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Capitalism, Consumption and Consumer Identity

Capitalism and consumption are both social processes that deal with the production, use and disposal of material things, as well as the social values placed upon them (Dellino-Musgrave 2006:72-73; Miller 1995b:279). Consumption is closely associated with the rise of modern capitalism, which started during the fifteenth century and has continued in various forms to the present day (Staniforth 1999:58). Although this chapter considers capitalism's social processes separately for analytical purposes, they were, and still are, interwoven. This chapter addresses how we can look at capitalism as a *longue durée* through the prism of the Spice Trade and how through changing patterns of consumption we can explore changing patterns in capitalism. This chapter also considers how, with the increasing complexity of capitalism, and parallel increases in consumption, consumer identity can provide insight into the lifestyles, attitudes and worldviews of consumers.

Capitalism

Many great historical and social thinkers, including Ferdinand Braudel (1977, 1982, 1984), Anthony Giddens (1971, 1984), Karl Marx (1971), E. P. Thompson (1967) and Max Weber (1947), and archaeologists, such Virginia Dellino-Musgrave (2006), Mark Groover (2003), Mark Leone (1984, 1988, 1994, 1995, 1999, 2005; Leone and Potter 1988, 1999), Mathew Johnson (1996), Randall McGuire (1992), Robert Paynter (1988), Parker Potter (Leone and Potter 1988, 1999), Paul Shackel (1993; Palus and Shackel 2006) and Mark Staniforth (1997, 1999, 2003) have discussed capitalism. Capitalism is a difficult term to define, but in its broadest definition, it is an economic, social, and ideological system that started during the fifteenth century

and has continued to the present day (Dellino-Musgrave 2006:73; Leone 1999:5; Staniforth 1999:58). An understanding of capitalism as a global system and its development can reveal important insights about the cultural attitudes, lifestyles and worldviews commonly taken for granted about our modern world (Staniforth 2003:34).

Capitalism is a *longue durée*, a global and social process in which change is slow, cyclical and imperceptible to the individual (see Chapter 2) (Braudel 1972:20). The slow and cyclical development of capitalism can be illustrated in the expansion and development in the global trade in spices starting in the fifteenth century. "The spice trade," Ferdinand Braudel contends (1982:191), "was an instance of sustained expansion over a long period, with various inter-related episodes, followed by a visible decline in the seventeenth century." Staniforth (1999:59) states,

> …it was the development and expansion of long-distance shipping that allowed the movement of people and goods across the world's oceans. Many of these ships sank and the archaeological remains in the form of shipwrecks, their cargoes and the personal belongings of the passengers and crew provide a variety of opportunities to critically examine the development of the modern world…

In this way, both Staniforth (1999:59) and Firth (1995:4) believe that shipwrecks provide maritime archaeology with archaeological evidence to study the spread of modern capitalism and Westernisation.

Capitalism is also inextricably linked to the development of economic and financial systems that allowed for the expansion of capitalism, shaping the system into the form it takes today and mirroring the ascendance and contraction of a series of state powers that would attempt to gain hegemony over the Spice Trade. The successive ascendance of each of these nation-states to hegemonic power was accompanied by successive and evolving forms of capitalism, each of which in turn involved an evolving series of fiscal policies (Parry 1963, 1974; Modelski 1978; Rosenberg and Birdzell 1986; Padfield 2002). According to Modelski (Modelski 1978:217), four nation-states have played a dominant role in managing global interdependence, and as such fit the description of a world power. These nation-states are Portugal, the Netherlands, Britain, and the United States. He describes the rise and fall of each power through an endogenous model of periodicity, with Britain experiencing two such cycles (Modelski 1978:217). In other words, each power originated from a global war that resulted in the emergence of a new world order. The emergent power formalised its position of power in a peace settlement, then maintained its basic order

through various economic policies that became "the mainspring of world institutions, often taking transnational forms" (Modelski 1978:217). However, this new world order eventually broke down and attracted rivalries that took on characteristics of "oligopolistic competition" (Modelski 1978:217). Gradually the order dissolved and the cycle repeated itself with a new economic variant. The Spice Trade provides a window to view this endogenous cycle, as Portugal, the Netherlands, Britain and the United States were all involved in this trade at some point during their history.

In an examination of the Spice Trade there is a trend not only to see the endogenous cycles of past world powers, but also to view the development of different forms of capitalism, including monarchical capitalism, merchant capitalism and industrial capitalism. Monarchical capitalism, like feudalism, was based on bloodline and land holdings as indicators of wealth with a ruler, or monarch, making all decisions relevant to the needs and welfare of society (Hamilton 1929). Portugal's activities in the Far East during the sixteenth century seem to be closely linked with this sort of monarchical capitalism, partly because it was one of the first global trading nation-states to emerge from a feudalistic society. Thus, it had many social qualities that characterised monarchical capitalism, particularly the conquistador mentality and noblemen who were appointed as trading *fidalgos* with authorisation from the papacy (see Chapter 5). At the same time, however, even though a monopoly charter regulated commerce, a characteristic of mercantilism (see below), authorisation for the granting of this charter remained the purview of the papacy, not the crown. In short, Portugal as a global power straddled the divide between monarchical and merchant capitalism, and this position might reflect why the mercantilist policies of the Portuguese in the Far East were, in the end, unsuccessful.

Merchant capitalism, on the other hand, was driven by merchants who believed in mercantilism and the exercise of monopolies. Mercantilism is the belief that there is a fixed amount of money in the world, and in order to prevent the export of bullion, nation-states needed to take money from other countries by trade or produce products that could be exchanged for bullion (Foucault 1974:177-180; Hamilton 1929:345; Irwin 1991:1297-1298). This new fiscal order is associated with the rise of modernism, which opposed and destroyed the feudal or monarchical system, freeing labour and rendering the power of the religious establishments largely ineffective in the political affairs of the nation-states (Askegaard and Firat 1997:116). Most scholars recognise the rise of Dutch hegemony during the seventeenth century as running parallel to the rise of the capitalistic spirit, in which wealth was defined by

means other than land holdings and in which there occurred a general expansion in knowledge of business principles (see Chapter 5) (Hamilton 1929:343). The Dutch nation-state differed markedly from Portugal in that politically it was a liberal republic governed by eighteen representatives, only one of whom was of noble descent. In contrast to the concentration of wealth among the landed gentry, as Masselman asserts, the Dutch Republic's merchant class included the wealthiest of society, as well those of the highest social level (Masselman 1961:456).

Though Britain's first ascent to hegemonic power was predicated upon merchant capitalistic policies like the use of monopoly charters (see Chapter 5), the second British empire and the move towards free trade during the 1820s shows that population growth and the expansion of industry had finally made inadequate the old self-contained colonial system (Cain and Hopkins 1980:478). Called the self-regulating market by Ferdinand Braudel (1982:225, 229-230), industrial capitalism was characterised by imperialism and the control of large economic regions isolated in producing raw materials to feed industry on the home front. It was based on the idea that the market was controlled by no one, and "exchange invariably stimulated both supply and demand, guiding production, leading to the specialization of huge economic regions which therefore became committed to exchange, as a necessity to ensure their own survival" (Braudel 1982:224). One such area in the Far East was India, and according Cain and Hopkins (1980:470-471), Anglo-French pressures combined with the collapse of the Mughal empire provided the context within which the British imperialism of India took p1ace. At this time, Marshall contends, "British 'priorities' in India had shifted from 'mercantile' dealing in manufactured Indian cotton piece-goods to the acquisition of raw materials for the new industries" (Marshall 1985:164).

The only nation-state that did not exercise monopolistic-like claims or imperialistic policies in the Far East was the United States, and this is partly because it did not emerge as a global power until the twentieth century, after the emergence of free trade and the rise of industrial capitalism (Field 1978). The United States trading policies during the twentieth century are outside the scope of this study, but its trading roots, however, reached into the Spice Trade during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, forming an economic backbone for its subsequent growth.

As indicated above, several forms of capitalism and their corresponding economic policies are demonstrable through the involvement of several global powers involved

in the Spice Trade (see Chapter 5). Modelski (1978:228) reiterates this by providing a brief description of the early global players and their changing economic policy:

> The King of Portugal lost little time in proclaiming himself 'lord of conquest, navigation and commerce of Ethiopia, India, Arabia and Persia.' He proceeded to exclude all other powers and their ships from the major part of the world ocean and to require licenses for all ships trading in the East; he rested his authority on Papal Bulls (*Romanus Pontifex* 1455, later reconfirmed) and on treaties with Spain (Tordesillas 1494). But each of the succeeding global powers was less exclusive in its claims, the Dutch and English monopolistic trading companies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries being in the nineteenth century succeeded by the universalist doctrine of Free Trade. Thus the legitimacy of competition was rising even as the opportunities for monopoly were narrowing.

It should be noted that the rise and fall of world powers and capitalistic developments did not occur in a linear fashion; rather, they occurred slowly, haphazardly and unevenly depending on the country (Braudel 1982:204). In other words, ascendance to power was not clear-cut, just as there was no clear division in time between different forms of capitalism. It is therefore beyond the aim and scope of this chapter to provide a detailed analysis of northwestern Europe's expansion, or the rise of capitalism, as that has been done elsewhere (e.g. Modelski 1978; Parry 1963, 1974; Padfield 2002; Rosenberg and Birdzell 1986).

Also characteristic of, and essential to, the rise of modern capitalism was the concept and widespread adoption of measured time in the organisation and regimentation of labour. Though there are many different forms of time, for example pragmatic time (the time of equipment and dealing in the world) (see Heidegger 1964; Gosden 1994; Giddens 1984), the rise of modern capitalism is specifically concerned with clock time, which is the traditional Western view of time as a linear, absolute, segmenting device measured in standardised units. Gosden (1994:3-4) argues that over the last two hundred years there have been two major developments in how people see measured time. The first of these was the introduction of a uniform world time system. The need for this was largely spurred on by the growth of a global transportation system and the introduction of a world communication system. For instance, transcontinental railroads necessitated a unified time system for scheduling arrivals and departures, as well as to prevent train crashes on bidirectional rails. Similarly, the introduction of the telegraph allowed for a global time system that linked time and space, with Greenwich as the zero meridian through which people

could transport goods and communicate around the world. The second major development was the introduction of a long time-scale that could account for long-term geological and biological processes that had come to the scientific forefront with the appearance of Darwinian evolution.

According to the historian E. P. Thompson (1967), before the rise of modern capitalism, time was task-oriented and the work day started with sunrise and ended at sunset. With the introduction of a time-oriented society, brought about largely as part of a segmented and standardised labour force, people switched from task-oriented time to labour-oriented time. At first clocks were public, consisting of public clocks on government buildings and church bells, but as clocks became more affordable and desirable they were brought into the home, as well as other areas of life, be it social, family, manufacturing or business.

The development of a dependable and precise clock also revolutionised maritime commerce. Although before the eighteenth century sea captains could use a variety of instruments, including the astrolabe, the cross-staff, and the sextant to find their position of latitude and navigate great distances, they could not pinpoint longitude governed sailing routes for early voyages of discovery and trade (see Chapter 5). Finding longitude was an issue until 1730, when John Harrison perfected a marine chronometer that he believed to be as precise as within two to three seconds a year (Collinder 1955:130-131, 139-140; Gould 1921:256; Rosenberg and Birdzell 1986:84; Thompson 1967:65).

Measured time also reinforced the internalisation of order and regularity, or what Shackel (1993) calls modern discipline. In other words, private life became more disciplined as daily routines became standardised. Skills like punctuality, control of emotions, rationality, reading, writing, numeracy, geography and the use of proportions were learned through the use of instruments like clocks. In this way, clocks not only regulated people's lives but also laid the groundwork for time efficiency at home and at work (see also Leone 2005:166-167). For instance, meals became daily rituals of family life, relating to the absence of husbands and boys from home during working hours to returning home for a few waking hours each day, during which time they shared meals with their family members (Wall 1994:111-112). These meals became a time of relative leisure and were ritualised into family reunions (Wall 1994:112). This growth in family meal importance was reflected in an increase in the labour of meal preparation, as well as in the quantity and variety of decorative and fashionable ceramics (Wall 1994:112-150).

In regards to the increasing importance of clocks in work life, both Leone (2005) and Shackel (1993) believe that an increasing emphasis on individualism is visible through the adoption of time and work discipline (see also Mrozowski 2006:8). The use of clocks and instruments, as Shackel (1993:8) asserts, "helped to legitimise control and power and the advent of individualism among the elite, because they understood the natural law through direct observation." Alienated labour and time discipline in the workplace helped to produce standardised products, which, when used by the consumer, subconsciously taught individuality (Shackel 1993:30). According to Leone (2005:167), the adoption of time and work discipline had two results: 1) people could be rationally trained for trades and business because these were rule-governed professions that produced wage workers; and 2) skill learning served as a mask because people thought they were discovering their intellect, rather than producing a working class. Observing, counting, fixing and following rules at the same time produced segmented, pragmatic and rationalised people. Measured time reinforced modern disciplines (Shackel 1993:130).

I believe time and work discipline, reinforcing the internalisation of order and regularity, were essential to shipboard life and the successful operation of a ship (see Chapter 9). Keeping time, both by the rotation of watches aboard the ship and as a means to calculate longitude, as well as the use of other scientific measuring instruments, helped to legitimise control and power and the advent of individualism among the officers. In other words, the officers were in charge of keeping watch, as well as the users of navigational instruments like sextants, navigational dividers and rulers. As the ones who understood the natural law and the world through direct observation, they reinforced their control and power aboard the ship through the use of such instruments. Along similar lines, Dellino-Musgrave (2006) contends that using fashionable ceramics reinforced the officers' positions to themselves and the crew, helping to maintain stability for the successful operation of the ship. As regards the crew, however, heaving lines, furling sails, running out yards and other shipboard activities produced a working class who could be rationally trained for shipboard life because such work was rule-governed and sailors were paid a wage. Learning the skills of a sailor served as a mask because seamen thought they were discovering their own intellect and capabilities, rather than producing a working class.

Another characteristic of society brought on by the development of capitalism is the exacerbation of social stratification. Social stratification, Leone (1999:5) specifies, is "based on control of wealth and holding a monopoly on power." The strata are in an

antagonistic relationship because "the profits of some are derived not from their own labour, but from the labour of others. This relationship is exploitative, is visible to workers and labourers, and creates unstable social relations" (Leone 1999:5). From a Marxist perspective, social stratification also occurs because human labour is treated as a commodity. "When work is compensated for with money, the tie effectively severs object from market value, on the one hand, and producer from owner, on the other. Such severed ties are the basis for profit accumulations, as well as exploitation, which produced poverty" (Leone 1999:5).

One of the problems with the Marxist concept of social stratification is that it implies there were only two classes: a lower class (the poor labourers) and a higher class (the rich capitalists). As Mrozowski (2006:2) points out, however, social stratification was actually quite complex, composed of several different layers that were fluid. In addition, modern capitalism is associated with the rise of the middle class, socially situated between the elites and the lower class (Orser 1996:171). The middle ranks included the lower stratum of the gentry, professions, merchants, farmers, craftsmen and the like (Weatherill 1994:210). According to Goodwin (1999:2), the rise of the middle class is parallel to the rise of the merchant class, and as the merchants' arrived at social prominence, they were also accused and suspected of possessing greater wealth and concern for politics than what was generally considered safe for those outside of the landed elite.

Capitalism and its accompanying ideological system have been examined through at least two different strategies. The first of these was advocated by Louis Althusser (1971) as a transparent ideology in which the ideology of the elite was taken to be part of the natural order of things. In this ideology, politics, religion and the legal system conformed to that of the dominant class, and whoever controlled the base of society, which was the means of production, was the dominant, ruling class. One of the first attempts at viewing this transparent ideology through archaeology was Leone's (1984) interpretation of William Paca's garden. William Paca was a prominent Maryland lawyer, plantation landowner, judge, merchant and signer of the Declaration of Independence. He built a terraced garden according to bilaterally balanced symmetry and the optical illusion of perspective to display his social ranking and knowledge of natural law to those who viewed it. The major contradiction in Paca's life, according to Leone (1984:33), "was between a slave-holding society and one proclaiming independence in order to promote personal freedom and individual liberty." One way in which Paca masked this contradiction was through the symbolism of power over nature in his garden. Paca used

precedents, which is a segmented view of space and time made available to a viewer through the application of natural law and rules of perspective. Precedents are so convincingly natural that they eliminate doubts about the existing social order. In this way, Leone claims (1984:34), building the garden, walking through it, talking about it, admiring it and discussing it allowed people to "take themselves and their position as granted and convince others that the way things are is the way they always have been and should remain. For the order was natural and had always been so." Thus, the garden both masked social inequalities and reproduced them, albeit unconsciously, at the same time. In response, several scholars contend that Leone denies subordinate groups the ability to formulate their own views (see Abercrombie et al. 1980, 1992; Burke 1999:6-7; Beaudry et al. 1991; Hall 1992).

A second strategy for analysing ideology in a capitalist system was also proposed in archaeology by Leone (1994, 2005) as a response to his critics. Leone's *An Archaeology of Liberty in an American Capital: Excavations in Annapolis* (2005) amends his previous definition of ideology to include the everyday views of the world that we take for granted. In other words it is neither formal religion, philosophy, nor civic religion. Ideology is hard to spot, but once spotted it appears to surround us" (Leone 2005:24). Leone's amended notion of ideology includes a mechanism through which the lower classes or disenfranchised groups adopt or reject the prevailing ideology of the elite class. He calls this state of affairs "possessive individualism."

Possessive individualism first and foremost focuses on the individual. Leone defines individualism as freedom of the self, or freedom from dependence upon others (Leone 2005:34). He takes this to mean that people owe none of their freedom or personal possessions to the state (or capitalists); rather, people are the proprietors of their own possessions and capacities (Leone 2005:34). Søren Askegaard and A. Fuat Firat (1997) believe that these ideas, which gave the human individual much greater powers in determining her or his own fate than previous belief systems that depicted humans as subject to higher and spiritual powers, are associated with the arrival of modern society. In this new outlook, ownership, responsibility and benefiting from skills and material possessions are derived from the motivation of the individual (Leone 2005). As an ideology, possessive individualism is not an exact reflection of reality, but remains very real and material. It is real in its consequences, as belief in it serves to mask steep hierarchies of wealth and power, oppression and exploitation (Leone 2005:35).

Possessive individualism is manifested through what Michel Foucault (1988) refers to as technologies of self. According to Foucault (1988:18), technologies of self,

> ...permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thought, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality.

It implies certain modes of training and modification of the individual, not only in acquiring skills but also in acquiring attitudes (Foucault 1988:18). Foucault speaks of activities such as writing and listening as part of self-expression and self-examination, and Leone (1995:260, 2005:34-35) has extended these activities to include seeing, walking, reading, talking, eating and etiquette. These activities create and maintain the self through certain responsibilities and ways of behaving, which become internalised, and are practiced through material and non-material mechanisms (dishes, toothbrushes, clocks, clothing, politeness, punctuality, voice, etc.). Material culture, Leone (2005:153) relates, engenders an emphasis on things and the dimensions of these things, as well as on the activity facilitated by things. These activities are, in turn, learned through the production, use, and possession of things. In their daily life individuals are taught and restricted by third party observation to use a wide array of material culture and to conform to expected modes of behaviour (Leone 2005:36). Archaeologically, these material mechanisms constitute material culture.

Most importantly for Leone, possessive individualism sheds light upon the individual freedom, as opposed to the mere the appearance of freedom, that enabled American capitalism and democracy to function and prosper in the peculiar environment that was the United States before and after its Revolution. It was these mechanisms, or technologies of self, that made modern citizens and that became essential to how democratic states wielded their power. More pertinent to this discussion, possessive individualism also situates and illuminates one of consumption's central roles in capitalism.

Consumption

Consumption is a useful tool for examining capitalism because by studying it, we can see how changing patterns in consumption led to changes in capitalism (Blim 2000:33). Consumption is in the broadest sense the processes by which commodities are produced, acquired, used, and discarded (McCracken 1988). Commodities are portable objects intended for trade, but these may also take the form of services, narratives, land and natural resources (Orser 1996:112; Kopytoff 1989:68). Both commodities and trade are universal features of culture and even though commodities have been around since prehistoric times, their significance has increased dramatically in the modern age with the rise of capitalism and increased consumption (Braudel 1977:15; Kopytoff 1989:68; Orser 1996:112).

Over the last few decades consumption has become such a popular topic in academic literature (e.g. Appadurai 1986; Brewer and Porter 1994; Campbell 1987, 1997; Dellino-Musgrave 2006; Gibb 1996; Klein and LeeDecker 1991; Mazrim 2002, 2008a; McCracken 1988; Miller 1987, 1995a, 1995b; Palus and Shackel 2006; Spencer-Wood 1987; Staniforth 1997, 1999, 2003; Weatherill 1994, 1996), that is has been called a vanguard (Miller 1995a:1). Staniforth (1999:73) believes that the increased academic interest in consumption and its accompanying "consumer revolution" is due in part to a shift away from a previous interest in the Industrial Revolution, which focused on the technologies of production for material culture, rather than its consumption. Similar to Staniforth (1999, 2003), this thesis focuses on the processes that occurred after production. Focusing on the broader processes of consumption rather than just production "turns our attention directly towards an interest in the relationship between people and things," and not solely upon the things themselves (Staniforth 1999:74).

There is debate about exactly when the consumer revolution began (Brewer and Porter 1993:2; McCracken 1988; McKendrick et al. 1982; Johnson 1996). For example, In *The Birth of A Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-Century England*, McKendrick et al. (1982) assert that the consumer revolution began in eighteenth-century England. On the other hand, in *Culture and Consumption,* McCracken (1988) discusses how consumption developed gradually and in variable stages, beginning in the sixteenth century. This thesis follows the lead of Staniforth (1999:75) in that, rather than setting a single date for the start of a consumer revolution, there has been a "gradual consumer evolution" over recent

centuries that has paralleled the growing complexity of modern capitalism. This growth has occurred at different times and at varying rates in Western societies, and has even reached into other non-Western societies (Staniforth 1999:75). As Staniforth indicates, what can certainly be argued about the consumer revolution is that its growing complexity and its associated consumer society meant that there was "an explosion in the number and type of consumer goods available and a massive increase in access to a range of food, drink and other consumer goods" since at least the sixteenth century (Staniforth 1999:74; see also Paynter 1988).

Mathew Palus and Paul Shackel (2006:98) argue that the increasing quantity and variety of consumer goods over the last few centuries can be seen archaeologically through the mass-produced glass and ceramics on historic sites. Glass and ceramics found archaeologically represent not merely the increasing variety of available consumer goods from the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, but also show the increasing demand for such goods (see also Orser 1996:12). At the same time, however, this explosion of goods was tempered and directed by a corresponding homogenisation of consumer tastes, as society embraced mass consumerism, archaeologically visible through mass-produced glass and ceramics (Palus and Shackel 2006:104).

One way in which consumption can provide insight into the character and construction of modern capitalism is by looking at the evolution of this system's impact upon individual attitudes and worldviews regarding consumer items. An approach to considering this impact looks to social definitions of what constitutes "luxuries," "necessities" and "decencies" (McKendrick et al. 1982:1; Staniforth 2003:45; Weatherill 1996:16). A luxury is used to convey the idea of high cost and high quality goods. The word luxury also carries with it an underlying connotation of immorality, as it implies that, if previous generations have survived without it, then it is not a necessity. Luxuries were considered desirable but not indispensable, and of a higher quality than other similar goods. A necessity, on the other hand, has traditionally been considered to be something that is essential to maintain life. In the modern age, however, a necessity is not necessarily conceptualised in the same way, because, with the rise of capitalism, a greater range and variety of utilitarian products have become commonplace in domestic households (Weatherill 1996:16; Askegaard and Firat 1997:119). What is 'necessary' can only be determined by observing behaviour and priorities. Thus, the stark separation between luxury and necessity is not particularly suited for examining consumption practices. Instead, it seems that there were goods in between, what Weatherill (1996:16) refers to as "decencies."

Thus, in a capitalist system that is ever increasing in its global capacity to produce consumer goods, what was considered a luxury at one time and in one society may often be classified as a decency or even a necessity many years later. Thus, as Csikszentmihalyi (1993:20) states, there has been an "increasing dependence on objects for survival and comfort," and our consumption of these goods has dramatically increased with the rise of modern capitalism, as well as our attitudes about them (see also Askegaard and Firat 1997:118-199).

In historical archaeology, households have traditionally served as the principal locale for considering consumption (Allison 1998; see also Gibb 1996; Henry 1991; Klein and LeeDecker 1991; Voss 2008; Weatherill 1994). As Lorna Weatherill (1994:206) contends, material culture associated with domestic life has been considered in conjunction with the social and mundane lives of households, and it has been in these everyday activities and experiences that the meanings behind consumption are to be found. However, Susan Henry (1991) identifies a number of variables that influence consumer behaviour: the decision to consume, acquisition, use and post-use deposition. She believes, "The act of consuming…is not only economic behaviour [sic], it is also social behaviour [sic], as well as a means to an end, a way of reaching goals" (Henry 1991:3). Henry argues that the decision to consume is based on external influences, such as marketed products, socio-cultural environments, informal sources like friends, neighbours, family or household, and internal influences, such as motivations, learning, perceptions and attitudes. Thus, though the household is the traditional level of inquiry, other factors should be considered as possibly influencing consumer choice. Henry ultimately claims that consumer behaviour models help archaeologists to "make the leap from the residues of use, to behaviour [sic] associated with the decision to acquire and the acquisition of those products, *and* with the acquisition of objects *not* present in the archaeological record" (Henry 1991:11). One of the key points in thinking about consumer choice in this way is that it considers consumer choice as a form of agency (see Chapter 2), in that people purchase things based on their own interest and beliefs, not just passive reflection (Palus and Shackel 2006:99).

Consumption is related to consumers' ability to generate new wants for novel products in an apparent endless series, one after the other, without any effort (Campbell 1987, 1997; Leone 2005). Campbell (1987, 1997) attributes this to the institutions of fashion and advertising, which both serve as mechanisms to ensure that novel products regularly appear on the market. Daydreaming of possible scenarios involving the use of these novel items and the pleasurable experiences they

bring to an individual inculcates dissatisfaction with the gratification that our current possessions give us, all the while creating longing for something different. For Leone (2005), on the other hand, patterns of consumption, through the operation of possessive individualism, are channelled and perpetuated by inculcating feelings of incompleteness in the individual. A possessive individual owns a potentially limitless amount of skills, abilities and traits, which are learned, displayed and continually refined to perfection (Leone 2005:154). Building on an idea of Deetz (1977), Leone (2005) asserts that these skills were compartmentalised but never complete (see Chapter 2). In this sense, an individual's suite of personal attributes were seen as existing independent of each other, both in attainment and character, as the refinement of any one skill could only occur independently of the others. Consequently, individuals could never see their self-betterment as complete and there remained indefinite room for improvement. Leone (2005:154) indicates that this social product is a functional component of capitalism and of the production process associated with early industrialization, wherein people were constantly made to reinvent themselves. The democratic ideals of self-responsibility and freedom allowed maximum room for people to "get, possess, accumulate, learn, assemble, achieve, and display" (Leone 2005:157). Thus, for both Campbell and Leone, the constant desire to acquire more and more consumer goods relates to personal feelings of dissatisfaction and incompleteness of the self.

The meaning of consumer goods is socially constituted. T. H. Breen argues that once an individual acquires a consumer object, he or she immediately produces an interpretation of that consumer object, a story that gives it particular significance (Breen 1994:250). McCracken (1988:71) shows how goods are accepted by the dominant culture and how consumer goods carry and communicate this meaning through a trajectory of movement. He explains at length,

> Meaning…is drawn from a culturally constituted world and transferred to the consumer good. It is then drawn from the object and transferred to the individual consumer. There are, in other words, three locations of meaning: the culturally constituted world, the consumer good, and the individual consumer, as well as two moments of transfer: world-to-good and good-to-individual (McCracken 1988:71-72).

He goes on to state that the meaning that resides in objects originates from the culturally constituted world, or the phenomenal world of an individual shaped by culture (McCracken 1988:72-73). The culturally constituted world ascribes meaning by way of two structures: cultural categories and cultural principles.

Cultural categories "represent the basic distinctions with which a culture divides up the phenomenal world," and constitute the whole system of distinctions between categories that organise the world (McCracken 1988:73). For example, a culture may distinguish cultural categories of age by dividing this category into baby, toddler, adolescent, teenager, adult and elderly. Other important categories could include those of time, class, gender, and occupation (McCracken 1988:73). Each culture "constitutes" the world around it by dividing each of these categories differently, and it is these categories as a system that distinguishes one particular culture from another (McCracken 1988:73). Moreover, cultural categories are substantiated in the culturally constituted world by human actions that conform to this "blueprint" of culture (McCracken 1988:74). McCracken asserts that material culture represents one of the most important ways of substantiating the culturally constituted world, as it is an essential, visible representation of cultural meaning that otherwise easily goes unnoticed (McCracken 1988:74). Therefore, material culture represented as a collection of goods belonging to a particular person permits "the public, visual discrimination of culturally specified categories by encoding these categories in the form of a set of distinction of their own" (McCracken 1988:75).

Culture principles, on the other hand, represent the organisation of ideas or values ascribed to cultural categories (McCracken 1988:76). In other words, they are the mental reasoning behind the division of cultural categories. As McCracken (1988:76) explains, "the orienting ideas of thought and action…find expression in every aspect of social life and, not least of all…find expression in goods." He also notes that "cultural categories and cultural principles are mutually presupposing and their expression in goods is necessarily simultaneous" (McCracken 1988:76). For example, material culture, such as two drinking cups, one made of stoneware and the other of porcelain, can not only illustrate distinctions between categories of social class, but they can also communicate ideas of "coarse" and "refined." Thus, drinking cups can communicate principles that are inherent in a particularly category of behaviour.

Meaning, as represented by cultural categories and cultural principles, is subsequently transferred from the world to goods through the institutions of advertising and the fashion system and, subsequently, from goods to consumers through exchange rituals, possession rituals, grooming rituals and divestment rituals (McCracken 1988:77-89). This transfer of meaning takes into account the recursive relationship of the meaning of material culture in time and space. In other words, each of these meaning transfers involves a dialectic, or back and forth, between the

meaning of an object and how it is adopted or manipulated by an individual in a specific time and place.

Miller, on the other hand, shows how goods can be accepted by minority groups because the meaning of a particular object is fluid, and can change over time and with new ownership. Miller (1987) adopts a Hegelian approach to consumer behaviour, using the terms objectification (the social negotiations of an individual or group through the creation, acquisition, use and discard of material culture) and creative recontextualization (which includes both the interpretation and consumption of consumer goods). Miller (1987) abstracts both terms from a Marxist perspective in order to strip them of the negative depiction implicit in the Marxist approach, instead viewing the consumption of material culture as a positive process. He believes that, despite the efforts of elite domination to control production and distribution of consumer goods, objectification and creative recontextualisation allow individuals or groups to create an identity through how they use and interpret objects. Thus, objectification refers to how people constitute their identity through things (Meskell and Preucel 2007:14). People give meaning to their lives through the things that they use. They use things as part of a role, and it is this role that gives them identity (Meskell and Preucel 2007:14; see also Heidegger 1962).

Consumer Identity

Consumption works to reinforce identity and, through what consumers choose to buy, reinforces their identity to themselves and to others (see Askegard and Firat 1997; Gibb 1996; Meskell and Preucel 2007). Consumption plays a role in how people define their individual identities, from the clothes they wear to the home furnishings they posses (Meskell and Preucel 2007:14). People buy and use objects as part of creating "multiple and often intersecting identities" (Cochran and Beaudry 2006:191). In this way, as Mullins (2007:197) suggests, "Consumption is a social practice in which people simultaneously construct understanding of themselves and their position within the world…" Consumption is how people define similarities and differences within and outside of their social group, as well as in other social groups (Mullins 2007; see also Casella and Fowler 2005:6; Insoll 2007:4).

In the past, there has been a tendency for archaeologists to define identity along neat categorical lines, such as gender, age, ethnicity or class. However, these categories are only entry points to analysis, and they do not reflect how people may have

thought about themselves in the past (Casella and Fowler 2005:6; Insoll 2007:4; Hides 1997). Additionally, Hides (1997) gathers that the episteme through which we think about material culture and identity has changed dramatically over time such that all interpretations are themselves products of their own time. Archaeologists now recognise that identity is plural and that categories are blurred and fluid so that people use a variety of objects throughout their lifetime to construct their identity (Meskell 2001:188). As Casella and Fowler (2005:1-2) state:

> …as people move through life they continually shift affiliation from one position to another, dependent on the wider contexts of their interactions. Different forms of material culture may be employed as affiliations shift, and the connotations of any given set of artifacts may change.

Thus, not only can a person belong to multiple identity categories simultaneously, they can also shift between those categories by consuming different types of material culture (Casella and Fowler 2005:3-5). In this way, a single artifact can have many polysemic variations, or, in other words, material culture "can communicate multiple, different, and contextually-dependent identities" invested in it over time (Casella and Fowler 2005:4). Thus, archaeology should ideally approach consumer identity holistically, considering its plurality and polysemy through all of its material manifestations (Insoll 2007:1). For instance, one way in which archaeology can approach multiple and intersecting identities is by considering how people may have a work identity and a home identity. Mary Beaudry et al. (1991:154) have pointed out that the production of cultural identity is essentially a public act of negotiation between the individual and those around him or her. In this way, members of the working class and subordinated groups (e.g., slaves, indigenous groups, women) often find the opportunity for self-expression less through work than during off-work hours. For instance, eating habits may vary between work and home, with the simplest and most quickly consumed foods appropriate in the workplace and with more time-consuming and elaborate foods prepared and consumed with more elaborate tablewares during off-work hours.

This plurality and polysemy also holds true for societies considered in the aggregate as well. Meskell (2001:187) writes that there are two interpretive levels of identity: "one is the broader social level in which identities are defined by formal associations or mores; the other is the individual or personal level where a person experiences many aspects of identity within a single subjectivity, fluid over the trajectories of life." The identity of a society takes longer to reformulate than the identity of an

individual; however, the two levels are recursive (Meskell 2001:189). One cannot exist without the other.

Consumer identity and consumer choice are, to a large extent, dependent on the symbolic value and meaning of goods in reference to social groups. Paul Shackel (1993:163) relates, individuals within a particular group often choose similar symbols and through these symbols communicate and construct the contours of that group's social boundaries. He argues in *Personal Discipline and Material Culture* (1993:3-4) that,

> The elite used goods and the rules associated with their use to maintain social distance and stratification. As the lower wealth and status groups acquired goods and learned their meanings and how they operated in the upper classes, the elite either changed the rules or began to use a new type of material culture to create boundaries and maintain their distance.

As more and more people followed the elite, the elite changed the rules (Martin 1994:171; Shackel 1993:3-4). According to Ann Smart Martin (1994:171) groups guarded their boundaries, and as other groups intruded upon it, the group sought out new material culture symbols to redefine them. In short, the middle class galloped after the elite, while the poor jogged along as quickly as their pocket books allowed them. Veblen (1899) refers to the emulation and desire to purchase and wield consumer goods as part of negotiating an identity as conspicuous consumption. It is how ideology creates a false consciousness in alienated groups, causing a fetishism of commodities, such that the lower classes emulate the higher ones. As each group fought to maintain borders, changes in fashion occurred with increasing frequency (Martin 1994:171). Merchants, for example, used costly and exotic goods that they themselves imported in order to legitimise and maintain their middle class positions in a rapidly evolving society (Goodwin 1999). As Goodwin (1999:23) asserts, "Capitalism expanded ways of getting wealth for many and provided the goods to display that wealth…As wealthy artisans and merchants now materially resembled the landed elite…manners became increasingly important to distinguish old rank from new riches." By the eighteenth century the pace of the race was so chaotic and the participation so extensive, it became what Neil McKendrick (1982) has dubbed the "consumer revolution." In today's terms this would be referred to as 'keeping up with the Jones's.'

Linking this consumer revolution with the mechanics of establishing and maintaining identity, Leone (2005) states that people purchase material culture through which to

learn and exercise technologies of self. In this way the consumption of material things is inextricably linked to the establishment and maintenance of identity, both self defined and validated through the perception of others and society (Leone 2005:36; see also Mullins 2007; Casella and Fowler 2005:6; Insoll 2007:4). Thus, an approximation of these identities can be observed through the objects an individual chooses to possess.

Critical to consumer identity, part of how people understand their position in the world in relation to others and make decisions on what to consume is through popular opinion (Leone 2005). Popular opinion is not only informed through watching others and emulation (see Detweiler 1982:30), but, as this study discusses, it was also informed on a massive and powerful scale through mass media, such as etiquette guides, newspapers and magazines, for it was the fashion industry and advertising that ensured new and novel consumer goods regularly appeared on the market (see Chapters 4 and 9) (Campbell 1987, 1997). Drawing on Derrida (1986), Leone (Leone 2005:51) looks at consumption's relationship to an individual's identity, while at the same time considering how consumption affects the worldview of groups. The people who control capital, the social and economic elite, are by definition the same ones who control the printing presses and the paper, and it is they with the bully pulpit who therefore author public consensus in society. This is made more complex, however, if we consider the influences of merchants and shopkeepers (see Chapter 2). According to Mrozowski (1988:189), "Merchants and shopkeepers…could manipulate the market, included trade and affected decision-making at the household level concerning the expenditure of capital. Those who controlled the flow of information were therefore able to wield power and influence."

A key point about the relationship between consumer society and public media is that it creates a positive feedback loop between the printing press and broader society, comprised of individuals. Whereas the press acts as a mirror for society, it also becomes a mirror of that society which it works to influence (Leone 2005). As Leone (2005:51) evinces, newspapers are "part of daily life and a mirror of and for daily life—maybe mostly for—and thus constitutes an imagined description of it." In other words, publicly shared tastes and values, or a shared worldview, allows for individuals to internalise publicly held views as their own. In internalising public opinion, people take responsibility for their own consumer identity. This method of constructing a personal narrative engenders incompleteness. Because of these feelings of incompleteness people are constantly remaking themselves by continually

changing with the times to mirror the fashions in the press. People in possession of agency, in choosing whether or not to adopt these prevailing fashions, choose to move inside or outside of the mainstream market in consumer goods, the contours of which are determined in part by the dictates of popular culture.

In this way, through consumer identity and its encapsulation in material culture we can look at how social practices conform to social norms and beliefs, or how they can challenge or change them (Meskell and Preucel 2007:14). For example, Leone (2005:161) maintains that the adoption of the ideology of possessive individualism, which includes the internalisation of popular consumer fashions as personal identity, can be indexed to the adoption of matching sets of dishes in mid-nineteenth century Annapolis. He shows that by this time dishes were so universally available to the public that the presence or absence of these sets more closely reflects a long run cultural preference, rather than wealth (Leone 2005:158). Using his Index of Ceramic Variability, Leone found that matching sets of dishes first were used among the wealthy and then adopted by the lower classes. In this way, the adoption of matching sets did not flow from a desire to copy the stylish, but was instead a way of asserting individual identity through the consumption of material goods (Leone 2005:162). Sets of dishes could consist of expensive and inexpensive dishes, just as flatware for an individual could have been silver or some other, cheaper metal (see Chapter 9). Expense was not the issue. Leone (2005) and Deetz (1977) both believe that sets of dishes defined an individual, and as Leone (2005:158) indicates, "therefore whether or not a household moved into or out of the code of the market economy." Many families in the middle and lower classes adopted consumption patterns modelled upon elite tastes when entering the wage labour market and thus gaining a disposable income. In Annapolis the frequency of different types of decoration decreased because people were purchasing sets of dishes, indicating that people operated within the market (Leone 2005:158). Wealthier families owned more sets of dishes, while poor people owned fewer.

Resistance to prevailing fashions of the market, on the other hand, can be seen in the presence of dishes that do not look alike or match (Leone 2005:159). In particular, the excavations of a boarding house that was home to African American labourers showed that these occupants were "not matching their wares according to the Victorian style that others were employing" (Leone 2005:159-161). This could reflect a different type of cuisine brought from their homeland. It could also, however, represent a rejection of the fashions imbued through public media and self-identification with the prevailing ideology. Leone (2005:163) states,

> People did not emulate the rich because the rich set the trends and styles. People, rich, middling, and poor, entered the transatlantic market in hundreds of different ways, and as they worked for wages, made profits, bought and sold labour [sic], they realized they had possessions, could have more, including rights and liberties, and became individuals as a function of movement into or out of the market. This is what guides the adoption of modernizing etiquettes, better called routines.

The rejection of some routines by groups falling outside the etiquette demands of the market and popular opinion serves as a control group for illuminating the contours of fashionable consumption. In sum, one cannot define the norm without outliers, but by defining the contours of popular tastes through the analysis of material culture, archaeology can bring to light the tastes, attitudes and worldview of different groups within a society, as well as paint a clearer picture of the character of that society in the aggregate.

Conclusion

The study of capitalism and its development through various stages to the form it takes today can reveal a wealth of commonly unexamined assumptions relating to modern life. Maritime archaeology is distinctly well positioned to do this due to the centrality of long distance shipping to capitalism's development, such as that involving the Spice Trade, and the archaeological encapsulation of this development within shipwrecks. As this chapter has explored, capitalism was characterised by the shift from a task-oriented work to temporally segmented labour, producing a working class and regimenting daily life in a variety of ways, for instance by giving new importance to family meals. Antagonistic social stratification, composed of a complex artifice of class structures, also developed, along with new opportunities to establish and maintain individual and group identity through consumption.

In archaeology, there have been at least two strategies for approaching ideology through the capitalist system. The first of these sees ideology as legitimising, arguing that the dominant ideology is adopted by the lower classes as part of the natural order of things. The second strategy, however, takes a more nuanced stance asserting that through possessive individualism people exist free from the dependence upon others, owning and benefiting from the skills and capacities they possess. They are responsible for their own learning and betterment, involving the use of material

objects in activities like seeing, walking, reading, talking, eating and etiquette, and made visible archaeologically through artifacts (dishes, toothbrushes, combs, bottles). In this latter approach, consumption is channelled through the ideology of possessive individualism.

The study of consumption is important to the study of capitalism in that changing patterns in consumption signal changes in capitalism, and vice versa. With the consumer revolution there emerged an increasing quantity and variety of goods, which in turn allowed for parallel increases in consumption, as well as changing attitudes towards the necessity of these items to daily life. The ideology of possessive individualism, in conjunction with the compartmentalisation of individually owned skills, meant that people never saw their self-betterment as being complete, allowing maximum room for individuals to purchase, accumulate, and display material goods throughout their life. Through a variety of social rituals involving the consumption of objects, along with the observation of these rituals by others, people constantly negotiated a consumer identity through the things they owned.

People define themselves and their social groups in contrast to others, a process made more complex by the pluralistic and polysemic nature of this identity. The mass media plays a vital role in this, driving the consumer choices of individuals, as well as mirroring and perpetuating popular tastes. Archaeologists can use material culture, and the consumer identities it communicates, to examine the lifestyles, attitudes and worldview of people and social groups, as well as to see how particular groups followed, challenged or changed prevailing social practices. In the aggregate, this allows archaeology to present a clearer picture, and offers new insights into society as a whole.