a desire to rewrite the story of tea as a global living history – highlighting the devastating effects the tea trade had on Chinese and Indian society and exploring how these have been addressed in both European and Asian attitudes to the beverage, and often going on to consider how tea is still involved in debates on the ethics of globalisation and fair trade.

Julie Fromer's 2008 text, *Necessary Luxury: Tea in Victorian England*, offers an in-depth study of tea in nineteenth-century literary culture and claims that in the course of the nineteenth century, the identity of tea changed from that of an exotic luxury to a comforting domestic necessity.<sup>10</sup> Fromer also considers the symbiotic relationship between the writing of tea culture and its reality.

More recently within popular culture, a BBC 1 documentary series *Victoria Wood's Nice Cup of Tea* explored the British relationship with tea.<sup>11</sup> The series was criticised on Radio 4's *Saturday Review Show* for skirting over the darker issues of the tea trade, focusing instead on the more 'comforting' subject of British tea traditions.<sup>12</sup> This thesis will explore how this continuing pattern of avoidance was established in the nineteenth century, considering how tea and the imperial implications it carried were assimilated into a transcultural language of objects and images communicating nationalist rhetoric.

The first chapter explores the material culture of the tea table of the late nineteenth century as a transcultural moment where the adoption of these objects within fine art and artistic culture engaged with complex and multifarious concepts of home and of the empire. It will discuss the communication of tea as a sign of middle-class taste and imperial strength through material culture and the nationalisation of a foreign product.

The second part of this thesis will consider how the visual language of tea in art came to function as an idealised symbol of British society in painting in the second half of the

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twentieth century with an exploration of the philosophical understanding of tea, combined with an exploration of histories of tea and information about different types and how to prepare them, in the same vein of its nineteenth-century counterparts.

<sup>10</sup> Julie E. Fromer, *A Necessary Luxury: Tea in Victorian England*, Ohio, 2008

<sup>11</sup> *Victoria Wood's Nice Cup of Tea*, BBC One first aired Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2013, 21:00 (part one) and Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2013, 21:00 (part two)

<sup>12</sup> Naomi Alderman on *Saturday Review Show*, BBC Radio 4, Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2013. 19:15

nineteenth century. Tea served as a symbol of a people unified through correct behaviours and subsequently of a British national identity centred on middle-class morality which served to justify the asymmetrical power structures of the empire. The final chapter will discuss the proliferation of images of tea during the advertising boom following the removal of stamp duty on tea in 1855, exploring the relationship between the visual languages adopted within these adverts and parallel depictions of tea drinking within fine art. It will consider how these advertising practices disseminated middle-class ideologies throughout the streets and homes of the nation naturalising the nationalisation of imperial products which was discussed in chapter one and its idealisation which was discussed in chapter two.

In conclusion, I argue that the idea of tea as an icon of Britishness was assimilated as an historical process through the visual and material dissemination of ideology; that advertising and painting mutually defined a visual language of tea that would play an important role in delineating normative structures of class and gender, and that these ideologies consolidated the contradictory identities of tea as both domestic and international through transcultural concepts of Britishness.

In order to give context to this analysis of the visual culture of tea, it is necessary to establish the social and political background of tea in Britain following its first appearance in England in the seventeenth century. Tea was first officially imported into Britain by the East India Company in 1664 – comparatively late in contrast to Holland, Germany, and Spain. Catherine of Braganza, the Portuguese wife of Charles II, is credited with popularising the beverage in the similarly opulent English court of the 1660s which contributed to its fashionable adoption amongst the aristocracy as a novel indulgence.<sup>13</sup> The popularity of tea grew rapidly: from the first official tea import of 1664 of two pounds one ounce, consumption swelled to one million pounds annual import within 60 years.<sup>14</sup> This growth can largely be attributed to the sale of tea by the cup in coffee-houses where it was consumed by the exclusively male clientele.

The coffee house was part of the ‘public sphere’ primarily frequented by men and posed an alternative location to the inn for business, social meetings and debate.<sup>15</sup> It formed a public space of political life where knowledge and opinions were exchanged informally and

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<sup>13</sup> Jane Pettigrew, *The Social History of Tea*, London, 2001, 102

<sup>14</sup> Beatrice Hohenegger, *Liquid Jade: The Story of Tea from East to West*, New York, 2006, 72

<sup>15</sup> A. Clayton, “The character of the Coffee-house” in Stephanie Pickford, (ed.). *Tea and Coffee in the Age of Dr Johnson*, exhibition catalogue, London, 2008, 16

outside of state control.<sup>16</sup> This primary location of tea drinking in the masculine public sphere was disrupted in 1706, when Thomas Twining opened The Golden Lyon, selling Chinaware and leaf tea, contributing to a shift in the site of tea consumption to the private middle-class domestic sphere, where tea drinking became a formal, affair imbued with a convoluted material culture and subsequently codes of etiquette.<sup>17</sup>

The association between tea and bourgeois behaviour was utilised in conversation piece painting, where tea functioned as a symbol of refined behaviour. With their origins in portraiture of the Low Countries, conversation piece paintings were usually small in size and took the form of informal group portraits that recorded real or realistic landscapes or interiors. Such paintings usually depicted social scenes such as tea, cards, and music, displaying the sitters in a context of polite society and acculturated taste.

One of the best known conversation piece painters was Johannes Zoffany.<sup>18</sup> He painted *John, Fourteenth Lord Willoughby de Broke, and his Family at Tea* [**Fig. 1**] around 1766, depicting the family's tea table with a fine porcelain and a silver tea urn as part of a sumptuous meal, but amongst this scene of privilege and abundance, Lord Willoughby de Brooke is depicted reprimanding his son for taking a piece of buttered bread, educating him of the ills of indulgence.<sup>19</sup> This combination of elegance and excess with moral restraint and correct behaviour exemplifies the role of the tea table within the conversation piece: a symbol of elite ideals of refined behaviour and politeness, as well as of sociability, luxury and the proper appreciation of pleasure. Chen Ching-Jung claims that it was this art of simultaneously negotiating the ideals of luxury and restraint ideals that distinguished the sitters from the common or foreign people.<sup>20</sup>

The choice of the small, informal format for a family portrait differentiated the sitters from the aristocracy. By rejecting the dominant seventeenth-century mode of portraiture in Britain which glorified the sitter in fictional, classical settings, the patrons of conversation piece paintings marked themselves as part of a progressive group, embracing emerging art

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 2

<sup>17</sup> Beatrice Hohenegger (ed.), *Steeped in History: The Art of Tea, exhibition catalogue*, The Fowler Museum UCLA, 2009, 129

<sup>18</sup> Other established painters of conversation Piece works were Arthur Devis and Joseph Francis Nollekens. Zoffany's was described by Ellis Waterhouse as "the real creator and master of this genre" (Ellis Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain: 1530 – 1790*, Yale, 1994, 315)

<sup>19</sup> Kenneth, Bendiner, *Food in Painting: From the Renaissance to the Present*, London, 2004, 172

<sup>20</sup> Chen Ching-Jung, "Tea Parties in early Georgian conversation pieces" in *British Art Journal*, 10:1, 2009, 35

forms. Ching-Jung claims that these works at just one metre squared complimented bourgeois ideals of modesty and contrasted the full-length portraiture favoured in the previous century. But the elegantly appointed tea tables of the conversation piece maintained a sense of wealth and class that compensated for this small scale.<sup>21</sup>

Despite its role in the establishment of a domestic and aesthetic bourgeois identity, tea was still immersed in debates about its physical and moral effects, as well as concerns about adulteration through the 'refreshing' of used tea leaves with things like verdigris and Japan earth meant that the presence of tea in homes across the country was viewed by some as an unstable and even dangerous habit. But these issues were rarely addressed in anti-tea rhetoric, which was largely argued on moral grounds – despite the claims about the physical dangers it caused. One of tea's greatest antagonists Jonas Hanway of The Foundling Hospital claimed in his book *A Candid Historical Account of the Hospital for the Reception of Exposed and Deserted Young Children* that “Liberty and Plenty should naturally create an increase of people as we have no epidemical disease, except the plague of the excessive use of gin and tea. These indeed have swept off many thousands.”<sup>22</sup> However by the 1820s, these concerns were already being neutralised through the use of packaging, the increasing availability of quality tea and its association with the temperance movement, meaning tea became a symbol of correct behaviour and Britishness.

It is significant that the association between tea and Britishness came to the fore in the late nineteenth century, following decades of conflict in the name of tea. Linda Colley suggests that confrontation with and contrast to the other gave a sense of unity to the United Kingdom, offering a distraction from their differences and a cause in common – whilst the possession of such a vast and alien empire encouraged the idea of Britishness as distinct and superior.<sup>23</sup> Shared involvement in imperial endeavours, including the tea trade, provided a politically unifying force within the relations of the United Kingdom. While the shared absorption of tea into British life was a unifying factor culturally. Public awareness of the international conflict that underlined British tea consumption could, therefore, be considered a contributing factor to the associations between tea and Britishness, rather than a challenge to it.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 36

<sup>22</sup> Jonas Hanway, *A Candid Historical Account of the Hospital for the Reception of Exposed and Deserted Young Children*, London, 1759, 65

<sup>23</sup> Linda Colley, “Britishness and Otherness: An Argument”, *Journal of British Studies*, 31:4, 1992, 309-329, 325

Beyond this ‘confrontation with and contrast to the other’, the British tea table assimilated the culture of the other in a transcultural moment. The process referred to by Julie Codell as ‘transculturation’, a concept coined by anthropologist Fernando Ortiz in 1940, outlines the transformative processes of the assimilation of foreign cultural products, in which the preceding culture is uprooted in a partial disculturation that results in new cultural phenomena.<sup>24</sup> Beyond the concept of globalisation, transculturation does not result in homogeneity, but rather a series of interactions and exchanges that combine “the global and local, universal and particular”.<sup>25</sup> Tea culture of the late nineteenth century presents a synchronic moment in which the diachronic histories of aesthetic and social customs of independent Asian countries were assimilated into those of the metropole of the British Empire to create a transcultural moment. Mary Louise Pratt claims that this readability of these intersections relies on signifying practices that encode the aspirations of the new, transcultural cultures and legitimizes these.<sup>26</sup> Transcultural objects and behaviours of the tea table were repeated in artworks and especially advertising, making them legible to the public, whilst naturalising them within concepts of Britain and the empire and legitimizing the asymmetrical power structures within this relationship.

The aspirations of this new, transcultural culture were based around the concepts of a specifically British morality of the tea table. Fromer argues that in the nineteenth century, the tea table functioned as a liminal space that forged a “unified English national identity out of disparate social groups, economic classes, and genders separated by ideologically distinct spheres of daily life.”<sup>27</sup> The ritual of the tea table became a socially transformative act imbued with middle-class morality centred on ideologies of moderation, social etiquette and material possessions.<sup>28</sup>

Tea culture unified social classes yet still perpetuated normative hierarchical social structures coming to function as what Pierre Bourdieu describes as a marker of distinction as a form of cultural capital.<sup>29</sup> It served as objectified capital through the accumulation of

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<sup>24</sup> Julie F. Codell (ed.) *Transculturation in British art, 1771 – 1930*, Farnham, 2012, 4

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 2

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>27</sup> Julie Fromer, *op. cit.*, 11

<sup>28</sup> Woodruff Smith “Tea and the Middle Class” in Beatrice Hohenegger (ed.), *Steeped in History: The Art of Tea*, exhibition catalogue, The Fowler Museum UCLA, 2009, 143

<sup>29</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, Paris, (1984), Oxford, 2010

teawares, as well as embodied capital through the acquisition and articulation of the coded etiquette of the tea table. But most importantly, the acquisitions of tea and teawares can also be viewed as a form of symbolic capital through the socially transformative association with middle-class morality.

The domestic ritual of tea and its ever present visual culture would be adopted by individuals from early age and throughout the class system. Bourdieu argues that dispositions within daily habits such as beliefs, taste and interests belonging to a particular group of people are acquired by the individual from an early age and are reflective of categorisations such as class, gender and age. He calls this location where dispositions are formed the “habitus”, claiming that it is here that acts are “normalised” and their original logic is forgotten, and that this naturalisation of behaviours makes those differing from your own seem abhorrent.<sup>30</sup> Through a system of objects, images and behaviours, tea was established within structures of class, gender and morality to become a feature of the national habitus and was normalised therein – its foreign origins masked through assimilation into the ideals of Britishness.

Informed by theories of distinction, transculturation and semiotics, which will be discussed later, as well as nineteenth-century theories of leisure and the gendered spheres, the following chapters will explore British relationships with tea in the second half of the nineteenth century. This thesis will discuss how the image of tea within fine art and advertising engaged in classed and gendered domestic structures that tempered fears of a foreign product contaminating British life and British homes – investing tea with moralistic ideologies and a hybrid British-imperial visual and material culture that normalised the asymmetric power balance of the tea trade.

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<sup>30</sup> Richard Jenkins. *Pierre Bourdieu*, London, 2002, 79



## Cultchar: The Material Culture of the Tea Table and its Function as a Transcultural Symbol in the Late Nineteenth Century.

The mind and choice of the artist plays an important role in the processes of ingestion, acceptance and transformation of foreign techniques and styles, while confronting new objects and ideas. Being a creative individual, the artist may adapt, appropriate, translate or distort the imported stimuli in order to transform them into different modes of artistic expression.<sup>31</sup>

This chapter will explore the material culture of the tea table of the late nineteenth century as a transcultural moment where the design of teawares and the adoption of these objects within fine art and artistic culture engaged with complex concepts of home and of the empire. Firstly looking into how tea functioned as a sign within painting through the nuanced depiction of teawares, before interrogating how this material culture of the tea table of the late nineteenth century mediated and communicated continuity and change in British interaction with Asia, in order to explore how an imperial product became a symbol of Britishness.

In his essay “Wine and Milk” in *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes describes tea as a “totem drink”, like the milk of a Dutch cow or wine to the French.<sup>32</sup> Barthes argues that the French nationalist ideologies surrounding wine position it as having positive transformative effects and as a social equaliser but that these mythologies serve to distance the substance from the expropriation of Algerian land by the French empire to grow grapes. At the time Barthes wrote *Mythologies*, Algeria was in the midst of a lengthy conflict with the French Empire following an uprising in 1954 which eventually resulted in Algerian independence in 1962. The role of wine as a French totem drink in the 1950s was threatened by imperial conflict, but these threats were tempered with nationalistic ideologies. The establishment of tea as a British totem drink in the nineteenth century held a similar function, however the foreign origins of tea meant its ideological nationalisation was required.

In ‘Myth Today’, Barthes discusses a cover of *Paris-Match* magazine which depicts a close cropped view of a young black man dressed in French military uniform gazing upwards

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<sup>31</sup> Michelle Ying-Ling Huang (ed.), *Beyond Boundaries: East & West Cross-Cultural Encounters*, Cambridge, 2011, 2

<sup>32</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, (1957), London, 2009, 65.

saluting something outside of the frame of the image that Barthes assumed to be the tricolor.<sup>33</sup> The ideological and historically specific signified evoked by this image, “that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag” are naturalised within the photograph and presented as fact.<sup>34</sup> Using this example, Barthes suggests that the role of the mythologist, is to deconstruct the artificial nature of such images that give a foundation to the mythologies they communicate.

Barthes further outlined his theories of semiology in the 1977 text *Elements of Semiology*, which describes the role of the sign-function: Semiological systems whose primary usage is utilitarian but which acquire meaning as a sign, such as food or clothing, as in every usage it is “converted into a sign of itself”.<sup>35</sup> Through the semantic institutionalisation of its usage and of its depiction in eighteenth and nineteenth-century painting, tea becomes a sign of bourgeoisie taste, sobriety, domesticity, and ultimately Britishness. Within the sign-function, whether an object is understood as utilitarian or ideological is itself a semantic. In this context, whether tea is addressed (visually or linguistically) in ideological or practical terms, it is entered into a form of signification, but it is the order of connotation that differentiates meaning.

The order of connotation of tea in Nineteenth-century art positions tea as an analogical and metonymical symbol rather than a sign, as it is predominantly represented by the image of a tea set; the image of people actually drinking tea is infrequently depicted. In most paintings of tea in late nineteenth-century painting, including the key examples discussed in chapters one and two, including John Everett Millais' *Afternoon Tea*, William Holman Hunt's *The Children's Holiday*, and Thomas Webster's *A Tea Party*, [Figs. 2 – 4] the consumption of tea is represented by tea sets. No liquid or leaves are seen and none of the subjects drink from their Chinaware. Through metonymy, the image of tea is furnished with a number of connotators and through the order of connotation, in these works, tea is a visual, material and social symbol, rather than a consumable.

This phenomenon can be related to the fact that, as Kenneth Bendiner argues, the actual act of eating and drinking is rarely represented in the history of art.<sup>36</sup> Despite a large tradition of banquet paintings, picnics and tea parties, the depiction of someone chewing or with a utensil or cup to their mouth is remarkably rare. Subjects that do are usually children

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 139

<sup>34</sup> Loc. cit.,

<sup>35</sup> Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, (1964), New York, 1968. 12

<sup>36</sup> Kenneth Bendiner, op. cit., 22

such as in *Man and Child Drinking Tea* (artist unknown), c. 1720 [Fig. 5], or the peasantry, as in Bruegel the Elder's *Peasant Wedding*, 1586, in which eating signals baseness or a lack of refinement.<sup>37</sup> The visible act of eating is also more frequent in representations of figures of evil such as Hieronymus Bosch's phantasmagoric human-bird demon in the right panel of *Garden of Earthly Delights* c. 1490 – 1510 [Fig. 6]. This image highlights one of the reasons for the reluctance to depict consumption: its strong association with excrement.<sup>38</sup> Robert Cruickshank's *A Tea Party or English Manners and French Politeness* of 1835 [Fig. 7] makes a rare reference to the bodily processes of tea drinking where a guest, unaccustomed to the etiquettes of the British tea table, finds himself uncomfortable from over-consumption, to comic visual effect with his bulging stomach. Satirical prints are also one of the few places where tea cups are raised to lips, James Gillray's *Anti-Saccharites or John Bull and His Family Leaving off the Use of Sugar*, 1792 [Fig. 8], for example, depicts George III, a favourite of satirists, sipping his un-sugared tea while his daughters look down at their own with disapproval.

In the case of tea, it can be noted that not only is the image of drinking largely avoided, the image of tea itself – as both liquid and leaf – is also predominantly absent. Kenneth Bendiner argues that in traditions of insignia, the depiction of food is subject to a hierarchy that favours food in its living or raw forms, for example: sheaves of corn represent bread and cattle represent beef, as these substances are considered crude in their edible form.<sup>39</sup> The image of tea negotiates a similar hierarchy where food in its natural and/or unprepared forms is substituted. Tea is instead represented by its equipage, pots, cups, saucers, urns, etcetera – the “civilised” accompaniments of tea, rather than the crude and often dangerous product itself. This semiotic displacement that privileges material culture highlights the importance of aesthetics, fashion and social meaning of tea within visual culture rather than the physical consumption or presence of the beverage itself, which seemingly becomes secondary to the social and material scenes which surround it.

When tea was first imported to Britain it did not hold its own code of behaviour or visual identity; it was consumed, for example, in mismatching imported tea bowls. However, by the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a proliferation of teawares and codes of

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37 Ibid., 23

38 Loc, cit.

39 Ibid., 22

behaviour had been added to the tea table. In the 1930s Norbert Elias argued that human behaviours, from bodily functions to personal relationships, have been moulded through etiquette.<sup>40</sup> He emphasises the importance of material culture in this process, claiming that eating utensils, for example, enforce physical and social constraints on the individual.<sup>41</sup> Elias traced these changes in acceptable behaviour to the enlargement and centralisation of structures of authority, forging class hierarchies that were justified by the division of labour and, in turn, justified by class-specific standards of physical constraint.<sup>42</sup> The tea table of the eighteenth century saw a number of European additions to material culture, such as the introduction of handled cups and the mote spoon: a silver spoon with a bowl perforated with ornate designs and used to skim off any unsightly stray leaves floating in the cup, and along with a thin handle to unclog the spout or internal strainer, ensuring that any problems encountered whilst pouring and drinking tea could be solved with dignity. In the context of Elias' argument, the ritualised behaviours that accompany these could be related to expansions in empire and industry which centred on the increasingly powerful middle classes.

Lorna Weatherill's survey of probate inventories shows that between 1675 and 1725 the percentage of households that owned tea equipage had risen from 0% to 5% and this number would have been considerably larger in reality as the survey only represents households wealthy enough to have probate inventories made.<sup>43</sup> In the decades following the first imports of tea, it was exceedingly expensive and was considered an exotic novelty. However, tea drinking was increasingly popular amongst the working classes despite this and despite the 119% tax.<sup>44</sup> The real amount of tea consumed becomes clearer after 1784, when Richard Twining successfully lobbied Prime Minister William Pitt to pass the

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<sup>40</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, (1939), Oxford, 1994, 188

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 58

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, P.320

<sup>43</sup> Hannah Greig, "Eighteenth-century English Interiors in Image and Text" In Jeremy Aynsley and Charlotte Grant(eds.) *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior Since the Renaissance*, London, 2006, 116

<sup>44</sup> Tea could be procured cheaply from smugglers or bought from suppliers of used tea which had been rejuvenated with foliage and coloured with harmful chemicals. Anti-smuggling legislation did little to curb this trade. The 1725 law against the adulteration of tea, for example, made little impact on this trade, nor did the addition of a prison sentence in 1766, however, both of these practices practically died out following the passing of the communication act and the reduction of taxes in 1784. (Beatrice. Hohenegger, op. cit., *Liquid Jade*, 96)

Communication Act and drop tea taxation from 119% to 12.5 %, which marked an enormous rise in the recorded consumption of tea from five million pounds to eleven million in just a year.<sup>45</sup>

The increasing affordability of tea and teawares brought luxuries to houses of all social classes. In *A Frenchman's Year in Suffolk, 1784*, François de la Rochefoucauld claimed “The drinking of tea is general throughout England [...] It gives the rich opportunity to show off their possessions; cups, tea-pots, etc., all made to the most elegant designs all copies of Etruscan and the antique”.<sup>46</sup> As he points out, by this time tea drinking was “general” but the material culture of the tea table remained a marker of class distinction.

In the nineteenth century, following the assimilation of tea into daily life throughout Britain, the dynamics of social distinction through tea drinking changed, meaning that tea consumption itself was no longer a symbol of wealth and taste, but this signal came to rely specifically on the material culture of tea. Distinction was displayed through the ability to afford and make choices of style and material.

A comparison of depictions of tea sets in socially distinct nineteenth-century familial tea scenes can illustrate this. The first example is William Holman Hunt's *The Children's Holiday* (1864 – 65) [**Fig. 3**] in which, Judith Bronkhurst claims, the “tea set as a whole firmly places the family in their social context.”<sup>47</sup> The neoclassical hemispherical silver tea pot from the London firm Pearce and Burrows was given to industrialist Thomas Fairbairn and his wife Allison (depicted) as a wedding present.<sup>48</sup> The set also included an urn adorned with lions and scrolls with ivory detailing and chinaware of an ornate neoclassical design with a Greek inspired gold and black Meander pattern. Neoclassical designs in teawares, dated from around 1760, were a fashionable alternative to the glut of affordable Chinese or Chinese-inspired sets, allowing the wealthy consumer to distinguish their taste as apart from the masses. The tea set distinguishes them not only as wealthy, but also as cultured and fashionable. In his execution of the painting, Hunt pays as much attention to the details of the accessories of the tea table as he does to the sitters. The mirrored surface of the samovar and the glittering gold and translucent white of the set are rendered to the high level of realism and visual balance expected from pre-Raphaelite painting, however the areas of grass in the

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<sup>45</sup> Beatrice Hohenegger, *Liquid Jade*, op. cit., 103

<sup>46</sup> François de la Rochefoucauld, *A Frenchman's Year in Suffolk 1784*, 1784, Suffolk, (2001), 18

<sup>47</sup> Judith Bronkhurst, “Fruits of a Connoisseur's Friendship: Sir Thom Fairbairn and William Holman Hunt” in *Burlington Magazine*, 125:967, 1983, pp. 586 – 597, 594

<sup>48</sup> Loc. cit.,

background have not received the same close attention and are loosely painted and undetailed. According to Hunt's letters, *The Children's Holiday* was painted piecemeal over two years due to the movements of Mrs Fairbairn and the moods of the children. These sittings were staged both indoors and in the garden.<sup>49</sup> Coupled with the inconstancy in painterly finish, this suggests that the artist may have had to choose where to place his attentions, rather than developing the piece consistently as a whole. The tea table is foregrounded in this painting, both spatially and in terms of painterly finish.

On the other hand, Joseph Clark's *Family Gathering* (date unknown) depicts a modest style of glazed earthenware teapot known as a brown Betty or cottage teapot – an affordable, utilitarian design made from Caledonian clay which was often used by British working classes – coupled with simple blue and white china which fit within the comfortable familial surroundings of the modest home adorned with a few decorative luxuries. Clark represents the working-class tea drinker as well-nourished, well-dressed and living in comfortable yet modest surroundings with a few humble, yet well-designed luxuries. This depiction of fictional working-class family is as specific in its choice of a tea set as Hunt's portrait of a real family – the Fairbairn's are likely to have carefully selected their tea set and it speaks of taste, wealth and their family history, whereas the tea set in *Family Gathering* illustrates Clark's own middle-class concept of working-class possessions, leisure time and tea drinking. However, the teawares in *Family Gathering* are less significant in the composition than those depicted in *The Children's Holiday* where the inter-generational family scene is the key focus, with the involved patriarch at the centre of the composition.

Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Classes*, which was written in 1899 utilised anthropological evidence and examples from contemporary America to argue that western economies were driven by the forces of social stratification.<sup>50</sup> A key element in Veblen's argument is that the display of conspicuous leisure served as evidence of social standing and pecuniary success.<sup>51</sup> To a degree, this is a problematic argument when considering the practices of the tea table which served as a regular leisurely pursuit for rich and poor alike. However, according to Veblen, the classes are differentiated through “material evidence”.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 193-94

<sup>50</sup> Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899, New York, 1994

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 25

<sup>52</sup> As Veblen analysed contemporary American society, in the context of British society it becomes a theory offering insight into the function and performance of nineteenth-century capitalist social structures, rather than a document of contemporary criticism.

Tea tables were class-specific through subtle evidences of the binaries between work/rest: it became an arena to display the financial ability and leisure time available to cultivate and articulate taste – from the acutely developed etiquette and ceremonial observances to the latest proprieties of fashion.<sup>53</sup> Utilising these properties of distinction, in nineteenth-century painting, the depiction of a choice tea set functioned as a symbolic social marker.

Veblen also claimed that a wife's conspicuous leisure was a key indicator of class and financial success. In this context, the depiction of Mrs Fairbairn on 'holiday', amongst her tasteful possessions, her children and the landscape of the family's park land is a program of the 'material evidences' of pecuniary success and class. Mr Fairbairn's labour is suggested in his absence from this family scene of leisure time, conforming to the ideals of the separate spheres which will be discussed in the following chapter. Whilst Clark also depicts a family at leisure over tea and bread, we are reminded of the mother's domestic labour by the broom in the bottom right corner which suggests that Clark depicts this idealised working-class family gathering for a moment of respite among their daily labour.

The role of teawares in the distinction of class and taste in the late nineteenth century was underpinned by a widening of choice in teawares throughout the eighteenth century. In 1784, François de la Rochefoucauld described the design of teawares as diverse and incorporating western influences of various kinds.<sup>54</sup> However, earlier in the eighteenth century, tea was predominantly consumed in Britain in Chinese teawares imported by employees of the East India Company for private profit.<sup>55</sup> Initially these imports demanded high prices, but as increasing amounts were imported as saleable ballast, prices were driven down. Fashions for China-ware were based in its status as a novel and exotic commodity, so with the increasing availability and falling prices, this fashionable status declined leading to an overstock of unwanted imported china – by 1723 a Chinese teapot cost little over a penny.<sup>56</sup>

The affordability and easy availability of Chinese-made teawares contributed to their fall from favour as fashionable objects in Britain, and they were replaced by a growing European industry largely centred on Britain, Germany, and Holland that made teawares in

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 28-29

<sup>54</sup> François de la Rochefoucauld, *op. cit.*, 18

<sup>55</sup> Dawn Jacobson, *Chinoiserie*, London 1993 21

<sup>56</sup> Ellis, Markman. (ed.) *Tea and the Tea-Table in Eighteenth-Century England*, Vol. 3, "Tea, Commerce and the east India Company", London, 2010, Xiii

neoclassical styles from silver, creamware, or bone china. Initially, British designed chinaware such as the willow pattern (developed by Thomas Minton around 1790), would be made in porcelain by Chinese labourers to the specification of the British client. However throughout Europe much effort was poured into discovering the 'secrets' of porcelain creating a narrative of exploration and innovation, a French Jesuit missionary Père François Xavier d'Entrecolles, for example, also dedicated his efforts in China to taking notes on the manufacture of Chinaware.<sup>57</sup> While in England, Thomas Frye and Josiah Spode scientifically developed bone china between 1748 and 1793 as an alternative to porcelain. Through domestic experimentation and research within China, European ceramics manufacturers displaced China's role as the soul producers of both tea and teawares. With these increases in domestic manufacture, control of the material culture of the British tea table was placed firmly under the control of Britain, both aesthetically and economically.

The search for a recipe for porcelain itself or an equally suitable material also led to numerous innovations and a massive variety of teawares in varying degrees of quality: from German Kaolin clay, to silver, Sheffield plate, jasper, agate, bone china and Royal Worcester's "creamware" – the latter being the most successful earthenware replica that was as durable and pale as porcelain. This variety led to a proliferation of designs and styles including moulded novelty teapots in the forms of objects such as vegetables or buildings [Fig. 9], and from the 1760s printed teapots with mottoes, coats of arms and decorative designs [Fig. 10].<sup>58</sup>

Lionel Lambourne argues that the imperial "plagiarizing process is more evident in the production of ceramics than in any other discipline [...] Throughout Europe, wherever the ceramic disciplines of pottery and porcelain flourished, copying was rife and industrial espionage thrived."<sup>59</sup> Despite the fall in favour of original Chinese teawares, in the early eighteenth-century European teaware design predominantly consisted of imitation Chinese styles. Chinese inspired European designs such as the willow pattern were often sent to China to be manufactured and exported back to Europe as the European imitations of porcelain lacked the quality of Chinese porcelain.

Dawn Jacobson describes this early period in the design of British-made pottery as "artless, simplified, a kind of peasant porcelain with bright colours and patterns without

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<sup>57</sup> Beatrice Hohenegger, op. cit., *Liquid Jade*, P. 114

<sup>58</sup> Robin Emmerson, *British Teapots and Tea Drinking 1700 - 1850*, Norwich, 1992, exhibition catalogue Twining Teapot Gallery at Norwich Castle Museum, 6

<sup>59</sup> Lionel Lambourne, *Japonisme: Cultural Crossings between East and West*, London, 2005, 70



rules.”<sup>60</sup> However, in the mid eighteenth century these crude imitations of Chinese designs were surpassed by the more sophisticated exuberance of rococo designs and Chinoiserie-rococo [Fig. 11].<sup>61</sup> The middle of the eighteenth century also saw the growing popularity of teapots that moved away from the rounded style inherited from China, towards teawares with an oval or polygonal base and vertical sides, which would be among the most popular designs from the late eighteenth to the nineteenth century and more sober Greco-Roman inspired designs also became fashionable [Fig. 12].<sup>62</sup>

A century after their first appearance, the neoclassical tea set depicted in *The Children’s Holiday* could be received in the same vein as these designs, but the potency of an imperial commodity transformed into western style is re-iterated with the addition of ivory detailing – creating a dialogue between the tea set, originally with Chinese origins, and the Ivory from Africa, all brought together in a western, neoclassical style.

This merging of neoclassical designs with Indian designs (seen in Mrs Fairbairn’s shawl) and African materials at the tea table – a British institution with origins in China – highlights the transcultural moment of the late nineteenth-century British tea table as a contact zone where cultures meet in this specific intersection of “time, place, culture, nation and globalisation” to create new cultural phenomena.<sup>63</sup>

The vacillating popularity of Chinese and Chinese-inspired designs was tied up with the changeable of public opinion regarding Chinese culture, which stood in a complex relationship with the political events of the nineteenth-century tea trade. In the eighteenth century, the tea trade was centred on the trade relationship between the Britain, India and China. During that period China was in a position to impose strict laws restricting trade to the port of Canton and to negotiate high prices for tea, which had to be paid for in either silver or occasionally Indian cotton. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, however, the East India Company flooded China with opium, trading it illegally to reduce the amount of silver that had to be paid.<sup>64</sup> In 1839, Lin Zexu, the governor of Canton ordered the arrest of opium dealers and had their stocks of the drug destroyed. In response, the East India Company

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<sup>60</sup> Dawn Jacobson, op. cit., 144

<sup>61</sup> Loc, cit., 144

<sup>62</sup> Robin Emmerson, op. cit., 9

<sup>63</sup> Julie Codell, op. cit., 2

<sup>64</sup> Following Holland and France’s lead, but in much greater quantity.

entered China, resulting in the first Anglo-Chinese war of 1839 to 1842.<sup>65</sup> The war ended in a humiliating defeat for the Chinese, with large war reparations including the opening of all of China to trade and the legalisation of opium. This action weakened China politically, socially, and economically through the effects of wide-spread addiction and, crucially, reduced the cost of importing tea by changing the power dynamics of trade.

Around this time, the East India Company's military took over the region of Assam in India in order to cultivate tea and produce an alternative supply, further undermining China's power over the tea trade. In contrast to China, where tea was bought directly from the Chinese themselves, the cultivation of tea in India used industrial processes introduced by British expatriates who oversaw the Indian workers, creating a more secure source for exportation. Throughout the century, the empire's hold over India increased and imports of Indian tea had outpaced those from China by the late 1880s.<sup>66</sup>

In 1857, however, underlying culture struggles and internal inequalities between Indian soldiers and their British employers led to a rebellion which escalated into a full military revolt and one of the most vicious conflicts of the British Empire.<sup>67</sup> The East India Company's failure to quell the rebellion led directly to its dissolution and the areas of India under the company's control were subsequently transferred to the control of the British crown and re-named The British Raj.<sup>68</sup> Despite this conflict, the resultant assimilation of areas of India into the British crown and the successful establishment of a tea trade run by British imperialists was viewed as a political success.

In October of 1856, an incident concerning the confusion of the legality of the trading of a trade ship in China led to the second Anglo-Chinese war of 1856 – 1860. This second war culminated in the plunder and sacking of the Imperial City in Beijing, and the destruction of five palace complexes.<sup>69</sup> In 1839, the year the first Anglo-Chinese conflict began, a veteran of McCartney's former embassy to China, Sir John Barrow referred to what "was not *then* so much as *now* ... the *proneness* of falsehood, the duplicity and Knavery of the Chinese."<sup>70</sup> The

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<sup>65</sup> Catharine Pagani, "Chinese Material Culture and British Perceptions of China in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in Timothy Barringer, Tom Flynn (eds.). *Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, Oxford, 1998, 29-30

<sup>66</sup> Julie Fromer, op. cit., 55

<sup>67</sup> Gregory Freemont-Barnes, *The Indian Mutiny, 1857 – 1858*, Oxford, 2007, 9

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 13

<sup>69</sup> Dawn Jacobson, op. cit., 181

<sup>70</sup> Sir John Barrow, *The Life of George, Lord Anson*, London, 1839, 72

opium wars marked a change in perception of the Chinese who, previously respected for their culture, were now viewed in Europe as a nation of liars and fools.<sup>71</sup>

John M. Mackenzie claims that public responses to imperial climacterics like military campaigns, expeditions, and crises were merely 'surface ripples'. A deeper social and intellectual current was established in the latter half of the century which saw a retreat from classical liberalism and emergence of new nationalism based upon state, nation and society converged. This convergence was underlined by new, invented rituals, traditions and cults, like those of the tea table, which communicated these ideals to the public.<sup>72</sup>

Despite the popularity of Indian tea and the attraction of Indian objects at the Great Exhibition which led to popularity in Indian styles in architecture and fashion, the impact of Indian style on teawares was limited as neoclassic orientalist designs remained the dominant styles in teawares throughout the nineteenth century. While Indian cottons, silks, and patterns, such as the paisley shawl Mr Fairbairn wears, became extremely influential in British textile design from the 1730s with the introduction of calico printing and painting. One key design in British calico was white on indigo chintz, which held similarities to blue and white china [Fig.13].<sup>73</sup> Following innovations in textile printing, including the use of copper printing plates after 1754 which allowed for the reproduction of complex designs and roller printing, production of these products was considerably faster and cheaper – meaning that the aesthetic of Indian inspired fabrics became commonplace and were absorbed into British culture.<sup>74</sup> The impact of India pattern would continue into the late nineteenth century, most notably in the textiles of Morris & Co, established by William Morris, as well as Liberty & Co, who were at the heart of the introduction of Indian designs into England – both of which were central to the Aesthetic movement.

A number of British designers including Royal Worcester [Fig. 14] created Anglo-Indian teawares that merged Indian visual cultures with Rococo styles in highly expensive ornate sets. British companies including Liberty & Co also began to sell Indian silver tea sets,

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<sup>71</sup> Dawn Jacobson, *op. cit.*, 182.

<sup>72</sup> John M. Mackenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, Manchester, 1986, 3

<sup>73</sup> Giorgio Riello and Beverly Lemire, “East and West: Textiles and Fashion in Early Modern Europe”, *Journal of Social History*, 41:4, 2008, 887-916, 900

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 906

utilising the country's skills and tradition of silversmithery [Fig. 15].<sup>75</sup> In theory, these hybrid Anglo-Indian versions of objects with origins in China could be seen as the definition of imperial material culture of the tea table. But these Anglo-Indian teaware designs were not as frequent as Indian inspired textiles and never outshone the vacillating popularity of Chinoiserie, which had been established as the signature style of the British tea table.

Nineteenth-century fashions in teawares did not directly react against Chinese material culture as a result of the opium wars but altered and vacillated in accordance with popular opinions of the Chinese. Nor were Indian designs widely popularised because of the tea trade's successes in the country. The popularity of China-ware and Chinoiserie held a more complex relation with international politics and popular opinions of the Chinese and their material culture as a transcultural moment unifying the social codes of the British tea table with a commodity fetishism for Chinese and Chinese inspired ceramics that constituted a new, synchronically specific culture.

At a high point in the popularity of Chinese material culture in 1842, the year of the treaty of Nanking, an exhibition of Chinese arts, objects and even buildings at Hyde Park Corner, made the real visual culture of the previously mysterious nation visible to the population. The exhibition was vastly popular and 100,000 copies of the catalogue were sold.<sup>76</sup> However, between the wars, the century-long interest in Chinese design rapidly declined and in 1850, the Orientalist interior of the Brighton Pavilions, constructed at great expense for George IV, was torn down and the empty shell was sold to Brighton Council.<sup>77</sup> In 1851, the catalogue of the Great Exhibition only illustrated one item of Chinese design in the form of a westernised carved table.<sup>78</sup>

In 1881, the British Museum bought 3,000 Japanese artworks and 114 Chinese paintings from the collection of Dr William Anderson for £3,000.<sup>79</sup> Before which, neither Japanese nor Chinese painting had been studied with much depth.<sup>80</sup> Michelle Ying-Ling Huang claims that

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<sup>75</sup> Anonymous, Mawji Oomersi teapot, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O140165/teapot-mawji-oomersi/>  
Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013

<sup>76</sup> Michelle Ying-Ling Huang "The influence of Japanese Expertise in the British Reception of Chinese Painting" in Michelle Ying-Ling Huang (ed.), *Beyond Boundaries: East & West Cross-Cultural Encounters*, 199

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 200

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 201

<sup>79</sup> Michelle Ying-Ling Huang, "British Interest in Chinese Painting, 1881-1910: The Anderson and Wegener Collections of Chinese Painting in the British Museum" *Journal of the History of Collections*, 22:2, 2010, 1-14, 2

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 1

in the late nineteenth century, Japanese painting received more attention than those of China and that Chinese painting generally “served as complementary material to the study of Japanese painting.”<sup>81</sup> Japanese art was often favoured, as it was by Anderson himself, due to the Western aesthetic concern for realism.<sup>82</sup> However, there was an exhibition of thirteen examples of Chinese painting from Anderson's collection (among 260 Japanese works) at the British Museum in 1888 which were praised by British Museum curator, Sir Sidney Colvin, for their style and the sense of freedom.<sup>83</sup>

With the wane in popularity of Chinoiserie, Japan became a dominant influence on design, architecture, and especially its art – notably, woodcuts – grew in popularity. This fashion followed the forced opening of Japan's borders in 1858 after 200 years of the policy of *sakoku* (literally: ‘secluded country’), which isolated Japan from the outside and defended it from the threat of imperialism.<sup>84</sup>

Queen Victoria had a Japanese-inspired tea house designed for the grounds of Frogmore in Windsor in 1869. Yet despite her interest and that of the British Museum, the influences of Japanese design did not fully extend to the material culture of the tea table. Christopher Dresser's popular travelling tea set of 1879 [Fig. 16] took influence from Japanese stacking boxes and the focus on form over decoration, as well as the use of bamboo. Similarly, companies such as Royal Worcester and Minton & Co. experimented with Japanese inspired designs for vases, flasks and teawares [Fig.17]. However Japanese inspired teawares did not fully establish their own identity, as Japanese influences were merged into the larger influences of Chinoiserie. Even key Japoniste artworks like James Abbot McNeal Whistler's *Purple and Rose: The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks*, 1864, [Fig.18] depicted an Anglo-Chinese blue and white cup and saucer rather than the distinctive low tea pot and small bowls of the Japanese tea table or a Japoniste design like Dresser's set.

Whistler's interest in Japanese art and design initially manifested itself in the “fun of using unusual Japanese artefacts as studio props” including fans, lacquered boxes and costumes as well as ceramics<sup>85</sup>. However, his Japonisme works developed a style sympathetic to Japanese art, arranging paintings around a single colour and using strong horizontal and

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 6

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 3

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 6

<sup>84</sup> Lambourne, op. cit., 7

<sup>85</sup> Lambourne, op. cit., 35

vertical lines.<sup>86</sup> Lionel Lambourne describes the painterly style of *Purple and Rose: The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks*, as taking inspiration from the freedom of the potter's brush.<sup>87</sup> Coupling this specific interest in the formal aspects of Japanese art with the transcultural blue and white pottery, most specifically the tea set, and the European sitter, highlights the fact that, while the Aesthetes showed considerable interest in the art and material culture of both China and Japan, historic authenticity was a secondary concern.

The conflation of Japanese and Chinese visual culture was not specific to Aesthetic culture but was at the heart of European understanding of the art of these two artistic cultures, and cultural exchanges between Britain and Japan served to influence the conception and interpretation of Chinese art.<sup>88</sup> Neither Anderson nor Colvin consulted Chinese scholars when studying the Chinese art in the British Museum collection, but sought the opinions of European scholars or Japanese experts, a practice common among collectors, subsequently, Academic understanding of Chinese art was mediated by the understanding of Japanese art.<sup>89</sup> As *Purple and Rose: The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks* indicates, the popular conception appreciation of Eastern ceramics was not culturally specific but merged Japanese and Chinese design with Anglo-Chinese products such as blue and white china.

The cultural connotations of these teawares and their visual style came to have meaning within artistic culture as blue and white china was adopted as an icon of Aestheticism. It was championed by Whistler, Dante Gabriel Rossette and Oscar Wilde from the 1860s onwards, who reacted against the perceived ugliness of the heavy historicising taste of the early Victorian period, whilst simultaneously assimilating those of the East.<sup>90</sup>

Blue and white designs had long been an element of the British tea table in the form of English delftware from the sixteenth century and Minton's Willow pattern design from 1790 – as well as low cost reproductions of these. The collection of china subsequently held connotations of tradition and affordable comforts. Simultaneously, through Aestheticist appropriation of these objects as among the outward signs of their distinct culture, it also came to signify Aesthete taste. In contrast to the depiction to blue and white china at modest

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 35-36

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 35

<sup>88</sup> Michelle Ying-Ling Huang, op. cit., *Beyond Boundaries: East & West Cross-Cultural Encounters*, 7

<sup>89</sup> Michelle Ying-Ling Huang "The influence of Japanese Expertise in the British Reception of Chinese Painting" in Michelle Ying-Ling Huang (ed.), op. cit., *Beyond Boundaries: East & West Cross-Cultural Encounters*, 93

<sup>90</sup> Dawn Jacobson, op. cit., 203

working-class tea tables, the Aesthetic use of tea and chinaware held decadent associations, as George Du Maurier's 1880 *Punch* cartoon *The Six Mark Teapot* [Fig. 19] satirises.<sup>91</sup> Romita Ray describes a foppish bridegroom, visibly based on Wilde and his Aesthete bride, transfixed by the teapot rupturing the Victorian ideals of homeliness by shifting "the paradigms of domestic bliss to the collecting of ephemera."<sup>92</sup>

Aestheticist collection of china was viewed as problematic and widely satirised because these forms of consumerism were viewed as the remit of the domestic sphere.<sup>93</sup> Despite the fears of the deviant or unhealthy nature of the collection of blue and white, this Aestheticist taste for filling domestic spaces with oriental bric-a-brac, conformed to normative values of consumption and the dizzying spectacle of consumerism that made the cult of domesticity inseparable from an economy dependant on Asian imports. However the subversion of gender roles in Aestheticist collection of blue and white china meant this form of consumption was considered deviant.<sup>94</sup> Aestheticism marked a specific transcultural moment from that of more mainstream consumption of Asian material culture and was viewed as degenerate in contrast, however Chinamania and Japonisme similarly functioned as a form of commodity fetishism that was underlined by imperialist power structures.

According to Karl Marx, in a capitalist system, commodities gain their strength through market exchange, rather than use value. Labour is therefore valued in terms of its ability to generate exchange and the human act of labour becomes an exchangeable commodity. In this context, both the domestic and aesthetic, the British adoption of Chinese visual culture and their indiscriminate and extensive collection of Chinese "things" (or Chinese inspired reproductions) can be viewed as a symbolic subordination of Chinese labour and culture by seemingly relocating its value within a British market exchange system.

The material and visual culture of the British tea table represented a hybrid, transcultural assimilation of the aesthetics and labour of imperial subjects into narratives of taste, transforming these objects into a sign of cultural capital and correct behaviour. Through

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<sup>91</sup> Romita Ray "Storm in a Teacup: Visualising Tea Consumptions in the British Empire" in Barringer, Tim. (ed.), *Art and the British Empire*, Manchester, 2007, 207

<sup>92</sup> Romita Ray, op. cit., 207

<sup>93</sup> Anne Anderson, "Fearful Consequences ... of Living Up to One's Teapot": Men, Women, and "cultchah" in the English Aesthetic Movement c. 1870-1900", Edwards, Jason. And Hart, Imogen (eds.), *Rethinking the Interior c. 1863 – 1897*, Yale, 2010, 112

<sup>94</sup> Romita Ray, op. cit., 218-219

the transcultural British material culture of the tea table, tea came to function as marker of distinction codifying the tea tables of the working classes as different to the bourgeoisie and establishing British tea tables as distinct from than their Asian counterparts.



## The Art of Tea: The Tea Table as a Liminal and Symbol of Britishness in Late Nineteenth Century Painting.

There is a subdued look about that ancient lady in the family picture, which speaks of small companionship with her lesser half, and much undivided sorrow. If her living eyes could gaze down from her portrait yonder, she would see a great change caused by a simple agent. There is no possibility of strong bibbing now. At the magic words 'tea is ready!' she would behold to her astonishment, the rosy light of the bottle wane.<sup>95</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the tea table became a ritualised, idealised and visual experience. This evocative passage from an 1853 *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* article entitled "Indian Teas and Chinese Travel", highlights how the sociability of the tea ceremony was judged as other than and superior to the raucous, alcohol-steeped tables of previous generations, and that it was judged by its visual appearance as such. Studying late nineteenth-century tea scenes highlights the association between the tea ceremony and the imaging of correct behaviour: it was a scene of social display, definition and distinction mediated by visual codes. Exploring the projection of middle-class morality and correct behaviour onto tea drinking, this chapter will explore how concepts of the British tea drinker created the idea of an ideologically unified Britain.

In the eighteenth century, tea held a symbolic role in conversation piece painting, where its meaning was defined within the parameters of the genre. In the nineteenth century however, the role of tea in art was less clearly defined; it was not associated with a single format or movement but occurred throughout paintings of contemporary life. In the previous century, tea was consumed by the masses but the image of tea-drinking was one of middle-class domesticity: in the nineteenth century, this exclusivity did not continue. However, the associations between the image of tea, correct behaviour and social mobility was not lost but elaborated and adapted.

After a flourish of popularity as an emblem in eighteenth-century conversation piece paintings, tea appeared less frequently in art in the early nineteenth century. It appeared in a handful of society portraits, like William Mulready's *Interior with a Portrait of John Sheepshanks* of 1832-34, but tea also began to appear in rural genre images like Myles

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<sup>95</sup> Anonymous, "Indian Teas and Chinese Travel" in *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 47:177, 1853, London, 88-100, 89

Berkett Forster's *Tea Time* (date unknown). This movement from a symbol specific to the conversation piece to more general, incidental appearances, could be related to the fact that tea drinking was no longer novel and that tea was no longer considered a luxury but a necessity of daily life throughout the classes.

It was not until the middle of the century that the image of tea began to appear more frequently in painting again. Unlike the conversation works of the previous century, the depiction of tea was not limited to paintings of a specific genre but occurred throughout images of contemporary British life and appeared in domestic scenes of the Pre-Raphaelite painters, Royal Academicians, painters of social realism, and minor genre painters.

Throughout the nineteenth century, numerous industry improvements contributed to the falling price of tea and a continuing rise in tea consumption: new plantations increased sources of supply, the development of the English transport system improved dissemination and the reduction of tea duty from 2 shillings per pound to fewer than 1 shilling in 1875 all meant that tea was between a third and half of the price it had been for the previous generation.<sup>96</sup> By this time, tea was widely affordable and available throughout Britain.

The main change in the social and political background that may have prompted a rise in the frequency of tea in fine art in the second half of the century was the advertising boom that resulted from the abolition of the Advertising Levy in 1853, and the adoption of new forms of printing around this time. This meant that aspirational images of commodities saturated the homes and streets of Britain, repeatedly defining ideologies of products and brands through visual communication, a phenomenon that will be discussed later. This chapter will consider the occurrence of a proliferation of images of tea within paintings of contemporary life, discussing how the ideologies of the tea ceremony were utilised in painting as a symbol that assimilated the material culture of this imperial product to imbue the subjects with qualities of correct behaviour, middle-class morality and, ultimately, of Britishness

In the eighteenth century, the tea table had acquired a code of behaviour and formed a ritual or ceremony. In the domestic tea ceremony, the woman of the house held rare authority, as Woodruff D. Smith states:

The ritual delineated the proper place of the respectable, adult, married woman in the world: she presided over proceedings, organizing the distribution of sustenance and ensuring the

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 38

maintenance of propriety and the use of appropriate language. Men, whether members of the family or guests, accepted symbolic secondary roles.<sup>97</sup>

Rather than having tea made by domestic staff and distributed by the cup, in the middle-class home tea predominantly became a ceremony of matriarchal influence and care, where the woman of the house would prepare tea at the table, distributing it to each person's specification, whilst leading the occasion socially.<sup>98</sup>

Key to the ideology of women's role at the tea-table were the ideals of the labour of leisure. The symbolic labour of procuring good-value, quality tea, making the tea, then pouring and making each cup to individual specification was prized as a domestic art.<sup>99</sup> While, for the middle-classes, meals could be made and served by staff, the woman of the house maintained a hands-on role at the tea table, as it symbolised her position as provider of sustenance, emotional care and social guidance.

As Fromer has argued, the tea table functioned as a liminal space. Drawing on Victor Turner's work on rituals that temporarily disrupt hierarchical structures, she argues that in the nineteenth century, the tea table held a role as a liminal space "forging a unified English national identity out of disparate social groups, economic classes, and genders separated by ideologically distinct spheres of daily life."<sup>100</sup> Hence, women briefly overturned their normal subordination to men. The poor, too, gained the social status of the classes above them, by adopting the social refinements associated with the consumption of tea.

In the nineteenth century, the gendered structure of the tea table remained largely the same, but this was also invested with further meaning in the idealisation of domesticity. This reverence for the social importance of the feminine sphere is best outlined in John Ruskin's 1865, 'Of Queen's Gardens', published in 1865, which outlined the importance of domesticity and clearly defined gender roles for the moral guidance of society. He paints a metaphor of the domestic space as a garden; women reside safely behind its walls tending the flowers while, beyond them, man fights to protect and to provide for his family. But Ruskin claims

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<sup>97</sup> W. D. Smith, op. cit., 144

<sup>98</sup> Boiled water would be brought from the kitchens along with all of the necessary accoutrements of tea making and were handed over to the woman of the house.

<sup>99</sup> Julie Fromer, op. cit., 94

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 11

that the domestic sphere refers not to a specific place but “wherever a true wife comes”.<sup>101</sup> He claims that as men are “prone to fight” it is women’s duty women to “choose their cause for them”.<sup>102</sup> Ruskin’s essay reveals how the gendered encryption of the domestic and public spheres structured the domestic ideal and, in turn, confirmed the ideological construction of the public political sphere as wholly masculine. Within this context, the tea table formed a Ruskinian Eden where women's moral influence shaped new generations and guided men’s behaviour as she tempers the social behaviour of those present which, in turn, tempers their behaviour beyond the gardens walls.

The tea ceremony offered women a temporary power, and the fashion for tea dresses in the 1860s increasingly offered women temporary bodily freedom, if only for a short window of the day during tea or dinner with close friends and members of the immediate family, and only for wealthy, bourgeois women.<sup>103</sup> Inspired by mediaevalist costume in Pre-Raphaelite painting, tea dresses were either ankle or calf length, without boning or bustles, and consisted simply of a loosely cut empire-line over-dress and under tunic [Fig. 20].<sup>104</sup> Yet while the tea dress signified a temporary inversion of traditional social hierarchy, even Veblen argued that display of a wife's conspicuous leisure was a marker of the social powers and pecuniary successes of the husband through “transmissible gentility”.<sup>105</sup> In the context of which, the tea dress reiterated normative gender roles.

The woman’s role at the tea-table among the Victorian middle classes idealised the labour of leisure. Tea made by women’s hands was consequently prized. G. G. Sigmonds, the author of *Tea, its Effects, Medicinal and Moral* (1839) lamented that in some households tea would be brought from the kitchens and warmed with water from an urn, as this diluted women’s role in the making and distribution of tea, consequently threatening the security of the British home.<sup>106</sup>

In *Lady Audley's Secret*, Elizabeth Gaskell describes the tea table as “women’s legitimate empire” – referencing imperial connotations of the beverage, whilst

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<sup>101</sup> J. Ruskin, 'Of Queen's Gardens' in *Sesame and Lilies: Lectures*, (1851), Harvard, 2003, 33

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 77

<sup>103</sup> However the tea dress was controversially worn by some aesthetic avant-garde women in public.

<sup>104</sup> Patricia A. Cunningham , *Reforming Women's Fashion, 1850-1920: Politics, Health, and Art*, Kent State, 2003, 14

<sup>105</sup> Thorstein Veblen, *op. cit.*, 35

<sup>106</sup> Julie Fromer. *op. cit.*, 94.

simultaneously highlighting both the restraints of the feminine sphere and of the *domestic ideal* which Lynn Nead claims signifies morality, virtue and ultimately national stability.<sup>107</sup> Nead claims that the domestic ideal was an underlying concept within nationalistic rhetoric of the nineteenth century and highlights that the term ‘home’ was underscored with concerns of morality, economy and empire.<sup>108</sup> The home was a symbol of national strength and a recipe for a healthy nation in an age of economic expansion; empire expansion; technological innovation; and urban isolation. The middle-class decency of the domestic ideal was portrayed as the ideal moral culture of the nation and empire as a whole: serving as justification – and a mould – for the ‘civilisation’ of non-western culture.<sup>109</sup>

The role of women at the tea table was learned during childhood, through observation and play. In the nineteenth-century children's pretend teas were depicted in numerous sentimental works such as John Everett Millais' *Afternoon Tea*, also known as *The Gossips* [Fig. 2] and in commercial genre works such as George Bernard O'Neill's *The Tete-a-Tete Tea*. They depict children's toy sets, which became popular for children to emulate and practice adult etiquette. The images draw on the Victorian cult of childhood and the taste for sentimental images of children. Millais' *The Gossips* of 1889 depicts the role play games of three well-dressed and rosy cheeked girls, who rehearse their adult roles, politely drinking pretend tea outside in a park or garden accompanied by a pug – a breed associated with ancient China that was kept by Queen Victoria. The pug sits next to a willow pattern teapot, in a tableaux of Chinoiserie, British nature and British girlhood. The soft, defused treatment of the subject creates a Rousseauian image of the child at home within nature. While the depiction of the girl on the right with curly chestnut hair in a mop cap, a thick, pink sash around her waist and black lace gloves, is a clear reference to Millais 1879 painting *Cherry Ripe*, which in turn, referenced Joshua Reynolds's *Penelope Boothby* (1788) – entering *The Gossips* into a history of idealised depictions of femininity and childhood that anticipate the achievement of full womanhood.

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<sup>107</sup> Nead, Lynn “*The Magdalene in Modern Times: The Mythology of the Fallen Woman in Pre-Raphaelite*” *Oxford Art Journal*, 7:1, 1984, 26-37, 37.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>109</sup> Woodruff D. Smith, op. cit., 138.

Thomas Webster's *A Tea Party* (1862) [Fig. 4] depicts a similar scene of girls playing with a toy tea set. The younger children look on whilst the oldest girl pours what may be real tea, judging by the slices of cake or pie that will accompany it. The youngest girls learn from her performance, whilst in the background, an elderly relative takes her tea alone, and empty chairs allude to the absence of their parents, creating a narrative of time and the matriarchal passing of the mantle of head of the tea table. Webster creates an image of the process of feminine domestication, practised from an early age and quietly relinquished in old age. Although the interior is sparsely furnished, the family can clearly afford not only cake and tea, but also a few sparse luxuries such as ornaments and toys to enjoy in their small but cosy home. Webster was a member of the Cranbrook Colony which settled in rural Kent in the mid-1840s, an artistic group which claimed no intellectual platform but a shared interest in the themes of rural life and childhood. Webster engaged with his subjects as an outsider in a clearly visual and sentimental manner.<sup>110</sup> His image interprets these comforts of rural life from his privileged position as an artist from an aristocratic background, painting a bourgeois ideal of working-class life.

While united in morality, the depiction of these children clearly delineates their social background through their possessions. In these works, the morality of the tea table is not only articulated through the depiction of correct behaviours, but in the depiction of class-appropriate possessions that are suggestive of the cultivation of home and family with modestly aspirational social consciousness, rather than pecuniary excess.

In the previous century, tea drinking was jealously guarded by the middle classes and working-class tea drinkers were often criticised for aspiring to go beyond their social station. Dr Johnson, who himself took up to 40 cups a day claimed “tea is a liquor not proper for the lower classes of the people, as it supply’s [sic] no strength to labour or relief of disease, but gratifies the taste without nourishing the body.”<sup>111</sup> This argument is based more in class prejudice than health concerns, as it was known that the mild caffeine beverage of boiled, and therefore clean, water often taken with calorific sugar and calcium rich milk provided a perfect stimulating alternative to unhygienic water or the depressant effects of alcohol.

Leisure is, as Veblen famously pointed out, a classed concept, and conspicuous leisure was a marker of social power and pecuniary successes. Subsequently, the association between

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<sup>110</sup> Lambourne, Lionel. *'Victorian' Genre Painting From Wilkie to Frith*, Ipswich, 1982, 23

<sup>111</sup> Samuel Johnson and Arthur Murphy, *The Works of Samuel Johnson*, New York, 1837, 599

tea drinking and idleness was a common criticism in arguments against working-class tea drinking as it was seen as both damaging to their labour and socially inappropriate. Veblen claimed that a wife's conspicuous leisure was a key indicator of class and financial success and arguments about the inappropriateness of working-class tea drinking reflect this. Tea drinking was considered beneficial to the social development of upper-class women, but poisonous to the work ethic and social responsibility of working-class women. Simon Mason's 1745 book, *The Good and Bad Effects of Tea Considered* distinguished between the gendered implications of upper and lower-class use of tea, painting tea drinking within the upper classes in a positive light, describing the desirable health and social effects it has that suits this sort of lifestyle: to relax, encourage conversation and to and settle over-fed stomachs. In contrast, his account of working-class tea drinking described wives "neglecting their spinning, knitting and etc. Spending what their husbands are working hard for; their children are in rags gnawing a brown crust while these gossips are canvassing over the affairs of the whole town."<sup>112</sup> Mason's objection to working-class tea drinking doesn't just centre on the desire to protect middle-class fashion, or reveal a distaste for social aspiration but, as Kowalski-Wallace argues, seemed to suggest a fear that the tea table posed a threat to the status-quo, upsetting traditions of difference in the behaviours between the classes and deference to the behaviours of the upper classes.<sup>113</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century however, working-class tea drinking was not only accepted, but encouraged through its associations with the temperance movement in the 1830s which dictated a code of protestant ethics of the honour of work and the morality of sobriety. Being cheaper and more physically edifying than other alternatives to alcohol, such as ginger beer and lemonade, tea became the drink of choice for those promoting abstinence and was heralded as an icon of sobriety and respectability. However the tea table remained a classed space through markers of distinction in the forms of possession and behaviour.

Differentiations in the classed behaviours of the tea table are best seen in the practices of afternoon tea. By the nineteenth century, tea was firmly established as a part of day to day life in Britain. It was consumed throughout the day as in the previous century, but the ceremony of afternoon tea – which spread throughout the country in different forms – would formalise tea time, casting it as an indispensable part of the day. In the eighteenth and early

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<sup>112</sup> Simon Mason, *The Good and Bad Effects of Tea Considered*, 1745, London, 41-42

<sup>113</sup> Loc. cit.,

nineteenth centuries, tea was taken after dinner in wealthy households. But as the hours of dinner slipped later from mid-afternoon to early evening, people were often hungry in the afternoon, which is why in the 1840s, Duchess Anna Maria, wife of the 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford and friend of Queen Victoria, complained of having a sinking feeling at around four or five and called for tea and bread to be brought to her in her room – a tradition she continued, inviting guests and spreading this practice of taking tea with sandwiches and confectionery in the late afternoon and has subsequently been credited with popularising afternoon tea.<sup>114</sup> While high teas were still sometimes consumed after dinner, afternoon tea became the most popular and most ceremonial time.

Afternoon tea became a feature in the social lives of both the upper and the working classes and various forms of afternoon tea punctuated days of both labour and leisure. Veblen's claim that the articulation of leisure is the “most conclusive evidence of pecuniary strength” is particularly pertinent when differentiating between the traditions of tea in the working and middle classes.<sup>115</sup> For the upper classes the tea table was a forum of conspicuous leisure to display the material evidence of leisurely pursuits and of ceremonial observances. For the labouring-classes, the tea table also aspired to these social and material aspirations of pecuniary strength and social mobility. 'Visitors teas', for example were special occasions when the best tableware would be brought out and cakes and bread and butter would be served. However, unlike their wealthier counterparts, the working-class daily routine of afternoon tea was a more functional affair, usually accompanied by protein and carbohydrates rather than confectionery – a light meal of toast, cakes, eggs and tea to revive workers returning from the factory or the field. For poorer, often urban families, for whom there was not time to return home for lunch, the main meal of the day would be taken after work, known as high tea or meat teas, this would consist of cold cuts, potatoes, cheese, and bread accompanied by tea.<sup>116</sup> Working-class afternoon teas evoked binaries of work and rest. Serving as fuel for drudgery, rather than as a marker of leisure.

Tea came to function as a replacement for alcohol, and working-class tea drinkers were cast as holders of middle-class morality. The ideologies of middle-class tea consumption centred on ideals of moderation that positioned middle-class living as the correct medium between the excessive spending, conspicuous consumption and addictions of aristocracy, and

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<sup>114</sup> Jane Pettigrew, *The Social History of Tea*, London, 2001, 102

<sup>115</sup> Thorstein Veblen, *op. cit.*, 27

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 110



the supposed drunkenness and wasteful household management of the lower classes, whilst still avoiding self-denial.<sup>117</sup> This middle-class ideal was positioned as a mindful and restrained approach to economic, social and physical behaviours.

Increasingly, in the nineteenth century, working and middle-class tea drinkers were painted in formats that merged the refinement of the conversation piece with the pastoral ideology of genre painting – visually representing the socially transformative nature of tea. In genre images of rural workers, tea can be read as a symbol of moral behaviour, temperance, comfort, and the reward of small luxuries – engendering pastoral ideals of hard work and rest. Lynn Nead's 1984 essay “The Magdalene in Modern Times: The Mythology of the Fallen Woman in Pre-Raphaelite Painting” interprets George Elgar Hicks' 1857 painting, *The Sinews of Old England* [**Fig. 21**], in terms of a “timeless and natural rural” ideology.<sup>118</sup> Nead argues that the image of this family holding on to one another creates an image of unity, anchored to their home and land, like the ivy that spreads around them.<sup>119</sup> The flowering plants and the family's healthy appearance gives the impression of wholesomeness and fecundity.<sup>120</sup> The husband steps out of the home, whilst the wife leans into him and into the house, evoking the idealised gender roles Ruskin described in ‘Of Queen's Gardens’. Nead argues that the painting depicts a class-specific domestic ideology that reassures of a respectable working class that, though respectable, still differs from the middle classes.<sup>121</sup> She claims that the domestic ideology and the definition of class and gender were viewed as central to securing the nation's future and foundations.<sup>122</sup> In this painting, tea occurs as part of the domestic background where a table can be seen laid out with the morning tea things, while a Welsh dresser proudly displays a set of blue and white china. Hicks' idealised working-class family, positioned as the strength behind the nation's past and future, who breakfast on tea before a day's labour and proudly display their modest but tasteful collection of china. Timothy

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 74

<sup>118</sup> Lynn Nead, op. cit., 29

<sup>119</sup> Gill Perry analyses the symbolism of ivy in Victorian art as a metaphor of the idealised gender relationships where the patriarch is understood as an oak while the matriarch is an ivy. The ivy needs the oak in order to grow, while the ivy offers support to the oak when it is afflicted. (Gill Perry, *Gender and Art*, London and New Haven, Yale, 1999, 161.)

<sup>120</sup> Timothy Barringer, *Men at Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain*, Newhaven and London 2005, 30

<sup>121</sup> Lynn Nead, op. cit., 29

<sup>122</sup> Timothy Barringer, op. cit., 29

Barringer suggests that the man is a navvy, comparing his clothing to that of the navvy's depicted in Ford Madox Brown's 1862 – 1865 painting, *Work* [Fig. 22]. Barringer claims that this idealised depiction of a navvy and their family did not fit with common conceptions of the career as they were known for drunkenness, violence and promiscuity, while a navvy would be unlikely to be able to provide a full willow-pattern dinner service.<sup>123</sup> In contrast to this, Hicks' work seems to position the physical strength and labour of the father, alongside the domestic labour of the mother, as “the very bedrock of national prosperity”.<sup>124</sup> Realism is thus replaced by an idealism which, embroidered with realistic elements and rendered to a highly realistic finish, naturalises this fabricated family, seemingly validating this ideology.

Building on John Barrell's *The Dark Side of the Landscape: the Rural Poor in English Painting*, Christina Payne argues that it was believed that “Contentment was seen as the natural accompaniment to a set of [...] virtues that would help avert revolution: Piety, industriousness, and family affection.”<sup>125</sup> John Barrell argues that images of the “virtuous poor”, comfortable and content in their situations were prescriptive rather than descriptive and sought not only to edify the poor and assure the rich, but may also be viewed as an ideological statement ennobling rural labouring life.<sup>126</sup>

The late nineteenth century saw a shift in the audiences for art, moving away from a predominantly upper and upper middle-class audience due to the rise of the middle-class patron, the increasing role of museums and galleries in working and middle-class leisure consumption.<sup>127</sup> As well as the practices of publishing reproductions of popular paintings.<sup>128</sup> All of which increased the reach of artworks.

In 1861, William Holman Hunt painted his sister dressed like a member of the comfortable working classes with a simple dress and cameo brooch, holding up a blue and white teapot ready to pour, in a painting titled: *Honest Labour Has a Comely Face* [Fig.

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 30

<sup>125</sup> Christina Payne, *Toil and Plenty: Images of the Agricultural Landscape in England, 1780 – 1890*, New Haven and London, 1993, 31

<sup>126</sup> John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: the Rural Poor in English Painting*, Cambridge, 1983, 5

<sup>127</sup> Amy Woodson-Boulton, *Transformative Beauty: Art Museums in Industrial Britain*, Stanford, 2012, 13

<sup>128</sup> George P Landow, “Victorian Art Criticism and the Rise of a Middle-Class Audience” The Victorian web: <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/ruskin/finearts/criticism1.html>

23].<sup>129</sup> This class play of Hunt's sister, posing as an allegorical representation of a working woman, highlights idealised bourgeois conceptions of the labouring classes, and through the use of the word “comely” and the slightly ruddy flush of her cheeks characterises working women as of a personable nature, proper behaviour and as aesthetically pleasing – yet physically and materially different from the middle-class woman.

Both Hicks’ and Hunt’s paintings adopt the image of teawares within idealised depictions of the working classes and the nobility of labour but both images are fabricated engagements with these subjects mediated by bourgeois conceptions of social ideals. This association between tea drinking and “honest labour” has its roots in the temperance movement. In the mid-nineteenth century, 'work' became viewed as a moral category due to the popular philosophies of Thomas Carlyle and Samuel Smiles. Carlyle argued for the nobility of work and likens it to a religious act. Smiles wrote the hugely popular text *Self-Help*<sup>130</sup>. In this text, he emphasised the possibility for any member of society to raise their status through work and education giving examples of self-made men as aspirational icons.<sup>131</sup> His focus was not on financial success or social mobility, but on independence and character development.<sup>132</sup> Smiles’ ideas of the nobility of physical labour were aimed at reforming the ills of urban life, of bad habits and a lack of personal liberty within the working classes.<sup>133</sup> These ills were viewed as symptoms of industrial work and were therefore underlined with a nostalgia for the traditional and rural.

The temperance movement was predominantly championed by members of the middle classes, but the message of temperance was largely aimed at industrial workers, for it was a reaction to middle-class fears about the moral and physical impact of industrial urban living. The Temperance movement encouraged industrial workers to consume tea rather than alcohol in order to promote social reform within cities. However genre paintings rarely, if ever, depicted urban tea drinkers or the meat teas of factory workers. When considering this anomaly, Payne's interpretation of these works becomes particularly relevant: these works made for middle-class, domestic consumption, chose only to depict the comfort of tea and the nobility of temperance within traditional images of the rural working classes rather than producing images of industrial workers at rest. The image of urban workers evoked the

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129 Judith Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, London, 2006, 280

130 Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help: With Illustrations of Character and Conduct*, Cambridge, 1861

131 Asa Briggs, *Victorian People: A Reassessment of Persons and Themes*, 1851-67, Chicago, 1975, 117

132 Ibid., 119

133 Ibid., 124

growing fear of the effect of urban slums on the health and the social stability of the nation. The image of rural workers, however, suggested a harmonious and just social structure and placated the fears of the middle and upper classes, who were the consumers of these works.

For the commissioning classes, the middle-class ideal was articulated through the acutely programmed imaging of the self. The painted image of a family at tea indicated taste in terms of sobriety, correct behaviour and the possession of cultural capital. Later in his career, Hunt was commissioned by Thomas Fairbairn to paint two portraits: the first in 1873, a portrait of Fairbairn in front of South Kensington Museum, where he was commissioner for the International Exhibitions.<sup>134</sup> The second painting, commissioned a year later, was *The Children's Holiday* [Fig. 3]. In contrast to the formal portrait that emphasises his place in the professional world, *The Children's Holiday* resembles both a conversation piece and a genre painting. It depicts polite tea table behaviour designed to hang in a prominent stairway in the family home, as a coffee.<sup>135</sup> But it also presents an idealised image of countryside living and of childhood.

The depiction of Fairbairn's family similarly evokes pastoral and domestic ideals in the grounds of their countryside home enjoying the safety of the well-tended garden – a Ruskinian Eden removed from the family's industrial background. Mrs Fairbairn presides over the tea table, guiding and protecting ideologies of childhood and family. True to the rhetoric of separate spheres, the patriarch is represented by his absence which suggests he is working among the public sphere. Caroline Arscott argues that *The Children's Holiday* could be seen as a pendant to *The Awakening Conscience* [Fig. 24], which Fairbairn owned. She pairs the two as opposites in the imaging of Victorian femininity: the feminine ideal and its anti-type.<sup>136</sup> In the gaudy and vulgar interior of the fallen woman's apartment her possessions speak of conspicuous wealth. In contrast, the possessions of the Fairbairn family suggest the more middle-class 'curation' of the domestic sphere over time.

Fairbairn is recorded to have requested that *The Children's Holiday* resemble *Summertime, Gloucestershire* by James Archer [Fig. 25].<sup>137</sup> Archer's Image depicts a young

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<sup>134</sup> Judith Bronkhurst, op. cit., *Fruits of a Connoisseur's Friendship*, 594

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 593

<sup>136</sup> Timothy Barringer, *The Pre-Raphaelites: Reading the Image*, Yale, 1998, 96

<sup>137</sup> Judith Bronkhurst, op. cit., "Fruits of a Connoisseur's Friendship: Sir Thom Fairbairn and William Holman Hunt" 96

middle-class family relaxing in the countryside, huddled together, evoking visual harmony with their surroundings – creating a middle-class form of the pastoral ideal. The painting evokes the fashionable ideologies of the pastoral ideal implied by both the scene and the genre format. While the painting uses the visual language of genre painting usually associated with images of the labouring classes, the family are contrasted with the rural labourer in the background, whose depiction differs in terms of size, attire and depth of visual “harmony” as he blurs almost invisibly into the landscape, which reinstates their social superiority. This class play, like that seen in *Honest Labour has a Comely Face* highlights the somewhat aspirational qualities that the middle classes projected onto their concepts of working-class life, as a simple, fulfilling existence based around honest labour, nature and domestic comforts.

Tea and the ceremony of British tea drinking was a symbol of civilising and sanitising Asian products within British daily life – of both the exotic and the domestic. As discussed in chapter one, the material cultures of the tea table formed a marker of distinction that allowed the tea drinker to display taste, wealth and morality. The performative nature of the tea table and its associated values of morality and sobriety neutralized the political implications of the product and naturalised it re-framing it within a transcultural moment where imperial products are understood within the context of a liminal, middle-class, British morality.

The aggrandisement of the respectable working classes can be related to protestant notions of work and the projection of middle-class morality as the ideal moral culture of the nation and empire as a whole. This concept of the middle-class morality of the tea table served to justify the asymmetrical transcultural relations between the metropole of the British Empire and its colonies.

Visual codification of the tea table in the late nineteenth century is suggestive of a peaceful and unified Britain, alike in the morality of domesticity yet socially distinct, respecting established hierarchies of class. The assimilation of the tea table into the imaging of domesticity across the classes highlights the position of the British citizen within hierarchies of empire, where rich, poor, adult and child are all served by the labour of the colonised.

## All the Tea in China: Late Nineteenth-Century Advertising and the Visual Dissemination of an International National Icon.

This chapter considers the role the advertising boom of the second half of the nineteenth century played in the establishment of tea's status as an icon of Britishness. It will first consider how changes in advertising practice affected the tea market, before discussing the imagery used within these campaigns, followed by an analysis of the artistic status of these images and, finally, will argue that through multifaceted imagery within advertising that permeated the streets and homes of Britain, the visual definition of tea was solidified as an icon of Britishness.

Viscount G. J. Goschen was Chancellor of the Exchequer between 1887 and 1892 and also wrote *The Theory of the Foreign Exchanges*.<sup>138</sup> In one of his budget speeches whilst in office he claimed that the consumption of cocoa and other non-alcoholic drinks was directly created by mural advertising.<sup>139</sup> During this time, however, the continuing rise in tea consumption was also in direct correlation with the industrial innovations that contributed to the falling price of tea.<sup>140</sup>

Social critics such as Veblen argued that the demand for goods reflected acquisitiveness and aspiration to status rather than the satisfaction of needs. However, anthropologists have highlighted that the distinction between essential and non-essential needs is an oversimplification, as all needs other than those of survival are socially constructed and evolve historically.<sup>141</sup> With this in mind, it could be argued that, as a part of daily life, by 1855 tea was both a necessity and a luxury and was subsequently an established element of the expenditures of most households.<sup>142</sup> Therefore, marketing campaigns for tea

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<sup>138</sup> Viscount G. J. Goschen, *The Theory of the Foreign Exchanges*, London, 1861.

<sup>139</sup> Hamish Fraser, *The Coming of The Mass-Market 1850-1950*, London, 1982, 135

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 38

<sup>141</sup> Roy Church, "Advertising Consumer Goods in nineteenth-century Britain" in *Economic History Review*, 53:4, 2000, 624-625, op. cit., 635

<sup>142</sup> Church claims that "except for those living in or close to destitution, 'discretionary income' is a dubious concept which disregards the extent to which needs and wants were socially constructed in a process in which socio-economic and cultural environmental influences were important." (Roy Church, op. cit., 642)

did not need to convince the public to buy a new product, but functioned as a competitive tool in a widening market.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, manufacturers' advertisements were small and conformed to the column format of the publication and were confined to the back page of a few papers and periodicals. Often they were not illustrated, relying on headlines and small logos as illustration was largely confined to merchant hand-bills.<sup>143</sup> But by the mid-century, imagery took on a central role in advertising with the introduction of chromoxylography which allowed for multi-coloured, detailed newspaper prints. Brands such as Mazawattee Tea, Coleman's, Bovril and Pears became synonymous with their advertising campaigns, which used high art or sentimental, amusing images alongside the brand name and a slogan. Roy Church argues that these visually defined advertisements reacted to a public distaste for the verbose hyperbole and innuendo adopted in advertisements for patent medicines. He claims that to distance themselves from this, companies would rely on images rather than text.<sup>144</sup> This process was especially important in the advertising of tea, as early adverts for the product took on a similar format to those of patent medicines as it had been – as Horniman's still was – sold as a health drink.

However, Church's argument doesn't consider that most companies, including Horniman's, Bovril and Beecham's, would accompany their advertisements with text which did not entirely reject traditional modes of persuasive text, but side-lined them in favour of aspirational images. These images removed illiteracy boundaries and took advantage of the new pervasive forms of advertising – widening advertising's potential impact to include even the most underprivileged.

These images were disseminated in national and local newspapers throughout the country, and with the removal of stamp duty in 1855, increased in size and frequency. T. R. Nevett recognises this year as the beginning of an increasingly professional age in advertising, when growth in the market meant advertising agencies extended their function from the brokering of space to a wider, more creative role.<sup>145</sup> Most importantly, during this period the adoption of new printing techniques meant that these images became part of the landscape. From 1860 enamel signs could be seen on vehicles and in train stations throughout

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<sup>143</sup> Lori Anne Loeb, *Consuming Angels: Advertising and Victorian Women*, Oxford, 1994, 7

<sup>144</sup> Roy Church, *op. cit.*, 633

<sup>145</sup> Hamish Fraser, *op. cit.*, 138

the country: Mazawattee Tea had a long-standing contract with train companies to ensure that at least one of their enamel advertisements was displayed in every train station throughout the country.<sup>146</sup> Advertisements ranged from simple bold typographic advertisements, to illustrated, colour posters that were plastered on the walls of town and city alike, with the introduction of high quality lithography into the commercial advertising in 1870.<sup>147</sup>

Thomas Richards differentiates between the advertising practice of the first and second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>148</sup> He claims that before the 1850s, commodities were considered trivial and that the concept of a specifically capitalist form of representation would have previously been conceived as ludicrous, whereas in the latter half of the century commodities would hold a significant role in the global industrial economy. Richards attributes this significant change in attitude to the effect of the Great Exhibition of 1852, claiming that it “was conceived by a think tank expressly to become a sort of semiotic laboratory for the labour theory of value.”<sup>149</sup> Through the spectacle of objects from around the world, accompanied by little interpretation, it supplied a common denominator – a system of objects for the various things of the world, and through this “Capitalism was not only consolidating its hold over England economically but semiotically.”<sup>150</sup> Richards claims that the Great Exhibition “synthesised” the commodity spectacle as, visited by over six million members of the public from all walks of British life, here “social distinction seemed to reside not in persons but in things”.<sup>151</sup> In this context, the Great Exhibition could be seen as the largest and most nationally significant platform of this capitalist and imperialist approach to objects. Richards claims that it was through this spectacle that advertisers learned that the best way to sell the consumers products was to sell them the ideology of England: “from the national identity embodied in the monarchy to the imperial expansion taking place in Africa, from the many diseases threatening the national health to the boundaries separating class and genders” advertisers sold products through “an imaginary way of relating to a real world”.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Dianna James, *The Story of Mazawattee Tea*, Durham, 1996, 88

<sup>147</sup> Colta Ives "Lithography in the nineteenth-century". In *Heilbrunn Time line of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/lith/hd\\_lith.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/lith/hd_lith.htm) (October 2004) accessed: 08/12/2012

<sup>148</sup> Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle 1851 – 1914*, Stanford, 1990, 1

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 3

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 3

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 5

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 5



Roy Church has criticised Richards' argument, noting that it does not acknowledge the impact of political, technological, and social factors such as improvements in printing technologies, changing levels of living standards or industrial growth and the expansion of the empire on the increase in advertising in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>153</sup> Church's main criticism, however, is that Richards' evidence comes predominantly from advertisements published in the middle-class publication, the *Illustrated London News* and subsequently cannot represent the relationship between advertising and the working-class consumer.<sup>154</sup>

Richards also claims that a decade passed before the effects of the Great Exhibition were visible in marketing, and three further decades elapsed before working classes were "admitted" into consumer society and advertising affected their patterns of consumption.<sup>155</sup> He claims this was due to a lack of expendable income, ignorance of visual images on the part of the working classes and a disinterest in their patterns of consumption on the part of the advertiser. However working-class autobiographies and memoirs evidence the widespread power of imperialism.<sup>156</sup> Workers were likely to have access to newspapers and a small (although increasing) number of working-class families took daily newspapers.<sup>157</sup> Also, the visibility of public advertising, and the popularity of art galleries and printed copies amongst the working classes meant advertising was part of life throughout Britain. Numerous advertisements were also specifically aimed towards the labouring classes. Some, for example, utilised the material aspirations of the working classes by offering free gifts like prints of genre paintings.

Richards' claims that the Great Exhibition secured capitalism's hold over the nation semiotically, through a system of objects from around the empire that are unified in their value as objects, rather than different in their cultural diversity, highlights how the empire

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<sup>153</sup> Roy Church, op. cit., 629

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 630

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 629-630

<sup>156</sup> John M. MacKenzie op, cit., 3

<sup>157</sup> Between 1753 and 1854, the circulation of newspapers increased seventeen times, while the population quadrupled. (William Stead, *The art of advertising. Its theory and practice fully described*. London, 1899, 127) A 1848 study of a working-class parish in London of 1436 families, 616 had newspapers, a number which would have grown significantly after the drop in prices with the abolition of stamp duty. (op. cit., Hamish Fraser, 72)

was normalised within the home, through the consumption of these objects and the consumption of advertising.

Tea advertisements utilised orientalising motifs as well as images of aspirational domesticity and humour. But, in support of Richards' claim that the working classes were initially ignored by advertisers, the image of the working-class tea drinker, while prominent in genre painting, was infrequent in advertising, – arguably because the aspirational qualities of middle-class morality underpinned a more lucrative market. *High Caste Ceylon Tea* [Fig. 26 & 27] lampooned the social aspirations of the growing number of working-class tea drinkers, coupling their name “High Caste” with the image of a comic elderly working-class couple. The images acknowledge the association between tea drinking and working-class respectability forged by the temperance movement, whilst simultaneously caricaturing them. The treatment of the male figure borrows from a stereotype recognisable to readers of *Punch* of the red nosed working man, with a glazed bovine face and head stooped over a tankard of ale [Fig. 28] (bottom right).<sup>158</sup> Yet here the red nosed, toothless worker is happy and alert; the working-class tea drinker thus stands in sharp contrast to his ale-consuming counterpart.

Probably the most successful campaign featuring working-class tea drinkers was Mazawattee's famous *Old Folks at Home* [Fig. 29], which depicts a grandmother and granddaughter dressed in matching traditional clothes. In 1892, the advert was reproduced with the slogan: “Recalls the delicious teas of thirty years ago”, exploiting connotations of nostalgia and British heritage. The pair are depicted dressed in colourful clothing, the grandmother's sober black dress is contrasted by a vibrant yellow shawl and the girl's patterned dress merges into the clashing patterns of the table cloth and the miss-matched tea set. The lively and bright depiction of the subjects and their tea table stands in contrast to the dull, background of textured brown, which is suited to the advertising format, leaving space for text, but also creates a sense of both modesty and luxury – of simple surroundings with a few choice possessions similar to the scene of a grandmother and her granddaughters taking tea in Thomas Webster's *A Tea Party* [Fig. 4], discussed earlier. This depiction of the modest luxury of the working-class tea table corresponds with the class-specific coded material culture of the tea table. The European designed but miss-matching tea set depicted in this

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<sup>158</sup> Sally Mitchel (ed.) *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopaedia*, Oxford, 2011, 168

idealised image of a working-class tea table speaks of comfort and taste, but also of economic modesty.

The image is accompanied by a text describing the drawbacks of cheaper teas, claiming “Better by far to have one good cup of tea a week than insult our palates and ruin our tempers and digestion by drinking rubbish daily” and goes on to state: “The company had nothing whatever to do with common tea, [...] their great aim being to elevate the public taste for tea.” These comments highlight the concept of the discerning consumer, as distinguished from the commoner by a concern for quality despite the constraints of budget. This is suggestive of a working-class adoption of middle-class concerns as claims of economy and value would also appeal to the middle classes who took advice from domestic economy manuals and endeavoured to reduce day-to-day expenditure in order to sustain a publicly affluent lifestyle, a desire deemed acceptable, if not necessary, for the middle classes but undesirable in the working classes.<sup>159</sup>

When depicted in advertising, the working classes were usually depicted as clean, happy, attractive or amusing, and images of working-class tea drinkers cast them as respectable members of society, taking tea as a reward for hard work. As a respectable alternative to alcohol, tea advertising frequently depicted children or the elderly, or both, as in the case of Mazawattee's *Old Folks at Home* campaign which proved to be hugely popular and was used by the company intermittently for forty years.

Lori Loeb argues that advertising was predominantly aimed at women as they generally handled family budgets, which afforded them a degree of commercial power and control within the household.<sup>160</sup> Within this female focused advertising practice, Loeb identifies two narratives of material progress: the first is the adoption of images of moral progress within the private sphere, the second incorporates two contrasting key themes: celebratory images of moral restraint, pastoral simplicity, girlhood and old England; then on the other hand, she recognises the frequent use of images of provocative women.<sup>161</sup>

Exemplifying the first of these themes, the image of children taking tea was adopted in numerous campaigns utilising the sentimental appeal of images of children and the role of the tea table in children's social education, like both Webster's *A Tea Party* and Millais' *The*

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<sup>159</sup> Hamish Fraser, op. cit., 6

<sup>160</sup> Lori Anne Loeb, op. cit., 33

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 57.

*Gossips*. Akin to the latter, Lamasoora Tea advertised their brand with a Chinoiserie inspired image of a girl's tea party [Fig. 30], where three plump, rosy cheeked girls take tea. The girls rehearse their adult roles at the table, neatly and politely serving and taking tea and passively receiving the gaze of the viewer. Horniman's used a similar image [Fig. 31] in which three girls play act different age and class roles, one girl playing an elderly servant pouring tea for a stiffly postured girl in the role of a lady and another girl as her guest. Advertisements depicting women together also contain similar classed and aged themes such as Mazawattee's image subtitled "Matrons who toss the cup and see the grounds of fate in the grounds of tea" [Fig. 32] which plays on the novelty of tea leaf reading, casting their superstitious "matrons" as eccentrics surrounded by mystical steam that rises from the spout and their out-dated handless cups.

Another regular trope among tea advertisements representing women is the depiction of beautiful young women at tea or making tea as objects of visual pleasure. Mazawattee's advert, taken from G. Sheridan Knowles' painting *Bosom Friends* [Fig. 33] of 1892, depicts two young women, posed angled away from the table offering the audience a largely unobstructed view of the subjects, whilst they talk in a way that excludes the viewer, positioning audiences as voyeurs spying on a private moment.

One Horniman's advert [Fig. 34] uses *tromp de l'oeil*, depicting its female subject leaning out of the frame to a tea table laid with one extra cup, creating a sense of accessibility. Advertising agents were likely to be aware that the image of a beautiful woman would sell a product, but these campaigns did not only utilise the sexual appeal of their subjects but rather the long established association with woman's duty at the tea table and the influences of femininity. The reliance on this association is best illustrated in Lamasoora Tea's advert which contains no image or text referring to tea, but merely a photograph of a woman looking coyly at the viewer [Fig. 35], with information about the product on the back. The choice of a photograph for this campaign makes clear that the central concern of the advertising designer was the subject's visual appeal. These images sell products to women through male fantasies of the feminine ideal, but the commercial success of these campaigns suggests that women readily accepted this and, Loeb argues, were swayed by these images of feminine power and of feminine sexual expression which was usually publicly repressed.<sup>162</sup>

The most prominent woman to feature in tea advertisements was, of course, Queen Victoria who featured in the nationalistic campaigns of the Victoria Tea and United Kingdom

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<sup>162</sup> Lori Loeb, *op. cit.*, 2

Tea Company (UKTC). Advertisements frequently utilised the Queen's dual identity as a political figure and as a wife and mother.<sup>163</sup> One Horniman's image of Queen Victoria places her in a political situation with the Prime Minister, but Florence Nightingale is also in attendance [Fig. 36], highlighting the combination of Victoria's political and feminine duties of care, and alluding to the perceived role of tea as a civilising agent, representing strength of nationhood via strength of home.

The depiction of men in tea advertising was much less frequent than that of women and where depicted, they usually represented political and allegorical figures or historic figures. Where contemporary European men were taken up as the central subject of a campaign, they rarely occupied domestic spaces but were represented in the international or public spheres. In this vein, a United Kingdom Tea Company advert of 1890 depicts the meeting between H. M. Stanley and Emin Pasha [Fig. 37]. This encounter, which is usually represented as a formal exchange, is shown here as a polite and friendly moment over tea. Stanley proclaims that a cup of tea “makes us forget all our troubles” and Pasha replies “so it is my boy” positioning the role of tea in the masculine, political sphere as a civilising agent capable of bringing refined, British domestic ideals into the international sphere. Likewise Twining's advertisement of around 1900 depicts John Bull in a motorcar full of tea traversing a globe [Fig. 38], using scale to suggest the conquering powers of the tea industry and to advertise the international status of their brand. The depiction of men in tea advertising almost exclusively represents political and allegorical figures. The few examples contrary to this are High Caste Ceylon Tea's caricatured working-class tea drinkers, and one Lamasoora advert [Fig. 39] where the men take up as little of the pictorial space as possible to ensure focus on the woman serving them.

In a similar image of imperial strength, a United Kingdom Tea Company advert first published in *The Graphic* around April 1894, shows Britannia sitting at a port with ships in the distance. At her makeshift tea table she sits on a chest emblazoned with the company's logo: a classical triumvirate representing English, Scottish and Indian femininity [Figs. 40]. She pours tea from a tea set consisting of a neoclassical silver kettle and a United Kingdom Tea Company-branded round cottage teapot and a simple, handled cup. Representing the tea trade, Britannia is attended by men representing Assam, Ceylon, and India, who carry crates

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 85

of tea as an offering to her, as well as ships for transporting this cargo which can be seen in the background.

The depiction of Britannia and of her porters closely mirrors elements of Walter Crane's *The Imperial Federation Map Showing the Extent of the British Empire* of 1889 [Fig. 41], which was also published in *The Graphic*.<sup>164</sup> Crane's image unites the allegorical figures of people and animals representing both the nationalities of the British Empire and classical culture, all of whom are united under the banners of "Freedom", "Fraternity" and "Federation". Felix Driver states that the image:

Seems to encapsulate the culture of high Victorian imperialism in a single iconic image conjoining the infrastructure of empire (represented by the statistics of trade and by the lines connecting major ports of call) and imperial fantasy (especially the use of statuesque human bodies, flora and fauna around its crowded margins to denote whole continents, races and landscapes).<sup>165</sup>

The advert, published in the same newspaper eight years later, depicts Britannia similarly in repose, while the labouring figures, especially the Indian porter, echo the image of the porter to the left of Britannia in the imperial Federation Map. Both porters are dressed only to the waist with their backs bent from labour, contrasting the air of sensual repose of Britannia and the rest of her imperial subjects.

One of the key differences between the two images of Britannia is that the labour of empire becomes significantly more visible in the United Kingdom Tea Company advert. While the *Imperial Map* shows only one character at work, the labour of the tea trade is a much more visible presence. Britannia's throne is also different here, for while she sits on the globe in the *Imperial Map*, here she sits on a company branded crate. Like the female subjects that boarder the map, the women of United Kingdom Tea Company's logo are similarly stereotyped and idealised representatives of the empire. In this logo, the United Kingdom Tea Company represents itself with a classical arrangement of women representing English, Scottish and Indian femininity.<sup>166</sup> These characters stand in contrast to the labouring, foreign,

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<sup>164</sup> The map has been attributed by Pippa Biltcliffe as the work of Walter Crane, due to the mark of a crane and his initials, with which he signed his work. (Pippa Biltcliffe, "Walter Crane and the Imperial Federation Map Showing the Extent of the British Empire (1886)" *Imago Mundi*, 57:1, 2005, 63-69, 64)

<sup>165</sup> Felix Driver, "In Search of The Imperial Map: Walter Crane and the Image of Empire", *History Workshop Journal*, 69, 2010, 146-157, 49

<sup>166</sup> Although the Indian woman looks suspiciously Caucasian.

male subjects shown in the scene, gendering the labour of the empire as male and the pleasures of the tea table as female.

In the background of the UKTC image of Emin Pasha and H. M Stanley, African labourers can similarly be seen dressed to the waist, carrying crates of tea, mirroring the image of Britannia and subsequently homogenising African and Asian people in their service to the tea trade. Tim Youngs connects the imperial labourers in this image to the accompanying text that refers to the company's role supplying the house of commons – and also to the claim that it can be “delivered to any address carriage paid”, which links every citizen to the international network put in place facilitating the individual British desire for tea.<sup>167</sup>

The notion of an empire of labourers serving the British tea table is also depicted in another UKTC advert showing a reclining middle-class British woman who has fallen asleep at the tea table, unaware of the audience's gaze or of the miniature Chinese labourers who are clambering over the heavy furniture and fashionable European made tea set, and over the woman herself, to bring tea to her table [Fig. 42]. These labourers are directed by imperialists in dark suits, hats and, in one case, even carrying an umbrella. The naive depiction of the chaotic and caricatured figures is in contrast to the serene and delicate chiaroscuro effect on the face of the woman, further emphasising the distinction between their manic labour and her repose. Unlike Britannia, who pours tea whilst awaiting the delivery, the angel of the house is blissfully unaware that she is at the centre of this labour and is visually distanced through tonal contrasts separating her from the foreign labour that brings tea to her table. The image addresses the role of the Other who enters British homes through imperial commodities, highlighting the dependency of British domestic comforts upon foreign labour. However, this relationship is not positioned as a cause for concern but as a form of superiority in a visualisation of commodity fetishism where the British tea table is served by hundreds of ‘little’ Chinese workers.

The UKTC explicitly embraced the imperial and national identities of its product in name and imagery, as well as in practice, as the company traded in both Indian and Chinese tea. In doing so, it had to reconcile its brand identity with the increasing unpopularity of Chinese tea. The company logo represents a tea trade based around the territories of the

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<sup>167</sup> Tim Youngs, *Travelers in Africa: British Travelogues 1850 – 1900*, Manchester, 1994, 76

empire, excluding China from its visual representations of the tea trade. Like the United Kingdom Tea Company logo, a representative of China is also absent from Mazawattee Tea's advert of 1900 captioned "1,000 million cups of tea: one cup of delicious Mazawattee tea for every man woman and child in the world". As the caption suggests, this image depicts allegorical representatives from nationalities both within and outside of the British Empire. However, a representative of China, despite tea's Chinese origins, is excluded from this conceptual 'empire of tea'.

In popular discourse, the Chinese – who, before the conflicts of the nineteenth century, had been respected in the Europe for their long history and for their arts and culture – were lampooned in the press as dirty, lazy and dishonest.<sup>168</sup> These stereotypes were perpetuated by concerns about the security and sanitation of Chinese tea during the first half of the century. Numerous newspaper articles, essays and advertisements in the popular press sensationalised the findings of scientific studies which suggested Chinese tea imports were frequently cut and laced with poisonous colour.<sup>169</sup> Tea companies, therefore, took to advertising the purity of their tea.

Erika Rappaport claims that Horniman's differentiated itself from other brands in 1826 by beginning to supply their teas pre-packaged, reacting to fears rife in consumer society surrounding the adulteration of food – concerns which threatened to impact the sales of tea.<sup>170</sup> Packaging allayed the consumer's fears by seemingly creating a barrier between the consumers and the putatively fraudulent practices of Chinese exporters and domestic retailers.<sup>171</sup>

Horniman's continued to sell China tea but used the stimulated fears of adulteration in order to differentiate the brand through hygienic packaging and by supplying it to chemists rather than grocers, which created an association between the product and health. Horniman's also continued to use the image of plantation workers [**Fig. 43**], as well as elements of Chinoiserie and Japonisme [**Fig. 44**] which were almost interchangeable in their advertising.

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<sup>168</sup> Catharine Pagani, "Chinese Material Culture and British Perceptions of China in the Mid-nineteenth Century", in Timothy Barringer & Tom Flynn (eds.), *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, Oxford, 1998, 28

<sup>169</sup> Erika Rappaport, "Packaging China: Foreign Articles and Dangerous Tastes in the Mid-Victorian Tea Party" in F. Trentmann (ed.), *The Making of the Consumer Knowledge, Power and Identity in the Modern World*, New York, 2005, 132

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 133

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 132



Despite increasing British control over trade with China following the final Anglo-Chinese war ending in 1860, fears about adulteration were ever-present and as a result, the produce of south Asia, where tea growth and distribution were controlled by Western expatriates, became increasingly popular.<sup>172</sup> Tea companies subsequently had to reconcile their brand identity with the decreasing popularity of China tea and the image of China and the Chinese in late nineteenth-century advertising appealed to nostalgia or the exoticism of Chinoiserie. A United Kingdom Tea Company advert of 1894 represents a pony-tailed Manchu man delicately and almost femininely pouring his tea, bearing his shaved head as he does so, in a gently satirical image of Chinese masculinity [Fig. 45]. The Chinese scene appeals to a taste for Chinoiserie which, despite facing vacillations in fashions since the eighteenth century, had regained a degree of popularity in its association of Japan and the Aesthetic movement as discussed in chapter one.

Another advert of the same year depicts a gleeful and glutinous Samuel Pepys drinking his first cup of tea in 1660 [Fig. 46], exclaiming: “I did send for a cup of tee (a China Drink) of which I had never drank before.” The image appeals to a nostalgic and exoticising view of China as well as evoking narratives of tea drinking within British heritage. These nostalgic Orientalising advertisements also stand out amongst tea advertising of the time, as they are both individual, domestic male portraits, and both make comparatively clear allusions to the drinking of tea: Pepys holds the steaming cup and saucer to himself with his right hand poised to raise the cup, and the image of the Manchu tea drinker are rare examples where tea itself is visible, rather than just being represented metonymically by a tea set. These physical references to tea and the physical act of tea drinking were usually absent from the sanitised, practices of advertising which dissociated the civilised ideologies of tea – based around etiquette and beautiful tea sets – from the association with the physical act of consumption. Both of these images of unrefined and ungainly tea drinking make light humour of tea consumption before or outside of the civilising influences of its British domestication and in doing so, strongly contrast the United Kingdom Tea Company's images of the restrained and refined tea tables of nineteenth-century Britons, highlighting how they were cast as civilised as opposed to the indulgent past and the unrefined “Other”.

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 125

The predominant mode of tea advertising exemplified the ideologies of the civilising influence of the feminine, domestic sphere of the British tea table at the moral centre of the empire. As both imperial and domestic, tea advertising unifies the two narratives of material progress, since tea connoted moral as well as industrial and imperial progress. The idea of material progress was inextricably linked with the industrial aspirations for choice, variety, surplus and excess: a world of commodities to be bought. This surplus increased competitive pressure and contributed to the development of a more sophisticated system of advertising, in which brands and advertising agents acknowledged the power of the image within commercial culture. This specifically capitalist form of representation was indebted to the visual language of art in order to communicate ideologies; using genre themes to create a sense of heritage, pastoral virtue and Orientalism to engender notions of exoticism and novelty – as well as to disguise behaviours too risqué for contemporary subjects.<sup>173</sup>

The relationship between the visual language of advertising design and fine art can be seen in various forms throughout tea advertising. This interrelation is also reiterated in the increasing frequency of the depiction of tea in painting in the second half of the nineteenth century, which followed the advertising boom in 1855. However, the nature of advertising practices meant that the creators of these works used usually remained anonymous, meaning that the image is seamlessly assimilated into the concept of the brand.<sup>174</sup> These images therefore cannot be assessed within the body of work of an artist or artistic group, but must be considered in the context of wider advertising and artistic practices.

Horniman's tea kept no record of the artists or where and when each advertisement was printed.<sup>175</sup> All that remains of their advertising process is a book listing decades of daily records of which publications were running a Horniman's Advertisement, and a huge tome-like scrap book of details taken from designs in progress, established Horniman's advertisements, original sketches of prospective advertisements, other companies' advertisements and even print blocks. This volume has few annotations and no dates, artists' names or discussions of the images. It is unclear whether this collection was kept by employees of Horniman's or by their advertising agent, Thomas Browne. In either case, it

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<sup>173</sup> Lori Loeb, *Op. Cit.*, 64

<sup>174</sup> Excluding a few notable examples such as Mazawattee's adoption of G. Sheridan Knowles RI's painting *Bosom Friends*, which is labelled at the bottom on the advert. Even the most famous examples of advertising adopting high art images: Pears use of Millais *Bubbles*, does not credit the artist on the advert itself.

<sup>175</sup> Similarly, Dianna James, heir to Mazawattee and author of *The Story of Mazawattee Tea* claims that the name of the artist who painted *Old Folks at home* has been lost. (Dianna James, *op. cit.*, 5)

suggests an ad-hoc approach to the development and documentation of the company's advertising.

The imagery is collected together from a number of sources, one recognisable example is a cutting from *The Graphic's* publication of Walter Crane's *The Imperial Federation Map Showing the Extent of the British Empire* [Fig. 47], which suggests that, like the United Kingdom Tea Company, they saw the commercial potential of Crane's image. The elements of the image are crudely executed fragments of what seems to be a design for Horniman's 1882 almanac that is pieced together within the book [Figs. 48 and 49]. Their translation of the image depicts a British woman, rather than Britannia, leaning on a globe that is printed with one of the company's logos: "Known in all parts of the world". She is similarly surrounded by representations of the colonised populace and allegorical classical figures.

The image that cites Crane is set within a composition of images that includes Chinese tea growers with plantations in the background, an image of the *camellia sinensis* plant, two images inspired by Eastern print culture depicting a swallow and a ship, as well as willow pattern china. Unusually, within these cups tea leaves are visible and are made to spell out the words "with best wishes". This almanac, depicting the tea plant and its cultivation as well as its shipping, not to mention the rare image of used tea leaves, all overlooked by the figures of empire referencing *The Imperial Federation Map*, create a dialogue of the logistics of tea trade – from its beginnings as a plant in the hills of China, to the dregs at the bottom of a British cup – and is one of very few examples of British art or advertising that show the latter. Like *The Imperial Federation Map*, it frames the logistics of empire with ideological and placative messages of unity, under the banner "never despair".

According to the dating of the image, this design was made in 1882, two years before the publication of the United Kingdom Tea Company's advert that mirrors Crane's image, suggesting that Horniman's reference was taken from the original, highlighting the company's direct engagement with fine art. It is unclear whether this design was ever finished and published, so it cannot be ascertained whether the United Kingdom Tea Companies engagement with this image was also unmediated by other advertising sources. However, these references highlight the significant impact that Crane's image had on the imaging of the empire.

In 1876, Horniman's advertising agent, Thomas Browne went on to establish one of the largest advertising agencies of the nineteenth century, T. B Browne, which created iconic

campaigns for brands like Cadbury and Pears.<sup>176</sup> Despite the ad-hoc approach to advertising practices at Horniman's, T. B Browne published a book in 1899 entitled: *The Art of Advertising. Its Theory and Practice Fully Described*. The author, William Stead, wrote on the artistic importance of advertising and wove tales of how late nineteenth-century advertisers found inspiration for their images.<sup>177</sup> Stead placed much emphasis on the social and artistic impact of advertising on society, claiming:

The future of English art depends more upon the designer of trade advertisements, than upon the whole body of Royal Academicians [...] The Academy, the National Gallery, and other institutions, although open to all, in reality belong to a privileged few. These great institutions do not appeal to the inhabitant of an East End slum. He never enters them; they consequently teach him nothing. It is not from them that he obtains any sense of colour or design.<sup>178</sup>

Despite this high opinion of the importance of advertising as an art form, Stead did not name the artists who created these works – even in the case of Millais' famous *Bubbles*, which he described as the commissioning of a “Royal Academician to paint a picture which could be utilised as an advertisement for a popular soap.”<sup>179</sup> This dismissal may be due to the onus Stead placed on the role of the advertising agent, stressing their extensive market and company research and describing the importance of their work:

One of the most interesting chapters in the history of the nineteenth century, when it comes to be written, will be that describing the services of Advertising Agents as empire-builders. Commerce even more than sentiment binds the ocean-sundered portions of the empire together.<sup>180</sup>

Stead considered the role of advertising in commercial globalisation to be the noble cause of the advertising agent. He also detailed the role of the artist: “The firm constantly employs a number of artists. They have rooms to themselves, where they can work at their ease either with brush or with pencil.”<sup>181</sup> In the discussion of advertising and empire building, the creators of these works are relegated to the status of employees while the creative and ideological power is invested in the agent.

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<sup>176</sup> Liz McFall, *Advertising: A Cultural Economy*, California, 2004, 112

<sup>177</sup> Unfortunately, he does not elaborate on the creative process behind any tea company campaigns.

<sup>178</sup> William Stead, op. cit., 95

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, 100

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 54

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 64

Whilst little is known about these artists, these authorless works show an awareness of fine art and the visual languages of art history. The designs include appropriations of Chinese culture as discussed above, as well as Japanese subjects and aesthetics [Fig. 50] utilising block colour, as well as horizontal and vertical lines. Another image in the book references classical subjects, an almanac design of 1880 [Fig. 51], depicts an allegorical figure of a female painter, possibly Minerva, god of war as well as the arts and wisdom, or possibly a muse. The figure is surrounded by cherubs, on the bottom left, what seems to be a young Mercury, god of commerce and on the right Vulcan, god of fire, metal work and stonemasonry and a symbol in the stonework also seems to refer to masonry. The combination of these subjects could be viewed to create a dialogue of progress and empire-building.

Among Horniman's published advertisements, a number of campaigns created dialogues between their products and nineteenth-century artistic culture and high fashions – a practice also visible in Cullen's advert reminiscent of art nouveau lithography [Fig. 52]. Similarly, another Horniman's advert [Fig. 53] adopts a flat mixture of printed textures referencing formal styles of Japanese print culture and subsequently Aestheticist tastes for this. Aestheticism is further referenced through the patterned wall-paper and tea dress of the figure. Poster design in both England and France was influenced by the use of bold colour taken from the Aesthete and Impressionist adoption of formal qualities of Japanese print.<sup>182</sup>

A further Horniman's advert depicts a happy, attractive working-class woman leaning out through the window [Fig. 54], which could be compared to George Elgar Hicks' *The Sinews of Old England* of 1857. In the advert, the female figure similarly has her sleeves rolled up from work and hovers on the boundaries of an ivy-clad house. Inside the house Hicks has detailed the interior with a dresser displaying blue and white china. The advert evokes the idealised domestic rural life of *The Sinews of Old England*, but in the advertisement, the tea set comes to the fore and the figure seems to welcome someone with tea, reversing Hicks' depiction of the labourer leaving his morning tea to go to work: The Horniman's image depicts an inviting scene on return from the field, evoking the binaries of labour and leisure, work and rest.

The contrast between the different styles of image shows the diversity of Horniman's approach to advertising – one image attempts to position its subject as an attainable

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<sup>182</sup> Lionel Lambourne, op. cit., 54

companion at an idealised tea table, whilst the other depicts an almost emblematic figure representing the position of tea within Aestheticist sentimentalities. But what is constant in these images, and in Horniman's advertising oeuvre in general, is an engagement with the traditions of visual representation, borrowing from nineteenth-century art as well as from traditions of genre painting, the conversation piece, Chinoiserie, and Japonisme. Mazawattee Tea's campaigns were similarly diverse, ranging from the humorous and sentimental of *Old Folks at Home* which echoes stereotypes of cartoon culture, to the appropriation of high art in *Bosom Friend* which includes a credit to the painter, G Sheridan Knowles. These varying approaches illustrate how both Horniman's and Mazawattee held their large market shares and broadened their audiences by positioning their product as part of low and high culture, consequently appealing to both working class and bourgeois taste.

These advertisements were created by middle-class manufacturers and advertising agents with commercial interests in the empire, but they were pitched to a cross-class audience, meaning that imperial and middle-class values were disseminated among working-class consumers which, I would argue, contributed to the continuing association between tea and middle-class values – despite its non-class-specific consumption at this time – and to the association between tea and Britishness. Competing within a growing industry, these images became part of the landscape of the country, feeding aspirational ideals to British consumers and embedding the symbolic meaning of an everyday commodity with ideologies of race, gender, and class.

## Conclusion

In 1882, Arthur Reed, author of *Tea and Tea Drinking*, described tea as the “national drink”.<sup>183</sup> By this time tea, a product of China that was grown across the empire, had been assimilated into concepts of Britishness. Through visual and material culture, foreign goods such as tea were assimilated in an historical process which uprooted their understanding, relocating it within a framework of British ideology to create a transcultural moment. Studying the visual material culture of tea in the second half of the nineteenth century highlights this capacity of Britain to assimilate the culture and labour of the Other, not just politically, but also domestically and aesthetically.

The visual coding of tea was predominantly defined within traditions of conversation and genre painting, within which the behaviours and material culture of the tea table served as a marker of distinction. Following the advertising boom in the middle of the nineteenth century, a cross-fertilisation between advertising and painting mutually defined and disseminated a visual language of tea which mediated its foreign origins. The imagery of tea imbued the foreign product with moral ideologies which were defined by, and in turn defined, concepts of Britishness. This projection of middle-class morality and correct behaviour onto tea drinking, created the idea of an ideologically unified Britain.

By studying primary sources on advertising, I have found that advertising agents were consciously aware of the impact of advertising on the empire as a whole and that these concerns were a conscious element in the decisions they made. Stead describes advertising agents as “empire-builders” and argues the historic significance of their role.<sup>184</sup> True to his prediction, historians of the last twenty years, such as Richards and Loeb have analysed the way advertising communicated ideologies of empire. Similarly, tea historians such as Fromer and Smith have analysed how in the nineteenth century, tea held numerous connotations reflecting the social concerns of the time, including ideologies of empire. These studies analyse how, through these ideologies, tea came to be viewed as an icon of Britishness.

Developing these two forms of analysis – the history of tea and of advertising – within an art historical framework has revealed the significance of imagery in encrypting

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<sup>183</sup> Arthur K Reade, *Tea and Tea Drinking*, London, 1882, 15

<sup>184</sup> William Stead, *op. cit.*, 54

imperial commodities with their own ideological identity in the context of ideological identities of Britishness.

Studying the concept of tea as the British national drink has highlighted that the concept of Britishness, and of the British Empire, as an identifiable characteristic is a construction based in further artificial constructions of class, gender and race. It also casts light on how the ideological assimilation of imperial products were mediated by visual and material culture.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw a proliferation of images of tea following the advertising boom and the frequent imaging of tea within painting. These pervasive images of codified tea scenes normalised the domestic assimilation of an imperial product, repeated daily through consumption both physically and through the consumption of imagery. These images and objects cast light on the inter relations of visual culture, colonialism and economy, whilst also highlighting how notions of Britishness were constituted in the context of these. By analysing the visual culture of an imperial product, the art historian may understand how narratives of empire and nation were shaped by the interrelation between visual languages of fine art and advertising, which mutually contributed to the definition and dissemination ideology.



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- Victoria Wood's Nice Cup of Tea, BBC One first aired Wednesday 10th April 2013, 21:00 (part one) and Thursday 11th April 2013, 21:00 (part two)

**Fig. 1** - Johannes Zoffany, *John, Fourteenth Lord Willoughby de Broke, and his Family at Tea*, oil on canvas, c. 1766, 125 x 100 cm, The Getty Museum, Los Angeles

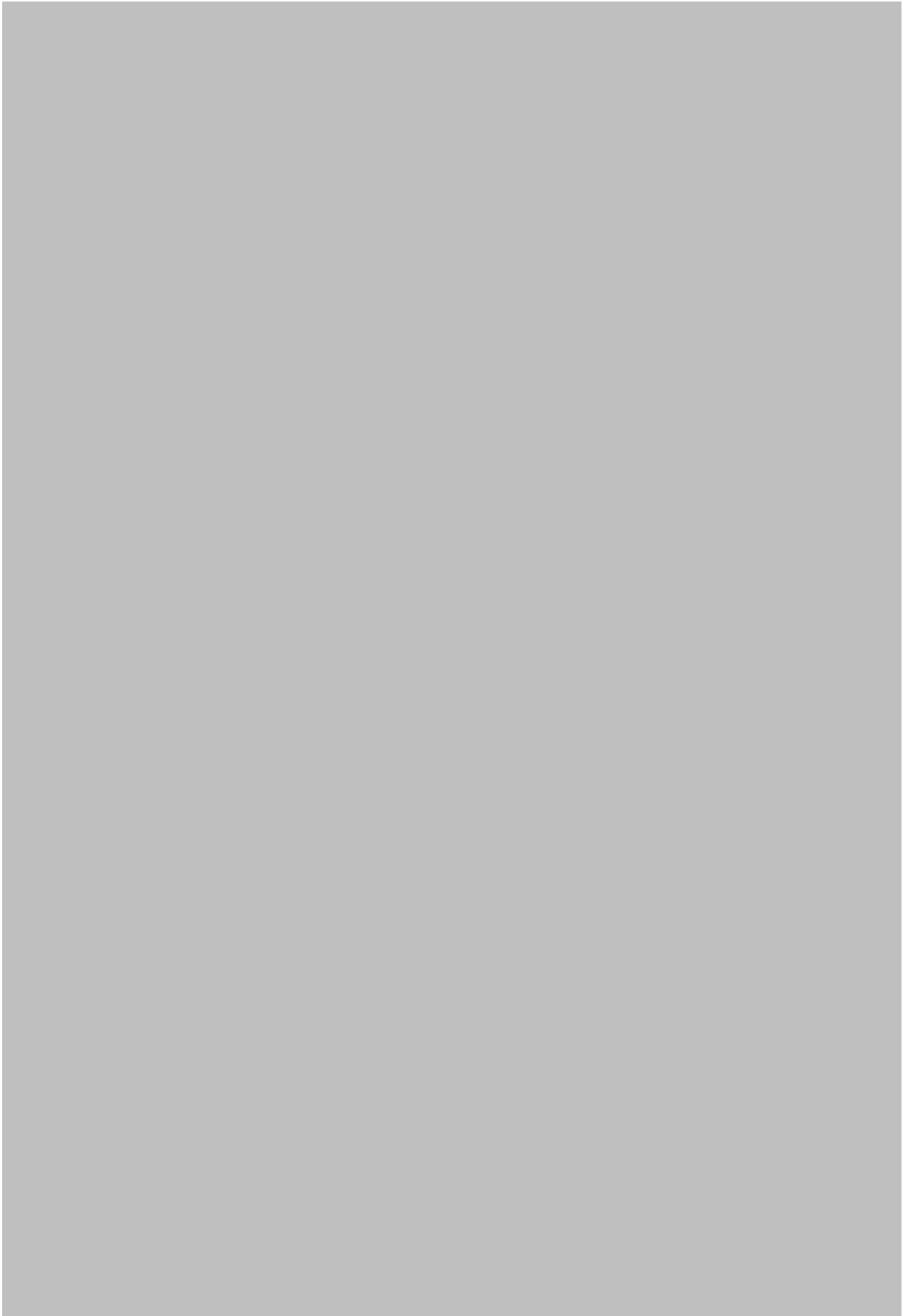


**Fig. 2** - John Everett Millais, *Afternoon Tea or The Gossips*, oil on canvas, 1889, dimensions unknown, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Canada





**Fig. 3** - William Holman Hunt, *The Children's Holiday*, oil on canvas, 1864 – 65, 213 x 146 cm, Torre Abbey Historic House and Gallery, Torquay



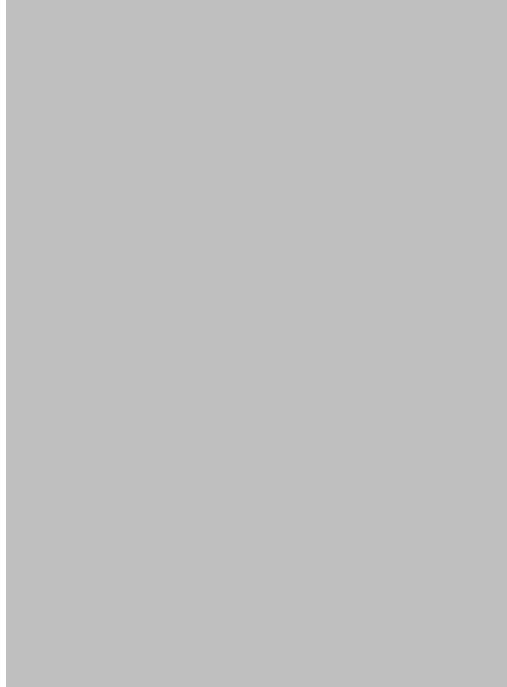
**Fig. 4-** Thomas Webster, *A Tea Party*, oil on canvas, 1862, 50.8 x 61 cm, Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston



**Fig. 5 -** Anonymous, *Man and Child Drinking Tea*, oil on canvas c. 1720, 71.1 x 62.6 cm, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg



**Fig. 6** – Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (detail), oil on panel, c. 1490 – 1510, 220 x 389 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid



**Fig. 7** - Robert Cruickshank, *A Tea Party or English Manners and French Politeness*, etching, 1735, 16 x 12.2 cm, the British Museum, London



**Fig. 8** - James Gillray, *Anti-Saccharites or John Bull and His Family Leaving off the Use of Sugar*, Hand coloured etching, 1792, 31.3 x 39.7cm, The British Museum



**Fig. 9** - Longton Hall porcelain factory, Teapot, Soft-paste porcelain, painted in enamels, c. 1755-1760, 11.43 cm (diameter), The Victoria and Albert Museum, London



**Fig. 10** - Wedgwood, Teapot with a portrait of John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, Lead-glazed earthenware transfer-printed with black enamel, c. 1775, 14.3 x 13 cm, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London



**Fig. 11** - Daniel Smith and Robert Sharp, George III Silver Tea Caddy, 1760, 15.2cm, Private collection



**Fig. 12** - Elijah Mayer & Son, Teapot, Stoneware, c. 1800, 11.4 x 10.8 cm, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London



**Fig. 13** - William Morris, *Wandle*, Indigo-discharged and block-printed cotton, c. 1884, 160.1 x 96.5 cm, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London

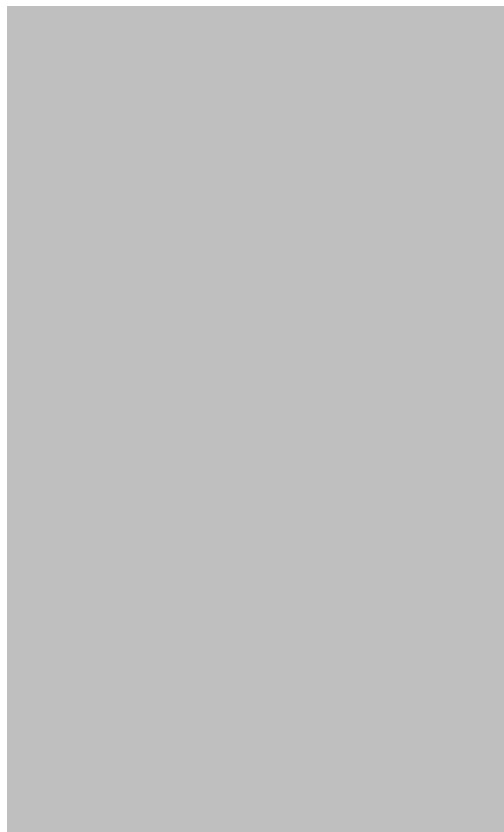


Fig. 14 – Royal Worcester, tea set, china, c. 1880, tray 50.8 x 33.02 cm, private collection



**Fig.15** - Oomersi Mawji, tea set, silver, c.1880, 16.5 x 13.6, The Victoria and Albert Museum,  
London



**Fig. 16** - Christopher Dresser for Hukin & Heath, Travelling tea set, Gilt and silver-plated white metal, split bamboo, leather-covered wood with velvet and glazed cotton linings, c. 1879, teapot 8.9 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

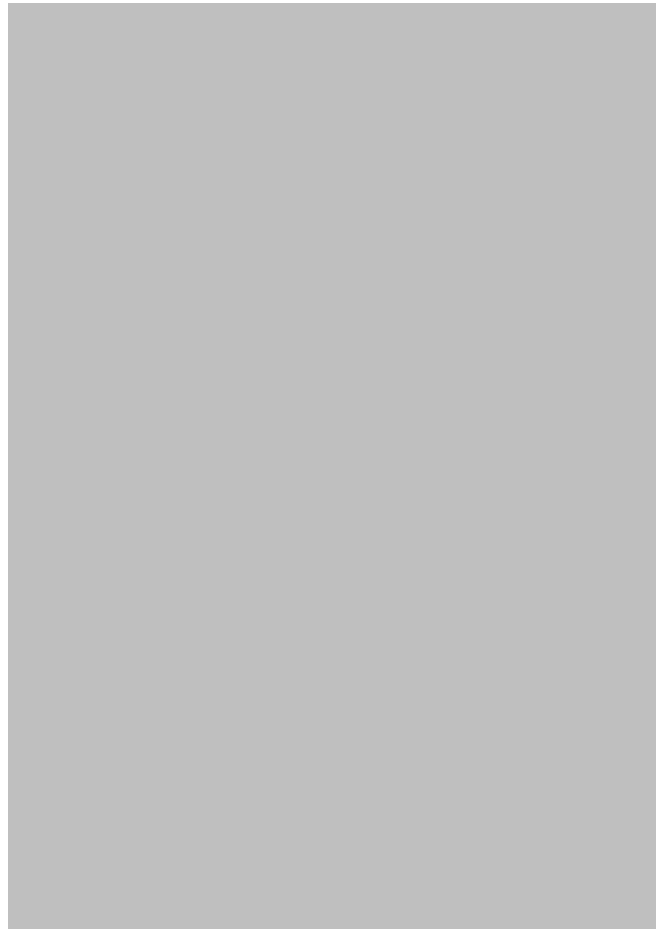


**Fig.17** - Royal Worcester, Teapot and Sucrier, porcelain, 1874, teapot 14.5 cm, private collection

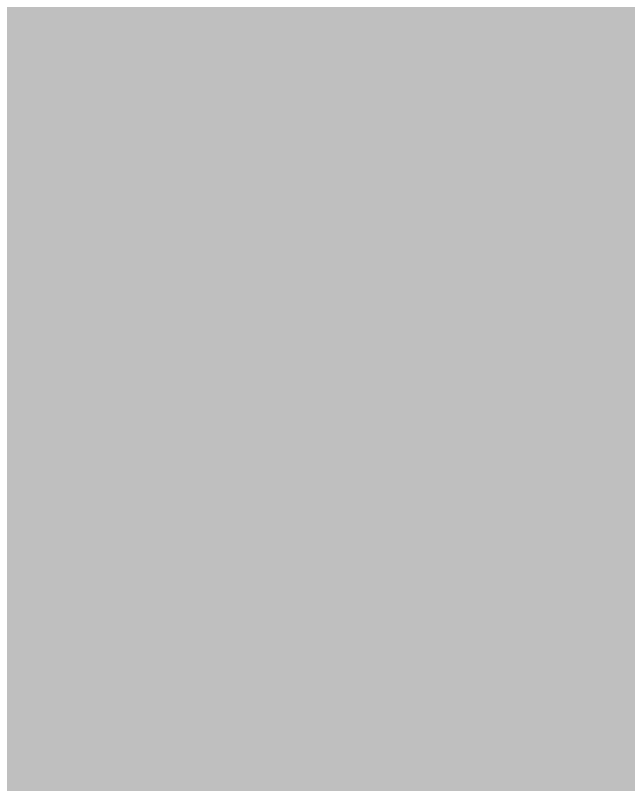




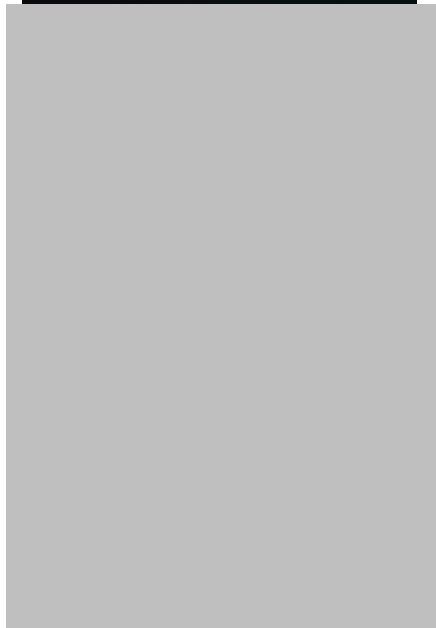
**Fig. 18** - James Abbot McNeal Whistler, *Purple and Rose: The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks*, oil on canvas, England, 1864, 93.3 x 61.3 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art



**Fig. 19** - George Du Maurier, *The Six Mark Teapot*, engraving, *Punch*, 30<sup>th</sup> October 1880, dimensions unknown, private collection



**Fig. 20** – Liberty & Co., Silk and cotton brocade, lined with taffeta, with a silk-satin front panel and silk-plush edgings, 1897, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London



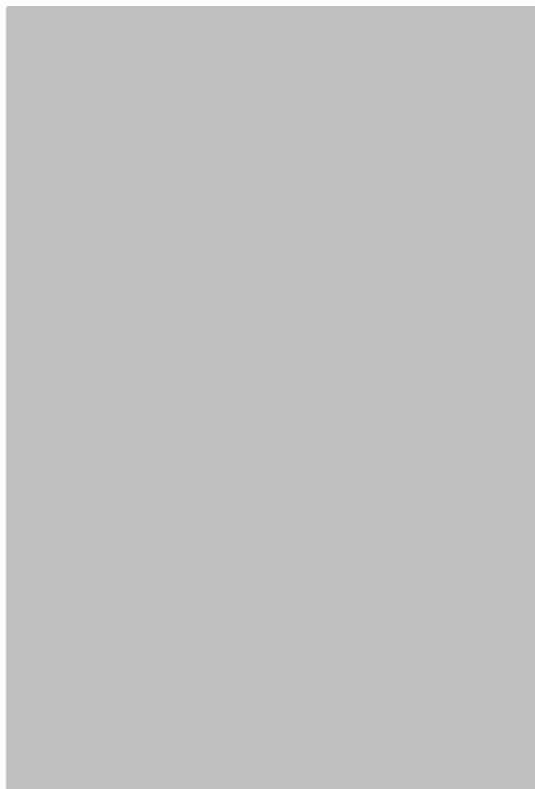
**Fig. 21** - George Elgar Hicks, *The Sinews of Old England*, watercolour and bodycolour with gum arabic on paper, 1857, 75.2 x 53.3 cm, The Yale Centre for British Art



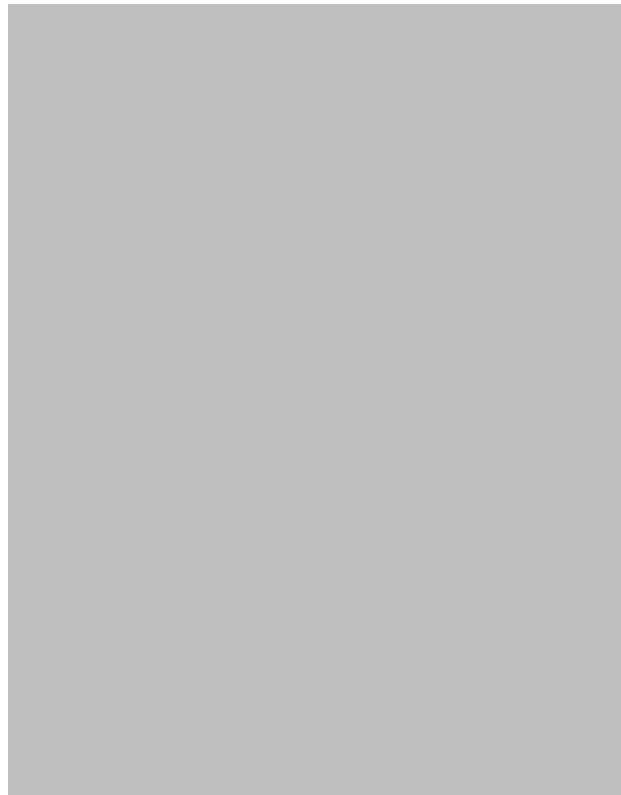
**Fig. 22** - Ford Madox Brown, *Work*, oil on canvas, 1862 – 1865, 137 x 198 cm, Manchester City Galleries



**Fig. 23** - William Holman Hunt, *Honest Labour Has a Comely Face*, oil on panel, 1861, 30.4 x 20.3 cm, private collection



**Fig. 24** - William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, oil on canvas, 1853, 76.2 x 55.9



cm, Tate Britain, London

**Fig. 25** – James Archer, *Summertime, Gloucestershire*, oil on canvas, 1860, 76.4 x 106 cm,  
National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh



**Fig. 26 & 27** - Anonymous, High Caste Ceylon Tea, Good luck to all who drink High Caste Ceylon Tea, Lithographs, c.1860-1885, 14.5 x 90.1 cm each, The John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Library, Oxford



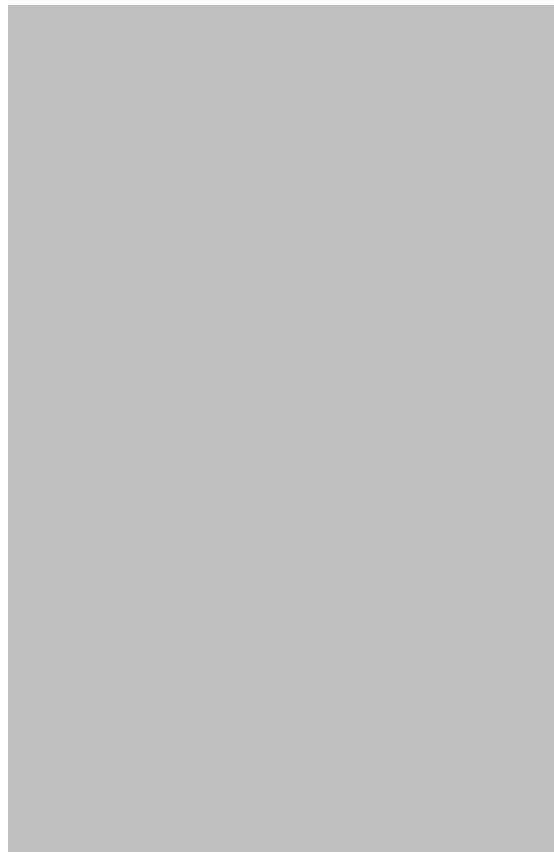
**Fig. 28** – John Tenniel, *The Working Mam from the Royal Westminster Exhibition*, (see bottom right), engraving, 1865, 21 x 27 cm, private collection



**Fig. 29** - Anonymous, Mazawatte Tea, *Old Folks At Home*, Lithograph, c. 1892, 14.6 x 20.3 cm, The John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Oxford



**Fig. 30** - Anonymous, Lamasoora Tea, lithograph, 21.0 x 13.4, c. 1890-1900, The John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Library, Oxford



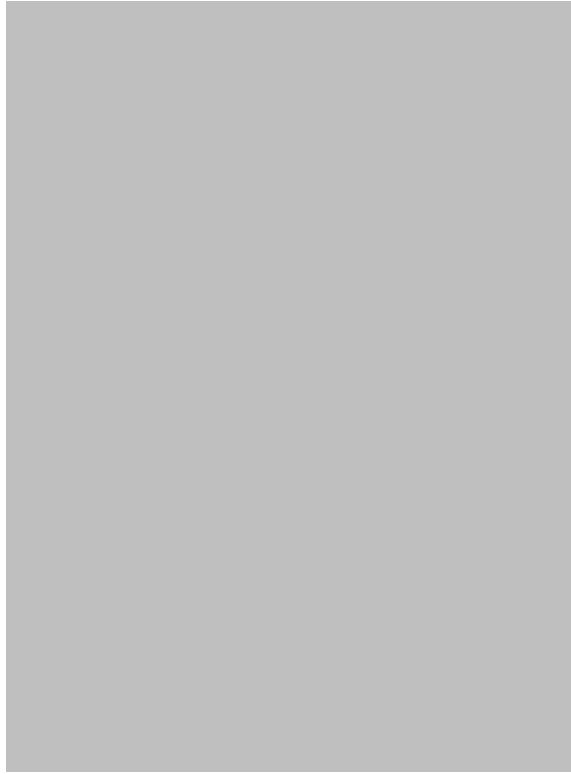
**Fig. 31** - Anonymous, Horniman's & Co., *We Use Horniman's Tea*, lithograph, c. 1870-1890, 10 x 8.5 cm, The John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Library, Oxford



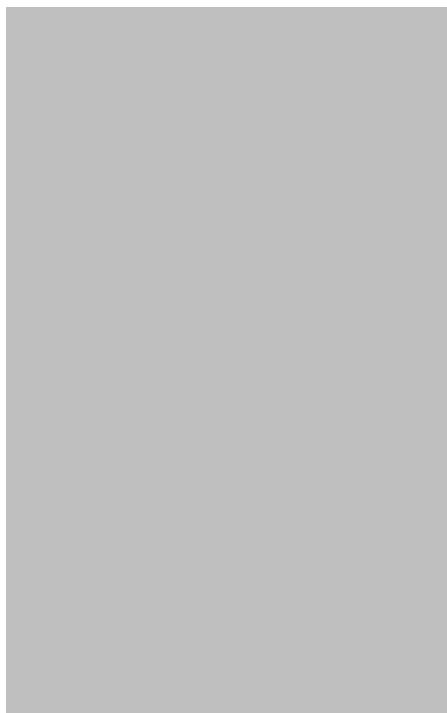
**Fig. 32** – Anonymous, Mazawattee Tea, *Matrons who toss the cup and see the grounds of fate in the grounds of tea*, lithograph, c. 1880 – 1890, dimensions unknown, Private collection



**Fig. 33** - George Sheridan Knowles, Mawawattee Tea, *Bosom Friends*, Photo-mechanical print, 1872, 19 x 13.6 cm, The John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Library, Oxford

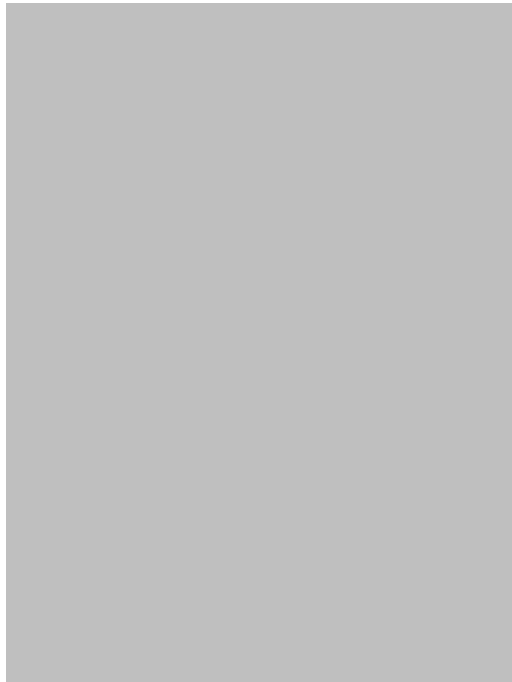


**Fig. 34** - Anonymous, Horniman's & Co., *Strong and Delicious*, lithograph, c. 1870-1890, 12.5 x 8.5 cm, The John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Library, Oxford





**Fig. 35** - Anonymous, Lamasoora Tea, photographic print, C. 1890-1900, 3.4 x 4.6 cm, The John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Library, Oxford



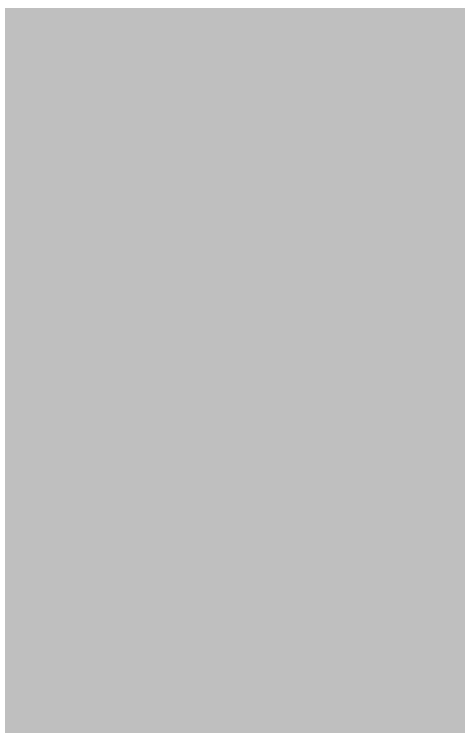
**Fig. 36** – Anonymous, Horniman’s & Co., lithograph, date unknown, dimensions unknown, The Tea Council, Woking



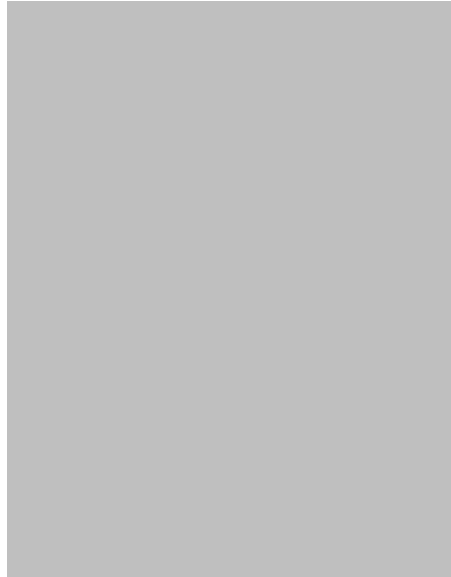
**Fig. 37** – Anonymous, United Kingdom Tea Company, 1890, dimensions unknown, etching,  
Mary Evans Picture Library, London



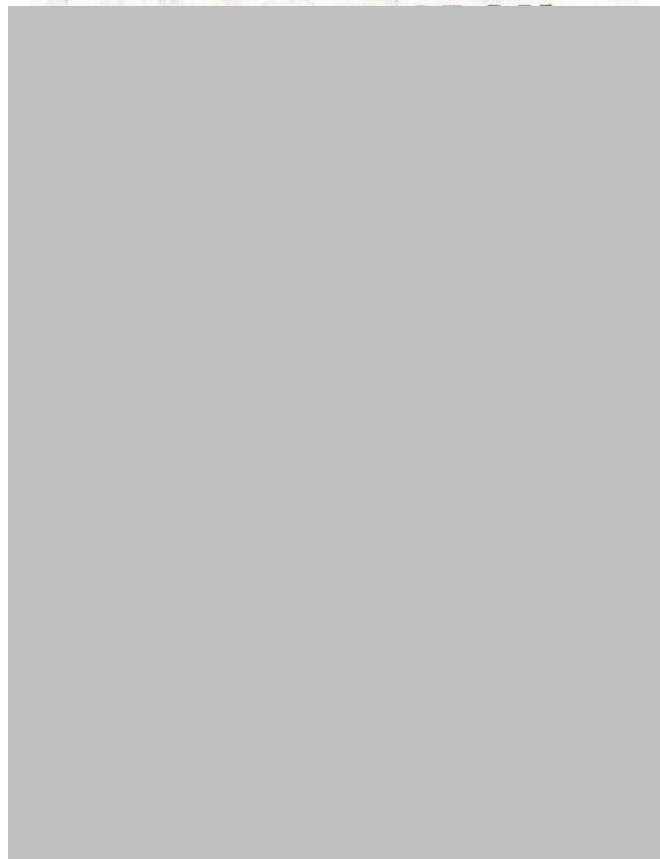
**Fig. 38** – Anonymous, Twinings, lithograph, c.1900, dimensions unknown, private collection



**Fig. 39** – Davie Howard, Lamasoora Tea, lithograph, c. 1890-1900, 21.6 x 13.9 cm, The John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Library, Oxford



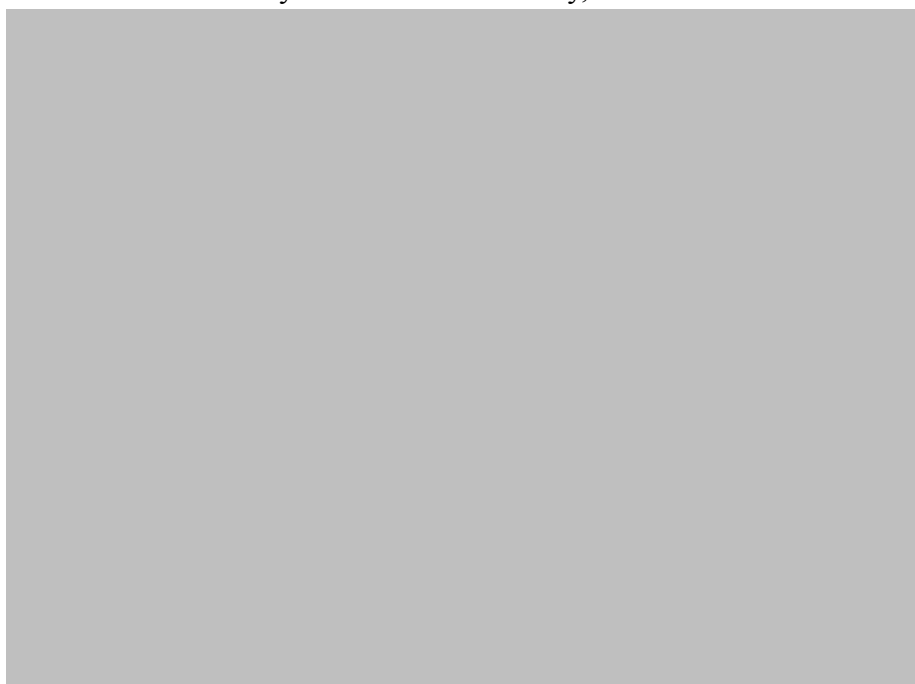
**Fig. 40** - Anonymous, United Kingdom Tea Company, *Tea First Hand*, etching, 1894, dimensions unknown, Mary Evans Picture Library, London



**Fig. 41** - Walter Crane, *The Imperial Federation Map Showing the Extent of the British Empire*, lithograph, 1886, 86 x 63 cm, Norman B. Leventhal Map Centre, Boston Library



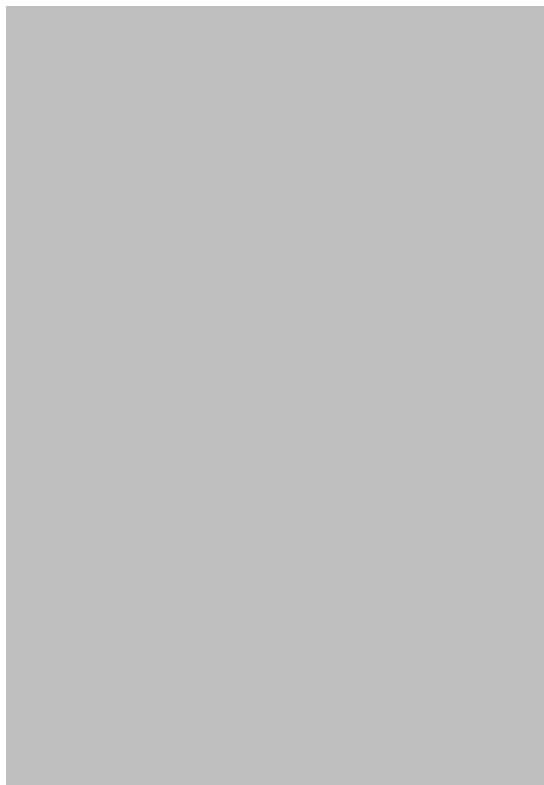
**Fig. 42** - Anonymous, United Kingdom Tea Company, etching, 1890, dimensions unknown, Mary Evans Picture Library, London



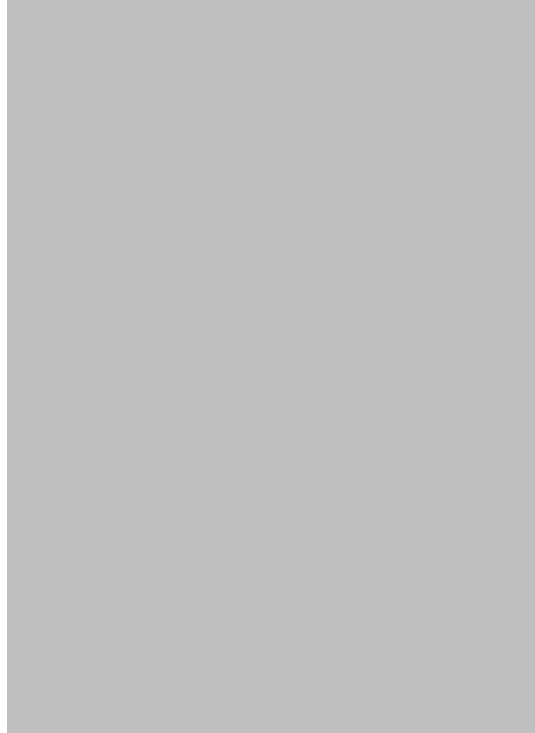
**Fig. 43** – Anonymous, Horniman's & Co, lithograph, 1873, 8.1 x 7.9 cm, The John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Library, Oxford



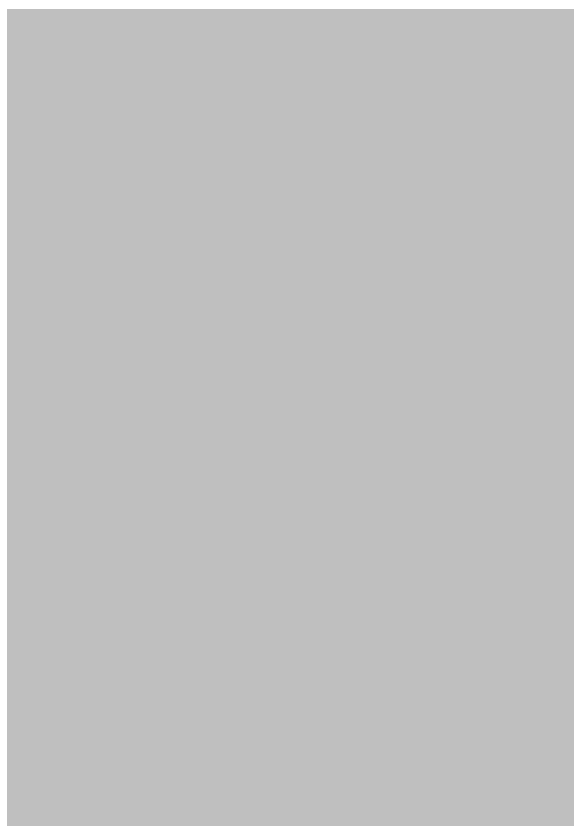
**Fig. 44** – Anonymous, Horniman's & Co, lithograph, c. 1870 - 1890, 12.8 x 8.6 cm, The John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Library, Oxford



**Fig. 45** - Anonymous, United Kingdom Tea Company, etching, 1890, dimensions unknown, Mary Evans Picture Library, London



**Fig. 46** - Anonymous, United Kingdom Tea Company, etching, 1890, dimensions unknown, Mary Evans Picture Library, London



**Fig. 47** – Walter Crane and anonymous artists, lithographs, Horniman's Tea Advertisements (artwork, almanacs, examples of stationery, and press cuttings, including photographs of Horniman's factory in Wormwood Street, London), London Metropolitan Archives



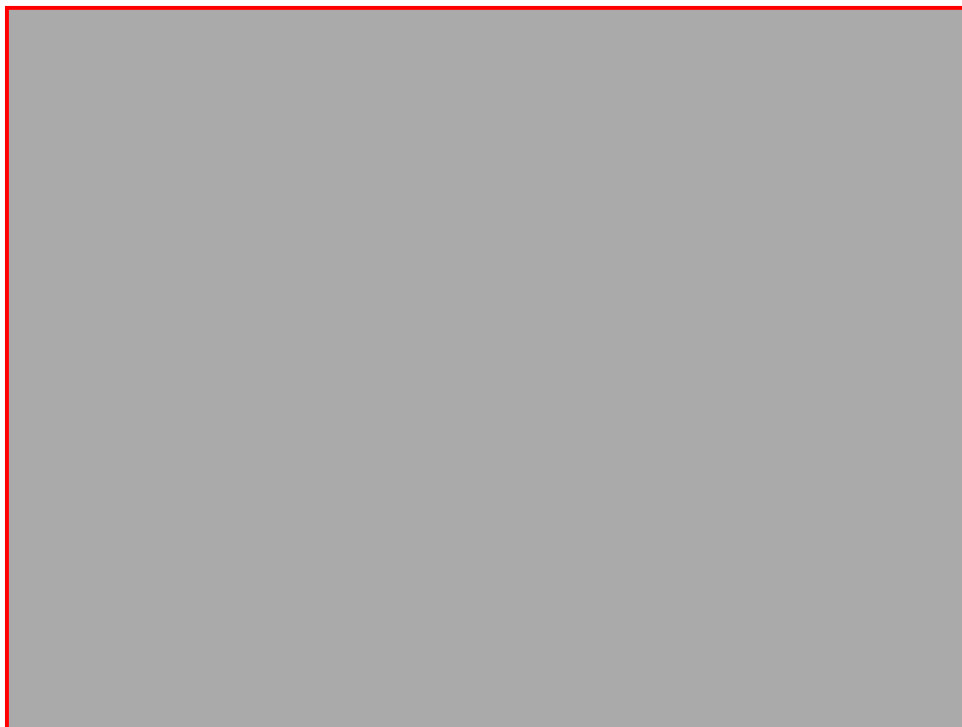
**Fig. 48** - Anonymous, lithograph and water colour, Horniman's Tea Advertisements (artwork, almanacs, examples of stationery, and press cuttings, including photographs of Horniman's factory in Wormwood Street, London), London Metropolitan Archives



**Fig. 49** - Anonymous, lithograph, Horniman's Tea Advertisements (artwork, almanacs, examples of stationery, and press cuttings, including photographs of Horniman's factory in Wormwood Street, London), London Metropolitan Archives

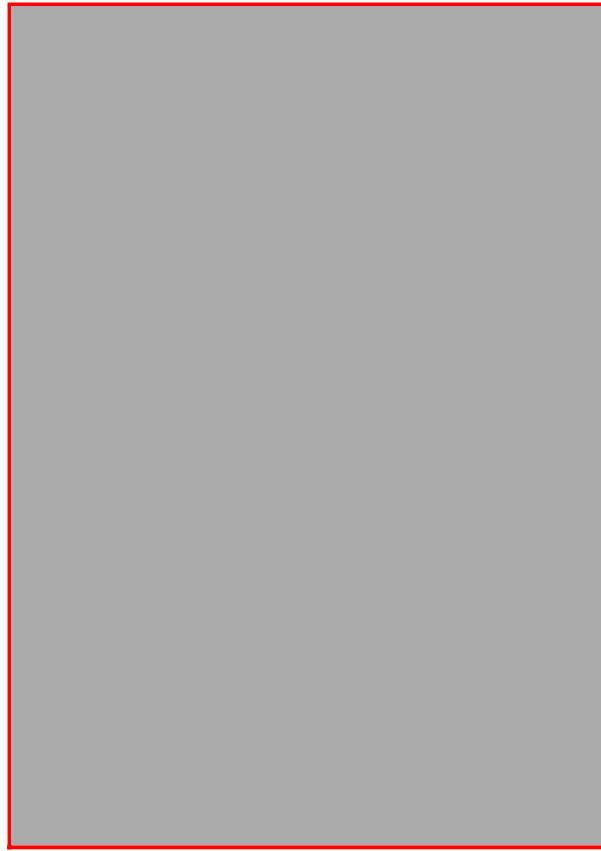


**Fig. 50** - Anonymous, water colour, Horniman's Tea Advertisements (artwork, almanacs, examples of stationery, and press cuttings, including photographs of Horniman's factory in Wormwood Street, London), London Metropolitan Archives

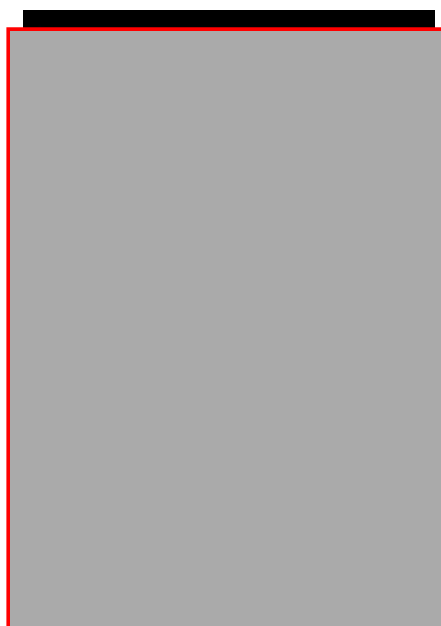




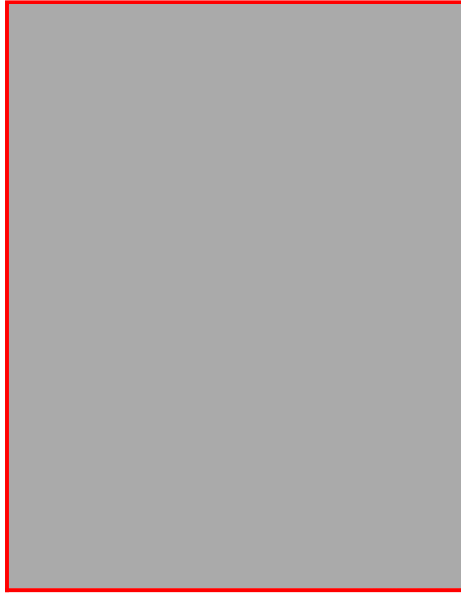
**Fig. 51** - Anonymous, lithograph, Horniman's Tea Advertisements (artwork, almanacs, examples of stationery, and press cuttings, including photographs of Horniman's factory in Wormwood Street, London), London Metropolitan Archives



**Fig. 52** - Anonymous, *Cullen's Teas are Very Delicious*, Lithograph, c. 1870-1890, 16.4 x 21.5 cm, The John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford



**Fig. 53** – Anonymous, Horniman's & Co, lithograph, c. 1870 – 1890, dimensions unknown, private collection



**Fig. 54** – Anonymous, Horniman's & Co, *Always Good Alike*, lithograph, c. 1890, dimensions unknown, private collection

