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Claiming Space and Collecting Objects: Mercantile Culture and Colonial Expansion in Early Modern World*

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Abstract

Arjun Appadurai in his illuminating book *The Social Life of Things* notes that material culture represents the relationship between people and the objects, and it bespeaks the value system as well as the core concept as related to self, community and the countries of a specific historical period (1-10). However, just as Appadurai indicates that the present value of any given object derives diachronically from its differential relations to its known past, present situations and future contexts. That is, the cultural meanings of the material may help decode the underlying meanings of established institutions, the possibilities of social progress or even mental potentialities of the people. Material culture as well as its multi-perspectives helps to approach economic and social activities, especially when material culture becomes interrelated to crowd behavior or collective concept of economical and political achievements (12-5).

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Certainly, among different aspects of material culture, locating space, claiming territory, and searching for resources are almost equivalent to asserting identities and resisting cultural differences during the early modern period. In the age of great discoveries, a lot of dramas with colonial themes and representations of the interaction between the material and colonizers, such as *Amboyna* or *Island Princes*, successfully represent a world of lived experience where people cooperate for certain goals but simultaneously fight with each other for certain conflicts; hence the contested territory is the exact place for coupling and feasting. Object is connected with ritual and trade; in these dramas, trading couples with fetishism, and mercantile spirit sides with the basic desires of the humans. This essay will explore spatial activities of claiming spaces and collecting Oriental objects and discuss how in these dramas the material culture is involved with the discourse of constructing empire.

Keywords: Early Modern Literature, Mercantilism, Colonialism, Material Culture

In his illuminating book *The Social Life of Things*, Arjun Appadurai notes that material culture represents the relationship between people and objects, and at the same time bespeaks the value system as well as the core concept as related to self, community and the country of a specific historical period (1-10). However, just as Appadurai indicates that the present value of any given object derives diachronically from its differential relations to its known past, present situations and future contexts. That is, the cultural meanings of the material may help decode the underlying meanings of established institutions, the possibilities of social progress or even mental potentialities of people. Material culture as well as its multi-perspectives helps to approach the economic and social activities, especially when material culture becomes interrelated to crowd behavior or collective concept of economical and political achievements (Appadurai, 1986: 12-5). Certainly, among different aspects of material culture, locating space, claiming space and searching for resources are almost equivalent to asserting identities and resisting cultural differences during the early modern period. In the age of great discoveries, a lot of dramas with colonial themes and representations of the interaction between the material and colonizers, such as *Island Princess* and *Amboyna*, successfully represent a world of lived experience where at one moment people cooperate for certain objects but fight with each other at the next for other conflicts; hence the contested territory becomes the exact place for everyday activities, coupling and feasting. Object is connected with ritual and trade; object is involved with fetishism and mercantile spirit sides with the basic desire and curiosity of humans. The imaginary world created by Mandeville highlights the relentless curiosities of people in the late medieval period of Europe. With increased opportunities for exploration and adventure in the early modern period, a longing for the exotic increased. Marlow represented how the Jew of Malta collected merchandise from all parts of the world:

Barabas. So that of thus much that return was made;
And of the third part of the Persian ships
There was the venture summ'd and satisfied.
As for those Samnites, and the men of Uz,
That bought my Spanish oils and wines of Greece,
Here have I purs'd their paltry silverlings.

Fie, what a trouble 'tis to count this trash!
Well fare the Arabians, who so richly pay
The things they traffic for with wedge of gold,
Whereof a man may easily in a day
Tell that which may maintain him all his life.

(The Jew of Malta I. i. 1-11)

Barabas the Jew mentioned he had collected pearls that are like pebble-stones, and bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts, jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds, beauteous rubies, and sparkling diamonds; all these costly stones are of so great a price that might help save a captured prince. Barabas' yearning is fully expressed through the lines:

Mine argosy from Alexandria,
Loaden with spice and silks, now under sail...

(The Jew of Malta 45-6)

The early modern fascination with exotic objects became a trend and the cabinets of curiosity were changing from private and amateur collections (Purinton, 2007: 250). The first of the cabinets of curiosities were assembled in the mid-sixteenth century. According to *wikipedia*, the Kunstkammer of Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor (ruled 1576-1612), housed in the Hradschin at Prague, north of the Alps, was unrivalled in the early modern era. It provided a solace and retreat for contemplation¹ and it also served to demonstrate his imperial taste, magnificence, prestige and power in the symbolic arrangement of their display, which was ceremoniously presented to visiting diplomats and magnates.² Besides the princely collections mentioned above, two of the most famous 17th century private cabinets or botanic gardens were those constructed by Ole

¹ This is the secretive aspect emphasized by R. J. W. Evans, *Rudolf II and His World: A Study in Intellectual History* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1973), 12-8.

² Thomas Da Costa Kaufmann, "Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II: The Kunstkammer as a Form of Representation." *Art Journal* 38.1 (Autumn 1978): 22-28.

Worm, also known as Olaus Wormius (1588-1654), Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680) and Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605). These seventeenth-century “cabinets” were filled with artifacts and specimens that fascinated these early modern visitors of the cabinets. As Ole Worm, a professor of medicine, indicated himself, his museum preserved natural specimens such as antiques and art objects but the most important collection for teaching includes horns of animals, tusks of elephants, skeletons of the whales, exquisite minerals, as well as “other types of equally fascinating man-made objects: sculptures wondrously old, wondrously fine or wondrously small; clockwork automata; ethnographic specimens from exotic locations. Often they would contain a mix of fact and fiction” including creatures of other worlds (*wikipedia*), although exotic creatures and strange plants always became the core attractions for the early modern people. Worm's collection included minerals, and what he thought a “Scythian Lamb”, or some fabulous creatures. However, as a professor serving the University of Copenhagen, he tried to familiarize his students with the nature of the soil, the narwhal's tusk and whales' skeletons (Shackelford, 1999: 2-3). The specimens displayed were often collected during exploring expeditions and trading voyages.³ The cabinets of the early modern period represent the trend of collecting objects. Early modern period was also the age of discovery and an age of early capitalism. Fetishism about the exotic became a trend. The fashion even transformed into a bizarre and notorious work of Dr. James Graham, who constructed his Temple of Health in London displaying electrical apparatus, and the natural human bodies. If Graham's Temple of Health represents one side of human curiosity, the exploration of the East brought more expectations and possibilities for curiosities.

The British and Dutch India Companies were established in the early seventeenth century; the former one was originally entitled The Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies. Its main trade includes cotton, silk, indigo dye, saltpetre,

³ In the sixteenth century there was an obsession of collecting objects from foreign countries. Marjorie Swann's *Curiosities and Texts* (2008) and Niels von Holst's creators, *Collectors and Connoisseurs* (1967) are both solid studies on the fashion of collection. For quotations, see *Life Science Encyclopedia* at http://www.bionity.com/lexikon/e/Cabinet_of_curiosities/ and *wikipedia* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_of_curiosity

tea, opium and spices. Since 1492 when Columbus found the New World, not only was the American Continent claimed as the territories of different European countries but also the eastern world was considered as a part of their missions of exploration. The missions of exploration therefore became involved with claiming territories and collecting techniques and objects. The technique of making porcelains was practiced in Europe in the fifteenth century; porcelains were in the private collections of the aristocratic and palaces.⁴ Silk, lacquer, pearl and spice, gems of the Orient were considered as the most precious gifts, prepared for kings and queens. According to Lydia H. Liu, chinaware even became a trope that could figure other kinds of difference as well. For example, John Gay (1685-1732), wrote a satirical poem entitled “To a Lady on her Passion for Old China” in 1725. In it, John Gay represents the concept that womanhood and porcelain evoke each other “metonymically and synecdochically” (Liu, 1999: 728), whereas manhood is equated to earthenware, rough on the surface but sturdy on the inside. Gay’s poem spells out an aesthetics of materiality that is categorically grounded in the metaphysics of appearance and reality, surface and depth, femininity and masculinity. Adventurers to the East were many. John Jordain, John Fitch and Anthony Jenckynson were all travelers to the East. Jenckynson even made four expeditions to Muskovy for trading privileges.⁵ John Newbery sailed in an English ship from London on the 19th of September 1580 direct to Tripoli and the newly formed Turkey Company. In 1583, he set out for Syria, Persia, Aleppo, and beyond. He experienced being captured by the Portugese but eventually made an escape with Ralph Fitch and William Leedes from their footholds. Leedes remained in India and was employed by the Emperor Akbar while Fitch continued his travels through India and

⁴ For information on porcelains of China, please see Ayers, John. (1985, 2001). “The Early China Trade.” Eds. Impey, O. and A. Macgregor. *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth-and Seventeenth-Century*. London: House of Stratus. 355-363. See d’Hélène Bélévitch-Stankévitch’s *Le Goût chinois en France au temps de Louis XIV*.

⁵ According to Krystyna Szykula, The map of Russia made by Anthony Jenkinson in 1562 was the most important document of the early modern travels of Englishmen whowere searching a proper way to China. For Anthony Jenckynson’s map, please see the 6th International BIMCC Conference program:

http://www.bimcc.org/articles/20071116_BIMCC_Formatting_Europe_Conf_Abstract_3_szykula.pdf

Burma and arrived at the Malabar coast. Earlier, Ferdinand Magellan, a traveller born in Portugal and naturalized as a Spanish citizen, reached the Moluccas Islands and Francis Drake, the most famous English privateer of Queen Elizabeth I, arrived in the Moluccas; during his stay in the Moluccas he sent messengers to the King of Tidore to assure him that he came to trade in a friendly manner (Kerr, 1811: 35). According to Francis Drake, when these foreigners arrived at Malabar Coast, they immediately found it would be a good place for national enterprise (Beazley, 1985: 149). John Fitch enjoyed his stay in Burma, impressed by the wealth and beauty of this kingdom belonging to the “Lord of the white elephant”⁶, and Sir Thomas Roe as the first English ambassador to India visited Jahanjir’s court in 1615. At the same time period that Matteo Ricci and Johann Adam Schall von Bell visited and joined the royal servants of the Chinese emperor in the Ming Dynasty. Miguel de Loarca and Pedro Sarmiento published their famous book entitled *Relacion del viaje que hezimos a la China desde la ciudad de Manila en las del poniente año de 1575 años, con mandado y acuerdo de Guido de Lavazaris governador i Capitan General que a la sazón era en las Islas Philipinas*. Miguel de Loarca’s main contribution is his observation on the Philippine Islands. However, this book is not only an ethnographical document about what they witnessed in Philippines and China but also a geographical document that represents China as the most prosperous country in the world, producing silk, sugar and rice. In the book, the travelers observed four-gated cities in China were well-constructed and in towns and cities the feasts were commonly seen. However, these descriptions juxtaposed the Philippine Islands and China, representing the prosperous cities and the economic situations. These travelers to the East not only provided information around the islands and the coasts of the East Indian countries, but also narrated about plunders, pirates, traders and profit-makers who were consequently involved with violence because when they pursued objects and were claiming their territories. Moreover, these early travelers and cartographers provided maps and geographical knowledge of his times (Szcześniak, 1956: 118).

⁶ A white elephant is a rare kind of elephant. In the myth of India, the white elephant belongs to Indra. In Thailand, the white elephant signified the royal power. During the reign of Jahanjir, an emperor of the Moghul Empire, one of his favorite spectacles was elephant combat. For the reception of porcelain in Europe, please see *Goût chinois en France au temps de Louis XIV*.

Fletcher's *The Princess Island*, a play published in 1621, is one of the most important dramatic works examining the possibility of global trading in the early modern period. *The Princess Island* shares with several of its contemporary dramas--*The Renegado* (1624), *The Sea Voyage* (1622) and the seventeenth-century *Amboyne* (1651) in representing the fetishism, foreign trade and political relations of that era. In these dramas, the political situations and economical expansions of the West are the focuses. The reasons for economical expansion of the West during the early modern era were complicated. Zachary Lesser notes that in the early seventeenth century England was facing a depression and a shortage of money and that that was the first time people voiced their ideas about economic situations (889-92). Queen Elizabeth I chartered the Moscovy Company in 1577, the Levant Company in 1581 and the East India Company in 1601. Hence the turn of the seventeenth century has become an age for those who dared to explore, just as Lester Thurow has said: "Fortune favors the bold" because Columbus, De Gama, Magellen, Americo Vespucci and Sir Francis Drake are all examples of those who explored their economic enterprises during this period of time. However, as the explorers from European countries crossed beyond their borders, claiming their territories and procuring objects, tragedy was almost unavoidable.

The first Europeans arriving in the Moluccas were the Portuguese adventurers led by Antonio de Abren, and the Jesuits took the responsibility of educating the natives by establishing schools. During the mid-fifteenth century, the Moluccas became a spice market with the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and the English competing with each other for the control of the market. Jan Huygen van Linschoten in his *Ilinerario Voyage ofte Shipvaert* narrated not only the route of travel to the East but also predicted that the sea empire of the Portuguese would eventually lose its power because of corruption and greed in the trading (3-15). The play is framed on the story that the sultan of Tidore is abducted by a neighboring country, and that his sister, Princess Quisara, announces that she will marry to the person who successfully saves her brother. In the beginning of the play, the princess is secretly in love with Ruy Dias, a Portuguese, adopted from real history. However, a young Portuguese, Amusia, rescues the sultan. When the princess announces she will marry him only when Amusia converts his religion. Amusia is eventually put into prison because of his haughtiness. Consequently Dias raids the sultan's castle with an attempt to destroy the "malicious people" (5.5.33). In the drama

western hegemony represented by guns and gunpowder subdued not only the Muslim city but also the princess. Throughout the whole play, the objects of this Oriental city are represented as desirable and tangible:

These noble thoughts sir, have intic'd us forward,
And minds unapt for ease to see these miracles,
In which we find report a poore relater;
We are arriv'd among the blessed Islands,
Where every wind that rises blowes perfumes,
And every breath of aire is like an Incence:
The treasure of the Sun dwels here, each tree
As if it envied the old Paradice,
Strives to bring forth immortall fruit; the spices
Renewing nature, though not deifying,
And when that fals by time, scorning the earth,
The sullen earth should taint or sucke their beauties,
But as we dreamt, for ever so preserve us:
Nothing we see, but breeds an admiration;
The very rivers as we floate along,
Throw up their pearles, and curl their heads to court us;
The bowels of the earth swell with the births
Of thousand unknowne gems, and thousand riches;
Nothing that beares a life, but brings a treasure;
The people they shew brave too, civill manner'd,
Proportioned like the Mastres of great minds,
The women which I wonder at---

(1.3.15-25)

The equivalence between the local culture, women, city, perfume, spices, and fruits manifests the young merchant's desire for objects and the land that produced precious plants. Amusia's seemingly heroic actions and up-righteousness bespeaks the impending threat of the European power. The friendship between Amusia and Dias

exemplifies the solid relationship among the western merchants who had constructed the notion of eurocentrism and who had formed their allegiances based on that irregardless of what cities or coasts they would capture. The Malacca in history was known for its multicultural phenomenon and its varieties of natural resources. Before the arrivals of the Westerners, Muslims, Somalians, Turks and Arabians had already visited the place for the exchange of goods. Musk, saffron, cloves, mace, nutmeg have been brought to the western world via Arabian merchants (Vander Wee, 1993: 15-6). However, when the age of discovery witnessed the triumph of navigation, it also witnessed the construction of empires and competition of colonized territories where the desire of collecting exotica finally came to fulfillment.

The Eastern world in the early modern period was not an enclosed territory. The Dutch and the Portuguese were leading enterprises while England was thriving but her prosperity was burdened with Poor Law (Lock, 1930: 2). Travelers, missionaries and ambassadors were sent to the East, but to the merchants, the route leading to spices went through Aleppo to Baghdad and down to Basra. While the Portuguese held the sea-road, travelers on foot were not rare. Thomas Coryate, “the long strider” became an ethnographer who recorded the patterns of life in Eastern countries, while Thomas Stevens recorded the animals he saw.⁷ Both Coryate and Roe arrived at Agra, the capital city of the Mughal Empire in 1615. They were not the first Europeans to make cultural dialogues and initiate business enterprises with the eastern world, although many later travelers following their steps inscribed “their linguistic, cultural and territorial claims” (Singh 1). Long before Roe and Coryate started their journey to the East, Persia, India and Cathay were the three main travel destinations for many diplomats, politicians and explorers from the European countries. The British Trade Company of Levant was established in 1581 and the next trade station to be established by England was India, a realm controlled by the Mughal Empire. Queen Elizabeth I in her letter to the king of China in 1596 requests that the emperor should add “the security of passage, with other

⁷ Historians call Thomas Coryate “The Long Strider”. A biography of Thomas Coryate, *The Long Strider*, was published by Dom Moraes, Sarayu Srivatsa Council. It tells the story of Thomas Coryate or Coryat, a dwarf and a native of the Somerset village of Odecombe, who walked 10,000 miles to the court of Jahangir. He started in 1613 and came overland, after disembarking from his ship at Aleppo, by way of the cities of the Middle East and reached Agra.

privileges most necessary to use the trade” of the Chinese merchants (33); to the emperor of Cambaia, she writes, “we request that because they are our subjects they may be honestly entreated and received” (32). In 1616 King James of England commissioned Sir Thomas Roe to declare in India that “our power and strength at sea...Maketh us even a Terror to all other nations” (quoted in Forster, 1899: 553). When Roe visited India, Moghul India was an empire of immense cultural complexity, sophistication, opulence, and power (Barbour 343). However, James, without the knowledge of the real Moghul and England’s competitors in the East, the content of Thomas Roe’s embassy was very superficial as compared to the traders, ambassadors and other visitors from the other European countries (Forster, 1899: 35-59). However, the political competition in India among the Jesuits, Portuguese and the English had just started and all those who arrived in the Eastern countries eventually shared the memory of imperialist expansion.

Exotic spices from these southeastern islands brought profits to the adventurers and merchants for at least one thousand years before the Westerners arrived; nutmeg was especially considered precious because it was believed to be an effective remedy against plague during the early modern period (Milton, 1999: 2-5). John Dryden’s *Amboyna* (1673) focused on the interests in the Spice Islands again, but conflicts among the European enterprisers and exploiters as well as the ambiguous relationships between the merchants and native people are highlighted. In the very beginning of the play, the Dutch merchants are happy about the rising price of spices in Europe: their only concern being the English factories maintained among the Dutch ones on the island of Amboyna. To the righteous major character Towerson, the exploitation of nature means the endless jars; only moderate gain will let nature produce. Dryden’s main character is an English merchant who falls in love with the princess on the island. The princess obviously has been waiting for a reunion after three years’ separation. However, it reveals that Harmon the Junior has spotted Ysabina for a long time; even though he was saved by Towerson from the corsairs on the ocean, Harmon the Junior raped her by cheating her to get into the woods. Throughout the whole drama, the evil and villainous character of the Dutch is presented; in order to avoid trade competitions, these Dutch merchants with military equipment not only create false accusations against the English but also put them in prison. The place that the Dutch occupy is claimed as a territory

owned by the Dutch only. Although there is no mentioning of colonization, yet the Dutch as presented in the drama become an example of mercantile colonization. The playwright by means of his dialectic structure and profitable corporate entity (Markley, 1998: 7) presents a phenomenon of mercantile competition; as Swann has put it, mercantile expansions and collecting territories became a vital social practice during the early modern period (16).

Amboyna is a play staged in 1673, one year after the third Anglo-Dutch War. The first Anglo-Dutch war occurred from 1652-4, when the conflict between England and New Netherland was caused by maritime trade and colonial competition. During the second decade of the seventeenth century, the mercantile situation did not favor England because England was edged out of the lucrative East Indian spice trade by the other European powers and the competition between the newly established colonies of the English needed to confront the threats from Spanish and Dutch power in the New World. In the period of discovery, unofficial warfare was not uncommon. English pirates or captains began seizing Dutch ships on the sea and some of them even required foreign ships passing by the “British Seas” to strike their flags as salute. In response, New Netherland gathered and equipped 150 merchant ships to fight against English aggression.⁸ In the rivalry for object attaining and international mercantilism, the Dutch took advantage of two major disasters at home in England--the Great Plague (1665-6) and the Great Fire of London (1666)--and initiated a sea battle in 1667, although the Dutch did not gain the upper hand. According to historical documents, the commander on the English side, Earl Edward Montague of Sandwich, chased a Dutch convoy into Bergen harbour of Denmark (Harris, 1912: 240). This encounter incited

⁸ The New Netherland was a Dutch colony. The history of the New Netherland in the early modern period is a history of the power struggle between the English and the Dutch. The New Netherland was first identified as New Netherland on a map drawn by the explorer Adriaen Block in 1614, extended from the Connecticut River to Delaware Bay, including within its boundaries much of the present states of Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and western Connecticut. The colony's location between New England in the north and Maryland and Virginia in the south brought it into direct conflict with English interests in North America. New Netherland was relinquished to England by treaty in 1674. See the research project of New York State Library at <http://www.nnp.org/nnp/index.html>

the Dutch commander Michel De Ruyter to launch a raid into the Medway, reaching the harbor of Thames approximately 20 miles of London, causing huge amounts of damage and the English government had to make more serious efforts towards further negotiations (Marley, 1998: 177-9). On the New Continent, another battle of claiming territories had just begun. The Dutch encountered French invasion and the fighting over borders of New Netherlands became frequent during the 1670s. With the current trend of Anglo-Dutch antagonism, Dryden's play *Amboyna* is suggestive with the Amboyna Massacre as the background of his play. Amboyna Massacre happened in 1623 on Ambon (Amboyna or Amboina) in the Moluccas, or Spice Islands, where the Dutch had constructed a military base and factories for producing cloves. Treaties between the two countries allowed the English to plant cloves and do trade; however, the antagonism between the English and the Dutch was ongoing and the Dutch governor even captured and executed eight English merchants and their Japanese workers under a charge of treason, and a false accusation of plotting against the Dutch fortress (Chancey, 1990: 583-9).

Amboyna represents a tragedy caused by mercantile imperialism, or a type of hegemony based on the desire for pursuing objects and claiming territory. The main reason for claiming territories and procuring objects are perhaps a part of the human instinct to survive. However, when the humans are stripped off the ability to understand each other, cruelty and violence dominate. The science of human behavior refers to the sense of territory as an animal instinct (Nell, 2004: 193-9); however, when people enjoy material life and claim their own territory, what lies behind it is an endless power struggle and defensive discourses. In her questioning of exploration and the desire to stretch beyond the sea, Virginia Woolf meditates,

Thus Defoe, by reiterating that nothing but a plain earthenware pot stands in the foreground, persuades us to see remote islands and the solitudes of the human soul. By believing fixedly in the solidity of the pot and its earthiness, he has subdued every other element to his design; he has roped the whole universe into harmony. And is there any reason, we ask as we shut the book, why the perspective that a plain earthenware pot exacts should not satisfy us as completely, once we grasp it, as man himself in all his sublimity standing

against a background of broken mountains and tumbling oceans with stars flaming in the sky ? (48-49)

Dryden's play insinuates that Dutch mercantile power in the Spice Islands is synonymous with greed and hypocrisy (Markeley, 1998: 10) but his presentation of the main character as a hero also legitimizes the mercantile interests within a foreign territory. The exploitation of objects in both *Amboyna* and *Princess Island* parallels the raiders' attack on Singapore in 1613 and the destruction of the city Ayutthaya, one of the greatest and wealthiest cities in Asia during the 16th century. Tabinshweti of Burma aided by the Portuguese mercenaries and soldiers with western arms subjugated the city in 1549 but the alliance also initiated Burma into a colonial period. Claiming territories and procuring objects in history parallel John Donne's lines in his "Elegie: Going to Bed," in which he equivalent the finding of America to exploring his mistress's body:

Licence my roving hands, and let them go,
Before, behind, between, above and below.
O my America! My new-found-land,
My kingdom, safest when one man manned,
My mine of precious stones. My empery,
How blest am I in this discovering thee! (58)

John Donne's poem reminds of Sir Raleigh's adventure to Guiana in 1595. However, adventurers' missions are universal. Anthony Jenkinson was sent by the Muscovy Company to Russia but went on his journey to the East to find the land route to China. Up until this time, the objects that merchants collect include gold, silver, pearls, precious stones from Russia where he witnessed very rich pavilion, wrought with silk and gold and the prince appareled with garments of silk, and cloth of gold, embroidered with pearls and stones. He himself brought with him "silver basin and ewer, a looking-glass, and a bunch of ostrich feathers" (Morgan, 1895: 88). He described how the merchants brought craska, woolen cloth, linen cloth, diverse kinds of wrought pied silks, and argomacks from Persia to Europe (Morgan, 1895: 89). Just as Jenkinson described, "via caravan from the countries of Cathay are brought thither in time of

peace, and when the way is open, musk, rhubarb, satin, damask, with divers other things”⁹. Jenkinson represents a diplomatic merchant who explored the East. However, what Flecture and Dryden represented in *The Princess Island* and *Amboyna* are the objects of curiosity and material stratification that not only degenerate desire but brought along with it war, objectification of women and the legitimization of colonization.

⁹ See the excerpt of Anthony Jenkinson to Persia and Ussia, in *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia by Anthony Jenkinson and Other Englishmen* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1840). For his travel narratives to China, see *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 12 vols. (Glasgow: Glasgow U, 1903-1905), vol. II, 474.

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空間佔有與物件收藏： 前現代時期的商業文化與殖民擴展

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摘 要

阿爾俊·阿帕杜萊(Arjun Appadurai)在《物質的社會意義》一書中強調，物質文化代表了人與物品的關係，也代表某個特定時代的價值系統和自我、群體與國家的關係。然而，就像阿帕杜萊所言，物質的價值來自時間的脈絡，因此物質的文化內涵可以解讀社會變遷和人群對事物的看法。尤其是，當物質文化和群體行為即集體思維相關時，物質文化可以用以解讀社會與經濟活動的意義。因此，前現代時期的空間佔有、物質收藏，乃至於尋求其他國度的物質資源便涉及自我身分的建構，和對異質文化的抗拒。在西方的大航海時代，從劇作家佛萊契爾的《南島公主》到德來登的《安波那》，許多戲劇文學裡都以殖民做為主題；這些劇本不僅呈現出人類對於物質的探索與追求，而且對比了人類的競爭與抗衡，而這些競爭的場域也正是求偶與宴飲的場域。在這些劇作中，物質的追求有如儀典，商業的經營有如戀物主義的延展。此一論文探討空間佔有與物質收藏，並且藉由空間佔有、東方城市與女性之物化，探討帝國建構時所涉及的殖民論述。

關鍵詞：帝國建構、殖民、物質文化、空間佔有

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