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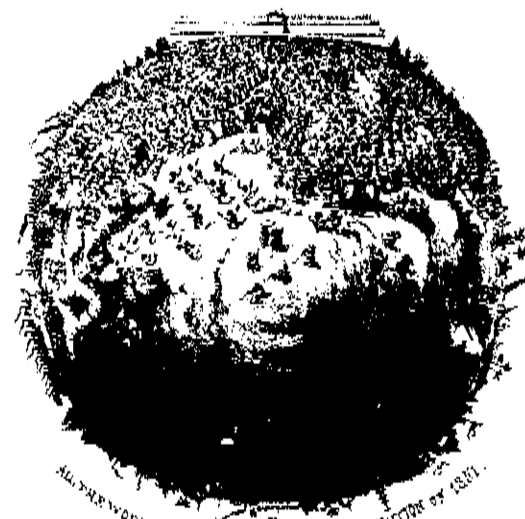

Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851

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ASHGATE

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Chapter 2

The World within the City: The Great Exhibition, Race, Class and Social Reform

Kylie Message and Ewan Johnston

In his speech at the inaugural ceremonies for the forthcoming World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago on 1 May 1892, Director-General George R. Davis expressed the hope of the organizers 'that this great Exposition may inaugurate a new era of moral and material progress, and our fervent aspiration that the associations of the nations here may secure not only warmer and stronger friendships, but lasting peace throughout the world'.[1] This statement reiterated the earliest rhetoric used to frame the Great Exhibition of 1851, and has marked similarities with the address made by Prince Albert on 21 March 1850 at the Mansion House, in which he stated that 'the realisation of the unity of mankind' was to be achieved because '[t]he distances which separated the different nations and parts of the globe are rapidly vanishing before the achievements of modern invention, and we can traverse them with incredible ease; the languages of all nations are known, and their acquirements placed within the reach of everybody'.[2] The studied similarity of these speeches demonstrates how consciously instrumental the international exhibitions and world's fairs became in the decades following the Great Exhibition. These events had a fundamental influence over the creation, legitimation and normalization of the class-based colonial world order that existed beyond the space of the fair.

As Albert's comments indicate, economic progress, democracy and social civilization were presented as hallmarks of the Great Exhibition that were understood to contribute to global solidarity through the expansion of an increasingly shared marketplace. However, the exhibitions were also designed to benefit the national good. This was to be achieved by motivating the expression of pride in national products and characteristics, and through offering inclusive new forms of social experience that employed techniques of entertainment and

1 *Chicago Record*, p. 37, in Meg Armstrong, '"A Jumble of Foreignness": The Sublime Musayums of Nineteenth-Century Fairs and Expositions', *Cultural Critique*, 22–25 (Winter 1992–93), pp. 199–250, at p. 210.

2 Theodore Martin, *The Life of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort*, 5 vols (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1876), vol. 2, p. 247.

delight that would appeal, in particular, to the middle and working classes. In this newly created instructive public sphere, 'all ranks may mingle' and all (even 'the workmen and workwomen of the world') 'may learn and all may profit from what they see'.[3] The spirit of this promise was captured by the *Illustrated London News*, in an article written a month after the opening of the Exhibition. Not only does this extract indicate the overlaps between imperialism and class reform within the Crystal Palace, but also the significance of the Exhibition as a lesson in looking – not only at the Exhibition's contents, but also at the society reflected as much in its walls as in its exhibits:

> The Great Exhibition continues its prosperous career. The crowd of the wealthy, to whom money is no object of concern, has been succeeded by the crowd of respectable people, to whom shillings are matters of importance. The same good feeling is displayed by the new-comers as was exhibited by their predecessors; and what is perhaps as gratifying as any of the pleasant incidents connected with the rise and progress of this happily realised idea, is the fact that there is a real fraternity between the two classes of visitors. ... As yet the Exhibition is in its second stage only. A great bulk of the British working-classes have not made their appearance in it; nor can it be supposed that any large numbers of foreign artisans have yet found their way across the Channel. When these arrive, the Exhibition will have achieved its last, and perhaps greatest, stage of usefulness, importance, and popularity. The same amalgamation of people of all ranks and classes will then, as now ... continue to render the Great Exhibition the most instructive and memorable spectacle of our time, or of any time in the history of civilization.[4]

The Great Exhibition has continued to be understood as a key component in the promotion of the British Empire to the globe and as instrumental in the programmes of social reform and cultural modernization developing at the time. In this chapter, we examine the points of intersection existing between the discourses of imperialism and class reform, and explore their ongoing influence on London life. We look, especially, at the way in which metaphors describing the 'picture of the world' moved beyond the Exhibition and into the social hierarchies of the urban metropole. In offering an image of culture that was perceived as advantageous to the education of non-English visitors, the newly emerged English working classes, and also the middle classes (which Matthew Arnold decried as 'shallow'), the Exhibition taught everyone to look at everyone else. Not only did the 'world' appear encapsulated within the city, but it offered and legitimated a diversity of experience and new ways of talking about class that contributed to the reconfiguration of London and its social spaces in explicitly exotic and racialized terms.

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3 Lord Carlisle in Asa Briggs, 'Exhibiting the Nation', *History Today*, 50/1 (2000), pp. 16–25, at p. 19.

4 *Illustrated London News*, 31 May 1851, p. 476.

Picturing the World: 'We have no need to go abroad to study ethnology'

While issues of race, class and reform come together in the mid-nineteenth century generally, they can be understood as coalescing at the 1851 Great Exhibition where imperial discourses, a new concern for national aggregation, and the new techniques and taste for visuality, mass consumption and mass travel were showcased and experienced to such magnitude for the first time. Contemporary accounts of the Great Exhibition also provided ample publicity and new audiences for the Exhibition as a global event. The new technologies of transnational mobility that were enabling the project of colonialism to spread faster and further also facilitated a greater transfer and exchange of information, so that the stuff of the daily newspapers – the stories, editorials, letters, graphic illustrations and caricatures – were finding an enlarged audience; as were the travel accounts, memoirs and guides that proliferated at this time to accompany the also expanding fashion of private travel.[5] However, while these textual and illustrated images are useful on the one hand for representing the level of general interest in the events and activities of the Great Exhibition, they also demonstrate the way in which fabricated images of otherness come to be accepted as having a factual basis. This process occurs through repetition, so that over time the short-hand characteristics used in caricature become recognized, normalized, and therefore incorporated into established power relations. This process frames exaggerated stereotypes of otherness and existing prejudices to reiterate and justify the application of Western systems of order and civilization on unruly subjects. For example, John Leech's series of cartoons and sketches, *Memorials of the Great Exhibition – 1851*, published in *Punch*, include depictions of both foreign and local visitors to the Exhibition that both reflected and contributed to the creation of otherness, in terms not only of race and class, but also of gender. Such examples also show that the titles or captions that accompany these illustrations (as well as photographic and other pictorial souvenirs) further contribute to the naturalization of difference. Meg Armstrong explains that these accompanying texts 'establish in memory the general characteristics of each class of human being and … establish preferences among exotic peoples on the basis of custom, aesthetics, and physical traits observed at the fair'.[6]

Integral to the emerging and interconnected modern economies of exoticism and commodification was the preference for visuality. This was apparent in the Crystal Palace's glass architecture and resonated throughout all aspects of the Exhibition. Visitors were encouraged to observe each other as if the people

5 Examples include the chronicles penned by Henry Mayhew, Charles Dickens and others (often first published in newspapers and other periodicals); the graphic illustrations and caricatures offered by cartoonists including George Cruikshank, Thomas Onwhyn, John Leech and other contributors to periodicals including *Punch* as well as to books; the witticisms of Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray and others; and the observations and analysis recorded by a multitude of travel diaries and memoirs.

6 Armstrong, p. 216.

were part of the spectacle for consumption, and this is reflected in the many accounts of this and later exhibitions that describe the crowds as much as they do the objects on display. In an episode in *London Labour and the London Poor*, Mayhew tells of a street seller who, upon being stopped from selling his illustrated postcards of the Crystal Palace, entered the Exhibition with the goal of watching the crowds.[7] Mayhew's observations may themselves be indicative of this taste for the visual and the everyday,[8] and *London Labour and the London Poor* is often described as the first interview-based ethnographic study of the poor (indeed, John Marriott contends that Mayhew did more than any other to 'discover the poor'[9]). Mayhew himself described his actions as those of a 'traveller in the undiscovered country of the poor ... of whom the public had less knowledge than of the most distant tribes of the earth'.[10]

Also commenting on the rapidly increasing taste for local class-based exoticism, an article entitled 'Passing Faces' in Dickens' *Household Words* in 1855 makes the increasingly typical comment that: 'We have no need to go abroad to study ethnology' ... 'A walk through the streets of London will show us specimens of every human variety known' ... 'Life, and all its boundless power of joy and suffering – this is the great picture book to be read in London streets'.[11] This text and others like it presented an image of London as a colonial hub that attracted visitors from all corners of the globe. This approach reflected the framework put in place by the Exhibition's commissioners, including Henry Cole, who 'found in the variety of visitors to the Great Exhibition a sign of the "cosmopolitan ... character" of the English nation itself'.[12]

7 Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor: The condition and earnings of those that will work, cannot work, and will not work* (London: C. Griffin & Co., 1861), vol. 1, p. 266.

8 The *flâneur* is evident in the work of Mayhew, as well as in the writings of Dickens (notably, *Sketches by Boz*) and other contemporaries. See, for example, Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. H. Zohn (London: Verso, 1997). Arthur Munby, for example, visiting the International Exhibition of 1862, 'constructed his own exhibits. He watched the elegant gentlefolk who thought that they were viewers rather than viewed, enjoying the contrast between them and the [machinery] operatives. He even lingered at the end of the day to watch the employees lining up to be paid – another unauthorized exhibit.' Barry Reay, *Watching Hannah: Sexuality, Horror and Bodily De-formation in Victorian England* (London: Reaktion, 2002), p. 22.

9 John Marriott, *The Other Empire: Metropolis, India and Progress in the Colonial Imagination* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 114. See Christopher Herbert, *Culture and Anomie: Ethnographic Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 204–52.

10 Marriott, *The Other Empire*, p. 114.

11 [Eliza Lynn], 'Passing Faces', *Household Words*, 14 April 1855.

12 Henry Cole, 'Lecture XX. 2nd series. December 1, 1852. On the International Results of the Exhibition of 1851', in *Fifty Years of Public Work of Sir Henry Cole, KCB, accounted for in his deeds, speeches and writings* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1884), vol. 2, pp. 233–4, cited in Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian,*

The language of cultural awareness and diversity was appropriated further still by a rush of popular titles including Watts Phillips's *The Wild Tribes of London* (1855). This fascination with cultural difference contributed to the growing taste for exoticism that also coincided with and expanded on the public's growing fascination with the metaphors, the narratives, and the possibilities for travel to unknown places that was made possible by companies (like Cook's Tours) that specialized in affordable travel for the newly mobile and leisure-conscious middle classes. The interest in experiencing otherness – to become a 'cosmopolitan' – can be seen as early as 1821, when, in his *Life in London*, Pierce Egan contended that London is a 'complete cyclopaedia ... every square in the metropolis is a sort of map well worthy of exploring'.[13] Over time this taste for observation and spectacle extended beyond the Exhibition spaces so that towards the end of the nineteenth century the city of London had itself been thoroughly reconceptualized in terms borrowed from the imperial tropes popularized in the first instance by the Great Exhibition and analyzed in great detail by international visitors. It was from this time and in relation to this event that we can identify the emerging racialization of class discourses within Britain. Indeed, the depiction of domestic difference according to racialized tropes can be seen as developing in close association with the imperial project of international exhibitions and world's fairs globally throughout the following century.

Suspension of Disbelief and the Production of Otherness

The Exhibition offered situations whereby the societies and individuals represented were thoroughly contained at the same time as they were available (for voyeurism or purchase). As Jeffrey Auerbach contends, 'Whatever doubts British men and women may have had about the composition of their own society, they had few such doubts about what differentiated them not only from their closest neighbours, but from the exotic, foreign "other"'.[14] India, for

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and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), p. 208; Louise Purbrick, 'Introduction', in *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 8. See also Elizabeth Bonython and Anthony Burton, *The Great Exhibitor: The Life and Work of Henry Cole* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum Publications, 2003); Louise Purbrick, 'The South Kensington Museum: The Building of the House of Henry Cole', in Marcia Pointon (ed.), *Art Apart: Art Institutions and Ideology across England and North America* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994).

13 Pierce Egan (with Robert and George Cruikshank), *Life in London: or, The day and night scenes of Jerry Hawthorne, esq., and his elegant friend Corinthia Tom, accompanied by Bob Logic, the Oxonian, in their rambles and sprees through the metropolis* (London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1821), cited in Marriott, *The Other Empire*, p. 103. See also John Marriott (ed.), *Unknown London. Early Modernist Visions of the Metropolis, 1815–1845*, 6 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000).

14 Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 3.

example – as the 'jewel' most desired by the British Crown – was constructed in the exhibitions (especially in 1851 and at the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition) as a museum or archive with 'crafts consigned to the past and their merits unattainable by modern, Western habits of production'.[15] Although this spectacle promoted a sense of interpersonal and geographical proximity on one hand, it also succeeded in preserving a strong sense of cultural distinction between nations. This disjuncture meant that the decontextualized status of fetishized objects was preserved, no matter how popular they were. In fact, the more omnipresent and fashionable these commodities were to become, the more 'Oriental' and mythical they also became. For example, one visitor to the 1851 Exhibition described cashmere shawls from India as 'designed for eternity in the unchanging past, copied from patterns which are the heirloom of a caste, and woven by fatalists'.[16]

Thus constituting a form of virtual tourism, the displays and depictions of foreign products and technologies combined with visitors and participants from far-flung places, together with the human scale panoramas offered by the exhibitions of the mid- to late nineteenth century, to produce a collective taste for believing in the unfamiliar and unlikely (*as* unfamiliar and unlikely). Not only did this allow for 'the parochialism of Londoners, and their reliance on vicarious rather than actual travel',[17] it developed the taste for actual mobility promoted since 1841 by British entrepreneur Thomas Cook. Already popular among the upper classes, the commodity of tourism – whether physical or imagined – combined the increased mobility and technological advances of the new era with Cook's marketing strategies to make it appear an affordable and even democratic pastime.[18] Cook's promotions were a feature of the 1851 Great Exhibition, and particularly notable were the tours to visit not the exhibits of the East, but the 'East itself'.[19]

In the comic novel *1851; or, the Adventures of Mr. and Mrs. Sandboys and Family who came to London to 'Enjoy Themselves' and to see the Great Exhibition*, written in collaboration with the illustrator George Cruikshank, and originally published in eight monthly parts between February and October 1851, Henry Mayhew noted that 'London, for some time previous to the opening of the Great Exhibition, had been a curious sight even to Londoners':

15 Lara Kriegel, 'Narrating the Subcontinent in 1851: India at the Crystal Palace', in Purbrick (ed.), p. 161.

16 Ibid.

17 Carol A. Breckenridge, 'The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World's Fairs', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31/2 (1989), pp. 195–216, at p. 197.

18 Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 59–61; Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken, 1989), p. 11; Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998).

19 Timothy Mitchell, 'The World as Exhibition', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31/2,(1989), pp. 217–36, at p. 227.

> … New amusements were daily springing into existence, or old ones being revived. The Chinese Collection had returned to the Metropolis …; Mr Catlin had re-opened his Indian exhibition; Mr Wyld had bought up the interior of Leicester Square, with the view of cramming into it – 'yea, the great globe itself!' The geographical panoramas had rapidly increased, no less than three Jerusalems having been hatched, as it were, by steam – like eggs, by the patent incubator – within the last three weeks. 'Australia' and 'New Zealand,' like floating islands, had shifted their quarters from Miss Linwood's Gallery to the Strand, while the cost of immigrating thither for half-an-hour was reduced from sixpence for each country, to 'three-pence all the way;' while those who felt indisposed for so long a journey, could make the 'Grand Tour of Europe' for one shilling, or take the 'Overland Route to India' for the same price, or be set down by the Waterloo omnibus at the entrance to the 'Dardanelles,' and see all over 'Constantinople' for less than a trip to Gravesend.[20]

Or, as it was stated in Dickens' *Household Words*, 'Now … we can visit any portion of the globe by taking a cab or an omnibus to Leicester Square'.[21] Within the Crystal Palace itself, Mayhew wrote, 'You might wander where you pleased – to "France" – and see the exquisite tapestry; you might step across to "Austria" – and wonder at the carving of the furniture'.[22] Later, of the soon to be opened exhibits at the relocated Crystal Palace, it was noted in *Household Words* that 'Greece and Athens have come to Sydenham by railway'. Not only was it possible to 'wander where you pleased' geographically, but also back in time through a survey, albeit proscribed, of the history of art:

> Rub your eyes. Dear me! Dear me! This is not Egypt; but merely a court of the Fairy Palace, representing the progress of Egyptian art … So from Egypt into Nineveh, from Nineveh into Greece, from Greece into Rome, from Rome to the Renaissance, from the Renaissance to the Louis Quatorze. We wander from court to court, each firmly stamping in our mind's eye the use and progress, and culmination and decadence of every school, losing ourselves in the mazes of antiquity, and finding ourselves in the Crystal Palace again.[23]

At the Crystal Palace, and at the exhibitions which followed, a belief in the effects of virtual travel was compounded by the visitor's curiosity which was piqued by aesthetics and otherness, so that a group of native artisans displayed in the Indian Palace at the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition was celebrated in *The Indian Mirror* as 'a curiously pretty spectacle of oriental

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20 Henry Mayhew, *1851; or, the Adventures of Mr. and Mrs. Sandboys and Family who came to London to 'Enjoy Themselves' and to See the Great Exhibition* (London: D. Bogue, 1851), pp. 132–3. See Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 455–69.

21 *Household Words*, 16 August 1851, p. 492. See also Sabine Clemm, '"Amidst the heterogeneous masses": Charles Dickens's *Household Words* and the Great Exhibition of 1851', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 27/3 (2005), pp. 207–30.

22 Mayhew, *1851*, p. 137.

23 'Fairyland in 'Fifty-four', *Household Words*, 3 December 1853, p. 315.

life'.[24] Sentiments of belief were, indeed, widely expressed in relation to the exhibitions' representation of aesthetic and industrial treasures, which were organized for contemplation and awe and for the 'documentation' of ethnic otherness depicted for the purposes of 'scientific' observation and instructional purposes. Offering a conceptual link between the premodern (princely) museums and the cabinets of curiosities of the sixteenth century with the systematic and logic-driven approach to museum-making, the suspension of disbelief contributed to the exhibitions' successful institutionalization of entertainment (and its association with education). Indeed, this was commented on by William Whewell in his lecture 'The Results of the Exhibition', delivered after the Exhibition had closed, in which he compared the Exhibition to such a cabinet, while also congratulating the organizers for having provided a 'scientific moral' in the way they had classified and ordered the objects on display.[25] Moreover, as Peter Hoffenberg notes with regard to later colonial exhibitions and displays, '[t]he historicist appropriation of the mythical Eastern bazaar was part of that seemingly common nineteenth-century manoeuvre by which the new was made popular by appealing to the old, even if the latter was a product of the imagination'.[26]

This suspension of disbelief led to a taste for otherness, so that the images of otherness became increasingly familiar due to mass production and popularity, thus constituting a recognized – and paradoxically 'authentic' – code of otherness. Creating stereotypical and reductive scenarios of colonial cultures, new technologies of representation such as panoramas, and the new focus on looking, facilitated by displaying objects in glass display cases shown to effect by electric light, was directed to show the 'great diversity' of Her Majesty's subjects.[27] However, in constructing simulated displays of different cultures, as easily apprehendable and consumable syntagms of symbolic otherness, the stereotype came to acquire an authenticity on the basis that it is subject to the ongoing reproduction repetition enabled by new technologies, new mobilities, and the fictions peddled by new symbolic exchanges.

A Palatable Reformism: The Exhibition as 'sublime musayum'

The relationship between imperialism, trade, education and citizenship (and consumption) aimed to demonstrate to audiences that culture was constructed – a skill to be learned and admired. Programmes dedicated to the entwined pleasures of entertainment and education also demonstrated that a national citizenry could be constituted and protected according to the acculturation and aggregation of all classes. While reformism was one of the day's most

24 Saloni Mathur, 'Living Ethnological Exhibits: The Case of 1886', *Cultural Anthropology*, 15/4 (2000), pp. 492–524, at p. 498.

25 Hoffenberg, p. 204.

26 Ibid., p. 230.

27 Frank Cundall, *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1886), p. 5, cited in Mathur, p. 506.

popular projects,[28] it was on this basis that Thackeray's Mr Malony parodies the Exhibition when he describes his experience of visiting the 'sublime musayum' of London's Great Exhibition of 1851:

> Amazed I pass
> From glass to glass,
> Deloighted I survey 'em;
> Fresh wondthers grows
> Before me nose
> In this sublime Musayum.
>
> Look, here's a fan
> From far Japan,
> A sabre from Damasco;
> There's shawls ye get
> From far Thibet,
> And cotton prints from Glasgow.[29]

And yet, almost concurrent with this, Thomas Greenwood suggested that public museums at this time were themselves becoming increasingly exhibition-like. In his 1888 survey, *Museums and Art Galleries*, Greenwood accounted for the rapid development of museum culture that had occurred throughout England in the mid-nineteenth century. He believed the increasing popularity of museums resulted from cooperation between civic effort and philanthropy, and argued that these new exhibitionary environments – many of which expanded further upon the form and function of the international exhibitions, and sought to corroborate with rather than compete against them – inspired a 'craving' for knowledge in the working classes and encouraged 'the duties and privileges of citizenship' and pride in the nation.[30] Successfully combining the symbols and practices of good citizenship with practices of consumption, new technologies and the techniques of mass production impacted on local economies as well as transnational mobility. New modes of production and commodification were made possible, and by converting vast numbers of farm labourers principally to factory work, a new and more economically secure class of consumers emerged. Often having only recently migrated to the cities and industrial areas from agrarian communities, this new (sub-) class offered an exemplary audience for programmes of reform and betterment. It was also believed that these groups must be educated in order to achieve the unified, singular and successful image of national cooperation and identity that was

28 Notable examples include Henry Cole, Dickens, Mayhew, Arnold Thackeray, and later Matthew Arnold, Thomas Huxley and others.

29 William Makepeace Thackeray, 'Mr Malony's Account of the Crystal Palace', *Punch*, 20 (26 August 1851), p. 171.

30 Thomas Greenwood, *Museums and Art Galleries* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1888), cited in Andrew McClellan, 'A Brief History of the Art Museum Public', in *idem* (ed.), *Art and its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), p. 11.

valued as a way to avoid the class revolt still occurring in parts of France and across Europe. These values are reflected by Matthew Arnold, writing in 1869, who argued that educational institutions should take the place of organized religion for the newly urbanized society.[31] Similarly, John Ruskin 'advocated the role of museums in educating and controlling "the labouring multitude" by offering an "example of perfect order and perfect elegance"'.[32] In addition to this trend for rational recreations, new technologies and the widespread zeal for reformism also enhanced the enlargement of possibilities for visualization (cinema, street lighting, new vistas offered by railway travel), and the construction of unified symbols of nationality that were defined in opposition to highly visible stereotypes of cultural and racial otherness. The principle of education by pleasure gained particular popularity at this time.[33] It is in this spirit that the *Illustrated London News* published the following account of the Great Exhibition:

> Hither to all classes seem to have determined upon studying in it its manifold aspects of usefulness, and to have ceased to regard it as a mere show, got up for their amusement. They have taken this view not simply because the sovereign was among the first to set the admirable example, and because the wealthy and titled of the land simultaneously followed it, but because they rightly appreciated its character and intention. Of course, amid such large masses of people, there must be many thousands disqualified by taste and temperament from taking the full advantage of the unrivalled opportunity afforded them, and who seek for nothing but amusement amid the beauties of art and the wonders of mechanism; but taking the visitors as a body, and without distinction of class or price, it is quite evident that the majority turn their inspection to practical and educational account. Nothing can be more satisfactory than this.[34]

In 1850, at Prince Albert's suggestion, a Central Working Classes Committee (CWCC) had been established to promote the interests of the working classes at the Exhibition. Henry Cole was secretary to the committee that included Samuel Wilberforce, Charles Dickens, Arnold Thackeray, Dr Southward Smith, Robert Chambers, John Forster (editor of the *Daily News*), several clergymen (including Rev. Sidney Godolphin Osborne, or 'S.G.O.', the controversial letter-writer to *The Times*), four Members of Parliament, and three former Chartists.

31 Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy and other writings*, ed. Samuel Lipton (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1994).

32 McClellan, 'A Brief History of the Art Museum Public', p. 8. See also Catherine Morley, *John Ruskin: Late Work, 1870–1890. The Museum and Guild of St. George: An Educational Experiment* (New York: Garland, 1984).

33 Robert Rydell, 'The Literature of International Expositions', in *The Books of the Fairs: Materials about World's Fairs, 1834–1916, in the Smithsonian Institution Libraries* (Chicago and London: American Library Association, 1992); Annie E. Coombes, 'Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities', in Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (eds), *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

34 *Illustrated London News*, 31 May 1851, p. 476.

However, when the Royal Commission refused to sanction the work of the committee, largely on account of its radical composition, the CWCC was forced to dissolve itself after little more than a month in existence. Dickens, who proposed the dissolution, 'argued that without official recognition, the CWCC would be unable either to render efficiently the services it sought to perform or to command the confidence of the working classes'.[35]

Equality, 'Shilling Days', Cultural Capital, and the Manufacture of Nation

According to their early modes of organization and through their articulation of the premises and trends of cultural modernity and social (capitalist) modernization, the international exhibitions of the nineteenth century functioned as rigorous ideological institutions. Framed according to a clearly stated moral agenda, their propensity to function as a visible actor within commodity culture made them valuable tools for appropriation by the state. Andrew McClellan explains that during the Victorian era and beyond, 'the museum [and exhibition] public was commonly represented as an idealised projection of what liberal politicians and social critics hoped it would become'.[36] In accord with this and the reformist spirit of the day, they preached education to the working classes and attempted to facilitate learning by offering entry to the Great Exhibition for a shilling on certain days (although the discount rates were not offered on Saturday afternoons, which was the most popular time for bourgeois visitors but possibly the only time many workers could attend).[37] Motivated by social unification, these measures aimed to educate 'the layman who enjoyed art'. However, they also aimed to produce a self-aware visitor who would 'behave as a competent consumer who uses art and relates aesthetic experiences to his own life problems'.[38] 'The First Shilling Day at the Exhibition' was described in the *Morning Chronicle*, and reprinted in the *Illustrated London Times* as follows:

> ... The first glance revealed the change from the last day of last week. The glitter, the elegance, the *luxe* was gone. ...
>
> ... it was worthwhile to study the people attentively. They were far less well-dressed – far less elegant than the previous crowds; but it was only here and there that a man or woman palpably belonged to the working classes. Sunday clothes had been at all events donned ...
>
> ... we passed the latter part of the day in doing little else than studying the crowds by whom we were surrounded. ...[39]

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35 Auerbach, p. 130.

36 McClellan, 'A Brief History of the Art Museum Public', p. 7.

37 'The Shilling Days at the Crystal Palace', *Punch*, 20 (1851), p. 240.

38 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An inquiry into a category of Bourgeois society*, trans. Thomas Burger in association with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 12.

39 *Illustrated London News*, 31 May 1851, p. 501.

Another commentator described the difference between the five shilling days and the one shilling days as '[o]n one day, society – on the other, the world'.[40]

Rather than replacing the predilection for distinction and differentiation that was emerging as a component of capitalism, mass production and the new middle class worked to increase the symbolic power of the commodity (primarily due to the aspirational sensibility associated with the condition of being middle class). Instead of resulting in the eradication of class difference, the new middle class was even more eager for the self-improvement and education that would add further value to the new leisure-time activity of conspicuous consumption: they desired the tools that would enable differentiation from the lower working classes. The intention to maintain clear markers of class differentiation is evident in the *Illustrated London News* story quoted above, which takes care to clarify issues of class: 'We have said that there seemed to be comparatively few artisans present. The middle classes, and those between the middle class and the working classes tradesfolk, and the great nondescript order of people who are seen on all public occasions in England, who are difficult to place socially, but who never miss a Derby, who throng the back benches of the courts of law, who always turn up at a boat-match or a house on fire' continued to make up the majority of attendees.[41] Not only did the acquisition of cultural capital provide enhanced personal status, the ability to participate with agency (gained by the ability to make purchases) gave people the opportunity to feel liberated momentarily from their everyday lives. Discussing a trade fair held in Paris in 1798 as a forerunner of the *expositions universelles*, Walter Benjamin described such events as having proceeded 'from the wish to entertain the working classes ... becom[ing] for them a symbol of emancipation'.[42]

In promoting a class-based nationalism and imperialist ideology, claims were made that the exhibitions offered a democratic space for the interaction of all.[43] Arnold idealistically identified culture and art as a means of unification rather than the 'engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it', as in the past.[44] This egalitarian vision was also represented by French and American exhibitions – which promoted the liberty afforded by republicanism and the equality of all men in the post-revolutionary world. Similarly promising social progress for the masses, the promotion of exhibition fervour in England leading up to the opening of the Great Exhibition may have been linked to the desire to distract public attention from urgent political issues, including the political significance

40 *Illustrated London News*, 19 July 1851, pp. 100–102.

41 *Illustrated London News*, 31 May 1851, p. 501.

42 Walter Benjamin, 'Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century', in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. P. Demetz, trans. E. Jephcott and K. Shorter (London: New Left, 1978), p. 152.

43 Arnold, pp. 106–8. See also Bonython and Burton.

44 Arnold, pp. 29–30.

of the Chartist demonstration of 10 April 1848 (which also took place in Hyde Park), and the extent of its suppression by the state.[45] Indeed, in his novel *1851* (which, while a work of fiction, utilizes aspects of journalism), Mayhew argued that the Great Exhibition could not fail to fill working men with pride and 'inspire them with a sense of their position in the State, and to increase their self respect in the same ratio as it must tend to increase the respect of all others for their vocation'.[46] Perhaps this concern for social stability explained the anxiety expressed in the *Illustrated London News* that 'the influx' of the working classes to the Crystal Palace on the first shilling day was 'far less than expected'.[47] Combined with an anxiety that was related to revolutionary activities occurring in Europe, this image of equality also marks a shift away from the direct management of class confrontation by means of force (that had occurred in the past) towards the governmental implementation of culture as a tool used for the purposes of order (and control by means of civilization). However, while the exhibitions were viewed increasingly as vehicles for integrating and ordering the 'masses' peaceably through large-scale entertainment, it is also notable that an extra policeman stood guard at the much-coveted 'Koh-i-Noor' diamond on the Shilling Days. Conversely, the *Illustrated London News* also registered expressions of surprise that shilling day visitors were so well behaved.[48] Similarly, in *1851*, Mayhew recounted that:

> For many days before the 'shilling people' were admitted to the building, the great topic of conversation was the probable behaviour of the people. Would they come sober? will they destroy the things? will they want to cut their initials, or scratch their names on the panes of the glass lighthouse? But they have surpassed in decorum the hopes of their well-wishers. The fact is, the Great Exhibition is to them more of a school than a show ... If we really desire the improvement of our social state, (and surely we are far from perfection yet,) we must address ourselves to the elevation of the people; and it is because the Great Exhibition is fitted to become a special instrument towards this end, that it forms one of the most remarkable and hopeful characteristics of our time.[49]

At the end of June 1851, it was reported in the *Illustrated London News* that '... the turn of those who are too poor to pay for such an amusement has come also' and that 'the doors of the Crystal Palace have been opened to many thousands of industrious, grateful, well-behaved, and admiring people, without cost to themselves' – the cost of admission instead being met by

45 See Purbrick's introduction to *The Great Exhibition of 1851* (pp. 4–5) for a discussion of the differences between using 1848 and 1851 as signposts in British history. Purbrick cites John Saville, who, in his book *1848*, 'argues that 1851 contributed a state of amnesia about the political significance of Chartism and the extent of its state suppression.' She suggests that histories that use 1851 to 'summarise the mid-nineteenth century cannot help but continue to diminish the significance of 1848'.

46 Mayhew, *1851*, p. 132.

47 *Illustrated London News*, 31 May 1851, p. 501.

48 Ibid.

49 Mayhew, *1851*, pp. 161–2.

philanthropic individuals. 'Clergymen and landed proprietors in remote rural districts have organised plans by which whole troops of agricultural labourers, with their wives and children, have been enabled to visit London', while some domestic servants and 'workers and employees were given holidays to visit and in numerous instances transport and admission paid'.[50] There were also publicized visits by children from the London Orphan Asylum (113 girls and 262 boys), and assisted emigrants on the eve of departure to one or other of the colonies.[51] According to an article published in the *Illustrated Exhibitor*, 'It is not a small excitement ... which so stirs the heart of private benevolence throughout the kingdom that even our charity schools, and the inmates of our workhouses, are largely represented at this Jubilee of Industry.'[52]

The promise of a liberal hegemonic egalitarianism was important for English exhibitions that took place prior to the Education Act of 1870, for the additional reason that it was not until then that locally controlled elementary schools were established through new legislation. Summarizing the events of May 1851 in *Household Words*, Dickens juxtaposes the opening of the Great Exhibition with 'one of the few [subjects] which even above the dust and din from Hyde Park has been able to make itself visible and audible in the House of Commons' – that is, William Johnson Fox's renewed attempt, and failure, 'to obtain the consent of that house to a plan for promoting the education of the people by the establishment of free schools for secular instruction'.[53] Moreover, in 1851, working men in England had yet to be awarded the vote. In addition to advocating the education of the working classes, it is also significant that Arnold saw the spread of culture as a way to redress the 'shallow materialism of the expanding middle classes'.[54] Indicating a possible paradox in his own argument, while Arnold perceived the public functions for culture as rigorously stabilizing, he also saw in it the potential for subversion, the disruption of conservative middle-class comfortability and materialism; a stance that Robert Young has described as anti-reifying and anti-ideological.[55] Furthermore, the new images of clearly framed 'cultural' products – be they anthropological or artistic – offered British audiences precisely what, according to Arnold, they had previously lacked. While Young asserts that Arnold equivocates culture with nationalism and national identity at a fundamental level, he also notes that the connection between culture and 'Englishness is not at all obvious – for the whole argument of *Culture and Anarchy* is that culture in England is lacking. Culture is characteristically defined for Arnold in strictly exotic terms'.[56]

50 *Illustrated London News*, 28 June 1851, pp. 606–7.

51 *Illustrated London News*, 3 May 1851, pp. 378–9 and 21 June 1851, p. 584.

52 *Illustrated Exhibitor*, 1 November 1851, p. 394.

53 'The Household Narrative of Current Events', supplement to *Household Words*, 27 April to 28 May 1851, p. 97.

54 McClellan, 'A Brief History of the Art Museum Public', p. 12.

55 Robert. J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 57, 58, 82–9.

56 Ibid., p. 57.

Yet, this differentiation of otherness may be more domestic in focus than Young suggests, and might be directed towards consolidating the symbolic function of 'nation', even if it was at the expense of providing the English with a culture. Rather than aiming to endear a spirit of goodwill among nations – which Paul Greenhalgh asserts that it did not[57] – and in accord with Arnold's aims to educate the English, the primary intent may have been to produce a sense of national unity among members of all classes.

Despite such sentiments, not all people (or rather the activities that defined them) were welcomed within the Crystal Palace. Yet the effect of the Exhibition extended beyond its walls to those excluded, like the seller of illustrated postcards described by Mayhew, from the building and its grounds. In *London Labour and the London Poor*, Mayhew locates the subjects of his study *outside* the Exhibition but *within* its sphere of influence. Likewise in the fictionalized account, *1851*, he describes 'along the edge of the footpath' leading to the Crystal Palace, 'hawkers, shouting out the attractions of their wares – some had trays filled with bright silvery-looking medals of the Exhibition – others, pictures of it printed in gold on "gelatine cards"'.[58] 'Nor,' Mayhew states, when describing the morning of the Exhibition's opening in *1851*, 'were the beggars absent from the scene, for in every direction along which the great mass of people came pouring, there were the blind and the crippled, reaping their holiday harvest'.[59] Similarly, having described for an audience of children the wonders and wealth of London, the writer of *The World's Fair: or Children's Prize Book of the Great Exhibition of 1851* cautions the reader: 'However, you must not think, from all this, there are no poor people in London; for, unfortunately, there are thousands'.[60] While Mayhew describes the interior of the Crystal Palace and its exhibits (generally as the products of labour rather than as commodities) for the audience of *1851*, it is telling that his heroes, despite their best intentions, never reach the Exhibition itself, being constantly hampered in their efforts by the Exhibition's effect on London – from the large numbers of other 'sight-seers of the world' and the unavailability of both transport and accommodation to the deceptions of unscrupulous street sellers, foreigners and locals alike. At the end of August 1851, four months after the Exhibition had opened, a decline in attendance was noted, due – it was speculated – to the harvests, leading to a call for the introduction of six-pence days for 'those engaged in that silent under-current of industry, whose labours are in the lowly and dark stations of society, and whose heads are only lifted

57 Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions, and World's Fairs, 1851–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 18.

58 Mayhew, *1851*, p. 133.

59 Ibid., p. 128.

60 *The World's Fair: or Children's Prize Book of the Great Exhibition of 1851, describing the beautiful inventions and manufactures exhibited therein, with pretty stories about the people who have made and sent them and how they live when at home* (London: Thomas Dean & Son, [1851]), p. 80.

up at such great holidays as Easter and Whitsuntide. At other times all is a blank. Now these comprise an immense portion of the population of this metropolis, to whom a shilling is a serious object'.[61]

While much has been made of working-class interest in the Great Exhibition, and for exhibitions generally, as expressed in radical periodicals such as *Reynold's Newspaper* or the Chartist *Northern Star*, there were those who were critical of the undertaking from the start. Edward Reynolds, for example (writing as 'Gracchus' in *Reynold's Newspaper*), 'berated the Exhibition as a "gigantic folly" designed to distract people from the real political issues of the day'. In a later piece, he 'argued that the Great Exhibition would not have been possible without the working class but that the event had in effect been largely appropriated by the aristocracy and the capitalist class'. A letter published in the *Northern Star* after the Exhibition had finished argued that the labouring classes had been poorly represented, with only about one million of the calculated six million visitors being 'from the "artisan and dangerous orders" and that this relatively modest number proved "as much the inability as the unwillingness of the many to visit it, notwithstanding the charge was but a shilling"'.[62]

On 10 May 1851, at a meeting of the Metropolitan Sanitary Association, the Earl of Carlisle 'alluded to the considerations naturally suggested by the contemplation of the Great Exhibition. They had (he said) close to where they sat, that remarkable building which was in itself a shrine of labour; but while they gazed on the long array of its radiant offerings, or the results of its harmonious combinations, let them not refrain from tracing them back in thought to the crowded workshops, to the damp cellars, and to the stifling garrets in which so much of that collected mass of ingenuity and splendour had been elaborated.'[63] Indeed, despite the widespread claim that the Exhibition celebrated the 'Dignity of Labour',[64] and while the modern machines of manufacture were displayed alongside their products, the emphasis of display remained on consumption rather than production. As Lara Kriegel has observed, '[a]lthough the Exhibition billed itself as a celebration of industry, its classificatory system rendered labourers themselves virtually invisible. The division of objects into Playfair's categories of Raw Materials, Machinery, Manufactures and Fine Arts offered no self-evident place for displaying labour'.[65] One exception to this practice could be found in the collection of miniature 'Ethnographic Models' of Indian labourers displayed

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61 *Illustrated London News*, 30 August 1851, p. 270.

62 Peter Gurney, 'An Appropriated Space: The Great Exhibition, the Crystal Palace and the Working Class', in Purbrick (ed.), pp. 118–22. Gurney cites *Reynold's Newspaper*, 9 March 1851, p. 7 and 24 August 1851, p. 7; and *Northern Star*, 18 October 1851, p. 1.

63 'The Household Narrative of Current Events', supplement to *Household Words*, 27 April to 28 May 1851, p. 115.

64 Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, delivered his address 'On the Dignity of Labour' at the first meeting of the Westminster local committee in 1850, and other promoters and commentators quickly took up the phrase (Auerbach, pp. 129–30).

65 Kriegel, p. 164.

in the Indian Court that pre-dated the living ethnographic villages of colonized peoples that featured at later exhibitions. In offering a contrast to the celebration of disciplined and mechanical English labour (while at the same time harking back to a seemingly less complex, pre-industrial past), the collection of more than 150 models 'provided a spiritual and material foil to Britain's industrial modernity'.[66]

City as Spectacle: New Economies of Looking

In the decades following the Great Exhibition, and particularly in the 1880s, the full impact of the discourses of otherness and racialization took hold both in relation to domestic British tastes and expanding practices of international trade, travel and migration. Just as the currency of national symbolism was recognized by the British Empire, nationalism was asserted by other countries and the potential of rhetoric to produce a national symbolism or imaginary can be recognized in the accounts of travellers from India and other colonial centres such as Egypt to international exhibitions held in Britain and France.[67] In these instances, such language encouraged the consolidation of singular cohesive forms of symbolism for non-English visitors to the exhibitions. At a time when India, for example, 'was considered by most if not all Britons to be a set of centripetal communities and factions incapable of ever consolidating into a national whole (and hence unworthy of the gift of self-government)', Antoinette Burton explains that the '"Indian" eye offered a persuasive challenge' by suggesting that the city could be objectified by a 'centrifugal Indian "national" gaze'.[68] While national aggregation was due in part to the expanding English middle class, the accounts of travellers from India and elsewhere suggest that it may have been connected more directly to the simultaneous imperial expansion of the nation state, and the way that racial and cultural difference was positioned as other to the English and European visitors to the exhibitions and metropolitan centres. Expanding upon Young's claim that the exhibitions may have provided English audiences with culture as something previously lacking in their self- and national imaginary, we can also note that in the Great Exhibition 'empire' was represented as host. Comparisons were made between the batches of products presented by foreign nations, however, as host of the Exhibition Britain encompassed all these nations on show (even if they were not part of the empire) and was to be congratulated for the good taste associated with 'collecting' together the arts and industry of the world.[69]

66 Ibid., pp. 164–5.

67 Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988).

68 Antoinette Burton, 'Making a Spectacle of Empire: Indian Travellers in Fin-de-Siècle London', *History Workshop Journal*, 42 (1996), pp. 127–46, at p. 143.

69 Victoria and Albert Museum, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Commemorative Album* (London: HMSO, 1950).

The taste for new commodities and the economies of looking, and the voyeurism attending these, went both ways. As the travelogues published by Indian writers in the latter half of the nineteenth century show, the English also became subject to the travellers' gaze. Consistent with the broader desire for status and personal acumen based on taste and distinction, their writings demonstrate class as a continuing and equally important factor in the constitution of authority in relation to the observing eye/I whatever the nationality of the observer. For example, similar hierarchies were self-consciously reproduced by the Indian traveller-authors who were themselves often wealthy and cosmopolitan in outlook. As is pointed out in the introduction to the 1889 travelogue of T. N. Mukharji, an English-educated, upper-class Bengali Brahmin, entitled *A Visit to Europe*, through such publications 'the European will learn to see himself as others see him'.[70]

Contending that the Indian travellers to London embodied the agency associated with the 'properly bourgeois, gentlemanly subject', Burton argues that it was the advantage of class that allowed them to enact self-governance in relation to the new metropolis.[71] London not only provided a host to the exhibitions and their visitors, but it offered a forum for the expansion of programmes of reform and spectacle beyond the exhibitions' boundaries. The whole city was thus bound up in mythical discourse that contributed fundamentally to the way that visitors were able to suspend their disbelief – which may have contributed to statements by Indian visitors about how authentic certain aspects of the 1886 Exhibition were.[72] Building on the earlier work by Dickens and Mayhew, the city came to exist as a site of spectacle and consumption, and offered visitors the means to acquire personal status and cultural capital.

Although the colonial exhibitions promoted dominant discourses through which the idea and experience of otherness was constituted, the historical subjects of ethnological display, and those travellers from colonial or remote countries who visited the exhibitions, can also be seen as having refused the terms of their representation. Critical of the racism demonstrated by visitors to the 1886 Exhibition, Mukharji comments, 'would they discuss us so freely ... if they knew that we understood their language?'[73] Moreover, the new technologies of modernity, including the mass production of glass panels and the use of gas lighting, facilitated the process of looking anew – indeed, few Indian travellers did not remark on the poverty and relative lack of progress they found in London. Terrible poverty, prostitutes, and normal 'domestic' scenes all were described as spectacles, and one writer noted that 'Old King Gas' was only slowly being replaced by 'the Imperial brilliance of the electric light'.[74]

70 T. N. Mukharji, *A Visit to Europe* (Calcutta: W. Newman, 1889), cited in Burton, p. 143.

71 Burton, p. 141.

72 Mathur, p. 498.

73 Mukharji, p. 101, cited in Mathur, p. 509.

74 T. B. Pandian, *England to an Indian Eye; or, English Pictures from an Indian Camera* (London: E. Stock, 1897), p. 21, cited in Burton, p. 134.

While international visitors were thus able to achieve a degree of agency through participating in an exchange of gazes and the active framing of the city, discourses of race and imperialism maintained a contemporary authority, so that over time they became increasingly used for the attribution and description of class difference. By the 1880s, for example, the East End was increasingly understood by middle- and upper-class Londoners as a different world.[75] Referred to as 'darkest England', its inhabitants were spoken of as a separate 'race'.[76] Saloni Mathur explains that 'London of the 1880s was thus profoundly mapped in imperial terms: whereas the West End symbolised the triumph of empire, the East End was its "foreign, dark, and forbidding" other. In fact, the language of colonial expansion and exploration became the terms in which urban social divisions were conceived'.[77] As Seth Koven argues in his work on slumming, 'the metropolitan slums and distant outposts of empire were linked in the British imperial imagination as places of freedom and danger, missionary altruism and sexual opportunity'.[78] Moreover, according to Marriott, the racialization of the poor, 'which began in mid century and intensified during the 1860s and 1880s was in terms of its chronology, narrative and rhetoric so similar to constructions of colonial others that they can be seen as shared and mutually reinforcing responses to deep anxieties about the future of the imperial race'.[79]

Anxiety over this situation may explain why imperialism continued to trade so consistently in the persistently reproduced symbolic economy of persuasive – if ersatz – images. Elaborating on this, Ann Laura Stoler argues that colonialism 'was not only about the importation of middle-class sensibilities to the colonies, but the *making* of them';[80] a point that we see clearly in relation to the rapidly spreading fashion throughout England and France for Indian fabrics and crafted items. Taken alongside Arnold's provocations that England would benefit from the culture of the non-European, these claims contribute to the argument that colonization (or the display of colonization in the exhibitions) contributed indelibly to the way in which the European bourgeoisie developed. However, as Stoler also explains, this issue of contingency or relationality is itself far from simplistic. Among other urgent questions, she argues that we should ask whether the language of class has been 'itself racialised in such

75 Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Night: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

76 Deborah Epstein Nord, 'The Social Explorer as Anthropologist: Victorian Travellers among the Urban Poor', in William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock (eds), *Visions of the Modern City: Essays in History, Art, and Literature* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

77 Mathur, p. 500.

78 Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 21.

79 Marriott, *The Other Empire*, p. 42.

80 Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's* History of Sexuality *and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 99.

a way that to subscribe to bourgeois respectability entailed dispositions and sentiments coded by race?' And if, she continues, this relationship between the affirmation of bourgeois hegemony and colonial practices was contingent, 'should we assume that the latter was *necessary* to the former's "cultivation" or merely supportive of it?'[81]

Conclusion: Exploring the World within the City within One Day

One consequence associated with the changing spectacles – and publicity forms – of empire (and the correlative stereotypes of otherness) was the presentation of the world as reproducible, consumable, and as fundamentally illustrative. The exhibitions (aided by Cook's Tours' advertising campaigns) consistently claimed that visitors could 'explore the world in a day', and so aimed to contain the world to a single sight/site. Moreover, by bringing the produce of the world (more or less) to a single shared location, visitors could also purvey the realm of empire within a single gaze. In presenting an image of the world as a picture, the aim was to make as real as possible for visitors the experience of travel to the geographically remote places that were represented. Initiating interconnections between reality and representation (where representation appears more believable than the reality offered by the city outside – which then comes in turn to be itself modelled on the images within the exhibitions), the international exhibitions offer an exacting case study for the analysis of Said's *Orientalism*.[82] The edifices produced for the exhibitions – and particularly the Crystal Palace, which offered a panoptical approach to control[83] – portray an architectural model of modern politics in which vision, knowledge and power depend on location and positionality.

In the context of the Great Exhibition, not only did the 'world' appear encapsulated within the city, but it offered and legitimated a diversity of experience and new ways of talking about class that contributed to the reconfiguration of London and its social spaces in explicitly exotic and racialized terms. As demonstrated by the Arnoldian desire to inculcate the English working classes with culture (to aggregate them into a unified national polity), and by evidence recorded in the accounts of T. N. Mukharji and others of the contested dialogical ground and shifting power relationships between the English and the Indians, colonialism could not be considered a secure bourgeois project in the nineteenth century.

81 Ibid., pp. 100–101.

82 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1991 [1978]).

83 Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 65.