The illusion of verisimilitude : Johan Nieuhof's images of China

Sun, J.

Chapter 7 Chinoiserie Works Inspired by Nieuhof's Images of China

Before the invention of photography in the early nineteenth century, the image of China in the West was determined mainly by the decorative pictures found on Chinese objects exported to Europe from the sixteenth century onwards, and by the representations of its landscape and people produced by European travellers. Shaped by these pictures and representations, an artistic style known as chinoiserie (Chinese-esque) took root in Europe in the mid-1600s and reached its peak a century later, providing Europeans with a hybrid understanding of the image of China. Compared with the objects imported from China, which were largely confined to the decorative arts such as porcelain, lacquerware, and textiles, and to a lesser extent Chinese "high" art, such as that produced by members of the literati and court painters, the representations by European travellers were especially influential in the evolution of chinoiserie. Therefore when considering issues regarding Europeans' adoption of Chinese imagery in seventeenth century art and design, we must pay attention to European travellers' representations of China, among which Nieuhof's images of China play an important role.

The "na het leven" claim of *Het Gezantschap* was to a large extent responsible for its becoming a standard source for visual images of China for a long time.[327] The assertion that the images were from life was ample reason for artists and designers to draw on Nieuhof's work for their inspiration, especially as there were few other ways they could approach an

[327] See Dematte and Reed, *China on Paper,* 142.

understanding of the forms and principles of Chinese art and architecture. The inspiration they derived from the illustrations can be discovered in subsequent publications about China, in architecture, in various decorative arts from interior decoration, wallpaper, and furniture to porcelain, lacquerware, and textiles.[328]

As "a touchstone for books of China," Nieuhof's book and especially the pictorial information it contained were eagerly seized upon and used by scholars as a primary source of visual information on China for about one and a half centuries.[329] As Oliver Impey has argued, chinoiserie is a European manifestation of a mixture of various oriental styles with rococo, baroque, and so on, and the origins of the chinoiserie cannot be easily traced to a single source,[330] the influence of the illustrations in Nieuhof's book on China are traceable and their impact on European art and the evolution of chinoiserie is widely accepted. The European craftsman copied and used the illustrations in Nieuhof's book in part or in whole, in various forms of art.

The chinoiserie styles inspired by the illustrations in Nieuhof's book began with direct imitation or simple copying. The freely decorated chinoiserie rooms greatly favoured by many European monarchs offer an interesting example. In 1663–65, for example, Frederik III of Denmark had a room in Slot Rosenborg, Copenhagen, decorated with chinoiserie in lacquer set with turquoise and mother-of-pearl. It was executed by the Dutch artist Francis de Bray, and many of its motifs derived from the engravings in *Het Gezantschap*, notably the Chinese dragon boat depicted on a dark green

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[328] There are a lot of examples showing how chinoiserie designs are copied from the illustrations in Nieuhof's book of China. See Christopher Thacker, *The History of Gardens* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 175–80; Anna Jolly, *A Taste for the Exotic: Foreign Influences on Early Eighteenth-Century Silk Designs* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2007), 45; Dematte and Reed, *China on Paper,* 10–18.

[329] Dematte and Reed, *China on Paper*, 13.

[330] Oliver Impey, *Chinoiserie: The Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 10.

panel (fig. 7.1).[331] The similarities between this and the dragon boat in *Het Gezantschap* (fig. 7.2) are self-evident, not only with respect to the shape and decoration of the boat, but also the figures on it, especially the one with long plumes standing on the prow. Francis de Bray directly imitated the design of the illustrations in Nieuhof's book to create a Chinese atmosphere for this room.

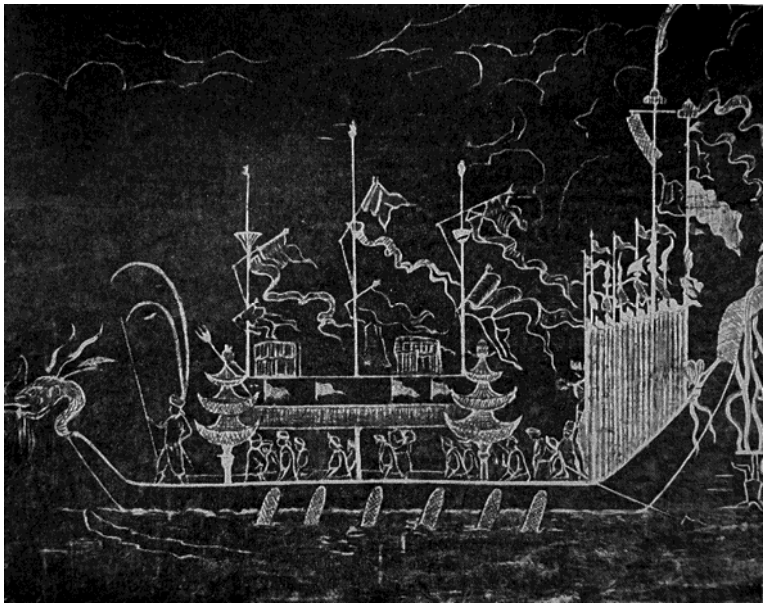

Figure 7.1. Francis de Bray, "Chinese dragon boat in the lacquer room in Slot Rosenborg," Copenhagn, 1665.

[331] This piece of lacquer has been discussed by Honour in his book *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay*, 45. But he did not point out the relationship between these junks and Nieuhof's illustrations. Oliver Impey has also mentioned that many motifs illustrated in this room are taken from Nieuhof's book, see Impey, *Chinoiserie*, 166. However, according to him, it is an edition of 1635, twenty years before the Dutch embassy visited China.

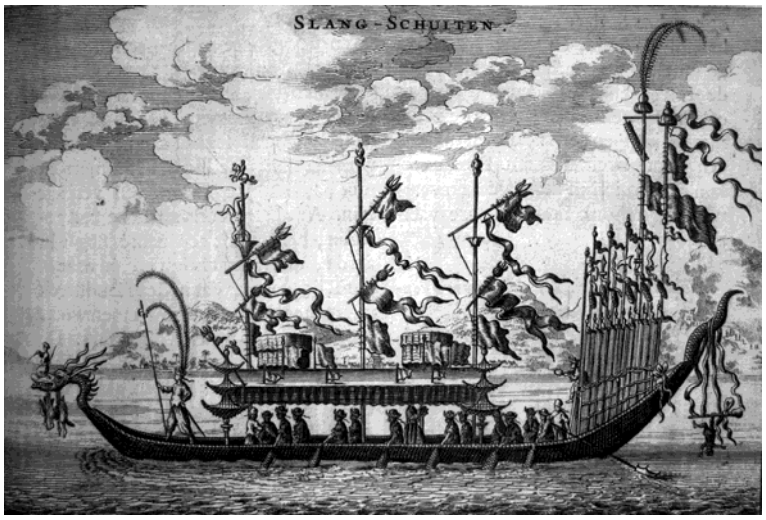

Figure 7.2. Copper engraving of Chinese dragon boat from J. Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, etc.* (Amsterdam, 1665).

How Nieuhof's design of the "Porcelain Pagoda" in the city Nanjing exercised much influence on European architects is well known. The real thing was a nine-storey pagoda constructed of glazed and painted tiles and crowned with a golden pineapple. Nieuhof must have made a number of elaborated drawings of this pagoda, for it is not only the main theme of two two-page engravings (one of them is shown in fig. 7.3) but it frequently appears in a number of other cityscapes. An impressive masterpiece, it has been regarded as "the Chinese building best known in Europe."[332] This exotic pagoda was imitated far and wide, not only in publications and interior decorations, but also quite often in European gardens, especially in the eighteenth century.[333] The pagoda in Kew Gardens (fig. 7.4) built in

[332] Patrick Conner, *Oriental Architecture in the West* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 17.
[333] The first appreciative account of Chinese architecture, *Entwurff einer historischen Architektur*, published in 1721 by Fischer von Erlach, relied for its illustrations principally on the engravings in Nieuhof's book. See Honour, *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay*, 21; also see Lothar Ledderose,

1761 by Sir William Chambers (1723–1796) and replicas in many other European gardens such as Munich's Englischer Garten and the castles of Sanssouci (1770) and Chanteloup (1775–78) all show how designers followed Nieuhof's prototypes.[334]

In this case, the European copies were not true facsimiles, as the materials used were quite different (the pagodas in European gardens were not decorated with porcelain); only its basic shape was similar. It was usually impossible for a European craftsman to make an object in a purely oriental style without any stamp of his own period or nationality and without some misunderstanding of the Chinese original. Often, the craftsman intentionally mixed different oriental styles to create a new image of China that suited his own taste.

"Chinese Influence on European Art, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries," in *China and Europe: Images and Influences in Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Thomas H. C. Lee (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press of Hong Kong, 1991), 232.

[334] In his *Designs of Chinese Buildings*, William Chamber provided accurate drawings of Chinese buildings including Chinese pagoda. But his own design was not adopted when he built the pagoda in Kew Gardens; by contrast, he used the design of the Bao'en porcelain pagoda that appears in Nieuhof's book. See Ledderose, "Chinese Influence on European Art, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries," 233–34. But Hugh Honour probably did not compare the pagoda in Kew Gardens with the illustration of the porcelain pagoda in Nieuhof's book of China as he thought this pagoda was not modelled on any particular oriental prototype. See Honour, *Chinoiserie,* 155. Oliver Impey traces the prototype of the pagoda in Kew Gardens to a pagoda in the background of the engraving of the city Canton (Kanton); see Impey, *Chinoiserie,* 146.

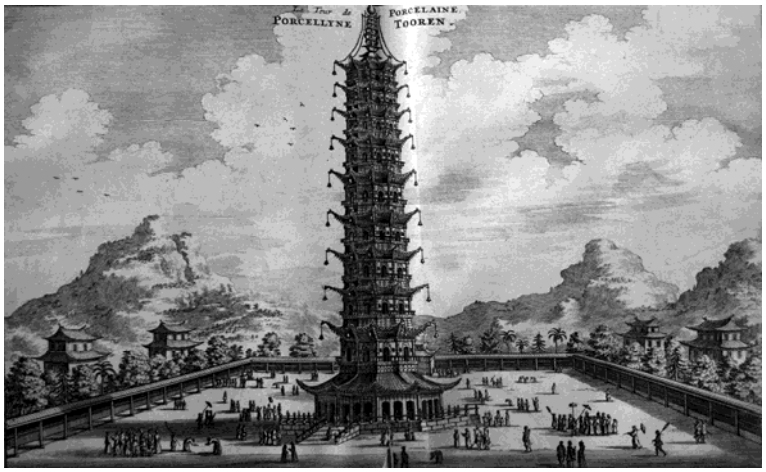

Figure 7.3. Copper engraving of the Bao'en Pagoda from J. Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, etc.* (Amsterdam, 1665).

Figure 7.4. Pagoda in Kew Gardens in London.

In fact, over time as more and more European designers looked to Nieuhof's illustrations for inspiration, they quite often went far beyond

Nieuhof's original presentations of China. No longer satisfied with Nieuhof's prototype, they extracted various Chinese elements from different sources and dealt with them in a western manner to invent imaginary scenes of a mysterious Far East. The example of figure 7.5 gives a good idea of how far Dutch potters went in reinterpreting Nieuhof's image of China and eventually created a completely novel Oriental fantasy.

Figure 7.5. Plaque with chinoiserie decoration; 63 x 92 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1680–1700.

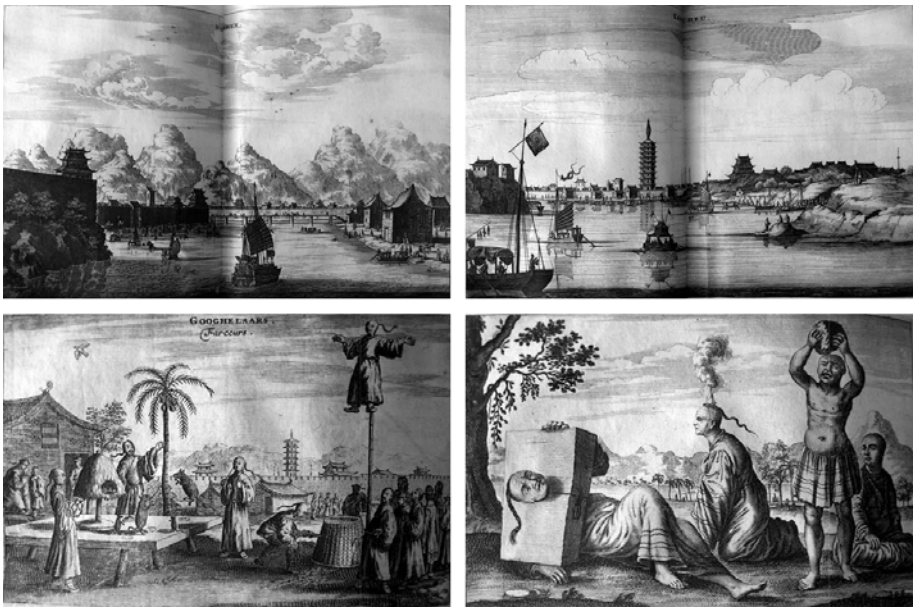

Figure 7.6. Copper engraving from J. Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, etc.* (Amsterdam, 1665).

It is a wall decoration, a plaque (a large tile) of Delftware pottery, painted by an unknown artist at the end of the seventeenth century. Decorated in blue and white, this plaque pictures a festive view of life in China: a river full of pleasure boats and happy people and circus attractions on the riverbank, which is also filled with oversized flowers, craggy rocks, dwarf trees, and fancy birds. The potter was very familiar with *Het Gezantschap*, because many of the motifs are derived directly from the engravings in the book (fig. 7.6), including the boats, the man striking his bare head against a stone, the man supporting a long pole atop which another man is standing, the city wall and tower on the left side, and the pagodas located here and there. Instead of simply copying one single print from *Het Gezantschap*, however, the potter extracted a number of Chinese elements from different illustrations and combined them into one pastiche.

In the process he created a new, more fanciful image of China that not only adopts Nieuhof's landscape settings and figures but also includes Japanese figures, Indonesian palm trees, and Scandinavian pine trees. People must have enjoyed such fanciful compositions, for such combinations met their expectations of and curiosity about this mysterious country. Incidentally, the Dutch audience would further gain some familiarity with the various flowers, plants, and animals taken from unknown sources and displayed in the foreground to frame the picture in a typical Dutch pictorial convention.

Although it is a mixture of various far-flung elements, this plaque sticks to Nieuhof's original concept of China. There are some other art works, however, that go well beyond Nieuhof's prototype. A remarkable example is one of the great tapestries of the *Tenture chinoise* set known as *The Audience of the Emperor* (fig. 7.7), which was made at Beauvais from designs by François Boucher.[335] This tapestry is an attempt to not simply depict an oriental subject, but to apply chinoiserie to a European one. The enthroned emperor closely copies the depiction on the title page from *Het Gezantschap* (see fig. 6.17). The magnificent setting, the prostrate courtiers, and exotic animals and flowers that surround him all show the power and glory of the sovereign, whether it is the Emperor of China or the King of France. As such, it bears witness to the carrying over of the Chinese imperial splendour in Nieuhof's prints to a theatrical stage-setting of chinoiserie based on European baroque court models.

[335] This tapestry is also discussed in Impey, *Chinoiserie,* 73.

Figure 7.7. "The Audience of the Emperor," after the designs by François Boucher, 1725–30.

As we can see, chinoiserie thus starts by direct imitation and the combination of classical Chinese-style elements, but later develops with further alteration from its prototypes to a more European-oriented style. The designs were often taken somewhat loosely from engravings of different countries. In the process, China was accorded in the first Dutch edition certain "odd" contents and characteristics, and little regard was given to the original designs, pictorial themes, or subjects represented. These objects were much appreciated when they were placed into European surroundings, with some exotic seasoning, which made everything even more fantastic and amazing. In this sense, objects in chinoiserie designs produced a feeling of a likeness of China on the basis of Chinese pictorial elements and Western imagination.

Although chinoiserie designs deviated increasingly from the prototype provided by Nieuhof's illustrations, these continued to be regarded as

"standard visual sources for images that defined China for Europeans."[336] It is generally accepted that Nieuhof's illustrations of China are quite different in intent and execution from the chinoiserie style they inspired because they are not artificial hybrids of various elements, but instead more or less reliable representations based on Nieuhof's eyewitness observation.

In my opinion, however, the relationship between Nieuhof's illustrations of China and the chinoiserie style is far more complicated than the above opinion. Many examples discussed in chapter 6 may be used to explain this point, but here I would like to give a simple example, an ordinary townscape illustrated in *Het Gezantschap*. This townscape (fig. 7.8) represents the countryside of Joeswoe (Hexiwu, 河西务), a small town near Peking. In this illustration, a broad canal extends towards the background where the city wall emerges, the left bank is occupied by a vast wheat field, and several rows of native dwellings with exotic roofs stand on the right bank. The Chinese junk with the envoys on board is shown in the foreground. All these detailed and vivid representations offer the viewers an impression that this townscape is taken from life. However, a critical examination reveals many extraordinary details that suggest otherwise. The enormous palm trees on the banks are not found in northern China, where it is far too cold for them to survive.[337] Such motifs do not improve the

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[336] Dematte and Reed, *China on Paper*, 142; also see Adrian Hsia, *The Vision of China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1998), 11.

[337] Johan Nieuhof, *An Embassy from the East India Company of the United Provinces to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperor of China*, 46: "The ambassadors had hired a very brave vessel to themselves, having procured fifty more at the Emperor's charge, to carry their followers, presents, and goods…It was thought unadvisable to bring our great ships any higher up the river, we left them at Canton, under the command of Francis Lansman." A similar account can be found in the manuscript: "Den 17e martij gingen *Haar E.s* van Canton met een vloot van omtrent vijftigh vaartuigen t'zeil om onze reyze na Pekin te vervorderen." See Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden Van Een Chinareis 1655–1657*, 35.

specific quality of this townscape but rather undermine Nieuhof's credibility. Given that the palm tree often represented the exotic to Dutch audiences in the seventeenth century, it may be reasonable to speculate that the purpose of adding this was to enhance the attraction of this foreign and mysterious country and, indeed, to further identify it as such.

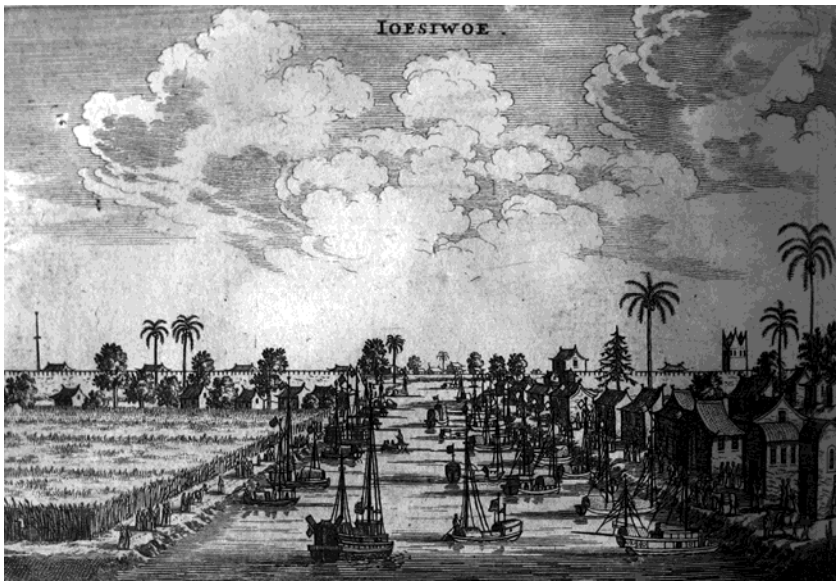

Figure 7.8. Copper engraving from J. Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, etc.* (Amsterdam, 1665).

In this respect, if we say one of the essential features of chinoiserie is to imitate and compose Chinese elements to create "China-like" images and do not care much about the reliability of what it represents, the illustrations of China in Nieuhof's book themselves should also be considered examples of chinoiserie. More precisely, these illustrations not only provide materials for the later chinoiserie designs, they themselves qualify as prototypes of chinoiserie. In this sense, we may say that they are at once the origin and the precursor of chinoiserie.

Unlike the drawings in the Paris manuscript or the engravings in the printed book, chinoiserie mainly reflects Europeans' ideas of what eastern objects did or should look like, rather than the "na het leven" representations of China. Because the innumerable oriental objects imported to Europe were in a very wide range of styles showing various arts of different eastern countries, according to Oliver Impey, "this resulted in a very wide range of chinoiserie styles in Europe, for not only were there these different styles to imitate, but the European craftsman was perfectly happy to mix together quite dissimilar ideas from quite distinct origins."[338] In this sense, to represent China as it really looked like was never the primary aim of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century producers of chinoiserie.

[338] Impey, *Chinoiserie,* 10.

Conclusion

The Illusion of Verisimilitude

Throughout this study, I have analysed images of China in Europe in the seventeenth century through the art of China made by Johan Nieuhof on the visit of the first Dutch embassy to China in 1655–57, and the reproductions made on the basis of his sketches. My analysis involves mainly the drawings in the Paris manuscript, the engravings in the first Dutch edition in 1665, and later works of chinoiserie inspired by the engravings. These three are closely related as the numerous designs and subjects in the more than 150 engravings provided considerable inspiration for later chinoiserie works, while the drawings in the Paris manuscript are either the source for the engravings, or are based on the same original sketches made by Nieuhof on spot. Some people who had the opportunity to see China with their own eyes questioned the claim that Nieuhof's representations of China in the engravings were "na het leven", or drawn from life. Careful study of the drawings in the Paris manuscript can tell us to what extent the engravings were modified by the engravers and, more important, how Dutch pictorial conventions of the seventeenth century influenced artists' representations of China. Taken together these show what kinds of images of China were represented to the European audience in the seventeenth century and how the engravers and craftsman dealt with these representations to create exotic and even fantastic images of China.

On the basis of Leonard Blussé's research into the historical background of the first Dutch embassy visit to China and the Paris manuscript, I first introduced the related background for a deeper

understanding of Nieuhof's images of China. Following that, I discussed Nieuhof's personal interest and occupations especially after his journey in China. According to his accounts recorded in various sources, he spent most of his adventurous life exploring the world and trade business. Apparently, making drawings and publishing his travelogues was initially not his main concern, but after the success of his China book he relished making drawings of many places he visited. I also described briefly the Dutch envoys' experience and route in China.

The manuscript's appearance and content suggest that it was a reproduction made after Nieuhof's return to Holland rather than a work made by Nieuhof on the spot during his travels in China. Scholars hold different opinions about whether the authorship of the Paris manuscript, particularly the drawings, should be attributed to Nieuhof. To investigate this issue, I compared the Paris manuscript with other works made by Nieuhof including two maps of Saint Helena and the handwriting found in different works attributed to him. The analysis from different points of view demonstrates that the Paris manuscript came from the same hand as other works more definitely written by Nieuhof. Moreover, the archive of the VOC's ship logs confirms the consistency and accuracy of Nieuhof's accounts in different sources. The weight of the evidence convincingly shows that Nieuhof did make the Paris manuscript during his stay in Amsterdam in 1658.

In order to make a thorough study of the Paris manuscript, I started from an analysis of the text, which mainly recorded the Dutch envoys' journey in China. Because the Dutch envoys did not linger long enough to become familiar with the cities and towns they passed through, and also because they were often confined to their lodgings, Nieuhof's description of

Chinese cities and towns has limitations. Moreover, he often makes analogies with things familiar to his Western readers. Even so, a comparison with Chinese chorography shows that most of his descriptions are based on direct observation. His choice of narrative subjects reflects his sense of humour, curiosity, and interests, and his vivid descriptions demonstrate his empathy for people who suffered because of the civil war. Therefore, his account is more like a diary recording the envoys' daily activities, sceneries, anecdotes, and so forth. It shows that Nieuhof was emotionally involved in his description of China. This is especially evident when we compare Nieuhof's account in the Paris manuscript with the ambassadors' official report to the VOC. The latter records similar activities and experiences, thus confirming the credibility of Nieuhof's account, but it concerns rather the Company's commercial and political interests in China, which made it confidential. Therefore, when the publisher Jacob van Meurs published the travelogue of the first Dutch embassy visit to China, he could not borrow from the contents of this report. A reasonable explanation for the much more detailed account in the printed book is that Nieuhof had made a comprehensive set of drawings during the embassy's visit to China, but when he made the Paris manuscript he chose only those items he thought interesting and necessary for his purpose.

Regarding the drawings in the Paris manuscript, I first discussed their themes and working procedure. The working procedure shows that the drawings were usually first depicted in chalk and pencil, after which the preliminary contour was redrawn in pen and ink. In many drawings, however, the depiction in pencil/chalk and the depiction in pen show different intentions. A comprehensive analysis of the depictions in pencil/chalk and pen suggests that the sources of the Paris manuscript,

namely, the original sketches made by Nieuhof on site, were very coarse sketches and that he needed to recompose the images of China when he produced the Paris manuscript. To show what kind of images of China could be made by a professional draftsman, I compared Nieuhof's work with Pieter van Doornik's later drawings of China. The comparison suggests that Nieuhof was not a professional draftsman, which in turn raises the question about how the drawings in the Paris manuscript were produced.

As the essential claim of the drawings in the Paris manuscript and the engravings in the printed book is that they are made "na het leven," my study of how these drawings were produced starts from the perspective of "na het leven" in the context of Dutch pictorial convention in the seventeenth century. There are primarily two essential aspects of the seventeenth-century concept "na het leven": first, the depictions are made on the basis of direct observation; second, the artists are permitted to add some imaginary elements or select and compose elements for a natural and harmonious representation.

Based on these two characteristics of the "from life" convention and the analysis of the working procedure, I first studied the drawings with specific and clear preliminary depictions in pencil and chalk to see if they were based on direct observation. I divided them into four categories, including the representation of Chinese people and their costume, grotesque rockeries and hills, historical events, and boats. Their resemblance to the actual scenery and Chinese pictorial material suggests that the representations of these subjects are reliable and that Nieuhof made them on the basis of direct observation. Moreover, it is possible that some specific depictions in pencil and chalk may have been be based on Chinese pictorial material to which Nieuhof might have had access, as well. As in the seventeenth century, most

European people's impression of China was mainly derived from the exquisite decorations on Chinese objects exported to Europe, and copying this Chinese pictorial material may also be regarded as a kind of "direct observation."

To render a sense of naturalness to the drawings, especially those of Chinese cityscapes, Nieuhof further refined them in pen. To examine the extent to which these refinements reflect the topographical features of the actual scenes, I compared some of the drawings with Chinese maps. The comparison suggests that although many cityscapes were observed directly from boats on the river during the Dutch envoys journey, they often do not reflect the actual layout of the city. In order to figure out how these drawings were then made, I gave an examples of how Dutch artists of the seventeenth century composed cityscapes and analysed how the principles of Dutch landscape composition were applied to representations of the Chinese landscape. Artists' reliance on familiar approaches to the rendering of landscapes gave their Western audience a familiar and comfortable feeling that made them more able to accept these images as being reliable representations of China. This feeling is reinforced by the representation of the components of the cityscapes, as most of them reflect Chinese characteristics and occasionally the actual situation. For some drawings of Chinese architecture and the like, Nieuhof adopted another approach to convey the sense of naturalness, with respect to which I discussed the drawings of the Forbidden City and a group of beggars. These drawings show that Nieuhof did make sketches but that he refined them with his own understanding of what he had seen or, after the fact, from memory. By doing so, the lifelike illusions of China were finally completed.

This approach is actually similar to the one adopted by the engravers when they dealt with their primary source, whether the rough sketches Nieuhof made on site or the drawings in the Paris manuscript, or both. In the engravings, the marks of direct observation in the engravings cannot be traced as easily as the marks in the drawing. The engravers' primary concern was to render a sense of naturalness by adding embellishments and exotic details. But most of their additions did not originate from eyewitness observation, but derived from Chinese or Dutch pictorial sources, or sometime the engravers' imagination. As such they do not offer a higher level of specificity than the drawings in the Paris manuscript. Moreover, to produce additional engravings of China, the engravers not only extracted various objects from different drawings in the Paris manuscript and composed them into one image, they also adopted subjects and images directly from other travel journals—even ones about other countries—and other Dutch pictures. The practice of re-cycling material without new information to enhance the phantasmal nature of the engravings was a time-honoured practice. The primary purpose of the engravings in the printed book was to meet the market's demand, and the engravers used whatever exotic illustrations of China served the purpose, even if they were pure invention. But this did not keep publishers from claiming that the illustrations of China are made "na het leven," which was a fashionable claim of the genre of Dutch travelogue in seventeenth century.

As I have discussed briefly, Karel van Mander's theory of landscape maintains that the representation of landscape should be rooted in the study of reality and that the aim of the landscape is to create the illusion of

verisimilitude.[339] In the case of Nieuhof's images of China, there should be enough recognisable elements to give the reader an impression that the images of China are drawn from life; but these plausible elements should be selected and arranged in a harmonious composition in order to create a lifelike cityscape of China. This is actually what Nieuhof and the engravers attempted to do in the production of the drawings in the Paris manuscript and the engravings in the printed book. In that sense, the question of whether the drawings in the Paris manuscript and the engravings in the printed book were made "na het leven" cannot be simply answered by yes or no.

The principal audience of Nieuhof's printed book on China in the seventeenth century would be an educated reader full of curiosity about this country of myth and legend and eager to learn more about China without leaving home; leafing through this series of illustrations would have been like taking an imaginary walk in that country.[340] To satisfy people's curiosity about faraway wonders, it is understandable that the engravings were not overly concerned about providing completely accurate topographical information, and great care was taken to enhance the exotic and fanciful nature of this remlote and mysterious country.

This is exactly what the later chinoiserie style did. Chinoiserie begins with direct imitation and the combination of classical Chinese-style elements, but later develops with further alteration from its prototypes to be more Europe-oriented. On the basis of Nieuhof's images of China and other sources, chinoiserie developed more exotic images, mixing various Oriental forms with rococo, baroque, Gothic, and other European styles and various

[339] Nguyen, *The Made Landscape: City and Country in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Prints*, 9.
[340] About the reader's expectation of the landscape prints about foreign countries in the seventeenth century, see Freedberg, *Dutch Landscape Prints of the Seventeenth Century*, 15–16.

elements to create a European idea of what Oriental things are like, or ought to be like.[341] In the course of that process, China was embellished with "odd" characteristics, and little regard was paid to original designs, pictorial themes, or subjects. Chinoiserie objects were much appreciated when placed in European surroundings, and produced a feeling of a likeness of China that combined Chinese pictorial elements and Western imagination.

In this respect, the approach adopted by chinoiserie to imitate and compose Chinese elements to create "China-like" images was very similar to the way in which the engravings in the printed book were produced. All of them tried for the "exotic" at large and cared little about accurate representation. In this sense, the illustrations in the printed book should themselves be considered a kind of chinoiserie. More precisely, these images not only provide material for later chinoiserie designs, they themselves are also involved in chinoiserie design. In this sense, we may say that they are both the origin and the precursor of chinoiserie.

Although the drawings and engravings may have been added to a pictorial framework to cater to public expectations and potential market demand, judging from the selection of themes and the approaches to representing China, they reflect the influence of the Dutch travelogue and of the landscape and cityscape painting that flourished in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century.

In this thesis, I have tried to keep an objective attitude in analysing Nieuhof's work on China and hope to have made a contribution to the scholarship that builds on previous research, particularly in respect of the images of China in Europe in the seventeenth century, the way that Dutch travellers produced and published accounts of foreign countries, the origin

[341] Impey, *Chinoiserie,* 9.

and development of chinoiserie, and how Dutch artists made and conceived of "na het leven" images.

My study also has some limitations, especially regarding the authority of the Paris manuscript. My assumption is mainly based on the comparison of the extant works by Nieuhof. If the original sketches made by Nieuhof on the spot are found in the future, more comprehensive and thorough research into his representations of China can be made. It would be a pleasant dream for historians and art historians to rotate the rings of years and live under the same sky as their research subjects and witness the same historical moments, for then we would know and learn more about the past.