

Fashion beyond Clothing: The Visual Culture of Eurasian Dress, 1500-1800

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Introduction

The 'visuality' of fashion conjures up thoughts of directional garments, spectacular catwalks and the fashion image. The term 'visuality' was coined by Thomas Carlyle in the 1830s to capture his conservative view of British Imperial history as a series 'vivid pictures' exceeding archival facts. It took on a very different resonance within late twentieth century postmodernism when it came to mean ways of seeing, 'sight as a social fact' and the 'politics of representation in transnational and transcultural form'.¹ Fashion Studies has been dominated by this discursive mode of analysing the fashion image via the insistence of Roland Barthes and Jean Baudrillard on 'written fashion' within twentieth-century media: printed page, photograph, simulation and copy. This approach tends to obscure the different work and connotation of fashion before Modernism, although early-modern prints and drawings of dress often resorted to words to convey the colours, textures and materialities of dress.

Fashion itself and the textiles, trimmings and accessories of which it is made generate the first visual register of dress. Acts of dressing and appearing provide a second register. It then undergoes multiple forms of representation that encompass a wide range of artefacts and

¹ Nicholas Mirzoeff, 'On Visuality', *Journal of Visual Culture*, 5/1 (2006), 54, 76.

materialities.² I here propose the 'visual culture' of fashion as not simply the domain of two-dimensional prints, drawings, manuscript illustrations and paintings and three-dimensional sculpture, all of which are commonly used to 'illustrate' fashion histories, but a much wider realm of material culture, design and the decorative arts. These include textiles, ceramics, glass, mirrors and enamels. Urbanised cultures around the world in this period were marked by a propensity to expect, enjoy and explore interactions between a wide range of new consumer goods. They were appreciated for their material, sensual and sometimes even alchemical attributes, understood within the cultural, scientific and philosophical frameworks of their time and place. This led to a distinctive visual economy of fashion between 1500-1800 which embraced not only cloth and clothing but also supercharged and surpassed it with cognate practices, materials and accoutrements.

Fashion is transient, short lived and fragile. Yet it is also mutable and open to translations and transformations across media and genre. It was the circulation of prints, drawings, models, written and verbal instruction, but primarily prints, that permitted the circulation and spread of ideas about fashion and fashionability in the era before photography and film. This was the case not only in the West but also in Eurasia: Japan and China. The enormous expansion of

² This formulation owes much to, but also differs from, the structure accorded to fashion by Roland Barthes, who developed his semiotic study of fashion published as *The Fashion System* (1967). Barthes described three codes based on his studies of 1950s-1960s French fashion magazines: the vestimentary (real fashion), the terminological (spoken), and the rhetorical (how fashion is translated into words and images in magazine spreads). Paul Jobling, 'Roland Barthes: Semiology and the Rhetorical Codes of Fashion' in Agnès Rocamora and Anneke Smelik (eds.), *Thinking Through Fashion* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 134.

European trade, conquest and colonisation from the sixteenth century onwards generated a raft of new fashions for all concerned not limited to clothes and textiles but encompassing spatial environments modified with new textiles. Trading companies engaging in European and intra-Asian trade commenced with the Portuguese and included also Dutch, English, French, Swedish and Danish concerns. They traded in an incredible range of goods, many of which were promoted as new fashionable pasttimes – tea, coffee and chocolate taking – and which introduced new visual registers to European eyes.³

This chapter therefore takes a comparative approach to West European, Japanese and Chinese fashion objects and their representations. The selection is deliberate, as Asian exported goods from chintz to parasols transformed European fashion in the early modern period, and European goods and technologies including oil painting, timepieces, mirror glass and lenses were adapted in China and Japan. Fashion itself, particularly the design and colours of the textiles of which it was crafted, influenced the formats, colours and design of adjacent artefacts ranging from French porcelain coffee services to Japanese lacquer lunch-boxes. As well as considering the primacy of textiles, the chapter ranges across a series of very different artefacts that also were fashions themselves: from Chinese export ceramics depicting dress, to printed instructions for designing a Japanese kimono, and to a print-like silhouette portrait ‘dressed’ with textiles in the early American Republic. Scenes of fashion were frequently depicted on

³ Goods ranged from Chinese silks to Indian chintzes, as well as spices, tea, coffee, chocolate, porcelain (including *chine de commande* or export commissions), woven and raw silk, linen (nankeen), drugs, aromatics, tropical woods, silver, wallpaper, lacquer, silver, pewter, ivories, jade, soapstone, mother of pearl, rattan and hardwood furniture, enamels, painted fans, paintings on wood and paper, and in reverse on glass.

porcelain and pottery tea wares and figurines, lacquer, enamels and reverse-painted glass in the early modern period. In the case of porcelain, images of fashionable people sometimes provided the very form of the object. Although not always yielding up their certain meanings or intentions, for Europeans they often inferred the novelty and excitement of new fashion products and encounters. The exchange was not always positive: for Japanese or Chinese Imperial viewers, images of foreigners in western dress might indicate the latter's supplication or derision.

The Art of Textile Design

Silk occupied a particular point of prestige and preference for fashion in the early modern period. Chinese silk had since Antiquity astonished Europeans for its lustre and complex brocaded designs. The first patterned silks woven in Europe date only from the thirteenth century and were manufactured first in Lucca. Despite East India silks being banned in England from 1699 and Chinese silk in France from 1702, they were not prohibited in Holland and were much re-exported. Many simpler, unpatterned silks were traded by the Chinese with Europe and large amounts of silk were imported to the Netherlands throughout the eighteenth century.⁴ In some cases entire garments of expensive local silk were shipped to Europe from China. Anne Maria Bogaert, the daughter of an Amsterdam merchant with Batavian connections, was married in a formal mantua gown of cream Chinese silk dress in the mid eighteenth century. Made to measure from six lengths of silk in China, the dress was also embroidered there (its rich embroidery surface has no interruption at the seams), and onward-shipped to Europe as

⁴ Christian J.A. Jörg, 'Chinese Export Silks for the Dutch in the 18th Century', lecture given 18 October 2008, *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 73 (2008-2009), 13-14.

part of the '*pacotille*' or ~~trade~~ privilege of a private trader on board an East India Company vessel (Figure 10.1).⁵

INSERT HERE FIGURE 10.1

Both dress and upholstery silks were subject from an early date to precise fashion directives. European agents worked with Chinese go-betweens and brokers to develop woven textiles that suited European consumers. Different textiles conveyed different moods and materialities. The glossy Chinese silks were very suitable for the making up of women's dresses and were used widely in France, England, the Low Countries and colonial North America. In 1773 the Dutch sent out a precise order for dress fabrics: '100 painted lustrings in a new taste: half of the order should be with small lozenges woven into the ground, the other half should be with soft-coloured stripes. Both types have to be nicely painted with small scrolls, not too coarse and the pattern not too large'.⁶ Palettes changed after 1770 from colours such as green, ochre, dark red and pink to white, grey, dark blue and other cool colours, reflecting new tastes in art and design and also a new conception of the body in which more was revealed. The neo-classical body could not afford to be swamped by very large pattern repeats.

Europeans also coveted Chinese painted silks for men's banyans (T-shaped 'undress' garments worn by European men, akin to a dressing gown) and room hangings. Such textiles were cheaper but not inferior versions of the most expensive format, Chinese embroidered silk, that

⁵ Jörg, 'Chinese Export Silks for the Dutch', 9.

⁶ Jörg, 'Chinese Export Silks', 16.

was also used for clothing and upholstery. These two categories of silk were made for export in the same factories in Canton and designs were often provided to the Dutch East India Company by Chinese artists, not by Europeans, as was generally the case with ceramics. A Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company) report noted in 1786: 'Anthonij the painter will prepare new designs for the painted textiles in order to enable us to select the most beautiful and fashionable patterns'.⁷ Anthony' was 'the famous Chinese [artist], also known as Antonio the Deaf' who both created designs for others, and also painted textiles himself. Such a statement indicates the appeal of designs drawn with a strong Chinese character: Europeans particularly liked the way in which the Chinese painted colourful flowers, birds and insects which suited the bucolic mood of mid to late eighteenth-century taste.

Print and Chintz

Historians including Giorgio Riello and Beverly Lemire have argued that European fashion can partly be understood as an interplay between the desire to consume Eastern textiles and new methods of production including sericulture and printed cotton textiles, as well as new European consumer tastes. They argue that printing was not only a form of information but also a technique in which European markets and consumers 'produced a type of fashionability that could be "read"'.⁸ Exchange and transformation was also very much the case for chintz, the painted-and-dyed cottons or *indiennes* from India noted for their range of dye-fast

⁷ Jörg, 'Chinese Export Silks', 15.

⁸ Beverly Lemire and Giorgio Riello, 'East and West: Textiles and Fashion in Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Social History* 41/4 (2008), 887-916.

properties and the depth of their colour, achieved by painting the mordants on the fabric by hand for each dye bath. Europeans preferred lighter grounds and requested pan-cultural motifs such as 'the tree of life'. Indian craftsmen also copied the grand French baroque decorative style of arabesques and 'grotesques' (derived from Pompeii and much used in Europe for wall paintings and garden design) reproduced in engravings of court ornament and spectacle by Jean Bérain (1640-1711, the official state designer for festivities from 1674).⁹ Rosemary Crill suggests that the effects of copying European engravings can be observed in the stippling and cross-hatching that appear on some Indian painted chintzes.¹⁰ She remarks that the French and Italian 'bizarre silks' of the early eighteenth century, once thought to be possibly of Asian design, but now understood to be European amalgams of Asian (particularly Japanese) and Persian design motifs, were occasionally translated into Indian chintz.¹¹ Liza Oliver's recent

⁹ Rosemary Crill, 'Asia in Europe: Textiles for the West', in Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer (eds.), *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800*, (London: V&A Publications, 2004), 270-271. Grotesques were anti-classical and referred to a mode of decoration, but they also referred to wider visual culture such as masquerade costumes, mixing low and popular motifs from the *commedia dell arte* and chinoiserie taste.

¹⁰ Crill, 'Asia in Europe,' 268.

¹¹ Bizarre silks combined Turkish, Japanese, Chinese, Indian and Persian motifs and were produced in Venice, Lyon and Spitalfields around 1705-1710. They frequently depicted Ottoman flowers such as the tulip, carnation, hyacinth and rose. Related 'lace-patterned' silks reproduced stylised lace grounds that did not depict real lace. They were therefore doubly artful. See Anna Jolly (ed.), *A Taste for the Exotic. Foreign Influences on Early Eighteenth-Century Silk Designs* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2007).

study of the French East India Company's trade with the Coromandel east coast notes that Bérainesque *palampores* and chintzes depicting 'Don Quixote' were manufactured in India in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These she sees as indicating the immediacy of the impact of hybrid visual cultures, a period of 'nuance and complexity that defined interactions in this formative period' well prior to imperialism.¹² Her words echo the earlier ones of Finlay for porcelain: 'artists, craftsmen, and entrepreneurs around the world during the early modern period were relaying, integrating, and generating cultural forms'.¹³ The nature and impact of these exchanges took many forms, involving even movement. From the mid seventeenth century wealthy Europeans adapted a new transportation practice derived from the Chinese and Indian manner of moving people around in wheelless sedan chairs or palanquins ('palki' meaning bed or couch) carried by 'chairmen', not drawn by animals. Unlike Indian chairs, the European ones were enclosed, upright and glazed, and the passenger sat up rather than reclined.

Designing Fashion

In Europe, fashions across a wide range of products from furniture to perfumed snuff and foodstuffs were generated through a complex imbrication of the skills of the designer who was also sometimes an entrepreneur, with the know-how of intermediary merchants who were

¹² Liza Oliver, *Art, Trade and Imperialism in Early Modern French India* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 29

¹³ Robert Finlay, 'The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History', *Journal of World History*, 9/2 (1998), 186.

closely attuned to consumer taste in towns and urban centres. What can be termed the 'conceptual' work of design, separate from making, was very evident in textiles of this period, and pre-dates the better-known category of industrial ceramics produced by Josiah Wedgwood and metal goods by Matthew Boulton. The silk merchants of Lyon in eighteenth-century Europe were considered unrivalled for their knowledge of fashion and skills of innovation, partly owing to their ability to judge and create changing tastes as well as their technical expertise. Some were also inventors who changed the visual appearance of silk altogether. These designers benefited from the existence of state sponsorship via the *Grande Fabrique* (silk-weaving guild), a free drawing school for 1500 pupils (*Ecole gratuite de dessin*), use of mobile sample-books, and the presence of high quality flower paintings available for study by the draughtsmen providing freehand sketches and 'point paper' plans for weaving. Lesley Miller has demonstrated in her numerous publications how the merchant weavers of Lyon were able to respond strategically to annual and season fashion change by the 1720s-30s, sending out new silks every three months and conveying French silks to centres as disparate as Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Russia, Germany, Italy (Milan) and Spain.¹⁴ Seasonal change for the Lyon dress silks was achieved by adaptation and was not as swift or absolute as might be expected in subsequent centuries.¹⁵ The influence of Lyon was widespread, not simply from imitations but as Anna Jolly remarks, many Lyon-trained artists emigrated and transferred their

¹⁴ Lesley Ellis Miller, 'Mysterious Manufacturers: Situating L. Galy, Gallien et Compe in the Eighteenth-Century Lyons Silk Industry', *Bard Studies in the Decorative Arts*, Spring Summer (2002), 87.

¹⁵ Lesley Ellis Miller, 'Innovation and Industrial Espionage in Eighteenth-Century France: An Investigation of the Selling of Silks through Samples', *Journal of Design History*, 12/3 (1999), 271-292.

design skills to new settings, including Jean Eric Rehn (1717-1793) to Stockholm and Fayetant de Saint Clair to a Florence textile drawing academy.¹⁶

Lyon silk design was notable for its ability to marry commerce with design and technological innovation. Jean Revel (1684-1751) perfected the '*point rentré*' technique around 1730 in which colours were dovetailed, creating a three-dimensional effect as in woven tapestry. Fluffy chenille yarns and *frisé* silver were used to create unusual textures with added three-dimensional air (Figure 10.2). The celebrated designer (*dessinateur*) of Lyon dress and notably furnishing silks, Philippe de Lasalle (1723-1804), was both merchant and designer. He leveraged state incentives to promote the French decorative arts and demanded a status somewhat akin to what we today call a fine artist, providing a new template for what the French call an '*artiste*' or an '*artisan-inventor*'.¹⁷ Lasalle had been formally trained by the academic history painter Daniel Sarrabat (1666-1748) and spent time with the celebrated artist François Boucher (1703-1770). Lasalle therefore learned figure drawing, which was not common for European silk designers. Lasalle was capable of incredible three-dimensional verism: recalling the Greek painter Apelles, his apologist abbé Bertolon wrote: 'we saw on fabrics, something most astonishing, flowers and fruits imitating nature perfectly, peaches with all their velvety texture, grapes with their transparency, birds with all the richness and pomp of their colouring,

¹⁶ Anna Jolly, *Fürstliche Interieurs. Dekorationstextilien des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2005), 227.

¹⁷ Lesley Ellis Miller, 'The Marriage of Art and Commerce: Philippe de Lasalle's Success in Silk', in Katie Scott and Deborah Cherry (eds.), *Between Luxury and the Everyday. Decorative Arts in Eighteenth-Century France* (Malden MA, Oxford and Carlton VIC: Blackwell, 2005), 66.

charming landscapes in which the spaces were skilfully managed, they all created the most ravishing illusion'.¹⁸

INSERT HERE FIGURE 10.2

Designers of silks were actively encouraged to seek out inter-connections between fashionable things. In 1765 the Lyon silk designer and manufacturer Joubert de l'Hiberderie (1725/9-1773) published his commentary on French silk. He noted that it was a pity that women were excluded from this profession as they would have made great contributions due to their proximity to fashion.¹⁹ He neglects here the famous exception of Anna Maria Garthwaite (1688-1763), Spitalfields (London) silk designer, noted for her brocaded floral and ribbon silks with contrasting textured grounds, which would have looked well when moving with the body. She worked from engravings and precise drawings provided by botanists of local as well as exotic specimens.²⁰ De L'Hiberderie's text made explicit the central role of what we might now call 'inter-media' within eighteenth-century design. Of the design of luxury cloths such as velours, cut gold, chiné and plush he wrote:

it is necessary to find ideas for this genre, apart from samples, in all the mosaics, on snuffboxes, on Chinese, Meissen (Saxon) and Sèvres [Sève] porcelain, on faience

¹⁸ Lesley Ellis Miller, 'The Marriage of Art and Commerce', 63.

¹⁹ Joubert de l'Hiberderie, *Le Dessinateur, pour les Fabrique d'étoffes d'or, d'argent et de soie* (Paris: Sébastien Jorry, Bauche, Brocas, 1765), xxvii.

²⁰ Huguenot Silk weaver Daniel Vautier purchased 122 designs from Garthwaite between 1741-1751, but often had his weavers change her colours and backgrounds to suit his customers.

vessels and even terracotta where there are to be found designs, on both fine and common *indiennes* alike with their little subjects, where one finds sometimes mosaics of singular taste, apart from the assembly of colours which can furnish ideas finally on all works in miniature, decorated with ornaments, fruits, foliage, plants etc’.

Many of the artefacts listed above are Asian imports.²¹ Furthermore, de l’Hiberderie remarked that it was necessary to have *rapport* with the taste of the day and to engage with the many ‘trinkets’ (*colichet*) of fashion, including ‘pearls, pompons, knots, plumage, martin, ermine, tiger fur etc. All these fantastical things, presented to the proposed buyer, will give a shape to his designs, and make for him a reputation’.²² When in Paris, he advised, the designer of luxury cloth should visit the flower painters as well as the Library of the King, the Louvre, look at coaches, the Gobelins, to ‘visit the couturiers and makers of fashion’, as well as fan-makers, silversmiths and embroiderers’.²³ In other words, a good designer had to be up to date with the luxury trades as well as the emerging academic art institutions.

De l’Hiberderie’s claim that Lyon silk was excellent because of the proximity of silk designers to other arts and crafts was taken one step further by his near contemporary the designer and manufacturer Jacques-Charles Dutilleu (1718-82), who ascribed Lyon’s excellence to the

²¹ *Indiennes* refers to chintz but also sometimes meant Dutch woven *chinoiserie* silk. Sjoukje Colenbrander and Clare Brown, ‘Indiennes: Chinoiserie Silks Woven in Amsterdam’, in Anna Jolly, *A Taste for the Exotic: Foreign Influences on Early Eighteenth-Century Silk Designs* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2007), 127-138.

²² De l’Hiberderie, *Le Dessinateur*, 25.

²³ De l’Hiberderie, *Le Dessinateur*, 100-101.

presence of first rate painters there, particularly of flowers. He 'thereby randomly rather than consciously set up the beginnings of a history of design and designers, akin to that already existing for painters'.²⁴

De l'Hiberderie's text highlights the well-known world of eighteenth-century Paris shopping, in which the guild of *marchand-merciers* produced commodities so luxurious and sometimes mysterious that they seemed to have no recognisable maker. These *marchand-merciers* (who had the right to trade in numerous materials and artefacts) assembled disparate forms such as a Chinese bowl or statue with a locally made ormolu frame or mount, perhaps creating a clock or a perfume burner (*brûle-parfum*), to generate new uses and meanings for local and imported products. Daniel Roche notes of such merchants, including Rose Bertin (1747-1813), the famed milliner (*marchande de modes*) to Marie Antoinette, that they 'no longer actually made things but had these made for them... In Paris they marked themselves off from the 'mécaniques', who often had to work with their own hands'.²⁵ That is to say, they invented new products and tastes rather than reproducing them, which is a characteristic often ascribed to modern rather than early-modern fashion. The chevalier Louis de Jaucourt (1704-1779) believed that the creation of such luxury goods conferred a special advantage: 'Hands that *divinely* paint a

²⁴ Lesley Ellis Miller, 'Manufactures and the Man: A Reassessment of the Place of Jacques-Charles Dutilleu in the Silk Industry of Eighteenth-Century Lyon', *Textile History* (29/1 1998), 20. Dutilleu observed Lyon in the 1730s and 1740s and his work was unpublished until 1886.

²⁵ Daniel Roche, *A History of Everyday Things. The birth of consumption in France, 1600-1800*, xx.

carriage, that *perfectly* mount a diamond, that *exceptionally* fit a fashionable suit, such hands do not resemble the hands of the people'.²⁶

The elite connoisseurs of European courts, such as Madame de Pompadour or Catherine the Great, sought out Japanese and Chinese lacquers, lapidary gemstones and porcelains that were concocted into new fantasies of the East including furniture panels, ormolu-mounted perfume burners and clocks by the specialist guild of Paris *marchand-merciers* (including Lazare-Duvaux, Simon-Philippe Poirier and Madame Dulac).²⁷ Of her Japanese lacquer the Empress Maria Theresa remarked: 'all the diamonds in the world are nothing to me. Objects made in India, especially lacquered woods... are the only things that give me pleasure'.²⁸ The Japanese refinement of technique saw dewdrops in lacquer represented by various shades of sprinkled gold, parts filled with gold dust and other minerals. Michael Yonan argues that the miraculous lustre of lacquer appealed to elite European interest in alchemical properties (as had Chinese porcelain, believed by Europeans for much of the seventeenth century to have been made from materials ranging from underground liquid to shells or eggs); it was a society that valued the sheen, polish and mirrored surfaces in materials as different as silk taffeta, satin, porcelain,

²⁶ Paola Bertucci, *Artisanal Enlightenment: Science and the Mechanical Arts in Old Regime France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017), 8-9.

²⁷ Carolyn Sargentson, *Merchants and Luxury Markets. The Marchands Merciers of Eighteenth-Century Paris* (London and Malibu, CA: Victoria and Albert Museum and J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996).

²⁸ Michael E. Yonan, 'Veneers of Authority: Chinese Lacquers in Maria Theresa's Vienna', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* (37/4, 2004), 652.

glass and silver.²⁹ Europeans preferred the lustrous effects of the incised, white or celadon Chinese porcelains which were ‘unremarkable to Chinese eyes’, just as they preferred pale-ground chintz rather than the dark grounds generally used in India.³⁰ Chinese and Japanese goods sometimes aroused derision in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries for their aesthetic qualities, but by the mid-eighteenth, generated fervent admiration:

Who does not know and admire the lacquer-work of the Chinese and Japanese! These people, perhaps the only ones on earth over whom European industry does not have the advantages of universal superiority, design and paint vases, jewels and furniture with an intelligence, taste and patience that amazes our countries.³¹

Chinoiserie

Chinese art, which did not generally use a perspectival system to indicate spatial depth, influenced and fed into European Rococo art and design. Rococo art, as Norman Bryson clearly argued, was despised by many Academicians for its spatial dislocations and disrupted scale of

²⁹ Christopher L. Maxwell (ed.), *In Sparkling Company: Reflections on Glass in the Eighteenth Century British World* (Corning: Corning Museum of Glass, 2020).

³⁰ Rose Kerr, ‘Chinese Porcelain in Early European Collections’, in Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer (eds.), *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800* (London: V&A Publications, 2004), 51.

³¹ Jean-Félix Watin, Royal residence worker, from his treatise on gilding and varnishing (1773) in Jean-Paul Desroches, ‘The Taste for China in 18th-Century Paris’, in Jean-Paul Desroches (ed.), *Paris 1730-1930: The Taste for China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Art Museum/Musée Guimet, 2008), 73.

values – it unduly elevated portraiture, still life and landscape over history or figure painting.³² One of the great exponents of European *Chinoiserie* was the artist-engraver Jean-Baptiste Pillement (1728-1808). Pillement was born in Lyon amidst a family of silk designers. A prolific illustrator, he updated the earlier grotesques of Bérain and the latter's predecessor Jacques Androuet du Cerceau (1510-1584). Du Cerceau's much copied prints 'had influenced gold and silver smiths, woodworkers and weavers and promoted hybrid forms that lent themselves well to the uptake of aspects of Chinese and other Asian art forms'.³³ As well as being an influential draughtsman-artist whose designs were used in myriad formats, Pillement studied new techniques of dying and printing of coloured designs on silks while in Vienna from 1763 to 1764. He petitioned the French state that he had invented a new way 'to print drawings and coloured flowers on plain silk fabrics superior to anything that Indian fabrics called Pekings can offer at their most brilliant ... the printing is much more clean, fine, and efficient'.³⁴

Pillement had a pan-European influence with his chinoiseries and rococo arabesques which could be applied to textile design, painted and inlaid furniture, wall murals and a host of

³² Norman Bryson, *Word and Image: French Painting of the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 89-121.

³³ Christine A. Jones, *Shapely Bodies. The Image of Porcelain in Eighteenth-Century France* (Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2013), 114.

³⁴ Maria Gordon-Smith, 'The Influence of Jean Pillement on French and English Decorative Arts, Part One', *Artibus et Historiae*, 21/41 (2000), 171-196; Maria Gordon-Smith, 'The Influence of Jean Pillement on French and English Decorative Arts. Part Two: Representative Fields of Influence', *Artibus et Historiae*, 21/42 (2000), 163.

decorative arts such as porcelain. His work was inspired by a long back-story of important printed sources for Chinoiserie designs such as engravings by Johan Nieuhof and Wenceslaus Hollar published in England in 1669, Watteau's designs for the Cabinet de roi at Chateau la Muette from 1710 (destroyed in 1741) that was copied by François Boucher and others, English printmaker and seller Matthew (and possibly Mary) Darly who published '*Darly's 'A New book of Chinese designs'*' (1754) as well as the extensive two volume, 1500 illustration (900 by Pillement) publication by Robert Sayer *The Ladies Amusement, or Whole Art of Japanning Made Easy, drawn by Pillement and other masters* (1758 and 1762). Pillement transferred the practical use of painted motifs such as insects and butterflies used to disguise blemishes on Chinese porcelain and wallpaper to a generic language of mid-century rococo-influenced design which had no interest in accuracy regarding Chinese sources. It was this approach to Chinese visual culture that David Porter claims signalled 'a delicious surrender to the unremitting exoticism of total illegibility'.³⁵ The engravings influenced the design of textiles including painted silks and printed cottons, wallpaper, tapestry, upholstered furniture, silver, ceramics and *objets de vertus* (small luxury items) such as enamelled *étuis* (often combination tooth-pick, tweezer, needle and miniature scissor cases), patch and snuff boxes, perfume or 'toilet' bottles, needle holders, gold and silver boxes, cane handles and fans (Figure 10.3).³⁶ Although there is a tendency today to read Chinoiserie as a blatant misunderstanding of Chinese customs and behaviour, its success partly rested on a fascination with Chinese splendour and luxury. As Liza Oliver notes for India: 'The European conflation of Indian

³⁵ David Porter, 'Chinoiserie and the Aesthetics of Illegitimacy', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Visual Culture*, 28 (1999), 28.

³⁶ Gordon-Smith, 'The Influence of Jean Pillement', Part Two, 132.

textiles with Chinese-styled motifs was something much more than the result of an Orientalist form of othering'. Instead, she argues for 'conflations 'and 'connections 'that bridge 'the aesthetic traditions of Europe and China by way of the Coromandel textile industries'.³⁷

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Materiality and Visuality

As Jones remarks in her study of the relationship of French porcelain and fashion, much of the power of seventeenth and eighteenth-century courtly portraits is carried by their depiction of the materiality of textiles, trimmings and lace 'and that 'the weight of meaning hangs disproportionately on the garment', a part of 'a larger aesthetic project that celebrated materiality'.³⁸ Early-modern élites indulged in practical investigations of materials themselves. Jean Haudicquer de Blancourt published *The Art of Glass* (1697) which conflated the making of glass, crystal and enamel, pearls, precious stones, porcelain and mirrors. Both porcelain and glass are enamelled in much the same manner and therefore early French porcelain was sometimes identified with the glass trades within the well-known Aristotelian category '*l'art du feu*' (art of fire). The transparency of porcelain and ability to take colours was particularly appealing.³⁹ The duc d'Orléans and Regent of France fabricated perfume, fake gems, medals

³⁷ Oliver, *Art, Trade and Imperialism*, 32.

³⁸ Jones, *Shapely Bodies*, 197.

³⁹ Susan Miller, 'Europe's enamellers: Creating China for the West', *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramics Society*, 65 (2000-2), 158-159.

and cameos behind his protective glass mask around 1715, Louis XV privately brewed coffee with Madame de Pompadour, and Louis XVI enjoyed working at his lathe in the attic of Versailles. In the fashionable rue Saint Honoré, women bought silkworm-growing kits with mulberry leaves and instructions on how to breed them and spin their silk.⁴⁰ All manner of material experiments were undertaken, including attempts to recreate Japanese lacquer, fascinating the French public who attended such scientific demonstrations.⁴¹ Entomologist René Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur (1683-1757) studied gold embroidery thread, glass and spider silk and investigated the thinnest possible gold thread for embroidery.⁴² Louis XV commissioned Jean Hellot (1685-1766), director of the Académie Royale des Sciences to write a detailed report on Vincennes porcelain, notable for its wide range of colours, as he had done previously for the chemistry of textile dyes.⁴³ As ceramics expert Sarah Richards writes, 'colour really became more important than the porcelain itself, which increasingly worked to provide a lustrous surface for the enhancement of rich colour grounds'.⁴⁴ The cooler, pastel palette popular in the second half of the eighteenth century was transposed by Europeans from textiles to their new locally produced porcelains at the manufactures of Vincennes and later Sèvres. The large, newly flat dinner plates produced by the French were something new, being difficult to fire in the kiln, and looked very different from deeper, Chinese chargers. Furthermore, they were decorated in new colours such as pea green, rose pink (later Pompadour

⁴⁰ Bertucci, *Artisanal Enlightenment*, 58, 198.

⁴¹ Bertucci, *Artisanal Enlightenment*, 182; Jones, *Shapely Bodies*, 100.

⁴² Bertucci, *Artisanal Enlightenment*, 56.

⁴³ Bertucci, *Artisanal Enlightenment*, 210.

⁴⁴ Sarah Richards, *Eighteenth-Century Ceramics: Products for a Civilised Society* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), 53.

or du Barry pink), *bleue celeste* (very different from Chinese cobalt blue) or yellow enamels. They therefore harmonised in new ways with the rich colours of the interiors and clothing of the French aristocracy and were in great demand as diplomatic gifts throughout Europe.⁴⁵

Wearing Other People's Textiles

As well as embracing painted and embroidered Chinese silk, Europeans occasionally wore dress silks embroidered in China with Buddhist and Taoist motifs.⁴⁶ Mei Mei Rado notes that European figured silks were hardly ever worn in China before the twentieth century as their lack of auspicious, cosmological or narrative motifs made them incongruous within Chinese visual systems. The Chinese embroidery pattern book *Collection of Snipped Rosy Clouds* was published in the early seventeenth century and included typical 'antique' motifs that gave aesthetic and literary value to their use by contemporary craftsmen and designers.⁴⁷ Silver and gold-figured (flowered) silks or 'foreign brocades' as from sources as varied as Dutch, Portuguese, Russian, French from Lyon and English from Spitalfields are recorded in summaries of gifts and tribute from West European and Russian merchants as well as Thai emissaries to the Qing court from the late seventeenth century. The Chinese Emperors owned

⁴⁵ Jones, *Shapely Bodies*, 197.

⁴⁶ European dress, Chinese embroidered taffeta c1760. Collection of the Ville de Lorient, Musée de la Compagnie des Indes, published in Brigitte Nicolas, 'Robe à la française or French Sack Dress, in Desroches (ed.), *Paris 1730-1930: The Taste for China*, 46-47.

⁴⁷ *Jian xia ji* (*Collection of Snipped Rosy Clouds*), preface Shen Linqi (1603-1664), see Rachel Silberstein, *A Fashionable City: Textile Artistry and Commerce in the Late Qing* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020), 164.

European textiles including gold-thread bizarre silks c. 1700-1720 made up into objects as diverse as horse trappings and archery cases, and a screen for a Mongolian-style campaign tent, part of Manchu martial rituals.⁴⁸ European tapestries and carpets were also acceptable tribute and the Qing Emperor favoured imported European gold thread (*filé* – smooth and *frisée* – spiral) over the flat gilt-paper Chinese thread used in local silk production.⁴⁹ Copies of a bizarre silk were made in China but Rado notes they lack the three-dimensional depth which is typical of the finest Lyon work.⁵⁰ As she goes on to emphasise, such textiles had a special charge as a form of encounter. Their splendid design and novel manufacture ‘were appropriated by the Qing court for the purposes of demonstrating its global reach and technological mastery as a way of showcasing imperial power’.⁵¹ She labels these exotic textiles ‘Chinese européeneries’ that derive their significance ‘not so much from any precise geographic association but from the meanings they acquired in the context in which they were produced and experienced’.⁵²

Fashion, Urbanism and Visual Acuity

⁴⁸ Rado, ‘Encountering Magnificence’, 59-75.

⁴⁹ The rococo was not a term used at the time. Contemporaries called it ‘modern’ or the ‘genre pittoresque’ and from 1734 ‘rocaille’ which also refers to grotto shellwork; sometimes also called ‘la chicorée’. See Svend Eriksen, ‘Marigny and Le Goût Grec’, *Burlington Magazine*, 708/54 (1962), 98.

⁵⁰ Rado, *Encountering Magnificence*, 63.

⁵¹ Rado, *Encountering Magnificence*, 61.

⁵² Rado, *Encountering Magnificence*, 65

Textile production in urbanised cultures often revolved around the sharing of pictorial sources relayed by a variety of intermediaries including merchants and manufacturers, some of whom came from accomplished artistic circles themselves. This was the case for both Europe and Japan. Fashion in Japan was generated within specific visual codes and networks that linked textile and clothing design to other visual arts, including screen painting, porcelain, metalwork, lacquer and architecture. As Christine Guth notes of Japanese Momoyama (1573-1615) textiles: 'Close personal ties between artists involved in textile production and those in other media fostered much artistic cross-fertilization'.⁵³ The urbane Ogata family of Kyoto were inter-married with famed aesthetes and held an awareness of design across the fields of 'textiles, painting, ceramics, lacquer, and printed books throughout the seventeenth century'.⁵⁴ In the Japanese Genroku period (1688-1704) the characteristics of multi-coloured Japanese *Imari* (the name of the port from which ceramics of this name were exported) could be found on dishes, brocades and screens. The *kinran-de* (gold brocade) subcategory of *Imari* porcelain, embellished with gold, was directly inspired by the textiles used in Japanese ceremonial, theatrical and fashionable life.⁵⁵ All played a role in a performative enactment of luxury and aesthetics. At the same time, in Mughal India, European modes of 'scientific' botanical representation spread by the importation of seventeenth-century botanical prints or 'herbals'

⁵³ Christina Guth, 'Textiles', in Money L. Hickman (ed.), *Momoyama: Japan's Golden Age*, Dallas Museum of Art (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 276.

⁵⁴ Guth, 'Textiles', 276.

⁵⁵ Wayne Crothers, 'Imari Porcelain: Brocades of Translucent Colour', National Gallery of Victoria (exhibition), 2018 see <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/imari-porcelain-brocades-of-translucent-colour/>.

influencing the design of Mughal architecture, manuscript illustration and printed and painted cottons depicting flowers.⁵⁶

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, European urban centres began to demand clothes that were literally 'easier' to wear than those worn at court (more loosely cut, more easily bundled up for women, shorter skirts for men's waistcoats and jackets, giving an ability to walk and to work but remaining 'in fashion'). A concentration of workers in the 'appearance industries' so deftly described by Daniel Roche for Paris, permitted the skills, practices and fashionably attuned air of mercers, tailors, hatters, milliners, wig-makers, hair-dressers, glovers, stay-makers and domino (paper patterns for cards and linings) printers to creatively merge with the new commercialisation of leisure and the public space.⁵⁷ Fashion was activated by the public spaces of the theatres, assembly halls, amusement venues (Vauxhall Gardens, the Pantheon and Ranelagh in London; the Colisée in Paris), permanent and open-air shops and markets, parks and gardens suitable for walking, to create a dense and diverse fashion culture that could be observed by a wide range of people not permitted in the older, exclusive court circles where a fashion of magnificence had reigned. As John Styles and others have indicated, workers in the appearance industries – actors, prostitutes, street sellers and the mobile urban poor – generated new meanings for fashionable clothes which could be registered by the artful addition of ribbons and laces, bright Indian chintzes, pinchbeck buckled shoes (in imitation of

⁵⁶ Susan Strong, 'Europe in Asia: The Impact of Western Art and Technology in South Asia', in Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer (eds.), *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800*, (London: V&A Publications, 2004), 292.

⁵⁷ Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Regime*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

silver) or copper lace (imitation of gold).⁵⁸ A similar engagement between the consumption of new textile imports, desired by fashion-conscious urban traders and often worn in leisure districts, also coalesced in contemporary Japan.

Fashion and Urban Life in Edo

Edo developed when the 1635 *sankin-kôtai* (alternate attendance service) ordinance required all feudal barons (*daimyo*) to have a household in Edo and spend several months of the year there (rather like Louis XIV and his courtiers required to attend Versailles). The merchant class was exempt from taxation and therefore economically ascendant, becoming more daring in their aesthetic choices than the samurai elites. Edo Japan has been fruitfully compared with seventeenth and eighteenth century France as both societies had strong and centralising rulers, who funded large public works to transform public space and create imposing metropolises in Paris and Edo, where there were flourishing print cultures subject to state control, and precincts devoted to pleasure and entertainments.⁵⁹ As Charles H. Parker notes, cities were not just more

⁵⁸ Cissie Fairchilds, 'The Production and Marketing of Populuxe Goods in Eighteenth-Century Paris', in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London: Routledge, 1993), 228-248; John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

⁵⁹ James L. McClain, John M. Merriman and Ugawa Kaoru (eds.), *Edo and Paris. Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994). A comparative study of dress or fashion was not addressed in this path-breaking work.

cosmopolitan and urbane because they were large, but because they 'formed the spatial environment for exchange between foreign merchants and organizations in the early modern world ... urban culture has, in most times, promoted a level of tolerance and cosmopolitanism to make buyers and sellers feel secure to transact business'.⁶⁰ In Tokugawa Japan (1615-1868) the port city of Edo (now Tokyo) became 'a city not of producers but of consumers'.⁶¹

Late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century woodblock prints of courtesans and actors were greatly sought after by both Japanese city-dwellers and tourists and were called *bijin-ga* or 'pictures of beautiful people'. Timon Screech notes that they 'were elaborate in the . . . attention they gave to interior furnishings, personal accessories and dress'.⁶² Kimono, perfume bottles, amulets, musical instruments and letter boxes often stood in for beautiful women as a literary and artistic device. From 1765 new technology made it possible to produce single sheet prints in a whole range of colours. Polychrome wood-block printing or 'brocade pictures' (*nishiki-e*) included calendars for the lunar months. Each print required the co-operation of a designer, engraver, printer and publisher to create what was a commercial venture by the publisher, who was also often a bookseller. This was precisely the format that

⁶⁰ Charles H. Parker, *Global Interactions in the Early Modern Age, 1400-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 81.

⁶¹ Miyeko Murase, *Bridge of Dreams: The Mary Griggs Burke Collection of Japanese Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Harry N. Abrams, 2000), 249.

⁶² Timon Screech, *Sex and the Floating World. Erotic Images in Japan, 1700-1820*, 2nd ed. (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), 55.

developed in England, France, the Low Countries and the Germanic states in the eighteenth century. The famous *Ukiyo-e* (floating world pictures) prints of the late Edo period placed 'emphasis on the transitory indulgences available for purchase in the theatre and pleasure districts of the great cities'.⁶³ Pleasure districts such as the Yoshiwara were well outside the main part of Edo, to protect against fires but also public modesty. Arriving after a boat journey, men often discarded their city dress for more elaborate clothing worn in the brothels.⁶⁴ The Japanese made less of a distinction between clothing and bed linen and often used kimono as bed coverings and room screens.

Elaborate marriage rituals, and dowry requirements of women living within a hierarchical society subject to sumptuary laws, also supercharged Japanese fashion well into the nineteenth century. Sumptuary law in Japan was distinctive from that in the west as it required women to spend not only a certain maximum, but also minimum. Some of the spending was transient in the extreme, such as summer folding fans, which were thrown out at the end of the season, forming an ongoing iconographic reference to courtly tales of discarded fans floating down a stream. A category of art developed whose subject was clothing itself. *Tagasode* (meaning 'whose sleeves?') depicted women's clothes draped over clothes racks which formed partitions in rooms rather like Europeans used curtains (Figure 10.4). Images of the *tagasode*, sometimes with the suggestive addition of women's accessories such as sashes, perfume bags, musical instruments and amulets, appeared on formats as different as lacquer food boxes and painted

⁶³ Murase, *Bridge of Dreams*, 332.

⁶⁴ Timon Screech, *Tokyo before Tokyo: Power and Magic in the Shogun's City of Edo* (London: Reaktion Books, 2020), chapter 6.

screens, recalling tenth-century 31 syllable *waka* poetry as well as *The Tale of Genji*.⁶⁵ Such images provided instruction to women as to how to best display their clothing and textiles on special stands. The particular erotic charge of women's cloth in Japan, generally selected and made up by the wearer and therefore very identifiable with a particular individual, is emphasized by Screech, who notes that 'buying a whose-sleeve' was slang for hiring a prostitute.⁶⁶ *Tagasode*, with their erotic default of disrobing and the naked body, find some parallels in the 'it' narratives, or object stories of eighteenth-century England, in which written and visual descriptions of clothes detached from bodies 'become protagonists of commodity culture' and assertions of the 'material status of objects'.⁶⁷

INSERT HERE FIGURE 10.4

Concurrent with the Japanese woodblock-printed book industry there arose the genre of textile pattern books (*Hiinagata-bon*), printed books which depicted designs for *kosode* (short sleeve, referring to the opening), the precursor to the kimono (Figure 10.5). Rather like the late seventeenth century French fashion prints published in the *Mercure Galant*, there is some ambiguity as to what the images were for: 'kosode pattern books not only provided models for

⁶⁵ Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere (ed.), *Kazari: Decoration and Display in Japan, 15th-19th Centuries* (London: British Museum Press, 2002), 208-209.

⁶⁶ Screech, *Sex and the Floating World*, 119.

⁶⁷ Chloe Wigston-Smith, 'Clothes without Bodies: Objects, Humans, and the Marketplace in Eighteenth-Century It-Narratives and Trade Cards', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (23/2, 2010-2012), 350; 380.

prospective purchase and commissions, but also publicised current fashions, perhaps even setting trends, playing a role similar to present-day fashion magazines'.⁶⁸ In the *Pattern Book by Yûzen* (1688), motifs from painting and calligraphy including poem cards, round and folding fans, cedar doors and bound books were transformed to create patterns suitable for textiles. Printed in black and white they also contain instructions for suitable colours: 'scattered closed umbrellas in persimmon and navy blue against a white ground 'or 'crest with banana leaf and garment sleeves; pattern of water plantains and gentle rills of a stream '(1703).⁶⁹ This is a similar semantic conceit to the black and white French fashion prints of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which relied on verbal information to convey the precise effect of cloth and clothing. A sense of fashion 'futures 'is suggested in the text of the hand-coloured book *Patterns or a Peaceful Age* (1696) which notes that it might be thought all patterns are now exhausted, but the book depicts styles 'as yet unknown to the world'.⁷⁰

INSERT HERE FIGURE 10.5

Iki: Japanese Chic

Japanese fashion was connected to a relational network of consumption, discrimination and urbanity that the Japanese modernist thinker Kuki Shûzô presented as a visual-philosophical system in *The Structure of Iki*, composed in Paris and published in 1930. Shûzô sought an

⁶⁸ John T. Carpenter in Rousmaniere (ed.), *Kazari*, 204.

⁶⁹ Tomoko Sakomura, Cat. 87, in Rousmaniere (ed.), *Kazari*, 204.

⁷⁰ Tomoko Sakomura, Cat. 89, in Rousmaniere (ed.), *Kazari*, 207.

aesthetic equivalence for the dandyism he had experienced living in France. Dandyism was a good fit with the quiet and effortless elegance he was able to identify in parts of Edo Japan, an aesthetic of subtlety and refinement for hiding wealth in plain sight. *Iki* was manifest in not only an array of bodily movements and postures, but also particular patterns and colours suggestive of nature but also the urbane world of the theatre. Sometimes translated as the French word '*chic*' or the German '*schick*' or '*geschickt*', Shûzô compared it with the French concept '*esprit*' and Italian '*sprezzatura*'. *Iki* colouring was not simply about a colour preference. It might involve a contrast of colours in different tones; or a single one providing a 'mood': 'the one which expresses *iki* certainly cannot be showy' but it 'asserts the relational in a whisper'.⁷¹ As in France there were colours named after actors: *Shikan* [reddish deep brown], *Rikan* [blackish deep brown-tinged blue]; a vast range of greys, grey being significant as 'ash white is a stage of colourless sensation which shifts from white to black', cool colours such as dark blue and blue purple, colours derived from the appearance of teas (white, cupboard grey-blue, seasoned yellow, smoked, scorched, black kite, smoked bamboo, silver smoked bamboo) and the subtlety of imperfect technique or 'dyeing in colours without them adhering'.⁷² The motif of the stripe was *iki* and yet the vertical one was more *iki* still '—In the horizontal stripe the weight of the earth's strata rests against gravity: in the vertical stripe there

⁷¹ John Clark, *Reflections on Japanese Taste: The Structure of Iki by Kuki Shûzô*, trans. John Clark; (eds.), Sakuko Matsui and John Clark (Sydney: Power Publications, 1997), 96.

⁷² Clark, *Reflections*, 96-99

is the lightness of willow branches and the light rain which gravitates'.⁷³ Guth notes the literary allusion here in another context: many poems relate willow to women's breeze-blown hair, but 'snow-covered willow' refers to men's strength instead.⁷⁴ Women's tobacco-burners with horizontal silver white and grey-blue stripes qualified as *iki*. Showing the nape of the neck was *iki* as was lifting a kimono by the left hand: 'when she walks, the red lining of her garment and the lemon-yellow undercloth seem to flutter' (Figure 10.6).⁷⁵

INSERT HERE FIGURE 10.6

Unlike the west, which by the sixteenth century was codifying academic hierarchies in the arts, all visual culture in Japan was worthy of considerable respect, earnest discrimination and connoisseurship. The rise of a strong merchant class in the Momoyama period (1568-1600)

⁷³ Clark, *Reflections*, 89. The stripe in Japanese culture had been associated with outsiders such as the courtesan but was rehabilitated in the Tenmei period (1791-1789) as suitable for the warrior class. It later became fashionable for male dandies in the Bunka (1804-1817) and Bunsei (1818-1830). Stripes have a particular place in the history of European fashion and appear in formats as different as the '*siamoises*' of the seventeenth-century influenced by the Embassy to the court of Louis XIV from Siam (Thailand); and the influence of Ottoman ribbons on eighteenth-century French dress. See Jirousek, Charlotte A. with Sara Catterall, *Ottoman Dress and Design in the West. A Visual History of Cultural Exchange* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019), 176.

⁷⁴ Guth, 'Textiles', 285.

⁷⁵ Clark, *Reflections*, 81.

saw a flourishing of fashionable forms including, but not limited to, dress. In Kyoto, novelty shops sold painted fans, lantern paper, seashells for games, screens, dolls, design patterns for kimonoes and the decoration of interiors.⁷⁶ Tea caddies were kept in their special textile bags.⁷⁷ The foundation of the great Japanese department stores was laid in the Edo period when Kyoto merchandisers established retail stores selling silks to service the townfolk of Edo.⁷⁸ European trade brought stripes and checks to Japan via their trade in South-East Asian cloth and these motifs appeared on lacquer storage trays in what look startlingly modern designs.⁷⁹ *Kabuki* aesthetics promoted ‘outlandish’, twisted forms across painting, ceramics and textiles. A seventeenth century black and white *Illustrated Encyclopedia for Women* (*Joyo kinmo zui* – writer Okumura Shôhakuken, illustrator Yoshida Hanbei, 1687) depicted textiles, mirrors, equipment for blackening teeth, mending equipment, bathing kit, baby clothes, the art of flower arranging and tea utensils, of wrapping objects and incense competition, as well as hairstyles for women and men.⁸⁰

Fashion Refinement and Kazari

⁷⁶ Murase, *Bridge of Dreams*, 216.

⁷⁷ Accoutrements of the tea ceremony (Chanoyu) first date from the Muromachi period (1392-1573).

⁷⁸ Hayashi Reiko, ‘Provisioning Edo in the Early Eighteenth Century: The Pricing Policies of the Shogunate and the Crisis of 1733’, in McClain, Merriman and Kaoru (eds.), *Edo and Paris*, 215.

⁷⁹ Striped namban storage trays, Momoyama, illus. in Murase, *Bridge of Dreams*, 234. The Japanese word ‘shima’ (stripe) is a homophone for ‘island’ and refers to the Dutch East Indies. Screech, *Sex and the Floating World*, 120.

⁸⁰ Tomoko Sakomura, cat. no. 87 in Rousmaniere (ed.), *Kazari*, 204.

There was an enormous refinement of production and representation in Japan that can be considered in parallel with the etiolation of rococo (c. 1720-1750) and neo-classical design (c. 1760-1790) at the European courts. Japanese *kazari* as a concept meaning an object of decoration as well as its environment of display embraces the sweep of the early modern period from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, crosses media from textiles to potted wares to paintings, prints and lacquer, and is an approach to objects and culture in which the everyday object or practice can be suffused with the extraordinary, with memory, imagination and past practices. For wealthy women and men of the Momoyama period there were lacquer bookstands, portable lacquer chests of drawers for incense (commonly used to scent clothing), and lacquer comb, mirror, makeup and writing boxes. The design by Kanô Eitoku (1543-1590) for a set of late-sixteenth century *taramaki-e* (three dimensional) lacquer saddle and stirrups made for the military aristocrat Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598) survives as Important Cultural Property (Tokyo National Museum). A single stalk of golden reed dotted with inlaid-silver 'dew' bends and twists, and is cut with a blade, floating on a black background. The design is possibly a pun on *kariho* (harvested grain or cut reed-head) and 'borrowed hut' or a simple reed lodging.⁸¹ Blackening teeth with liquid *haguro*, a mixture of iron and other materials, was performed by both men and women in the pre-Nara period. Kyoto male aristocrats continued the practice until Edo, and women continued it until the late nineteenth century. The practice was not simply a matter of beauty but 'part of the symbolism associated with the initiation ceremony for boys and girls at the age of nine' and used by women after

⁸¹ Andrew J. Pekarik, 'Lacquer and Metalwork' in Money L. Hickman (ed., *Momoyama: Japan's Golden Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 241.

matrimony 'as a mark of fidelity'.⁸² A fashion practice as particular as this required an elaborate set of associated objects, toiletry boxes which in the fifteenth century might be lacquer and part of a suite – square for face powder, round for incense, rectangular for *haguro* (lacquer was a cheaper option than expensive Chinese ceramics). Such boxes were often decorated with themes from nature which held older literary and courtly allusions and some had high mirror stands attached to them (Figure 10.7).⁸³

INSERT HERE FIGURE 10.7

Dressing Up Prints

The representation of fashionable clothing in the West was a common form of 'intermedia' that crossed genres and formats including, but not limited to, history and portrait painting, the 'conversation piece', sculpture, political and portrait prints, caricature (satirical prints), the fashion press, trade cards, 'dressed prints' (prints cut and modified with the addition of textiles), women's pocket books and almanacs, crafts such as embroidery and paper rolled work (often retailed by professionals as ready-made kits), printed patterns for fashion (some designed by women), 'it' narratives and sketches, drawings and marginalia from life penned by women and men. Even statues of members of the Holy Family and the saints were dressed in facsimiles of

⁸² Murase, *Bridge of Dreams*, 123.

⁸³ Murase, *Bridge of Dreams*, 123

real fashion clothing in many European Catholic churches.⁸⁴ Fashion drawings were often a part of eighteenth-century correspondence and contributed to the diffusion of fashion. For example, the Swede Axel de Fersen (a lover of Marie-Antoinette), sent drawings of French fashion to his sister Sophie in Sweden and members of the nobility often corresponded regarding textiles and fashion via their foreign diplomats.⁸⁵

The flourishing of this print culture, literacy and education was not unilateral radiating out from city to country but enabled rural communities to forge their own definitions of desirable consumption. Much printing was local, even if scenes of metropolitan life and fashionable modes of the year dominated English ladies' pocket-books and almanacs. This was true in both imperial and colonial settings. The *Connecticut Gazette* in 1809 ran an advertisement for Mary Way (1769-1833) who was teaching in a ladies' boarding house in New London, Connecticut (she later worked in New York). The text made explicit connections between the acquisitions of skills by young ladies in areas such as 'painting, Tambour, embroidery, lace work on muslin, reading, writing, plain sewing etc', connecting female skill, refinement, sensibility and the

⁸⁴ For an extensive range of print products connected to European fashion imagery see Peter McNeil, "'Beauty in Search of Knowledge": Eighteenth-Century Fashion and the World of Print', in Evelyn Welch (ed.), *Fashioning the early Modern: Dress, Textiles, and Innovation in Europe, 1500-1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 223-254.

⁸⁵ Françoise Tétart-Vittu, *Le dessin sous toutes ses coutures. Croquis, illustrations, modèles, 1760-1994* (Paris: Musée de la Mode et du Costume, 27 April-13 August 1995), 17.

arts.⁸⁶ As Catherine Kelly remarks, such accomplishments were ‘far more than a collection of desirable personal characteristics, sensibility carried broad political significance: it was both the precondition for virtuous citizenry and the best evidence of it’.⁸⁷ An understanding of the wider visual culture of fashion was essential to these practices.

Way and her sister Elizabeth (Betsey) Way Champlain (1771-1825) were daughters of a mercantile family, possibly self-taught, and became accomplished women artists working in a genre generally overlooked until the 1970s. Both sisters created remarkable dressed watercolour miniatures on ivory or paper, with the addition of textiles such as silk, linen, cotton, ribbon and sequins to depict clothing. Unlike most other miniature painters who painted the effects of cloth with their miniature brushes, Way collaged real cloth to simulate dress onto the body of her sitters, possibly even provided by the sitters themselves. Her art therefore has some links to the practice of the famous British gentlewoman creator of floral embroideries and collages, Mrs Delany (1700-1788), a highly accomplished embroiderer who began creating at the age of 72 her ‘*Flora Delanica*’, nearly 1000 superimposed cut paper ‘mosaics’ (made from dyed papers including imported Chinese ones) or the *hortus siccus* realistically depicting flowers.⁸⁸ Called ‘the woman of fashion of all ages’ by Edmund Burke, Mrs Delany’s mosaics were ‘the crowning glory of a long life devoted to exquisite embroidery, shellwork, gardening,

⁸⁶ William Lamson Warren, ‘Mary Way’s Dressed Miniatures’, *Magazine Antiques*, October (1992), 540-549.

⁸⁷ Catherine Kelly, ‘Miniature Worlds’, *Commonplace: The Journal of Early American Life*, 3/2, (January 2003), accessed <http://commonplace.online/article/miniature-worlds/>

⁸⁸ Ruth Hayden, *Mrs Delany. Her Life and her Flowers* (London: British Museum Press, 1980).

flower painting, landscape sketching and the cutting of images in paper more generally'.⁸⁹ Delany's approach to materials finds another echo in the mixed-media ceroplastic (wax sculpture) portraits of members of the Savoy court and French Revolutionary figures by the Piedmontese artist Francesco Orso (also known as François Orsy, active c1785), who fused polychrome wax, glass, fabrics and painted *papier-mâché* to simulate details of fashionable clothing and furs.⁹⁰

Although dressed prints have not been mentioned by the Way researchers, most of whom are miniature-painter experts, this author believes that the Way sisters might have decided on their distinctive approach by seeing or reading about what are now called 'adorned', 'modified' or 'dressed plates' or prints. As has been noted, they were possibly influenced by needleworkers of nearby Norwich, Connecticut, who produced very skilled graphic needlework and where Lucy Perkins Carew (1758-1832) advertised that she 'taught Cloath and Tiffina work on Sattin' as well as 'drawing, painting and figure', the 'work on Sattin' suggesting something akin to a collaged textile.⁹¹ Dressed fashion plates are quite common survivals in private collections

⁸⁹ Laird, Mark, *A Natural History of English Gardening 1650-1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 267. The English folk-artist George Smart fabricated a series of cloth-collage pictures depicting local manners and dress around 1810.

⁹⁰ An example is in the collection of Italian publisher and aesthete Franco Maria Ricci: see Susan Moore, 'True to Type', *Apollo* (September 2019), 65.

⁹¹ Carol Huber, 'Is it this way or that way? The Carew-Way Connection', *Antiques and Fine Art Magazine*, Autumn 2014: unpaginated version online

<https://www.incollect.com/articles/is-it-this-way-or-that-way>

(they are more scarce in museum collections, possibly because they are hybrid, incomplete or 'damaged' artefacts), in which the dress was cut out and cloth inserted behind to create the illusion of a fashion garment. Dressed prints were commonly used in Catholic countries from the seventeenth century as reliquaries depicting the splendour of the Saints; the print was often cut out in part and rich textiles added behind, or lace, ribbons, sand or lichen might be affixed to the front, creating a three dimensional effect.

Way charged the very considerable sum of ten to twenty dollars and occasionally twenty per portrait.⁹² The clothing in her miniatures likely derived from her own observation of fashion prints as well as the fashionable sitters themselves. She once invoked the language of fashion to critique the art of her niece, noting the figure should be 'light and airy, in a loose flowing robe... at least, not look like a stick with corsets on and a frock tied around it'.⁹³ David Jaffee has described her as possibly the first professional woman artist in post-Revolutionary America, and connects her to what he terms a consensual 'village enlightenment' in which local print culture and education transformed attitudes, industries and portraiture and was but another product lending itself to standardisation, leading in turn to the creation of a large and cohesive middle class set of tastes and values in the nineteenth century.⁹⁴ Eliza Way Champlain also painted mourning tokens and 'watch-papers' or small circular paintings to place inside men's

⁹² See Ramsay MacMullen, *Sisters of the Brush: Their Family, Art, Lives & Letters 1797-1833* (New Haven: Past Times Press, 1997), 24.

⁹³ Kelly, n.p.

⁹⁴ David Jaffee, *A New Nation of Goods: The Material Culture of Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 87.

watch-cases, depicting neo-classical allegories such as 'Faith', which added to the fashionable significance of male horology. The Ways painted many prominent sitters. Mary Way's portrait of Jonathan Devotion (1769-1843) depicts the grandson of a leading Congregational minister from Boston. In 1793 Jonathan returned to Scotland, Connecticut, where he opened a business as a merchant and this work depicting his very determined face, long wig queue, fine linen shirt, ruffled stock, fallen collar and fashionable frock coat likely dates from that time.⁹⁵ In order to work to the correct scale, Way cut out individually and applied squares to simulate a fashionable, dotted woven-silk waistcoat (Figure 10.8).⁹⁶

INSERT HERE FIGURE 10.8

From the Printed Page to Porcelain

The transmission and transformation of fashion images took place across a wide variety of material formats. Many of these material forms have tended to have been studied in isolation from each other and are little connected with developments in the study of the history of

⁹⁵ Lance and Gay Myers Mayer, *The Devotion Family. The Lives and Possessions of Three Generations in Eighteenth-Century Connecticut*, (New London, Lyman Allyn Art Museum, 1991), 40.

⁹⁶ Information courtesy Cheryl-Lynn May. See also Cheryl-Lynn May, 'The Portrait Miniature, Mary's Way: Contextualizing Mary Way's Dressed Portrait Miniatures' (Unpublished Masters Diss., University of Delaware, 2010).

fashionable dress. One such material domain is the topic of porcelain, which has been connected with textile culture but less so with dress fashions.⁹⁷

Chinese porcelain was developed in the sixth century and reached Europe in the mid fourteenth in small numbers. Durable, impervious and semi-translucent through vitrification, smooth and able to take a range of enamelled colours and glazes, it was inert, suited the new hot drinks of imported coffee and tea (far superior to the silver, tin or copper vessels previously used) and could be made into myriad forms. By the seventeenth century it was in huge demand, one of the key materials transmitting visual design. Peddlers carried the cheaper ceramic wares far into the English countryside, where it was common to trade them for second-hand clothing.⁹⁸ Porcelain collecting was often associated with women in Europe, although sea captains and merchants very much desired large Chinese export-ware armorial dinner services of 200-400 pieces to assert their high status and signal 'proximity to or membership of the prestigious enterprises that formed the East Indian companies'.⁹⁹ It was not just items of local design that the Chinese manufactured for Dutch, English, French and later American colonial traders.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Occasional museum exhibitions have considered aspects of this topic, for example 'Cross Pollination: Flowers in 18th-century European Porcelain and Textiles', curated by curator Genevieve Cortinovic, St Louis Art Museum, 2017.

⁹⁸ Richards, *Eighteenth-Century Ceramics*, 62.

⁹⁹ Brigitte Nicolas, 'China Trade Porcelain and *Famille* Wares', in Jean-Paul Desroches (ed.), *Paris 1730-1930: The Taste for China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Art Museum/Musée Guimet, 2008), 85.

¹⁰⁰ The American trade dates from 1784; before that goods were trans-shipped from Holland or England.

As Finlay notes: 'Porcelain played a central role in cross-cultural exchange in the Afro-Eurasian *oikumene*, since it was the principal material vehicle for the assimilation and transmission of artistic symbols, themes, and designs across vast distances. Finlay ¹⁰¹' describes the multifarious decoration on a Nîmes tin-glazed earthenware platter (1736) that included a scene of Venus and Adonis, reproduced from a French engraving, circled by a border of Chinese pomegranate vines taken from the cottons printed for Dutch merchants in India.¹⁰² Dawn Odell argues that Chinese export-porcelain as a carefully designed commodity 'fashioned a "mercantile" image of China for European consumers 'in which new narratives intersected with the lives of foreign consumers.¹⁰³ Fashion-related products from punch-bowls painted with English caricature scenes, to figurines depicting French courtiers wearing chintz robes and based on Baroque Paris fashion plates, were made in China for export to European and North American markets, representing complex entanglements of early modern global fashion and its myriad sources from West Europe, the American Republic, China, Japan and India.

The Jingdezhen potters and Canton painters were well used to creating imitations of foreign wares, having manufactured vessels designed for South East and Central Asian needs and tastes

¹⁰¹ Finlay, 'The Pilgrim Art', 143.

¹⁰² David Howard and John Ayers, *China for the West, Chinese Porcelain and other Decorative Arts for Export illustrated from the Mottahedeh Collection* (London and New York, Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1978). See also V&A C94-1963.

¹⁰³ Dawn Odell, 'Porcelain, Print Culture and Mercantile Aesthetics', in Alden Cavanaugh and Michael E. Yonan (eds.), *The Cultural Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century Porcelain* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 142.

for centuries. They produced their European export wares from a vast range of visual sources including drawings, caricatures, book illustration, printed bookplates and trade cards, newspapers, coins, shipping and insurance papers, seals, European-made ceramics, glass and metal objects as well as wooden pattern forms. They were influenced by, and sometimes directly copied, late seventeenth century French prints by the Bonnarts (Nicolas, engraver 1637-1718; Robert, draughtsman, 1652-1733) and Gaspard Deshayes (publisher, active c1690). They produced porcelain chargers with bucolic scenes of ladies reclining, noble women embroidering, 'The Three Graces', 'The Senses', music making, gardening, reclining – scenes of ease and fashionable *gallanterie* (Figure 10.9). They also copied caricatures by Hogarth (*The Gates of Calais*, 1749, in which French and Jacobite Scots are contrasted with a plain but well-fed Englishman; on another bowl appears *A Midnight Conversation*, 1733, deriding import taxes) onto *famille-rose* punch bowls as well as historico-political designs including caricatures of John Wilkes.¹⁰⁴ Such satirical ceramics appealed in England to 'a male fraternity of consumers who had reason to view the patriciate with a critical eye'.¹⁰⁵ Some were commissioned by European corporations, secret societies and livery companies as unique wares reinforcing their group identities. Humbler inn-keepers and tradesmen also commissioned export wares. Wealthy supercargo merchants were often collectors themselves,

¹⁰⁴ The Emperor Kangxi had requested the Jesuits study the possibilities of enamels sent out from Europe. An outcome was the new pink colour from *purple of Cassius* that produced the famous *famille rose* porcelain associated with China. Brigitte Nicolas, 'China Trade Porcelain and *Famille Wares*', in *A Taste for China*, 84.

¹⁰⁵ Richards, *Eighteenth-Century Ceramics*, 197.

hoarded rare stock, sold it on as required and gifted unique wares to patrons.¹⁰⁶ There is no evidence to date that such wares were used by the Chinese.

INSERT HERE FIGURE 10.9

The Chinese also modelled three-dimensional export wares depicting Europeans in fashionable and occupational dress. The former include a pair of *famille verte* courtier figures depicting a man in a long wig and a woman in a fontange, both figures dressed informally in Indian chintz. (Musée Cernushki, Paris). Sometimes called ‘Louis XIV and Mme de Maintenon’, they exist in several versions almost certainly copied from French fashion plates by the Bonnarts. A pair of Chinese figures catalogued in the past as Dutch or German peasants or ‘Mr and Mrs Duff’ are now believed to depict Ashkenazi Jews (indicated by the woman’s conical headwear, the man’s broad-brimmed hat and beard, and ruffs) and were made for export around 1740. The figures have a close resemblance to two prints by Dutchman Caspar Luiken published in Nuremberg as part of the 101-plate costume book *Neu-eröffnete Welt-Galleria* (1703) indicating that older imagery often informed new products made several decades later.¹⁰⁷ The

¹⁰⁶ Mieke von Brescius, ‘Private Enterprise and the China Trade: British interlopers and their informal networks in Europe, c.1720-1750’ (Unpublished PhD Diss., University of Warwick, 2016), 195.

¹⁰⁷ Ronald W. Fuchs II, ‘European subjects on Chinese porcelain’, Summary of Lecture 18 June 2008, *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 72 (2007-2008), 40. For the print see <https://www.lbi.org/artcatalog/record/246113> accessed 16 April 2021. See also Cornelia Aust, ‘From Noble Dress to Jewish Attire: Jewish Appearances in the Polish-Lithuanian

Chinese artist has copied the wind blowing the woman's garment but has not observed the man's *shabbad* cloak, replacing it instead with a Chinese robe of much the same length decorated with Chinese clouds. It has been suggested that such wares might have been commissioned by the extremely wealthy Viennese-Jewish families invited back to Vienna (following expulsion) as court bankers after 1673 (Figure 10.10).¹⁰⁸

INSERT HERE FIGURE 10.10

From Supplication to Celebration

The Chinese might have been more than amused by the scenes of European dress and manners on such export wares. Depicting large numbers of foreign envoys bringing gifts to court had been a part of Chinese statecraft since the sixth century and was undertaken in order to

Commonwealth and the Holy Roman Empire', *European History Yearbook* (20, 2019), 108-110. Other examples including those in the Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library (Delaware), Peabody Essex Museum and British Museum are in similar dimensions and colours, indicating an organised approach for their production.

¹⁰⁸ Sotheby's New York, *A Collecting Legacy: Property from The Collection of Nelson and Happy Rockefeller*, Lot 321, see <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2019/a-collecting-legacy-property-from-nelson-happy-rockefeller-n10004/lot.321.html> accessed 16 April 2021. Sephardic Jews (involved with the China trade in London and Amsterdam) are known to have commissioned Chinese export Armorial dinner services.

demonstrate Chinese superiority.¹⁰⁹ Costume or dress was considered essential to establish a visual shorthand for both Chinese and foreign peoples. The grandiose Emperor Chien-lung (also Qianlong, 1711-1799) commissioned an extensive tributary book from his regional officials in which subject peoples and foreigners were depicted in detail. These were derived from European sixteenth and seventeenth century costume books or the marginalia of Dutch maps, in which men and women were delineated from the front with some sense of movement but little expression. Chien-lung commissioned from the court artist Xie Sui two subsequently copied scrolls or 'Illustrations of Tributary Peoples' (completed 1775). These were based upon a twenty-year pictorial project reworking older 'tribute paintings' indicating supplication, as well as reports from regional officials and a Chinese painted compendia of the dress of other nations and Chinese ethnic peoples. The new commission departed from the older tributary tradition in showing men facing outwards rather than walking in a line as supplicants, and they also depicted women. As there were hardly any foreign women in China to observe, they must have been taken from European prints or drawings, and these later figures have a fluttering air akin to French *gravures de mode*.¹¹⁰ The Emperor had stated that in preparing the work, if there were no opportunities for the artist to observe western barbarians, 'for what he does not know,

¹⁰⁹ Ming Wilson, 'New Research on the Ceremonial Paraphernalia Album in the V&A', Summary of Lecture given 20 April 2004, *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 68 (2003-4), 51-59.

¹¹⁰ Yu-chih Lai, 'Costuming the Empire. A Study on the Production of Tributary Paintings at the Qianlong Court in Eighteenth-Century China', in Tara Zanardi and Lynda Klich (eds.), *Visual Typologies from the Early Modern to the Contemporary, Local Contexts and Global Practices* (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2019), 90-103.

there is no need of dispatching for further investigation', artists were free to extemporise from printed sources.¹¹¹

Specialist Chinese artists or 'face makers' were skilled at producing extremely realistic clay portrait figurines of Europeans wearing their contemporary dress. These were generally commissioned by senior members of supercargo (mobile agent) crews and taken back to Europe.¹¹² Susan Broomhall, writing of such figures in Danish collections, notes that the Swede Pehr Osbeck, who visited Guangzhou in 1750, observed 'in the Porcellane-street', in a small upper-storey gallery, the 'famous Face-Maker was at work, who makes men's figures, mainly in miniature... sometimes he hits them exceedingly well'.¹¹³ These figures were indeed small and well made, about the same height (30-40 cm) as the porcelain figures at Figure 10.10. Apart from the well-known example (Peabody Essex Museum) of the English china trade merchant Thomas Hall (1692-1748) reclining in oriental dress - a banyan and turban - most examples sit or stand in emphatically European attire. A fine example with a realistically painted face signed and dated by the artist known as Amoy Chinqua (1719) possibly represents the supercargo Captain Robert Knox (1641-1720) of the British East India Company, who brought cannabis to London amongst other trading achievements. It features many painted details of his rich

¹¹¹ Lai, 'Costuming the Empire', 92.

¹¹² V&A FE.32 to B-1981.

¹¹³ Susan Broomhall, 'Face-Making: Emotional and Gendered Meanings in Chinese Clay Portraits of Danish Asiatic Company Men', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, (41/3), 2016, 448. The skillset in part rested on the tradition of Chinese figure-sculpting for tomb and religious purposes.

dress: white linen stock and shirt, coat lined in turquoise silk, embroidered or woven waistcoat painted with clematis, dianthus and tulips, buckled shoes detailed with white stitching, and ivory and Malacca cane (Figure 10.11). Supercargoes played an important role in bringing back private trade goods or special commissions from Canton separate from the speculative commodities destined to be sold at auction. They ranged from women's shoes with European heels to the finest tea, enamelled wares, swords and embroidered textiles often purchased with very large amounts of money: in 1724-1726 the Duchess of d'Arenberg transmitted £300 to Thomas Hall for eleven pieces of Chinese silk.¹¹⁴

INSERT HERE FIGURE 10.11

The Chinese also copied European styles for the enjoyment of the Chinese Emperor and his court: the Yongzheng Emperor was painted in late seventeenth century style European dress including a long French wig and cravat (Palace Museum, Beijing) in order to 'signify China's universal sovereignty'.¹¹⁵ Qing Imperial archives mention some paintings affixed to the walls representing 'western beauties' and Chinese women dressed in the manner of Watteau were painted onto enamels in Canton. These are generally considered to be fantasies, and not real vestimentary practices. During the Opium Wars of the 1830s and 1840s, the Chinese made ceramic wine jugs and urinals for local consumption in the form of European men in western

¹¹⁴ Von Brescius, 'Private Enterprise and the China Trade', 212-213. On shoes see *Ibid.*, 221.

¹¹⁵ Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer, 'Introduction: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800', in Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer (eds.), *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800* (London: V&A Publications, 2004), 9.

trousers and hats, suggesting that the Europeans were only useful to pour them wine or deal with their waste.¹¹⁶

Portraits of elite Europeans wearing western dress and painted on mirror-glass also survive. Reverse-painted mirrors (painted in reverse from the back) generally depicted Chinese courtly figures, gardens, birds and landscapes. They were imported by most East India companies as a luxury good but the main markets appears to have been England, Sweden, colonial North America and India where they were used in Gujarati palace design. The quicksilvered mirror-glass was sent to China where the part to be painted was scraped off. Several Swedish painters went to China in the late-eighteenth century to learn ‘the Chinese way to paint on glass’, an irony as the Chinese had learned the reverse painting technique from Europeans, likely the Jesuits.¹¹⁷ An observer wrote in 1851 ‘This is an art which is almost entirely lost in Europe, but is very successfully practiced in this country. This style of painting suits the Chinese very well as it exhibits the splendour of their colours’.¹¹⁸ The majority of sources used for Chinese mirror printings likely consisted of prints (Figure 10.12).

¹¹⁶ Michael Lee, ‘Subduing the “Foreign Devils” in ‘Shekwan Ceramics: Representations of Westerners During the Opium Wars’, Lecture Given by Michael Lee, 19 January 2010, *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 74, (2009-2010), 35.

¹¹⁷ Jan Wirgin, ‘Chinese Reverse Glass Painting on Glass in the 18th Century’, lecture given 19 June 2002, *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 66 (2001-2002), 107.

¹¹⁸ Toogood Downing, member of the Royal College of Surgeons, cited in William R. Sargent, ‘Asia in Europe: Chinese Painting for the West’, in Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer (eds.), *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800* (London: V&A Publications, 2004), 278.

INSERT HERE FIGURE 10.12

A pair of undated Chinese mirror paintings purported to be the Fourth supercargo English-born John Pike and his wife was made in Canton and has been dated by a Swedish museum to the 1740s.¹¹⁹ As John Pike had a daughter Anna Elisabet (born Lisbon 1725) who married the supercargo Jakob Jeansson von Utfall in 1746, one might assume that this is a marriage commission dating from that year or thereabouts depicting the daughter.¹²⁰

INSERT HERE FIGURES 10.13 and 10.14.

Although the exact identity of the sitters is now obscured, analysis of the clothing suggests that this depicts the older generation rather than the daughter at marriage and was likely painted a little earlier, in the 1730s. This would match with the decade in which John Pike commenced his mercantile activity in China. Pike was an inter-generational tea-trader and naturalised Swede who sailed from Gothenburg for the Swedish East India Company four times between 1732-1745. Pike is depicted dressed in a woollen suit with richly trimmed waistcoat. The coat tails are long, stiffened and highly flared with the large cuffs typical of the 1720s-1730s. His wife is dressed in a fashionable *negligée* with wide, rich lace-trimmed sleeves typical of the period before 1740, and holding a fan (originally a Chinese innovation). John Pike's rich, full

¹¹⁹ Identity of the sitters comes from traces of a label pasted on the reverse of one mirror by a descendent in the 1930s when they were called 'Lord and Lady Pike' by the family.

¹²⁰ 'Det Gamla Göteborg', <https://gamlagoteborg.se/2016/09/01/jakob-jeansson-von-utfall/> accessed 9 July 2021.

but relatively plain dress reinforces the reputation of the supercargo as a man of shrewd, diplomatic and brave skills, often with linguistic and financial expertise: Pike was assistant director of the Company.¹²¹ Both are set in fantastic Chinese landscapes with European details such as balustrades and Delft tiles. Supercargoes were unusually well educated, sophisticated and engaged with contemporary history, politics and ideas.¹²² The Chinese artist has therefore conferred an appropriate genteel aura on the couple. The Pike mirrors were probably copied from a drawn or painted portrait sent out on the trip and are mounted in Chinese-made slip frames with later Swedish cresting. The reverse painting creates the effect of a European portrait silhouette.¹²³ When fashionable imagery was attached to durable media such as porcelain and mirrors it doubly surprised and enchanted. The fashion image that we might expect to be painted or printed and that depicted short-lived fashion 'news' became fixed on objects which due to their materiality had a much longer life of circulation, exchange and enjoyment. In the case of the Pike mirrors they also have an important commemorative function and likely found a place within the Pike residence in Gothenburg.

Trade, taste and technology transformed the meanings and materials of manufactures and were seen as a part of statecraft by the Qing Emperor, just as they had been by Louis XIV and his ministers. Mei Mei Rado refers to the Chinese adaptation of certain European silk designs as 'the Qing Imperial pursuit of imitating, appropriating, and developing foreign techniques and

¹²¹ Richards, *Eighteenth-Century Ceramics*, 59.

¹²² Von Brescius, 'Private Enterprise and the China Trade', 17.

¹²³ Wirgin, 'Chinese Reverse Glass Painting', 107

artistic styles'.¹²⁴ The trade in exotic fashions, wares, materials and technologies was a two way street: mechanical clocks and novelties being a good example of a fashionable luxury desired by the upper echelons of the Chinese, Indian and Turkish markets. Enamelled table snuff-boxes, patch and sponge boxes, cane handles, telescopes, fan guards and perfume bottles were fabricated in the crossroads of Geneva and retailed to Turkey, India and China often via London. Automaton producer Jean-Frédéric Leschot (1746-1824) cautioned against trying to sell objects depicting European dress to China, as ingenious objects depicting fruit, flowers or animals encircled with pearls as well as singing birds were always more popular.¹²⁵ Watches were created for the Chinese market shaped as peonies or peaches enamelled and inlaid with diamonds to simulate the effect of Chinese painting and generally were produced in pairs, yin and yang.¹²⁶ The Genevan watchmaker (*horloger*) and jeweller (*bijoutier*) trades were intertwined and the fashionable enamelled snuff-boxes of the last third of the eighteenth century were derived from expertise in *émigrés* making French watch-cases in the previous century. Clock making was highly significant across seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe as it was believed that horology held the answer to astronomy and navigation and the longitude required for precise navigation at sea. The special pendulum clock commissioned

¹²⁴ Mei Mei Rado, 'Encountering Magnificence: European Silks at the Qing Court during the Eighteenth Century', in Petra Ten-Doesschate Chu and Ning Ding (eds.), *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges Between China and the West* (Los Angeles: Getty Trust Publications, 2015), 64.

¹²⁵ Julia Clarke, 'Swiss Gold Boxes: Myth or Reality?', in Tessa Murdoch and Heike Zech (eds.), *Going for Gold: Craftsmanship and Collecting of Gold Boxes* (Brighton, Chicago and Toronto: Sussex Academic Press, 2014), 67.

¹²⁶ See the collection of the Patek Philippe Museum, Geneva.

and designed by the marquis de Beringhem with case by the sculptor Nicolas Le Sueur (1690-1764) and works by the clockmaker Julien Le Roy (1688-1759) for the *levée du roi* of Louis XV (when the King arose and was dressed for the day by courtiers) is an example of this technological priority. Many of the elaborate mechanical clocks made by English makers for export to China depicted fashionable references, such as one weighing nineteen kilograms by clockmaker John Marriott (London) surmounted by an ormolu (gilt bronze) European boy wearing informal dress with diamond buttons, tilling a garden in the manner espoused by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.¹²⁷

Conclusion

Images of fashion seem to be everywhere in the past. Yet early-modern audiences, with no photography or film, had a different relationship to the visual culture of fashion than nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first-century viewers. We are used to thinking about fashion of the early modern period through the prism of painting, print and sculpture. The power and proliferation of print in the early-modern period, whether it be for Japanese kimono design or to serve as model for a piece of Chinese porcelain, engendered new abilities to ‘read’, replicate and generate fashion. This chapter has discussed the visual culture of fashion in the early modern period not only in terms of materiality, of textures and colours but also in terms of technologies, formats and media that many assume are separate from dress fashions. It has done so to reassert the connectivity of fashion and the wider decorative arts and design. It has emphasised that

¹²⁷ *Pekin kokyūhakubutsuin hizō karakuridokei seika-ten* [*The Beijing Forbidden City Palace Museum Treasures: Brilliance of an Automaton Clock*], (Osaka: NHK Japan Broadcasting Corporation and NHK Kinki Media Plan, 1995), 52-53.

early-modern viewers thought about material relationships that were often synergistic and not yet 'scientific'. Fashion's 'intra-artefact' effect can be found in both Asia and Europe. Design often proceeded from complementary sources, approaches and insights that were constantly remade in a global setting that went beyond the notions of copy or influence to create a supercharged environment for fashion in a world before mass consumption.

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