

Exhibiting the Empire

CULTURES OF DISPLAY
AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Edited by
John McAleer and John M. MacKenzie

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS

Copyright © Manchester University Press 2015

While copyright in the volume as a whole is vested in Manchester University Press, copyright in individual chapters belongs to their respective authors, and no chapter may be reproduced wholly or in part without the express permission in writing of both author and publisher.

Published by MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS
ALTRINCHAM STREET, MANCHESTER M1 7JA, UK
www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data applied for

ISBN 978 07190 9109 4 *hardback*

First published 2015

The publisher has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for any external or third-party internet websites referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

CONTENTS

List of figures, music examples and tables—vi
Acknowledgements—ix
Notes on contributors—x

Introduction: Cultures of display and the British Empire <i>John M. MacKenzie and John McAleer</i>	1
1 An elite imperial vision: Eighteenth-century British country houses and four continents imagery <i>Stephanie Barczewski</i>	18
2 Exhibiting exploration: Captain Cook, voyages of exploration and the culture of display <i>John McAleer</i>	42
3 Satirical peace prints and the cartographic unconscious <i>Douglas Fordham</i>	64
4 Sanguinary engagements: Exhibiting the naval battles of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars <i>Eleanor Hughes</i>	90
5 Empire under glass: The British Empire and the Crystal Palace, 1851–1911 <i>Jeffrey Auerbach</i>	111
6 Ephemera and the British Empire <i>Ashley Jackson and David Tomkins</i>	142
7 Exhibiting the Empire in print: The press, the publishing world and the promotion of ‘Greater Britain’ <i>Berny Sèbe</i>	168
8 Exhibiting empire at the Delhi Durbar of 1911: Imperial and cultural contexts <i>John M. MacKenzie</i>	194
9 Elgar’s <i>Pageant of Empire</i> , 1924: An imperial leitmotif <i>Nalini Ghuman</i>	220
10 Representing ‘Our Island Sultanate’ in London and Zanzibar: Cross-currents in educating imperial publics <i>Sarah Longair</i>	257

Index—279

Typeset in Trump Medieval by
Koinonia, Manchester
Printed in Great Britain by
TJ International Ltd, Padstow

CHAPTER FIVE

Empire under glass: The British Empire and the Crystal Palace, 1851–1911

Jeffrey Auerbach

The Great Exhibition of 1851, held in London's Hyde Park, has long served as a symbol not only of Britain's industrial development but also of its burgeoning Empire. Numerous scholars in recent years have noted the centrality of the Indian exhibits in the Crystal Palace and emphasised the exhibition's role in promoting commodities from Britain's colonies.¹ Yet in retrospect one of the most remarkable features of this first world's fair was how limited a role the Empire played. In fact, it was not until 1886 that the Empire received top billing at a British exhibition, at the 'Colonial and Indian Exhibition' held in South Kensington. And it was not until 1911 that Britain's colonies predominated at the Crystal Palace. The Empire, therefore, rose to prominence in British exhibitions very slowly during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Tracing the history of imperial displays at the Crystal Palace suggests that, in 1851, 'empire' was still an amorphous and infrequently used concept in Britain. For many commentators the most meaningful distinctions were national and global, not imperial, either between themselves and continental Europeans, or between Europeans and non-Europeans. The enlarged Sydenham Crystal Palace was the successor to the Hyde Park building, and it remained standing in south London from 1854 to 1936. Its displays illustrate how the British increasingly began to view themselves as heirs to the great ancient empires such as Egypt and Assyria. But they were also mindful that, just as those once dominant empires had collapsed, so too might their own. Nonetheless, by the time of the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition, the Empire had grown and sufficiently coalesced to merit its own exhibition. This in turn helped pave the way for the 1911 Festival of Empire, the apex of imperial display at the Crystal Palace – an event clearly designed not just to celebrate the Empire but also to fortify already tenuous links between Britain and its dominions.

Woven into this history of imperial display is the increasing use of human exhibits. There were no people on display at the Hyde Park Crystal Palace in 1851, nor did the Royal Commission that planned and organised the Great Exhibition ever discuss having such a display. But foreigners – from both Europe and elsewhere, including regions that were part of Britain's Empire – were ubiquitous in the ephemeral literature that was published at the time of the event, and there were a few wax models on display as well. The Sydenham Crystal Palace, with its increased emphasis on natural history, included an ethnological 'museum of man' that featured plaster-cast models of supposedly representative Africans, American Indians, Aboriginal Australians and Pacific Islanders. On the one hand, it suggested that all human beings were descended from common ancestors; in this respect, it constituted an important intervention in the vibrant contemporary debate over monogenesis and polygenesis. On the other hand, even though the exhibits emphasised human unity, they also promoted and reinforced the belief that humanity could be divided between civilised and savage, Christian and heathen, hunter-gather and commercial, European and Other.² By the end of the century, when a Somali kraal was reconstructed inside the glass palace, living people would themselves be put on display, as they would to an even greater extent at the Festival of Empire in 1911, when entire native villages were recreated.³ The Crystal Palace, therefore, played a significant role both in imperial politics and in the politics of display, and it charts the rise, efflorescence and fraying of imperial ties from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century.

The Hyde Park Crystal Palace, 1851

The Empire occupied only a relatively small place at the Great Exhibition of 1851. The early discussions of the exhibition's organisers contain scarcely any references to the Empire, and the inclusion of Archibald Galloway, Chairman of the East India Company, on the Royal Commission was as much an obligatory nod as a reflection of commitment.⁴ Three highly publicised London Mansion House speeches promoting the exhibition likewise made no mention of how the exhibition might boost trade or foster closer ties with the Empire.⁵ Only a single meeting in Woolwich in June 1850, where the principal speaker was David Williams Wire, under-sheriff (and later Lord Mayor) of London, highlighted Britain's imperial connections. Wire presented a rosy vision of the Empire as an institution of mercantile exchange that was driving not only the British but also the entire world economy. Every time there had been a threat to British commerce, he boasted, the

British had found new routes and new markets by 'sending their sons to distant lands'. As a result, Britain was 'becoming the emporium of the commercial, and the mistress of the entire world'. Characterising the Empire as a central British institution, he argued that by 'civilising' foreign lands and peoples, the British were creating new markets for their goods, a process that would be furthered by the exhibition.⁶

Despite Wire's rousing defence of imperial commerce, when it came to soliciting exhibits and generating enthusiasm for the exhibition, the organisers' focus was overwhelmingly on the British Isles and continental Europe.⁷ The vast majority of the hundred thousand objects on display were European, even among the raw materials and manufactures, the only two classes of exhibits in which there was any significant imperial participation. In fact, among the prizewinning exhibits, virtually none came from the Empire.⁸ Although the press provided some coverage to Britain's colonies, they were rarely singled out.⁹ The *Illustrated London News*, for example, devoted hundreds of pages to the construction of the Crystal Palace and the opening of the exhibition, and eagerly noted the arrival of the French goods – and the paucity of American goods – perhaps because Britain's economic and commercial rivalry with those nations was, in 1851, far more significant than its still nascent colonial trade.¹⁰ The paper provided less coverage of the East Indian Courts than Prince Albert's model working-class houses, only a few of which were ever built.¹¹ It is also telling that, in its coverage of the opening ceremony, the *Illustrated London News* referred to the event as 'the Great *National* Exhibition of 1851' (*italics added*).¹²

Nevertheless, inside the Crystal Palace, the exhibits from India and the other regions of the Empire were given a prime location near the intersection of the nave and the transept, at the very centre of the exhibition building. But so too were the contributions from Turkey, China, Tunis, Persia and Egypt, suggesting an Orientalist zone as much as an imperial grouping.¹³ Moreover, the colonial displays were so enmeshed within the dizzying panoply of goods that they are barely visible in most of the widely reproduced engravings of the nave.¹⁴ The three-volume *Official Catalogue* offered a different but hardly more imperial vision, with its embossed cover showing Britannia crowning Asia and Europe with Africa and America looking on, suggesting a global, more than an imperial, hegemony.¹⁵

The most prominent imperial display in 1851 was the Indian Court (Figure 5.1). Henry Cole's plan, ably implemented by the Indian-born British botanist and professor John Forbes Royle, was to present India, and by extension the Empire, as a vast treasure-trove of untapped wealth and resources.¹⁶ Although the Court was stocked with fine

finished products, including a 'rich variety' of Indian shawls, especially cashmere, that were highlighted by the *Illustrated London News* just before the close of the exhibition, the underlying purpose of the display was to introduce manufacturers to raw materials.¹⁷ As Royle wrote in his introduction to the Indian section of the *Official Catalogue*, the goal of the Indian exhibits was 'at once to interest the public and to give such confidence to the manufacturer as to induce him to submit them to trial'.¹⁸ He continued: 'The peculiar products' of the colonies would be of interest to 'the merchant seeking a new source for known materials'.¹⁹ For Royle, it was axiomatic that the exhibition would benefit all countries with 'little-known products possessed of valuable properties, and procurable in large quantities at a cheap rate, if a demand could be created for them'.²⁰ The *Illustrated London News* reinforced his point soon after the opening of the exhibition by reminding its readers that India was one of Britain's 'best markets, either to buy produce or sell British manufactures', even though it was 'scarcely known to a very large part' of the 'educated public'.²¹

The most famous Indian exhibit – and one of the highlights of the exhibition, according to *The Times* – was the Koh-i-Noor diamond, which had been confiscated from the Sikh Empire by the East India Company in 1850. Valued at more than £2 million, the gem was exhib-

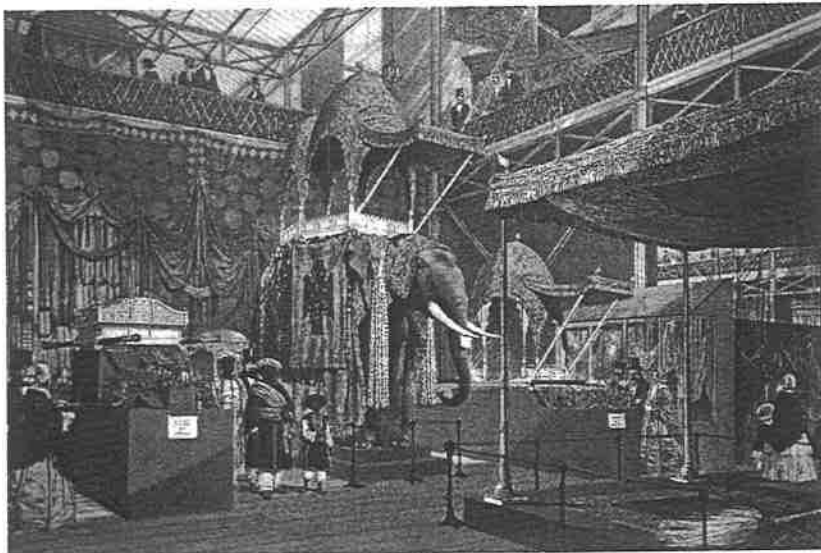


Figure 5.1 John Nash, 'Stuffed Elephant and Howdah'

ited by the Queen herself, with its own display case which took the form of a large gold cage with an ingenious mechanism designed to lower the diamond into the pedestal at night for greater security.²² In one of its articles, *The Illustrated London News* described the diamond as 'gigantic but somewhat rough and unhewn', clearly a metaphor for India itself.²³ The paper claimed that Indian rulers were so enamoured of 'rich and lavish magnificence' that they had appreciated the diamond solely on the basis of its striking 'magnitude'. Only a reduction in size by a European jeweller, the writer opined – seemingly forgetting that the stone had originally been cut not by an Indian but by a Venetian who was subsequently fined and executed for having performed his task in an 'unartist-like manner' – would render its 'beauty' visible and increase its value. As Lara Kriegel has observed: 'The koh-i-noor offers the most striking instance of the practice of miniaturising the "vast" continent for the purposes of entertainment, consumption and rule at mid-century'.²⁴

India was not the only colony relegated to the role of supplier of raw materials. Canada sent in two 'trophies' – tribute, in effect – one constructed of timber (Figure 5.2), the other consisting of furs organised by the Hudson's Bay Company.²⁵ And yet the *Illustrated London News* deemed the Canadian contributions so unimportant

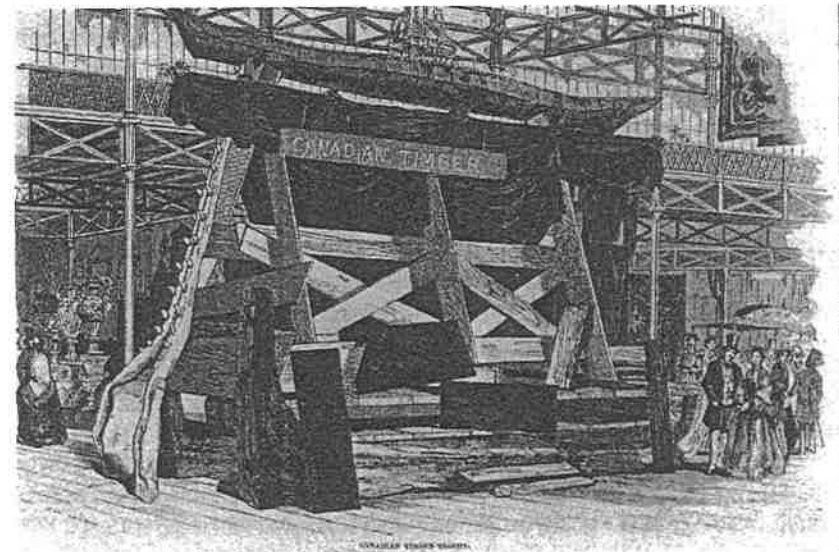


Figure 5.2 'Canadian Timber Trophy', *Illustrated London News* (21 June 1851)

that it covered the Timber Trophy alongside the Russian Court and the horological section.²⁶ In the West Indies stand, the most prominent objects on display included a case of artificial fruits and flowers, and several articles made from the leaves of palm trees.²⁷

The scale and scope of the exhibits from Australasia – New South Wales, South Australia and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) – was similarly limited. Delays and controversies hindered the timely arrival of the Australian exhibits; the first edition of the *Official Catalogue* included only 'about twenty exhibitors' from New South Wales and half that number from South Australia.²⁸ According to one popular guidebook, Britain's Australasian possessions 'had nothing very new or very showy'.²⁹ Still, the organisers presented an optimistic vision of Australia transformed from a penal colony into an economically vital component of the Empire.³⁰ The *Official Catalogue* promoted Australia as 'the most extensive wool-producing country in the world', and proudly noted the growing value of its exports to Britain.³¹ Likewise, the *Illustrated London News* raved about the 'superb specimens' of the 'well-known and remarkable mines of South Australia', including the famous Burra Burra copper mines, which were already making a dent in world trade.³² The London organisers actively encouraged the submission of raw materials, and the Australian local commissioners complied by sending unusual flora and fauna, such as wombats and black swans, as well as wool, wood, coal and beef that were part of the fledgling colony's effort to expand its overseas markets in Europe and North America.

There were some Australian manufactured goods on display. Not surprisingly, many of the motifs which embellished them derived from the early experiences of travellers, scientists, navigators and settlers.³³ Among these, the emu and the kangaroo were highlighted as distinctive inhabitants of the Australian colonies and reproduced extensively, suggesting, iconographically, a high level of integration between metropole and periphery. A Tasmanian furniture maker, for example, exhibited a chair, on the back of which was a shield supported by a kangaroo and an emu surmounted by an English rose. On one side was a Scottish thistle, on the other an Irish shamrock.³⁴ In objects such as these, far-flung territories became integrated – and integrated themselves – into a Greater Britain, helping to domesticate the Empire.

The 1851 exhibition also promoted the Empire by introducing British men and women – producers and consumers, and most importantly future supporters and defenders of the idea of empire – to the diversity and fascinating otherness of imperial territories. One indication of this was the highly publicised visit of a group of 240 would-be emigrants sponsored by the Colonization Loan Society, who were

scheduled to depart to Australia just a few days after the exhibition opened when the price of admission was still £1. They petitioned the commissioners for reduced admission to 1s, arguing that they were engaged in 'the rugged work of colonization' and that a visit to the exhibition would enable them to take with them 'their country's spirit of improvement'.³⁵ Visitors to the Crystal Palace learned about the British world through maps and charts as well as objects and dioramas.³⁶ The colonial exhibits familiarised British men and women with Britain's newly acquired and distant outposts, metaphorically taking British men and women to places they had never seen and, in all likelihood, would never be able to see. At the exhibition, British men and women could tour a recreated Mughal throne room or admire a howdah on an elephant, as well as exotic goods from Turkey, symbol of the 'East'.³⁷ For the many Britons who still had little connection with the Empire, the exhibition made clear that it was an important and growing component of British wealth, power and prestige. As one observer enthused, the East India Company exhibits had the effect of 'impressing every visitor with the importance of such possessions to Great Britain'.³⁸ The very language used by the organisers – 'British possessions' – suggested a degree of control and coherence that was still lacking at the administrative level.³⁹

Unlike at many subsequent exhibitions, however, there were no people from the colonies on display in 1851, although the Tunisian Court featured an 'extremely picturesque and obliging native custodian' who, being a 'good-natured Turk [sic]', handed out sweetmeats and guided visitors around articles of 'rudest description', but which were, according to the *Illustrated London News*, 'admirably calculated to afford illustration of the *ménage* and *convenances* of the North African tribes'.⁴⁰ His presence was in addition to the models of foreign people that were on display: the Indian Court featured a collection of more than sixty groups of figurines designed to showcase the various Hindu castes, and the Fine Arts court included wax models of North and South American peasants clothed in traditional costumes and arranged in tableaux illustrating their respective customs.⁴¹ There were also statues, such as Peter Stephenson's *The Wounded American Indian* (1848–50), poignantly symbolising the noble savagery of Native Americans, who were being conveniently erased from Britain's imperial past by virtue of their association with America's imperial present.⁴²

Representations of colonial people, however, were omnipresent in the ephemeral literature that proliferated at the time of the exhibition. In 'The Happy Family in Hyde Park' (Figure 5.3), which John Tenniel drew for the humorous magazine *Punch*, there is a clear demarcation between the Europeans, who, alongside Mr Punch and the royal family,



THE HAPPY FAMILY IN HYDE PARK.

Figure 5.3 John Tenniel, 'The Happy Family in Hyde Park',
Punch (19 July 1851)

EMPIRE UNDER GLASS

are standing outside the Crystal Palace, and the foreigners, including a Chinese man, a Native American Indian, a turbaned Turk and a hairy Cossack, all of whom are inside, under glass and virtually behind bars. It is as if they are exotic specimens in a colossal greenhouse – which was how the design for the Crystal Palace developed, from Joseph Paxton's work as landscape architect for the Duke of Devonshire. As if to underscore the point, the smartly dressed gentleman on the right, whose visage bears a remarkable resemblance to Prince Albert, the guiding force behind the 1851 exhibition, is using his walking stick to point out an especially interesting figure. Inside, the foreigners are not examining the exhibits but instead performing national dances as if they were themselves on display. These elements undermine the image of a happy family, and instead highlight a separation between European and Other, between the British and their Empire.



Figure 5.4 Thomas Onwhyn, 'Cannibal Islanders', in *Mr and Mrs John Brown's Visit to London to see the Great Exhibition of All Nations* (London: Ackerman, [1851])

Many of these images had clearly racist undertones. In *Mr and Mrs Brown's Visit to London to see the Great Exhibition of All Nations*, by the draughtsman and engraver Thomas Onwhyn, the Browns encounter a menacing Russian carrying a long sword, some Bedouin with spears and a Turk with a dagger. Most threatening of all, though, are the 'Cannibal Islanders' (Figure 5.4) who are sitting at the same picnic table at the restaurant as the Browns, beneath a sign that reads 'Soup a la Hottentot'. They have dark skin, bare feet and monkey-like faces; one of them is holding a knife, and is threatening to eat the Browns' boy, Johnny. They are depicted as cannibalistic savages.⁴³

Although imagined, these illustrations had a profound effect, especially given how few actual foreigners were in London during the summer of 1851.⁴⁴ *The Times*, for example, complained of a 'dearth of Turks and Turbans' at the opening of the exhibition.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, the artist Henrietta Ward recalled:

From every part of the globe came representatives, many gorgeous in oriental robes. Dusky Indian princes with turbans and jewels on their foreheads; sallow-faced Chinese Mandarins in silken embroidered dress; sedate little Japanese potentates with inscrutable faces; broad-faced, woolly-headed African Chiefs wearing bright colours; travellers from America, Australia, Canada other countries mingling with Russians, Poles, Frenchmen, Italians and Austrians.⁴⁶

Ward's phrasing illustrates how undifferentiated the Empire was in the mid-nineteenth century, and that, with the possible exception of India, colonial people were lumped together with every other sort of foreigner.

Although Britain's Empire was featured much more prominently at the Great Exhibition than it had ever been before, when compared to subsequent exhibitions the imperial presence was actually quite limited. Jamaica, for centuries one of Britain's most important colonies, was represented by only one exhibitor – from Manchester, no less – who sent in 'artificial flowers in imitation of the gorgeous productions of the Tropics'. The various catalogues of the exhibition make this point as well. The *Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue*, which comprised more than three hundred pages and included some fifteen hundred illustrations, contained only one item, an 'Oriental Tabletop', which reflected Britain's overseas interests.⁴⁷ Likewise, Tallis's three-volume *History and Description of the Crystal Palace* offered only a few chapters and plates devoted to imperial objects. The Empire was clearly only a very small part of a much larger exhibition, and lacking coherence and cohesiveness.

The Sydenham Crystal Palace, 1854–86

Six months after the Great Exhibition closed, Joseph Paxton, architect of the Crystal Palace, raised £500,000 in capital by selling shares in a newly formed corporation to purchase the iron and glass structure and relocate it to the south London suburb of Sydenham, where it stood until 1936.⁴⁸ The rebuilt Crystal Palace, which opened in 1854 to strains of 'God Save the Queen' and Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus', was for several decades one of London's most popular attractions, and a place of amusement, recreation and instruction for the middle and lower classes. Although the venue lost some of its appeal over the years – both Fyodor Dostoevsky and Hippolyte Taine mocked it when they visited in the 1860s – George Gissing's reference to the building in his novel *The Nether World* (1888) as a place where 'the slaves of industrialization' could go on their day off and stare at 'a wooden model of the treacherous Afghan or the base African' suggests that it nonetheless functioned as a locus of imperialist sentiments. Indeed, the Sydenham Crystal Palace depicted Britain's Empire as the successor to the great ancient empires of Egypt, Greece, Rome, Assyria and Byzantium, and also served as the site of Benjamin Disraeli's famous speech in which he sought to unite all classes under the banner of monarchy and empire. And yet there was very little on display about Britain's contemporary empire.

Aside from the model dinosaurs nestled into the terraced grounds, the most original features of the enlarged Crystal Palace were its ten 'courts' illustrating the art and architecture of iconic historical periods and styles including Greek, Roman, Medieval, Byzantine and Renaissance.⁴⁹ The idea of dedicated courts had begun with the Hyde Park Crystal Palace: the term was first used to describe the rectangular sections of the building in the central area that were divided from each other but open to the arcaded glass roof. These included, in 1851, the East Indian, Tunis and Canadian Courts. After Sydenham, the term came to mean the central open space of a museum or atrium surrounded by arcades and galleries. Most of the Sydenham courts were meticulously designed 'living reconstructions' and 'restorations' of defunct empires such as Egypt and Assyria.⁵⁰ As many contemporary guidebooks made clear, they were designed to be interpreted in sequence, to provide an overview of civilisation, 'of a vast panorama of extinct life, of vanished institutions, of habits and usages long since passed away, of decayed forms of polytheism, and of superseded arts'.⁵¹

While none of the courts focused on regions that were part of the British Empire – Britain would not conquer Egypt until 1882, and Nineveh, near Mosul, would not become a British-ruled territory until

after the First World War – many of them carried imperial resonances. Collectively, they produced a politics and morality of empire: the fall of once proud, wealthy and powerful civilisations which provided a warning to those in Britain about what might happen to their own rapidly expanding imperium. In the official *Guide to the Palace*, the journalist Samuel Phillips encouraged his readers to trace the course of art in order to gain ‘an idea of the successive stages of civilizations rising and falling’, until ‘overturned by the aggression of barbarians or the no less destructive agency of a sensual and degraded luxury’.⁵² Owen Jones, who helped design the courts, had spent months drawing and measuring in Egypt and the Alhambra, where he claimed to have made tracings and casts of numerous decorative details. In one of his lectures he spoke about the fresco on the walls of the Egyptian Court depicting ‘the greatest of the Pharaohs’ in which ‘the conqueror ... crushes beneath the wheels of his chariot crowds of the enemy’, perhaps a veiled allusion to recent British wars in Afghanistan, the Punjab, China and elsewhere, including Crimea, where the famous Charge of the Light Brigade during the Battle of Balaclava proved disastrous and humiliating.⁵³

The Nineveh Court (also called the Assyrian Court or Nineveh Palace), which offered a similar message, was designed with the co-operation of Henry Layard, who had excavated the originals on the banks of the Tigris a decade earlier. It was a monument to imperial power and pride, and to the architecture of the conqueror, showing subject peoples slaughtered in battle. It may have been with Britain’s own Crystal Palace in mind that the official guide described the court as a place of ‘great public ceremonies, national triumphs or religious worship’.⁵⁴ And yet, for the educated observer, the warning could not have been clearer: For all its pride, Nineveh fell in a day. Similarly, it took only an hour for Pompeii – the subject of one of the other courts – to be buried in ash. According to *The Crystal Palace Expositor*: ‘He who only gazes with curiosity and admiration at its recovered treasures can never appreciate the moral lesson which its catastrophe is so well calculated to teach.’⁵⁵ As one historian has observed, Nineveh stood as a ‘beckoning prototype’ for the grandiose New Delhi that the famed architect Edwin Lutyens would build in India, as well as a ‘prophetic *memento mori*’ of the possible demise of Britain’s Empire.⁵⁶

As instruments of display, the courts were quite controversial. Critics claimed they were inconsistent in scale, too conjectural and inaccurate in that they combined elements of different originals.⁵⁷ Owen Jones’s polychromatic colour schemes, which he applied to all the courts, and not only his own Alhambra display, were subjected to special ridicule. In promoting polychromatism, Jones was implying

that, although English painters had long been regarded as colourists, the English lagged behind ‘in employment and appreciation of colour’ in interior and exterior decoration.⁵⁸ He would work out these ideas more fully and influentially in *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856), in which he sought to establish basic principles for the colour combinations that would be in vogue for decades to come.⁵⁹ Although the colouring of the courts seemed garish to many visitors, at least one guidebook offered the reminder that Jones’s bright colours were from ‘Eastern’ countries with intense sunshine.⁶⁰ The colouring scheme certainly added to the theatrical excitement of the displays.⁶¹ This was in marked contrast to the Hyde Park building, which also employed colour – though to lesser effect – but where the sections of the exhibition had temporary partitions constructed or hung between them. In many respects then, the fine arts courts at the Sydenham Crystal Palace had a crucial influence on museums and on the display of architecture, sculpture and natural history. As the Revd Charles Boutell wrote in his series of articles on the courts in the *Art Journal*, what the ‘Sydenham Museum’ – as he termed it – taught was ‘clear, expressive, and easy to understand’.⁶²

Owen Jones’s Egyptian Court was also criticised. It reflected his many years studying Egyptian antiquities, but he designed the pavilion as a composite memorial not as a scale model or replica of one particular monument. Certainly its reduced size was incongruous – and even misleading – when compared to full-size reproductions such as the ancient Pompeian House. This was particularly evident with the reproduction of the Hall of Columns from the Temple of Carnac, which the antiquary and auctioneer Samuel Leigh Sotheby, a major Crystal Palace shareholder, groused was ‘Lilliputian’ and ‘most uninteresting’. Nonetheless, it must have been thrilling to turn from the nave of the Crystal Palace on to the side avenue that was flanked by eight lions cast from a pair brought from Egypt by the Duke of Northumberland, which led up to the giant entrance portal. The highlight of the Egyptian exhibits was the full-size reproductions of two colossal seated figures from the great temple of Abu Simbel in Nubia (Figure 5.5).⁶³ They occupied a prominent position at the north end of the vaulted glass transept: visitors approached them along an avenue of sphinxes, formed of twenty statues cast from an original in the Louvre. The promenade, which stretches a mile long in Egypt, had been reduced to less than 300 feet, symbolically encapsulating Britain’s ability to envelop and contain even the greatest of ancient empires – at least for a while. Both the colossal figures and the Nineveh Court were destroyed in a fire in 1886.

The Nineveh Court also illustrated Britain’s taming of empire. Henry Layard, who excavated the buildings on which the court was

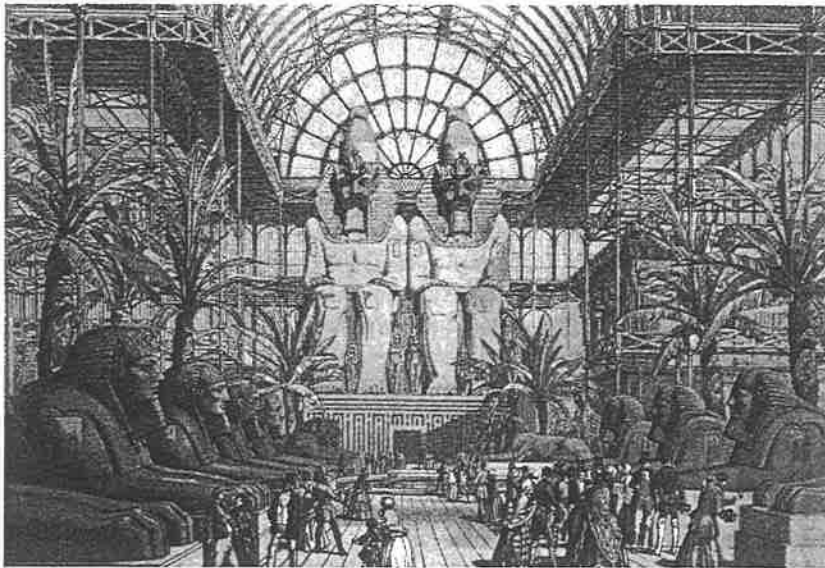


Figure 5.5 'North Transept, Sydenham', in Matthew Digby Wyatt, *Views of the Crystal Palace and Park, Sydenham* (London: s.n., 1854)

modelled and whose bestselling book about the excavations, *Nineveh and Its Remains*, was published in 1848, had said that 'a small packing case' could contain 'all that Europe knew or possessed' of Assyria.⁶⁴ Yet the Nineveh Court was about 20 per cent larger than the other courts. It was bounded on one side by the Abu Simbel figures, and faced the tropical department with its great palms and wild botanical flourishes, creating a kind of hybridised zone of imperial exoticism. Nineveh had numerous contemporary associations. Assyria was the most ancient of the cultures recalled by the Sydenham courts, the location of the origin of civilisation and associated with the rise and fall of a powerful monarchy. Nineveh was also featured in the biblical Book of Kings and the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah about desolation. Byron had written about Sardanapalus and the fall of Sennacherib, and Alexander's sack of Persepolis was part of the history curriculum. The court, therefore, had historical, biblical and literary associations, all of which Layard romanticised with his brightly coloured accents. Although Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote a poem, 'The Burden of Nineveh', about the arrival of Assyrian antiquities – the 'winged beasts' – at the British Museum that evinces a great dislike for imperial culture, and although his brother William Michael Rossetti hated the Nineveh Court, which he called an oppressive 'nightmare life in death', the link between

the modern British and ancient Assyrian empires could not have been clearer.⁶⁵

However, there was an uneasy relationship between the fine arts courts, with their imperial resonances, and the more strictly imperial displays, especially those from China and India. In July 1852, the *Athenaeum* reported that an Indian palace and Chinese court were being planned, although they never came to fulfilment.⁶⁶ Then in 1856, the Crystal Palace Company announced that an exhibition of Indian manufactures would be on view 'in a specially appropriated Court or compartment' with facsimiles of the famed Ajanta frescos, to be overseen by James Fergusson, one of the foremost mid-nineteenth-century experts on Indian art and architecture.⁶⁷ But when the display opened, reviews were lacklustre: *The Athenaeum* called it 'small' and 'incongruous' with too many 'showy goods'. Fergusson's wooden models of temples and mosques, which were surrounded by a hodgepodge of garments and musical instruments, simply could not compare to the more grandiose courts.⁶⁸ Additionally, the Indian and Chinese displays were located in the galleries above the Egyptian and Greek Courts, well off the main walkway. *The Crystal Palace Herald* reported in 1855 that these minor courts were 'hardly known and seldom discovered'.⁶⁹

Alongside the prehistoric dinosaurs and the ancient civilisations, the Sydenham Crystal Palace, which was conceived as 'a three-dimensional encyclopaedia of ... nature and art' that combined edification and entertainment in the hope of turning a profit for its shareholders, also featured a 'museum of man' that sought to offer something of an ethnological education.⁷⁰ Designed by the physician and philologist Robert Gordon Latham, a follower of James Prichard whose taxonomy of human variation was among the first to assign all races to a single species, the natural history department greeted visitors with life-sized groupings of stuffed animals, living plants and wax models of human beings, carefully placed in front of painted backdrops. The New World displays were located on the west side and the Old World exhibits were in the east, as if viewers were themselves circumnavigating the globe. These dioramas constituted a major change in techniques of display, and built on the increasing popularity of human exhibits during the first half of the nineteenth century.⁷¹ They certainly represented a shift from highlighting colonial products, which had characterised the Great Exhibition of 1851, to focusing on colonial people, though in terms of classification the two were treated in remarkably similar ways.

The most extensive tableau was devoted to Africa. In addition to representative animals such as the hippopotamus, giraffe and lion, there were examples of people from the Niger River area, Sierra Leone



Figure 5.6 Henry Negretti and Joseph Zambra, 'Models of the San at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, including Flora and Martinus', c. 1862

and South Africa, including the San and Zulu. The human models were arranged into visual narratives that Latham deemed representative of their ethnic traits. The adult male in the San family, for example, stood on high ground and was gazing out towards the horizon, an allusion to the reputed visual acuity of the San, who were frequently described in travel literature as having astonishing long-range vision that was particularly useful when hunting (Figure 5.6).⁷² The guidebook to the natural history court, co-authored by Latham and Edward Forbes, Professor of Botany at King's College, London, was designed to help viewers interpret the displays with details about ethnological characteristics and descriptions of manners and customs.⁷³ By intermingling humans, animals and plants, the court promoted the classification of the various people that inhabited British territories as natural history specimens. And, as Sadiya Qureshi has noted, "The substitution of visitors for specimens of British types neatly encouraged visitors to compare themselves with the peoples on display and note their progress from ... [their] relatively lowly states of social



CRYSTAL PALACE—SOME VARIETIES OF THE HUMAN RACE.⁶

Figure 5.7 John Leech, 'Crystal Palace – Some Varieties of the Human Race', *Punch* 28 (1855): xxiii

organization and moral purpose.⁷⁴ This is particularly evident in a John Leech cartoon for *Punch* (Figure 5.7), which extends some of the themes Tenniel explored in his earlier sketch. It depicts two young women sitting at a bistro table enjoying some refreshments; behind them a dark-skinned Bushman – or perhaps a Maori – holds a shield and is about to throw his spear. The caption, 'Crystal Palace – Varieties

of the Human Race', certainly implies that the well-dressed women were themselves to be thought of as part of the display. In any event, until the colonial models burned down in the 1860s, they, like the nearby arts courts, helped encode Britain's imperial standing, implicitly positioning it at the apex of historical development.

The Sydenham Crystal Palace and the modern British Empire were not fully yoked together, however, until 1872, when Benjamin Disraeli used the site to give a landmark speech in which he declared that the Empire was central to the Conservative Party as well as to the British nation. Disraeli's speech ushered in a radical realignment in British politics. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Disraeli had derided the colonies as a 'millstone 'round our necks' and as 'dead-weights'. Now he attacked a succession of Liberal governments for attempting to dismember the Empire by the progressive granting of colonial self-rule. His subject was especially topical, coinciding with Henry Morton Stanley's search for the Scottish missionary David Livingstone, and with a renewed debate over state-assisted emigration. Disraeli, as always, captured the public mood, in this case in favour of imperial consolidation and development.⁷⁵ Sydenham, therefore, would be remembered as an imperial site, but more for the imperial past and future that served as Britain's inspiration than for the imperial present.

The Festival of Empire, 1911

The Crystal Palace reached its apogee as an imperial site with the 1911 Festival of Empire, also known as the Coronation Exhibition. The festival had been planned for 1910, but was postponed because of Edward VII's death. It served as the first public function attended by George V, who, along with Queen Mary, opened the exhibition to rapturous applause. Highlights included a ceremonial greeting from some Maori warriors, described in the *Illustrated London News* as 'New Zealand's primitive inhabitants', as well as a thunderous performance of Elgar's arrangement of the national anthem by a 400-voice choir accompanied by the London Symphony Orchestra, the Festival of Empire Brass Band and thousands of enthusiastic observers in attendance.⁷⁶ *The Times* patriotically proclaimed it 'the most elaborate advertisement of the resources of the British Empire that has ever been devised', and an official brochure confidently asserted that 'The Gospel of Empire will be the dominant note at the Festival'.⁷⁷

But the organisers seem to have had a slightly different concept in mind.⁷⁸ According to one souvenir pamphlet, the primary objective of the exhibition was 'the firmer welding of those invisible bonds which hold together the greatest empire the world has ever known'.⁷⁹

This may explain in part why the opening programme included the London-born Anglo-Canadian composer Charles Harriss's *Empire of the Sea*, which he conducted himself. Described as 'an Imperial greeting chorus and orchestra', and dedicated to Earl Grey, Governor General of Canada, it celebrated Anglo-Canadian unity:

Hail! Sons of the race, from afar!
Joyous kings of the wind and the star,
We daughter of Britain's glad Isles,
Warmly welcome you home with our smiles ...
Come, from your far fields of foam!
Farewell to sadness,
Waken to gladness,
Welcome to Britain, your home ...
Come, then, come to our own, in the Empire of the sea
Might and joy never ending await the brave and the free.⁸⁰

At a time when doubts were beginning to surface about the future of the Empire, the 1911 exhibition and the associated pageant sought to strengthen the ties between the metropole and the colonies.

The roots of the 1911 festival lay in the many attempts to revive the declining fortunes and popularity of the Crystal Palace in the late nineteenth century, as well as the influence and popularity of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886, which was held in South Kensington, not far from the site of the original Crystal Palace. Organised largely by J. Forbes Watson, Keeper of the Indian Collection at the South Kensington Museum, the Colonial and Indian Exhibition was designed to highlight the growing importance of Britain's Empire.⁸¹ As Watson pointed out, commerce between Britain and its colonies was growing faster than trade between Britain and other independent countries: in 1874, India and the colonies accounted for 30 per cent of British exports, more than the United States, Germany and France combined. He also reminded potential doubters that India and the colonies were important repositories for British investment capital.⁸²

Opened by Queen Victoria, recently crowned Empress of India, to a newly composed Arthur Sullivan ode, the 1886 exhibition brought together Britain's dominions and colonies for the first time. It was the product of a much greater effort on the part of both imperial and colonial organisers to include and fully represent the colonies.⁸³ The notion of a Greater Britain was symbolised by the figure of Britannia surmounting five giant clocks over the entrance to the central annexe, which showed the local time in Greenwich, Ottawa, Cape Town, Calcutta and Sydney.⁸⁴ Beneath them was a 700-foot canvas map, on which British possessions were coloured a bright scarlet. Considered as a whole, the entrance display mapped the British Empire in time and space.

The 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition was also the first major British exhibition to put on display the people of the Empire. South Asian artisans were assigned to shops in the forecourt of the purpose-built Indian palace, to illustrate how they would ply their trade in a local setting, and six 'natives' from British Guiana were employed to weave hammocks and make jewellery from beads and twine in what was claimed to be a traditional dwelling.⁸⁵ Other displays – such as the Australian colonies – featured models arranged in such a way as to demonstrate the progress of civilisation, from nomadic Aborigines attired in kangaroo skins who carried clubs and were positioned as if they were walking through the forest in complete harmony with the fauna surrounding them, to a bushman's hut hewn from rough timber and thatched bark. The *Illustrated London News* likened the latter to the nostalgic reminiscence of a successful old man looking back on his youthful adventures and years of solitary isolation with a sense of idyllic satisfaction.⁸⁶ That the 'primitive' huts belonged to the present while the pioneer's hut was a temporary abode that resided in the past made clear the effects of 'civilisation' and reinforced a hierarchical view of humankind that simultaneously underpinned and was reinforced by Britain's economic, political and military strength.

As for rehabilitating the Crystal Palace, although Henry Cole boasted in 1884 that the Sydenham site had attracted 'millions of gratified visitors', attendances began to fall precipitously in the 1870s. By the end of the century the building had become severely dilapidated.⁸⁷ Efforts to revive the site's popularity included musical festivals as well as other forms of entertainment such as balloon flights, firework displays and demonstrations of moving pictures.⁸⁸ Several small colonial exhibitions were also held there. The African Exhibition of 1895 featured some two hundred African animals, birds and reptiles, but the featured attraction was a group of eighty Somalis wearing animal skins with red mud in their hair who performed traditional dances. An entire kraal had been reconstructed for the exhibition, where the Somalis slept at night and ate their meals.⁸⁹ But when they walked around working-class South London they were hooted and whistled at, and even threatened with fisticuffs.⁹⁰

The 1905 Colonial and Indian Exhibition, also held at the Crystal Palace and the most direct forerunner of the 1911 Festival of Empire, was considerably larger and more popular than the African Exhibition. Its goal was 'to offer to the people of the United Kingdom an object lesson which would demonstrate that the British Empire produces all the necessities and luxuries of life in quantities large enough to supply the wants of all its inhabitants'. The hope was that it would also boost 'inter-Imperial trading', a point the organisers emphasised in order to

differentiate it from the many international exhibitions that had been held during the previous three decades. Whereas the Great Exhibition had been promoted at least partly on the grounds that it would benefit world trade, the focus had now shifted to imperial commerce. The organisers' decision that there was 'no better site ... for this Imperial undertaking than the vast house of glass constructed for the epoch-making exhibition of 1851' reinforced the ever-tightening links between the Crystal Palace and the Empire.⁹¹

The 1911 Festival of Empire, which ran from 12 May to 28 October and featured representative and iconic scenes and structures from the British Empire in miniature, was the grandest imperial celebration ever held in the Crystal Palace. Among its most eye-catching and popular attractions were the three-quarter-sized replicas of the parliament houses of Ottawa, Melbourne, Wellington, Cape Town and St John's, Newfoundland, one of several ways the festival attempted to foster ties with the dominions. These specially constructed buildings, which dotted the terraces and grounds adjacent to the glass palace, housed displays of indigenous manufactures and produce (Figure 5.8). The South African building, for example, contained uncut diamonds worth £2 million, loaned by the De Beers Company. A miniature railway, the 'All-Red Route', one and a half miles long, linked these pavilions with other contemporary imperial scenes including a Malay village on stilts, a Jamaican sugar plantation, an Australian sheep farm, an

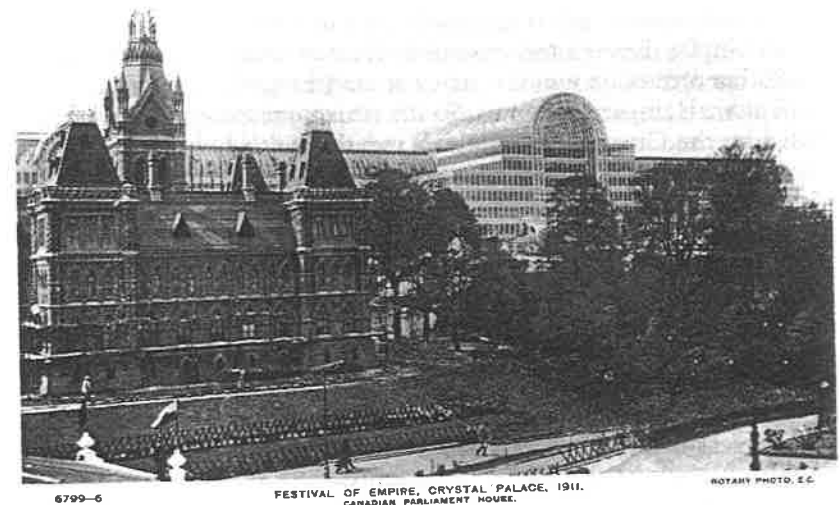


Figure 5.8 Postcard showing 'General View of the Crystal Palace and Canadian Building', 1911

Indian tea plantation and jungle 'well stocked with wild beasts' and a Maori village.⁹²

Patriotic music was omnipresent, especially from the Band of the Coldstream Guards, which offered repeated performances of Edward Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1* ('Land of Hope and Glory'). There was also the 400-voice Empire Choir, which gave weekly imperial concerts, each devoted to a different country (Canada, England, Australia, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, New Zealand and South Africa, the latter conducted by the black British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor).⁹³ Inside the Crystal Palace, many of the statues and early Victorian relics had been put into storage and replaced by an 'All-British Exhibition of Arts and Industries'. It featured important developments in mining, engineering, transportation and chemistry, as well as arts and crafts, photography, 'British and Colonial Agriculture', forestry and 'Imperial Industries'.

Building on the success of the 1908 London Olympics held just three years earlier, the festival also included an Inter-Empire sports championship – although only dominion countries could participate – in which teams from Australasia (a combined team from Australia and New Zealand), Canada, South Africa and the United Kingdom competed in five athletics events (100 yards, 220 yards, 880 yards, 1 mile and 120 yards hurdles), two swimming events (100 yards and 1 mile), heavyweight boxing and middleweight wrestling. This was the first-ever sporting competition between teams representing Britain and its dominions, and is generally regarded as a forerunner of the British Empire (now Commonwealth) Games, which began in 1930.⁹⁴

Another attraction was the series of forty historical tableaux, many of them with imperial themes. South Africa, for example, was represented by the Great Trek, Stanley's meeting with Livingstone, Cecil Rhodes negotiating with the natives and the opening of the Union Parliament by the Duke of Connaught. The Duke himself loaned a selection of animals he had shot during his recent East African tour, including a lion, a buffalo and an impala, which formed part of a display of big game trophies, 'probably the most representative of its kind that has been held in this country'. Although it was limited to 'sporting animals killed within the British Empire', the King loaned two 'fine specimens of Newfoundland caribou', the head of a musk ox and an Indian markhor (a large species of long-haired wild goat with majestic corkscrewing horns). Other big-game hunters lending trophies included the Duke of Westminster, Lord Kitchener and the Crown Prince of Bhopal.⁹⁵

The India Section was again the centrepiece of the imperial display, as it had been sixty years earlier at the Great Exhibition of 1851. The

emphasis had shifted, however, to showing the progress India had made under British rule since 1857, symbolised by a model of the new railway station at Howrah. The Indian exhibits also featured a series of twelve miniature historical tableaux, 'carefully prepared by English artists, as far as possible from drawings by Indians, so as to represent native ideas'. Scenes included the enthronement of Rama and Sita from the *Ramayana*, along with more contemporary events such as the 1858 reading of Queen Victoria's proclamation in Calcutta. These tableaux reflected the emerging Indian nationalist movement, and represent a move towards an Indo-, rather than Anglo-centric view of India.⁹⁶

There were other hints of the fragility of imperial integration and the possibility of imperial decline. According to Winston Churchill, many people at the time feared the Empire was so rickety that 'a single violent shock would bring it clattering down and lay it low for ever'.⁹⁷ At the opening ceremony, in addition to the national anthem, those in attendance heard a performance of Rudyard Kipling's 'Recessional', with its reminder that those who rule must be guided by the injunction in the Book of Common Prayer for 'an humble and contrite heart'. The couplet in the poem about 'All our pomp of yesterday is one with Nineveh and Tyre', against the backdrop of the decaying and cracked statues of the Assyrian Court, surely reinforced the message.

Amidst this imperial celebration, the festival clearly had commercial intentions as well. Although one of the many souvenir publications declared that the Crystal Palace and its grounds were 'an ideal place for a striking display of our commercial supremacy',⁹⁸ the organisers, again, saw things differently. According to the *Official Guide*, the festival would 'demonstrate to the somewhat casual, often times unobservant British public the real significance of our great self-governing Dominions, to make us familiar with their products, their ever-increasing resources, their illimitable possibilities'.⁹⁹ An 'International Rubber Exhibition' at the Agricultural Hall, for example, highlighted the recent growth of the rubber industry, but, just as importantly for *The Times*, demonstrated that, although Brazil occupied a 'a prominent position', it did not 'stand alone in the development of plantation rubber'. The exhibition, continued the paper, made it 'quite clear' that the British Dominions would 'play an important role in the future of the industry'.¹⁰⁰ The start of the 'All-British Shopping Week' six weeks before the exhibition underscored the economic imperatives at stake. According to *The Times*, there were many who took 'a limited and pessimistic view of the range of British arts and crafts' or who were 'obsessed by constant depreciation of home manufactures and insistence on the supposed supremacy of their

competitors'.¹⁰¹ In this respect, the 1911 Festival of Empire shared a fundamental similarity with the Great Exhibition of 1851, in that both were organised to remedy perceived economic weaknesses, but were typically celebrated in the popular press for demonstrating Britain's superiority. In any event, two acres of the Sydenham grounds were laid out with live farm animals, and representatives of various agricultural societies staffed information bureaux in order to offer farmers tips and techniques. There were also traditional amusements such as the TopsyTurvy, Hiram Maxim's Flying Machine, Joy Wheels, River Caves and the Coaster, which provided visitors with exhilarating rides throughout the season.

The Festival of Empire was also integrated with the adjacent Pageant of London, a four-part, forty-scene event staged over three days by fifteen thousand volunteers. The Pageant, which owed much to the imperial vision of Frank Lascelles, the long-time British diplomat known in the popular press as 'the man who staged the Empire', had originally been planned to recall London's central role in the history of Britain, with performers drawn from the various London boroughs, but, in view of the coronation and the general emphasis on the Empire, it was decided to add a fourth part, performed entirely by men and women of colonial birth, 'with the exception of the characters representative of the dark-skinned races'.¹⁰² It told the 'living story' of London 'from the dawn of British history', concluding with an elaborate 'Masque Imperial' that doubled as 'An Allegory of the Advantages of Empire'.¹⁰³ The 'dramatic thrust' of the pageant, therefore, which began with the discovery of Newfoundland and took its audience through the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India in 1877, 'was to suggest that the whole of the previous 2000 years of British history had been leading up inevitably to the glories and grandeur of the British Empire'.¹⁰⁴ There was, however, a certain irony to the pageant's implicit claim that London was not just an imperial city but the heart of the Empire, given that the Pageant took place at the Crystal Palace which – unlike its Hyde Park predecessor – was now located not in central London but in the suburbs, on the outskirts of the city.¹⁰⁵ Still, in blending theatre, dance and dialogue against the backdrop of the Crystal Palace, and with its parade of exotic animals including elephants, camels and zebus, the pageant was an extraordinary spectacle, and represented an enormous leap in modalities of display.

No amount of imperial pomp, however, could restore the fortunes of the Crystal Palace Company. The Crystal Palace was put on the market immediately after the 1911 festival, with the preface to the luxuriously illustrated sale catalogue expressing the hope that the idea of empire might once again be crystallised at the Sydenham Palace.¹⁰⁶

Just over two decades later, however, the Sydenham Palace burned down, an event which newspapers at the time saw as a portent, and which in retrospect seems an apt metaphor for the fortunes of the increasingly fraying Empire.

Conclusion

There would be other imperial festivals, though not at the Crystal Palace. The most famous was at Wembley in 1924–25, which drew a record twenty-seven million people and was designed to reinforce imperial economic ties after the First World War.¹⁰⁷ In 1938, a second Empire Exhibition was held in Glasgow, the 'second city of the empire', attracting millions of visitors who shared the organisers' hope that the Empire would help revive the city's and the nation's depression-ravaged economies.¹⁰⁸ But by the time the Festival of Britain took place in 1951, in the aftermath of the Second World War and fifteen years after the Crystal Palace itself had burned down, the Empire was in disarray. India, where Britain had beat a 'shameful flight', had been granted its independence; Palestine had been ignominiously turned over to the United Nations and, like India, partitioned amidst unanticipated and unimaginable violence.¹⁰⁹ The Festival of Britain, national rather than imperial in scope, relegated the imperial and Commonwealth exhibits to a secondary location, away from the main exhibition site on the South Bank.¹¹⁰

The Crystal Palace, therefore, illuminates the changing place of the Empire in British society and culture during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. From 1851, when industry and manufactures were the focus and the term 'empire' was barely even in use; to the 1850s and 1860s, when the British started to see themselves as heirs to the great ancient empires; to the 1890s, when the Crystal Palace began to display the people of the Empire, as colonial peoples themselves were increasingly making their way to the imperial metropolis; to 1911, when the British Empire was portrayed as a family but where the first stirrings of colonial nationalism were evident.¹¹¹ Beneath the surface, a continuing process of contestation and negotiation took place, as organisers, visitors and commentators, both in Britain and in its colonies, struggled to articulate and refine the relationship between Britain and its Empire.

But the imperial exhibits at the Crystal Palace from 1851 to 1911 also illustrate changing techniques of display. Between these years, the imperial presence at the Crystal Palace grew in size, as a portion of the overall collection of goods being exhibited, as well as in height (the Abu Simbel figures in Sydenham) and scale (the recreated parliament

buildings and villages at the 1911 Empire exhibition). The exhibitions also became more lifelike and theatrical, increasingly seeking to entertain and amuse, and not simply to educate. They became spectacles, bridging high and popular culture, moving inexorably away from raw materials and manufactured goods to living simulacra that not only took on a freak-show quality that bolstered Britain's sense of superiority but blurred the lines between metropole and periphery by bringing the recreated and miniaturised empire to the imperial centre.¹¹² In this respect, the imperial exhibitions that were held 'under glass' between 1851 and 1911 encapsulate British efforts to control and contain the Empire. Yet by 1911, it had become clear that the Empire had grown far too large to be enclosed in glass, but was now spilling over on to the adjacent grounds, just as it was beginning to burst the bonds that had held it together for so long.¹¹³

Notes

- 1 Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 100–2; Jeffrey A. Auerbach, 'The Great Exhibition and Historical Memory', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 6 (2001), pp. 89–112; Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 52–9; Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), p. 8; Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian Britain: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851–1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 40; Tim Barringer, 'Imperial Visions', in John M. MacKenzie (ed.), *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain* (London: V&A Publications, 2001), p. 321; P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 14–15; Carol Breckenridge, 'The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World Fairs', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 (1989), pp. 195–216.
- 2 Sadiya Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 199–201.
- 3 For a broad overview of these 'human showcases', see Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, pp. 82–111.
- 4 Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, pp. 23–4, 27–31.
- 5 *The Times*, 18 October 1849, 26 January 1850, 22 March 1850; *Illustrated London News*, 28 June 1851.
- 6 *Collection of Printed Documents and Forms used in carrying on the Business of the Exhibition of 1851*, 8 vols (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1853), vol. 2, p. 283.
- 7 Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, pp. 54–88.
- 8 *Illustrated London News*, 18–25 October and 6 December 1851.
- 9 *Illustrated London News*, 3 May 1851.
- 10 *Illustrated London News*, 8 March 1851, 22 March 1851.
- 11 *Illustrated London News*, 10 May 1851, 14 June 1851.
- 12 *Illustrated London News*, 3 May 1851.
- 13 See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), and, more generally, James Buzard, 'Conflicting Cartographies: Globalism, Nationalism, and the Crystal Palace Floor Plan', in James Buzard, Joseph W. Childers and Eileen Gillo-

- oly (eds), *Victorian Prism: Refractions of the Crystal Palace* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2007), pp. 40–50.
- 14 *Dickinsons' Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851* (London: Dickinson Brothers, 1854), II(1), Frontispiece.
- 15 *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, 3 vols (London: Spicer Brothers, 1851).
- 16 See David Arnold, *The Tropics and the Traveling Gaze: India, Landscape, and Science, 1800–1856* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2006), pp. 162–6, for an interesting discussion of how Forbes's personal commitment to botany fitted with his East India Company service. More broadly, see Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the 'Improvement' of the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000). On Orientalism and nineteenth-century exhibitions, see Timothy Mitchell, 'The World as Exhibition', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 (1989), pp. 217–36.
- 17 *Illustrated London News*, 4 October 1851. See also Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display*, p. 159.
- 18 *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, pp. 857–937.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 988.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 857. See also J. Forbes Royle, *On the Culture and Commerce of Cotton in India* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1851); British Library, India Office Records, E/4/803, India and Bengal Dispatches, 7 January 1850; Ray Desmond, *The India Museum* (London: HMSO, 1982).
- 21 *Illustrated London News*, 10 May 1851; Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- 22 The display was depicted in the *Illustrated London News*, 31 May 1851, though without the gold cage.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 17 May 1851. James Tennant, in his lecture on gems and precious stones at the Society of Arts on 24 March 1852, similarly concluded that the diamond 'disappointed' many of those who saw it. See 'On Gems and Precious Stones', in *Lectures on the Results of the Great Exhibition of 1851 delivered before the Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce*, second series (London: David Bogue, 1853), p. 80.
- 24 Lara Kriegel, 'Narrating the Subcontinent in 1851: India at the Crystal Palace', in Louise Purbrick (ed.), *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 168.
- 25 'A Few Words upon Canada', *Illustrated London News*, 21 June 1851.
- 26 *Illustrated London News*, 21 June 1851.
- 27 *Dickinsons' Comprehensive Pictures*, 'West Indies'.
- 28 *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, pp. 988–92. For New Zealand, see Amiria J.M. Henare, *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 148–53.
- 29 John Tallis, *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace and the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851*, 2 vols (London: John Tallis & Co., 1852), vol. 1, p. 53.
- 30 *Ibid.*; Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display*, pp. 129–65.
- 31 *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, pp. 998–9.
- 32 *Illustrated London News*, 24 May 1851.
- 33 See Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, 2nd edn (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), and Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific: In the Wake of Cook's Voyages* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1993).
- 34 *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, p. 992.
- 35 *Illustrated London News*, 10 May 1851.
- 36 Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2004); John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich (eds), *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2003).
- 37 *Dickinsons' Comprehensive Pictures*, India No. 1, India No. 4, Turkey No. 2.

- 38 *Art Union* 29 (1851), p. 1845.
- 39 The difficulties the British had governing their Empire are legendary. For a suggestive overview, see Ged Martin, 'Was There a British Empire?', *Historical Journal* 15 (1972), pp. 562–9; Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993), pp. 1–9.
- 40 *Illustrated London News*, 31 May 1851.
- 41 Edward Ziter, *The Orient on the Victorian Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 110.
- 42 Kate Flint, 'Exhibiting America: The Native American and the Crystal Palace', in James Buzard, Joseph W. Childers and Eileen Gillooly (eds), *Victorian Prism: Refractions of the Crystal Palace* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2007), pp. 171–85.
- 43 Thomas Onwhyn, *Mr and Mrs John Brown's Visit to London to see the Great Exhibition of All Nations* (London: Ackerman, [1851]).
- 44 The Royal Commission estimated that 60,000 foreigners came to London in 1851, approximately half of them from France. See Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, pp. 185–6; Royal Commission for the Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, *First Report* (London: William Clowes & Sons for HMSO, 1852), pp. 112–14.
- 45 *The Times*, 2 May 1851.
- 46 Henrietta Ward, *Memories of Ninety Years* (New York: H. Holt, 1925), p. 63.
- 47 *Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue* (London: George Virtue, 1851), p. 85.
- 48 On the early finances of the Crystal Palace Company, see Henry Atmore, 'Utopia Limited: The Crystal Palace Company and Joint-Stock Politics, 1854–1856', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 9 (2004), pp. 189–215.
- 49 For contrasting reviews of the arts courts, see Harriet Martineau, 'The Crystal Palace', *Westminster Review* 62 (1854), pp. 534–50, and Elizabeth Eastlake, 'The Crystal Palace', *Quarterly Review* 96 (1855), pp. 303–54, both of which focus on the nature of aesthetics and the need for aesthetic elevation through civic training and educational reform.
- 50 J.R. Piggott, *Palace of the People: The Crystal Palace at Sydenham 1854–1936* (London: Hurst & Company, 2004), p. 67.
- 51 *The Crystal Palace Exhibitor* (London: James S. Virtue, 1854), p. 143.
- 52 Samuel Phillips, *Guide to the Crystal Palace and Park* (London: Crystal Palace Library and Bradbury and Evans, 1854), p. 39.
- 53 Owen Jones, 'On the Influence of Religion', in *Lectures on Architecture and the Decorate Arts* (London: Strangeways & Walden, 1863), p. 7.
- 54 Phillips, *Guide to the Crystal Palace*, p. 52.
- 55 *The Crystal Palace Expositor*, p. 6.
- 56 Piggott, *Palace of the People*, p. 75. For an analysis of the Nineveh Court in relation to Baudrillard's theories about simulation, see Shawn Malley, *From Archaeology to Spectacle in Victorian Britain: The Case of Assyria, 1845–1854* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 127–60.
- 57 William Michael Rossetti, 'The Epochs of Art as Represented in the Crystal Palace (from *The Spectator*, 1854)', in *Fine Art, Chiefly Contemporary: Notes Re-Printed with Revisions* (London: Macmillan, 1867), p. 53. See also Natasha Eaton, *Colour, Art and Empire: Visual Culture and the Nomadism of Representation* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2013), pp. 77–94.
- 58 Owen Jones, 'On the Decorations Proposed for the Exhibition Building in Hyde Park', in *Lectures*, p. 4.
- 59 In 1887, Lewis F. Day wrote that *The Grammar of Ornament* marked 'a turning point in the history of English ornament'. See *British Art: Art Journal Royal Jubilee Number* (London: Virtue, 1887), pp. 187–8.
- 60 *Guide to the Ten Chief Courts of the Sydenham Palace* (London: Routledge, 1854), p. 25.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p. 116.
- 62 *Art Journal* 3 (1 March 1857), p. 95.

- 63 Samuel Leigh Sotheby, *A Few Words by way of a Letter Addressed to the Directors of the Crystal Palace Company* (London: John Russell Smith, 1855), p. 20.
- 64 James Fergusson, *The Palaces of Nineveh and Persepolis Restored* (London: John Murray, 1851), p. 6.
- 65 Rossetti, 'The Epochs of Art', p. 80.
- 66 *Athenaeum*, 10 July 1852, p. 751.
- 67 Piggott, *Palace of the People*, p. 77.
- 68 *Athenaeum*, 10 July 1852, pp. 814–15.
- 69 *Crystal Palace Herald*, November 1855, p. 100.
- 70 Piggott, *Palace of the People*, p. v.
- 71 See Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London: A Panoramic History of Exhibitions, 1600–1862* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978); Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*; Coco Fusco, 'The Other History of Intercultural Performance', in Coco Fusco, *English Is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas* (New York: New Press, 1995), pp. 41–3.
- 72 See, for example, Henry Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa, in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806*, trans. Anne Plumtre, 2 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1812), p. 196. On Latham and the Crystal Palace ethnological display, see Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, pp. 194–221; Sadiya Qureshi, 'Robert Gordon Latham, Displayed Peoples and the Natural History of Race, 1854–1866', *Historical Journal* 54 (2011), pp. 143–66; Efram Sera-Shriar, 'Ethnology in the Metropole: Robert Knox, Robert Gordon Latham and Local Sites of Observational Training', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 42 (2011), pp. 486–96.
- 73 R.G. Latham and E. Forbes, *A Hand Book to the Courts of Natural History* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1854); *Punch* 27 (1854), pp. 8–9.
- 74 Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, p. 201.
- 75 Paul Smith, *Disraeli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 163–4.
- 76 *Illustrated London News*, 20 May 1911.
- 77 *The Times*, 5 May 1911; *Festival of Empire Imperial Exhibition Pageant of London 1911* (Crystal Palace, 1911), p. 7.
- 78 *The Times*, 12–13 May 1911. Lord Plymouth conveyed to *The Times* that he had 'some doubt as to whether the aims and intentions of those of who worked for the success of the Festival of Empire and the Pageant of London are fully understood'.
- 79 *Souvenir of Royal Visit to the Festival of Empire, Imperial Exhibition and Pageant of London Crystal Palace, Coronation Year 1911* (London: Bemrose, 1911), p. 5; Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781–1997* (New York: Random House, 2007), p. 256.
- 80 Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain, 1876–1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 181–2.
- 81 J. Forbes Watson, *The Imperial Museum for India and the Colonies* (London: Wm H. Allen, 1876); Watson, letter to *The Times*, 9 June 1874. On the relative lack of interest in empire, see Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*. The 1886 exhibition also built on the successes of the 1879 Sydney Exhibition, which was held at a large, purpose-built exhibition building called The Garden Palace that was a reworking of London's Crystal Palace (although it was comprised predominantly of wood, brick and iron), and the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition, which heralded the city's emergence as an industrial metropolis and Australia's move towards self-rule government and federation.
- 82 Watson, *The Imperial Museum*, pp. 8–10.
- 83 The best discussion of the colonial role in exhibitions is Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display*.
- 84 *The Art Journal, Colonial and Indian Exhibition Supplement* (1886).
- 85 Frank Cundall (ed.), *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1886), pp. 26, 81.
- 86 *Illustrated London News*, 29 May 1886, p. 586. See also 'The Queen's Visit to the South Australian Court', *Illustrated London News*, 29 May 1886, p. 575.
- 87 *The Times*, 21 July 1872, 25 July 1908.

- 88 Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, pp. 202–3.
- 89 *Illustrated London News*, 15 June 1895; Carl Hagenbeck, *East African Village and Great Display of Natives of Somaliland* (Sydenham: Crystal Palace Company, 1895); Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, p. 116. Carl Hagenbeck (1844–1913) was a German merchant of wild animals who supplied many European zoos, as well as P.T. Barnum. He helped create the modern zoo by designing animal enclosures without bars that resembled the animals' natural habitats. He was also a pioneer in displaying humans. On the display of Africans in late nineteenth-century Britain, see Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), esp. pp. 85–97.
- 90 Neil Parsons, *King Khama, Empire Joe, and the Great White Queen: Victorian Britain through African Eyes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 28.
- 91 *The Times*, 12 October 1904.
- 92 John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 106–7.
- 93 Michael Musgrave, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 212; Richards, *Imperialism and Music*, pp. 186–7.
- 94 Nigel Burton, 'Festival of Empire', *History Today* 52 (2002), pp. 2–3.
- 95 Richards, *Imperialism and Music*, pp. 180–1.
- 96 *Indian Court: Festival of Empire 1911: Guide Book and Catalogue* (London: Bemrose and Sons, [1911]).
- 97 Robert Rhodes James (ed.), *Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches, 1897–1963*, 8 vols (London: Bowker, 1974), vol. 7, p. 6920.
- 98 *Souvenir of Royal Visit to the Festival of Empire*, p. 5.
- 99 *Festival of Empire Imperial Exhibition Pageant of London 1911*, p. 7. On this point see Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*.
- 100 *The Times*, 7 July 1911.
- 101 *The Times*, 28 March 1911.
- 102 Deborah S. Ryan, 'The Pageant of London, 1911', in Felix Driver and David Gilbert (eds), *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 119, 124; Richards, *Imperialism and Music*, p. 188. See also H.V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), esp. pp. 141–97.
- 103 M. Baxter, 'An Imperial Triumph', in Earl of Darnley (ed.), *Frank Lascelles: Our Modern Orpheus* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 50.
- 104 *Festival of Empire: The Pageant of London, May to October, 1911: Pageant Programme* (London: Bemrose, 1911), Parts I–IV; Richards, *Imperialism and Music*, p. 188; Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 151–3.
- 105 Ryan, 'The Pageant of London, 1911', pp. 117, 127–8. On London as the 'heart of empire', see Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998); Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). The term was also widely used in the decade before the exhibition. See Charles Masterman, *The Heart of the Empire: Discussions of Problems of Modern City Life in England* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901).
- 106 Piggott, *Palace of the People*, p. 178.
- 107 See Daniel Stephen, *The Empire of Progress: West Africans, Indians, and Britons at the British Empire Exhibition, 1924–25* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- 108 Ian Johnstone (ed.), *Glasgow's Greatest Exhibition: Recreating the 1938 Empire Exhibition* (Edinburgh: RIAS, 2008); Perilla and Juliet Kinchin, *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions, 1888, 1901, 1911, 1938, 1988* (Wendlebury: White Cockade, 1988); John M. MacKenzie, 'The Second City of the Empire: Glasgow – Imperial Municipality', in Felix Driver and David Gilbert (eds), *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and*

- Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 215–37.
- 109 Stanley Wolpert, *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine: Retreat from Mandate: The Making of British Policy 1936–45* (London: Paul Elek, 1978).
- 110 Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, pp. 220–7; Becky Conekin, *The Autobiography of a Nation: The 1951 Festival of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).
- 111 See Schneer, *London 1900*, and Burton, *At the Heart of Empire*.
- 112 According to the postmodernist French theorist Jean Baudrillard, a simulacrum is not a copy of the real, but becomes truth in its own right. See *Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 166–84.
- 113 For a Foucauldian analysis of the relationship between exhibition and confinement, containment and control, see Tony Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *New Formations* 4 (1988), pp. 73–102.