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### **Exhibiting India in Nineteenth-Century Scotland and the Impact on Commerce, Industry and Popular Culture**

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## **EXHIBITING INDIA IN NINETEENTH CENTURY SCOTLAND AND THE IMPACT ON COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND POPULAR CULTURE**

It is commonly observed that the 'colonist is an exhibitor' and there were no more extravagant exhibitors than the British in India in the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The Indian empire was marked by the creation of a sense of empire authority and culture through great government buildings, processional gates and arches, statues and ceremonials that culminated in a series of 'durbars', ritual installations of royal and government officials before the assembled masses of local elites, that equalled the splendour of anything seen in Britain.<sup>2</sup> The Scots, as prominent players in the British colonizing enterprise, were major participants in empire exhibiting and in some respects what was seen abroad was similar to some of the spectacles of Anglo-Scottish Britishness that took place in Scotland in the early nineteenth century, as with the 'tartan' parading of loyal clansmen that accompanied George IV's first visit to Edinburgh in 1822. Such spectacles attracted massive audiences, they were reported widely in the press and they were captured by artists on canvas for public exhibition and by illustrators or photographers for reproduction in popular magazines. Spectacles like these were also important economic stimuli, as in Scotland in 1822 at the time of the royal visit, when the fashion demand for tartan accelerated sharply, remaining high for years and sustaining a sector of the textile industry that had languished since the collapse of the military market at the end of the Napoleonic wars.<sup>3</sup> This essay explores one aspect of nineteenth-century exhibition-of-empire culture – focussed on exhibitions of India in

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<sup>1</sup> M. Jasanoff, 'Collectors of empire: Objects, conquests and imperial self-fashioning.' *Past and Present*, 184 (2004) pp.109-136.

<sup>2</sup> D. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London, 2001); J. M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester, 1995); S. Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley, 2007); P. H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley, 2001); A. Burton, *At the Heart of Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian England* (Berkeley, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> S. Tuckett, 'National dress, gender and Scotland, 1745-1822.' *Textile History*, 40.2 (2009) pp. 140-51.

Scotland – and considers the impact and implications for developments in Scottish commercial activity and on industry, industrial design and more broadly in the sphere of popular culture.<sup>4</sup> It argues that Scottish-India ‘exhibiting’, in its various manifestations, which arose from a competitive ‘booster’ agenda among elites in Edinburgh and Glasgow and was manifested in subtly different ways to the equivalent phenomena in London or provincial England, was intimately connected with economic aspirations, illustrated here with reference to the textile industry and to changes in the character of craft production in Scotland.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, in the process of ‘domesticating the exotic’ for the homeland audience, India exhibitions reflected and shaped distinctive features of Scottish social experience, providing a platform for the articulation of a Scottish cultural identity that crossed the class divide, uniting elites, middle class and masses alike in a popular preoccupation with imperial triumphalism, exoticism, fantasy and romance.<sup>6</sup>

The aesthetic and semiotic potency of nineteenth-century exhibitions has generated much scholarly interest in recent times, mainly focussed on the metropolitan experience, while provincial and regional exhibitions in Britain or elsewhere in Europe have been largely overlooked.<sup>7</sup> The exception is Manchester whose competitive responses to the Great Exhibition of 1851, coupled with a politically-motivated desire

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<sup>4</sup> The essay arises from a Royal Society of Edinburgh/Scottish Government funded project titled ‘Colouring the Nation. Turkey Red and other Fancy Textiles in Scotland’s Culture and Global Impact.’ For further information see project website at - [www.colouringthenation.wordpress.com](http://www.colouringthenation.wordpress.com).

<sup>5</sup> For background discussion of the relationship between exhibition and government economic concerns, mainly with reference to London and design reform, see, L. Kriegal, *Grand Designs: Labour, Empire and the Museum in Victorian Culture* (London, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> My theoretical approach is informed by J. Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* (London, 1968); P. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York, 1993); A. Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1988). See also, J. Sattaur, ‘Thinking objectively: An overview of ‘Thing Theory’ in Victorian Studies.’ *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 40.1 (2012) pp. 347-57.

<sup>7</sup> T. Renard, ‘The provinces and the world.’ Unpublished paper circulated at the European Association for Urban History Conference, Prague, August 2012. Session S16 ‘Great Exhibitions and Cities on the Move: A Comparative Perspective.’

amongst its manufacturing elites to establish the city as a center for high culture as well as economic clout, resulted in a flurry of exhibitions and cultural institution formation from the mid 1850s.<sup>8</sup> Scotland, which is little studied, differed from north-west England in having a capital city whose political and professional elites had long engaged in overt cultural display and in having a great commercial city that competed with the capital for economic and cultural status.<sup>9</sup> Exhibitions of India and Indian goods were also distinct in Scotland when compared with provincial England because of the unique characteristics of Scottish imperial engagement.

The early relationship with India was mostly defined by the activities of the East India Company, where Scottish soldiers and officials had long been prominent in numbers and achievements, driven in their thousands to hazard the risks of life in India by the relative lack of opportunities at home for young men who were mainly the sons of the lesser gentry and middle classes.<sup>10</sup> East India company service placed many Scots in positions where they could accumulate the riches of empire for sending back to Scotland. The material culture of India, reflected in food, dress and sometimes also in servants, was particularly apparent among the nabobs – wealthy returnees from India who had ‘gone

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<sup>8</sup> S. Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2000); J. Seed and J. Woolf, eds., *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power and the Nineteenth Century Middle Class* (New York, 1988).

<sup>9</sup> Two features of Glasgow’s cultural life are worth highlighting here, both connected with the University. The first is the Academy of Fine Arts (1753-76) created by the Foulis brothers, which included art and craft training and exhibition and preceded the Royal Academy in London. The second is the opening of the spectacular Hunterian collection of art and artefacts in 1807, the finest museum in Britain at the time after the British Museum and Ashmolean, which included India specimens. P. Black, ed., *“My Highest Pleasures.” William Hunter’s Art Collections* (Glasgow, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> J. M. MacKenzie and T. M. Devine, eds., *Scotland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2011), esp. ch. 2; M. Fry, *The Dundas Despotism* (Edinburgh, 1992); William Dalrymple, *White Mughals. Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (London, 2002). S. Nenadic, ‘Military men, businessmen and the ‘business’ of patronage in eighteenth-century London.’ In S. Nenadic, ed., *Scots in London in the Eighteenth Century* (Lewsbury, 2010) pp. 229-252.

native' – a social type that was numerous in Scotland as elsewhere in Britain and is described in Scottish popular fiction of the 1820s by Susan Ferrier in her novel *The Inheritance*, by John Galt, writing about provincial life in Ayrshire where in several novels the nabob features as an industrial investor, and by Walter Scott, most famously in his novella *The Surgeon's Daughter*, published in 1827, which describes Scottish medical experience in India by an author whose brother had died in 'company' service.<sup>11</sup> Compared with English 'nabobs', Scottish India returnees, reflecting a local culture of restraint,<sup>12</sup> were not so frequently criticised for excessive conspicuous consumption and, as Galt accurately noted, many gravitated towards industrial investment, particularly where they had existing family interests in areas like bleaching and dying.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Scottish 'company' men, including soldiers, were avid recorders and collectors of botanical specimens, an interest that was both scientific and economic in motivation.<sup>14</sup> Of course, military exploits in India brought celebrity to some Scots, including David Baird (1757-1829) from Haddingtonshire, whose long service in India was highlighted in 1799 when, as Major-General, he led the final assault on Srirangapatam, defeating and killing Tipoo Sultan, the ruler of Mysore, which marked a famous victory for Britain. War booty from India was acquired and traded in vast quantities, much of it making its way back to Britain for sale. It included such famed objects as 'Tipoo's tiger', a life-size mechanical toy shown mauling to death a man in European uniform, initially displayed in London in the East India Company's own premises, and personal relics from Tipoo himself, such as an armband worn in battle

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<sup>11</sup> See also, T. W. Nechtman, *Nabobs, Empire and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 2010); M. Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> For the Scottish critique, see *The Lounger*, XLIV (3 December, 1785) pp. 173-6. The magazine was published in Edinburgh and this and several other essays critical of 'nabob' luxury and lack of responsibility was penned by the editor, and celebrated novelist, Henry Mackenzie.

<sup>13</sup> A. Mackillop, 'Locality, nation and empire: Scots in Asia, c. 1695-c.1813.' In Mackenzie and Devine, eds. *Scotland and the British Empire*.

<sup>14</sup> An example is furnished by Lieut-Colonel William Gordon Mackenzie, whose diaries for 1804-10 list the vegetation and plants he observed while travelling for the EIC. National Library of Scotland, MS.6372.

and removed from the Sultan's body. This garment, which included talismanic objects to 'protect' the ruler in battle, was taken by one of Baird's officers and sent to Scotland.<sup>15</sup> Ancient Koranic texts and documents from Tipoo's great library were also seized by soldiers and officials, with many gifted to Scottish universities in the early decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup>

### **Collecting and Exhibiting India before the Great Exhibitions**

Early Scots in India, mainly by virtue of their numbers, were significant collectors of Indian goods - as relicts of war, as part of a broader scholarly interest in Indian culture and history and with the hope of exploiting the economic potential that India represented. Many collections and objects were sent to Scotland for display through private societies or exhibitions in private houses.<sup>17</sup> Private displays before the start of the 'great exhibition' movement and the parallel founding of public museums in Scotland, took place through the collecting activities of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, founded in Edinburgh in 1780.<sup>18</sup> A typical entry in the list of donations is 'An Indian Parasol and an Indian Spear, part of the plunder of Seringapatam', which was gifted by a Mrs Greig in January 1823, along with various Scottish antiquities.<sup>19</sup> Great country houses, which were visited by tourists, included India antiquities and representations, such as the portrait at Hamilton Palace of 'Sir William Fielding, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl

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<sup>15</sup> It is now in the Scottish National War Museum in Edinburgh Castle, displayed along with other artefacts celebrating Baird's career. See, National Museums Scotland. National War Museum. M.1960.272. Amulet, covered in brocaded silk, found on the body of Tipu Sultan in 1799. SCRAN online.

<sup>16</sup> See, for instance, University of Edinburgh Library Or Ms 148. 'Tipu's Koran' presented to the University in 1805 by the Directors of the EIC.

<sup>17</sup> For details and case illustrations, including Scottish country houses, see 'The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857' project website at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/research/eicah>

<sup>18</sup> B. Tessier, 'Asia in 18<sup>th</sup> century Edinburgh institutions: seen or unseen?' *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 134 (2004) pp. 499-556.

<sup>19</sup> *Archaeologia Scotica: Or Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. 3. (Edinburgh, 1831) pp. 104-5.

of Denbigh with an Indian servant', by Van Dyck (1633), which shows an early visitor to the Mughal court, wearing Indian dress. A gift from the sitter to the Duke of Hamilton, who was Denbigh's son-in-law, the portrait was hung in Hamilton Palace from 1643 to 1919.<sup>20</sup> Access to learned societies and to country house collections, was, however, the preserve of an exclusive elite, as Dorothy and William Wordsworth discovered in 1805 when turned away from Hamilton Palace by haughty servants who thought them insufficiently genteel to view the picture gallery.<sup>21</sup> For the ordinary public before the age of the great exhibition, the main source of visual display of ideas and images connected with India, and, indeed, with all parts of the globe and with all manner of spectacle, past and present, was the commercial panorama.

Panoramas, which were great painted scenes displayed 'in the round' with lighting effects and often also with musical accompaniments and printed companion guides, were invented in the late eighteenth century by Robert Barker, an Irishman living in Edinburgh, who soon moved to London to take advantage of the bigger market for his theatrical spectacles.<sup>22</sup> One of the first depicting an India theme, painted by Robert Ker Porter, a Scot, and titled 'The Great Historical Picture of the Storming of Seringapatam by the British Troops and their Allies', was exhibited in London in 1800 at Barker's Lyceum Theatre on the Strand, just a few months after the event it described. It then travelled to Edinburgh to capitalise on General Baird's celebrity as a local hero, before a national tour to other cities.<sup>23</sup> The first half of nineteenth century saw several Indian war panoramas touring Britain, along with numerous depictions of other notable British

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<sup>20</sup> Hamilton Palace, A Virtual Reconstruction. <http://hamilton.rcahms.gov.uk/>

<sup>21</sup> D. Wordsworth, *Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland* (New Haven and London, 1997) p. 69.

<sup>22</sup> D. B. Olenksijczuk, *The First Panoramas: Visions of British Imperialism* (Minneapolis, 2011). On the technology and how it situated the viewer, see, W. Uricchio, 'A "proper point of view": The panorama and some of its early media iterations.' *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 9.3 (2011) pp. 225-238. For the broader context of Scottish visual entrepreneurs in London, including Barker, see, S. Nenadic, ed., *Scots in London in the Eighteenth Century* (Lewisburg, 2010) 'Introduction'.

<sup>23</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum, London: E.572-1926. SCRAN online.

theatres of war that acted as popular symbols of the country's overseas ambitions and conquests. They included, in September 1846, 'Twelve views, each 36 feet wide by 22 feet high, illustrative of the War and Triumphant Defeat of the SIKH ARMY of the PUNJAB.' The event was described by the exhibitor in Glasgow's Assembly Rooms in Ingram Street, as 'one of the most brilliant achievements of Modern Warfare', which had secured the 'power and stability of the British Government in India'. A 'full military band' accompanied the advertised viewings, which took place at hourly intervals in the afternoon and evening.<sup>24</sup>

Panoramas articulated military triumphalism for a popular audience eager for spectacle and excitement, but, in a rapidly globalizing economy that was focussed in Britain on its rising commercial cities, the panorama also communicated an increasingly positive and popular narrative on the imperial 'civilizing' mission abroad. So, in parallel with battle scenes, the 1830s witnessed a fashion for panoramas depicting the great cities of the world, including those in India where British occupation had shaped the modernising colonial townscape. In December 1831, for instance, as part of a show at the Rotunda on the Mound in Edinburgh that celebrated the recent coronation of William IV and Queen Adelaide, there was a panorama of 'the CITY OF MADRAS, in the East Indies, taken from the Lighthouse in Fort George...in which most of the public buildings and surrounding country are represented. The effect of the whole is considerably heightened by a Finger Organ, full Military Band, Drums, Trumpets &c.'<sup>25</sup> The message attached to these views of India was one where national pride and commercial potential were uppermost. By the 1850s, further new themes emerged, including a growing emphasis on the people and the landscape, which paralleled a trend, discussed below, of displays of living subjects against theatrical backdrops with a quasi-educational

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<sup>24</sup> *The Glasgow Herald*, 7 September, 1846.

<sup>25</sup> *The Scotsman*, 21 December, 1831.



purpose informed by published travel literature.<sup>26</sup> In Glasgow in November 1855 the paying public could view ‘an enchanting Diorama’ at the Princes Theatre, depicting the ‘over-land journey to India’ and offering ‘instruction’ for adults and children alike, ‘connected with geography, and the habits and manners of the Eastern races of people’. The latter included representations of craftsmen and agricultural production, which again highlighted commercial opportunity and emphasised the ‘industriousness’ of Indian people, which will have resonated positively with the mainly lower middle class and artisan audience in an age that celebrated the ‘Smilesian’ virtues of hard work.<sup>27</sup>

Many panoramas toured Great Britain, but not all were exhibited in all parts of the country, with local populations and economies acting to shape exhibitor’s tour strategies. India themes were popular in Scotland and in Glasgow in particular mid-century, but were less in evidence in Manchester and northwest England, whilst in Manchester and its locality there was more interest in America-themed panoramas than was apparent in Scotland. One of the first of the great American panoramas in Britain, Bavard’s ‘three-mile’ painting of the Mississippi River and its environs, which originated in New York, was exhibited in London in 1848, where it remained for over a year, before a brief showing in Edinburgh (but not Glasgow), and then on to Manchester and a tour of local cotton towns such as Rochdale, where it remained for two years.<sup>28</sup> Doubtless reflecting trends in Scottish migration and shipping, coupled with the export interests of the Glasgow engineering industry, the first showing of a north American panorama in Glasgow was not until 1875 when there were two during the New Year holidays - Gilard’s ‘Great American Panorama’ and ‘Bavard’s Mammoth Moving Mirror of Canada, United States, and British Columbia.’<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> On the latter, see S. Qureshi, ‘Peopling the landscape: Showmen, displayed peoples and travel illustration in nineteenth-century Britain.’ *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 10.1 (2012) pp. 23-36.

<sup>27</sup> *The Glasgow Herald*, 30 November, 1855.

<sup>28</sup> *The Scotsman*, 23 February 1850; *The Manchester Times*, 17 March, 1852.

<sup>29</sup> *The Glasgow Herald*, 31 December, 1875.

Panoramas, dioramas, which were a near relation of the panorama, and also domestic stereoscopic photographs, remained popular throughout the century, and in Scotland as elsewhere were complex and powerful geo-political and nation-building visual devices exploited by entrepreneurs for varying purposes.<sup>30</sup> In the first half of the nineteenth century, the growing emphasis on Indian manners, work and commerce within an aesthetically appealing landscape acted to domesticate and normalise the experience of the exotic for popular audiences in Scotland who had neither the resources nor the time to purchase and read travel literature, but who were interested in Britain's encounters with the world because for many they had family and friends in India or because they worked in sectors of the home economy that had commercial connections with India.<sup>31</sup> Developments in popular visual culture in Scotland were matched by parallel trends in collecting and exhibition which moved beyond the acquisition and display of war booty to a distinctive and sustained Scottish engagement with India's industrial and commercial potential, which drew particularly on the interests of a group of Scottish medical professionals who served as East India Company surgeons.<sup>32</sup>

Scottish born or educated 'company' surgeons played a major role in developing commercial links with India, and they also collected India materials for sending to Scotland. Their interests were focussed initially on plant collecting, an unsurprising specialism given the emphasis on botany in Scottish medical training and the existence in Scotland of several important botanical gardens.<sup>33</sup> The shift from botanical medicine to the manufacturing potential of plants such as cotton or jute evolved swiftly, as did

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<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, G. Iversen, 'Inventing the nation: Diorama in Norway 1880-1894.' *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 9.2 (2011) pp. 123-129. D. Harkett, 'Illusions of power: The diorama and the royalist press in restoration Paris.' *Visual Resources: An International Journal of Documentation*, 22.1 (2006) pp. 33-52.

<sup>31</sup> Quereshi, 'Peopling the landscape.'; N. Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840* (Oxford, 2002); M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturalization* (London, 1992).

<sup>32</sup> On personal collecting see, J. Potvin and A. Myzelev, eds., *Material Cultures, 1740-1920. The Meaning and Pleasures of Collecting* (Aldershot, 2009).

<sup>33</sup> H. J. Noltie, 'A botanical group in Lahore, 1864.' *Archives of Natural History*, 38.2 (2011) pp. 267-277.

their willingness to engage in other areas of collecting on behalf of British institutions, notably for the India Museum in the East India Company premises in London, which was founded in 1801 and later incorporated into the Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>34</sup> In the 1850s, a prominent collector on behalf of the evolving Edinburgh Industrial Museum was Dr Alexander Hunter of Madras, founder of the Madras School of Industrial Arts, which promoted industrial design. It is possibly drawings from the students at this school that were sent to Edinburgh as a gift for the new museum, described as ‘an interesting series of native East-Indian designs for dresses, wall-papers, floor-decoration, &c., furnished by Dr Hunter of Madras.’<sup>35</sup> The most famous Scottish military-medical collector in India was John Forbes Watson (1827-92), son of an Aberdeen farmer, trained at Aberdeen University, who served with the Bombay Medical Service in the 1850s before returning to Britain where he took up the role of Reporter on the Products of India and Director of the India Museum, in succession to J. F. Royle, another Scot.<sup>36</sup> Forbes Watson was the editor of one of the first photographic collections of Indian ethnographical portraits and scenes.<sup>37</sup> He also advanced the textiles industry in India and Britain through the creation in the 1860s of eighteen-volume sets of albums containing hundreds of mounted samples of Indian-made craft textiles for distribution to manufacturing centres in Britain and the colonies, in order to provide information and inspiration for designers and producers.<sup>38</sup> Described as a ‘trade museum’, sets of these volumes were sent by Forbes Watson to Edinburgh in 1862 for the Industrial Museum collection, as part of a ‘large contribution of articles illustrating the customs

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<sup>34</sup> R. Desmond, *The India Museum 1801-1879* (London, 1982).

<sup>35</sup> *The Scotsman*, 27 July, 1859. For background see, P. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922* (Cambridge, 1994).

<sup>36</sup> *The British Medical Journal*, 13 August, 1892, p. 391. Obituary.

<sup>37</sup> J. F. Watson and J. W. Kaye, *The People of India. A Series of Photographic Illustrations* (London, 1868) 8 vols.

<sup>38</sup> F. Driver and S. Ashmore, ‘The mobile museum. Collecting and circulating Indian textiles in Victorian Britain.’ *Victorian Studies* 52.3 (2010) pp. 353-384.

and manufactures of India'.<sup>39</sup> In Glasgow, the Forbes Watson 'trade museum' was received by the Chamber of Commerce in 1866 on condition that it 'provide for the permanent protection of the work by placing it in the charge of a proper and responsible person .. in a suitable building [and] to afford the requisite facilities for consulting the work, subject, however, to the condition that under no circumstances shall any of the volumes be removed for purposes of exhibition or reference.'<sup>40</sup> Access to the collection, which was later housed in the Kelvingrove Museum, required a signed order from the Chairman or Secretary. Watson's predecessor at the India Museum, Edinburgh-educated Dr John Forbes Royle, another East India Company surgeon, was also interested in botany and manufacturing, and produced a report *On the Exhibition of Raw Products and Manufactured Articles from India* in 1849, as well as researching the cultivation and manufacture of cotton in India.<sup>41</sup> Both Royle and Watson contributed to the development of a new exhibition phenomenon, the Museum of Ornamental Art, which was founded in London in 1852 with the intention of stimulating design reform in Britain.<sup>42</sup>

Inspired by the Museum of Ornamental Art and building also on the Great Exhibition of 1851, the formation of the Industrial Museum of Scotland in 1854 provided a permanent public institution for acquiring and displaying artefacts associated with India, as well as other places, though the initial aims of the museum were fluid. At an Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce Conversazione, held in February 1861 in the Hall of the Highland and Agricultural Society on George IV Bridge, there were several

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<sup>39</sup> *The Scotsman*, 16 August, 1862.

<sup>40</sup> *The Glasgow Herald*, 15 August, 1866.

<sup>41</sup> B. B. Woodward, 'Royle, John Forbes (1798–1858)', rev. Mark Harrison, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2010  
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24239>, accessed 19 July 2012]

<sup>42</sup> See, Kriegel, *Grand Designs*; For background see, J. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851. A Nation on Display* (London, 1990); J. A. Auerbach and P. H. Hoffenberg, eds, *Britain, the Empire and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851* (Ashgate, 2008)

presentations and heated discussion of 'The Objects and Probable Benefits of the Industrial Museum of Scotland.' The purpose, suggested by Thomas Archer, the director, included the demonstration of how raw materials are converted into the necessities and luxuries of life. The intention was to show not only the work of 'civilized man' but also to consider the works of the 'untutored savage' since, 'such contemplation often affords us useful hints for our improvement, and still more frequently suggests to us means whereby we can render to such children of nature the aids they most require and thus extend the blessings of civilization.'<sup>43</sup> The speech, recorded in *The Scotsman*, proceeded to detail Indian and Chinese examples of the works of 'untutored savages', including those supplied by Dr Hunter of Madras. Yet later in the same lengthy presentation, Professor Archer referred to other India goods supplied by Hunter as of 'beautiful design'. This ambiguity, along with the explicitly commercial dimension, underlined a tension that was inherent in most nineteenth-century exhibitions of India.

The exhibition activity of the Edinburgh Industrial Museum was paralleled by another initiative, the creation of a Scottish Art Manufacturers Association in 1855. This was again partly inspired by the Great Exhibition and the London Museum of Ornamental Art, but was also derived from a longer tradition of industrial exhibitions in Scotland, which began in the 1760s when a design school was first founded in Edinburgh, long before they existed in England, and continued through to 1840s under the auspices of the Scottish Board of Trustees for Manufacturers.<sup>44</sup> With the intention of encouraging and rewarding good design and manufacture in areas of production that were seen as particularly well suited to the Scottish industrial economy, these exhibitions were initially devoted to linen fabrics, but expanded to include woollen goods, carpets,

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<sup>43</sup> *The Scotsman*, 14 February, 1861.

<sup>44</sup> See, S. Nenadic, 'Industrialisation and the Scottish people.' In T. M. Devine and J. Wormald, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History* (Oxford, 2012) pp. 405-422. On English design reform from the 1830s, which saw the first founding of a design school in London and Manchester in the 1830's, see Kriegal, *Grand Designs*.

wallpapers and 'other articles of a decorative nature.'<sup>45</sup> By the 1840s, small exhibitions of manufactured and craft goods were held throughout Scotland, often organized by working men's associations, with prizes and bounties offered to the best exhibits, which were announced in the press. The 1857 exhibition of the Scottish Art Manufactures Association was held in the rooms of the National Galleries of Scotland during the winter months from November to January and came swiftly on the heels of the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of the same year. The latter, however, was mainly focussed on fine and aesthetic arts whilst the former was mainly for modern Scottish manufactures, but also included large quantities of India goods, modern and antique, such 'the miniature portraits of the old King of Delhi, and of his sons, who recently met the just punishment of their atrocities in the old capital of Northern India.' Also, 'brass work and lacquered work, and ivory-work, arms and textile fabrics produced by the patient toil of the Hindoo, and worn by Mohomedan masters, far more imperious and exacting than their present rulers have ever been charged with being and which are contributed by the East India Company.'<sup>46</sup> This tone of criticism of aspects of India was, of course, informed by the contemporary preoccupation with the Indian Mutiny and its aftermath and was out-of-step with most reporting of displays of India goods, as seen, for instance, at the first of the 'great' exhibitions in 1851. However, the stress on the 'patient toil of the Hindoo' pointed in a more positively nuanced direction similar to what was also seen in mid-century panoramas and in the later international exhibitions.

### **India at the Great Exhibitions**

The 'great' or international exhibition movement was a highly competitive articulation of national identity and aspirations for the future. It was a city focussed form of national and local boosterism, mostly devoted to industrial achievement and a celebration of new technologies, particularly electricity which was first displayed in Paris for the exhibition of 1881 and thereafter formed a focus at all events in the exhibition

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<sup>45</sup> *The Scotsman*, 25 September 25, 1885.

<sup>46</sup> *The Caledonian Mercury*, 30 November, 1857.

stands, in the travel infrastructure for reaching the exhibition sites and in the fairground entertainments.<sup>47</sup> Though driven by local agendas, all had international aspirations, as seen in advertising posters such as the one for Glasgow 1901, which represented the four corners of the earth in attractive female form.<sup>48</sup>

Exhibitions were complex economic phenomena – some highly successful as financial ventures, though many were not. The organizers made money by charging exhibitors for space rental, and exhibitors expected to profit by selling goods - though this was often strictly controlled - by taking orders for future supply, by advertising and by winning prizes, which were subsequently used in advertising. The cost of mounting a display could be considerable. The exhibition stand that was commissioned by Dunbartonshire Turkey red printed cotton manufacturer William Stirling & Sons was 15 feet wide, 20 feet deep and 13 feet high. It cost £175 to make (with the cost of transport and interior decoration added to that) and it was used in both the 1888 Glasgow exhibition and the year before at the Manchester Royal Jubilee Exhibition of 1887. Renting a space at the Manchester exhibition cost £50 and there were travel and accommodation costs for those who attended the displays during the run of the event, which lasted several months.<sup>49</sup> Commercial ventures which in their ordinary day-to-day existence were devoted to spectacle – as with departmental stores – took stands at the international exhibitions, often with exotic themes, such as that of Pettigrew and Stephens, with their ‘Moorish’ temple in Glasgow in 1901, which, somewhat incongruously, incorporated a display of Irish damask weaving and lacemaking girls.<sup>50</sup> A key to financial success for all concerned, and a feature of the booster propaganda that surrounded exhibitions, was

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<sup>47</sup> P. Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester, 1988).

<sup>48</sup> *International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art: Pen & Pencil Exhibition Number* (Glasgow, 1901). Front cover.

<sup>49</sup> Glasgow University Archives, UGD 13/5/13/6/7. Letter from Wm Hood of Manchester to John Christie, 6 June 1887.

<sup>50</sup> L. F. Day, ‘Decorative and industrial art at the Glasgow Exhibition.’ *Art Journal*, Sept. 1901, p. 273-277.

the capacity to attract visitors from the locality and beyond who paid for tickets for entry and purchased services, such as food and drink, once they were in the grounds. Although big industry and modern technology was conspicuous, this is not what the mass of a mainly working class audience mostly came to see. Rather they were seeking entertainment, spectacle, novelty and pleasure.<sup>51</sup>

Britain had twenty-two 'international' exhibitions in the second half of the nineteenth century. The first of these, at Crystal Palace in 1851, had extensive displays of Indian goods including raw materials, pottery, textiles, carpets, tribal dress, state carriages and stuffed elephants. It also included ethnological models showing craftsmen at work.<sup>52</sup> These displays, designed to 'glorify and domesticate' the British understanding of India, attracted wide interest among visitors and were illustrated in lavish commemorative volumes.<sup>53</sup> One of the main organizers was Edinburgh-educated Dr John Forbes Royle, East India Company surgeon. There were several further London exhibitions in the decades that followed, and Manchester entered the great exhibition arena in 1856, but the 1880s marked the highpoint in 'exhibition fever', and also saw the first events in Scotland. In London, there was an International Fisheries Exhibition in 1883, an 1884 exhibition of objects and displays connected with hygiene, another focussed on inventions in 1885 and the fourth, in 1886, devoted to the British colonies and India, all held in South Kensington. 1884 also saw an International Exhibition at Crystal Palace. In Edinburgh there was an International Fisheries Exhibition in 1882, an International Forestry Exhibition in 1884, and an International Exhibition focussed particularly on

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<sup>51</sup> See, P. Bailey, *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (Cambridge, 2003); P. Barlow and C. Trodd, eds., *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London* (Aldershot, 2000); V. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siecle Paris* (Berkeley, 1998).

<sup>52</sup> *Dickenson's Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851: From the Originals Painted for H.R.H. Prince Albert* (London, 1854).

<sup>53</sup> See, L. Kriegel, 'Narrating the sub-continent in 1851: India at the Crystal Palace,' in L. Purbrick, ed., *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Manchester, 2001).



innovations in electricity in 1886.<sup>54</sup> 1887 saw major exhibitions in Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle and 1888 saw the first of a series of Glasgow International Exhibitions.<sup>55</sup> There were similar events, large and small, in the major cities of Europe, Australia and the United States during the 1880s.

The Edinburgh International Fisheries Exhibition of 1882 was a mainly European occasion for a specialist industry audience and the popular appeal was limited.<sup>56</sup> But there were some cultural features with entertainment as their main objective, notably the Newhaven fishwives, with their striped 'kilted' petticoats, floral blouses and knitted shawls and fish baskets (or creels) on their backs, whose choirs also featured at the London Fisheries Exhibition the year before and at some of the Scandinavian exhibitions later in the century.<sup>57</sup> The 1884 International Forestry Exhibition held in the grounds of Donaldson's Hospital in the west of Edinburgh was devoted to another area of the Scottish economy – forestry and forest products – and was an important showcase for new scientific developments in domestic, particularly highland, forest planting and management, but was also driven by empire interests and included significant displays of Indian raw and manufactured forest products.<sup>58</sup> The import of Indian forest goods, particularly teak and rubber, was of growing importance for several areas of the later nineteenth-century British economy and was dominated by some of the great Scottish-founded international trading companies, such as Wallace Brothers & Co. of Calcutta.<sup>59</sup> Gutta percha, a latex from trees that was easily melted and formed a hard and durable

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<sup>54</sup> G. F. Crosbie, 'Notable Scottish exhibitions. Vanished palaces of the past.' *The Scotsman*, May 3 1939.

<sup>55</sup> P. Kinchin and J. Kinchin, *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions: 1888, 1901, 1911, 1938, 1988* (Wendlebury, n.d c.1988).

<sup>56</sup> D. Herbert, *Fish and Fisheries. A Selection from the Prize Essays of the International Fisheries Exhibition, Edinburgh, 1882* (Edinburgh, 1883). Preface.

<sup>57</sup> City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries: SECF ELO 0408.000. SCRAN online.

<sup>58</sup> J. Rattray and H. R. Mills, eds., *Forestry and Forest Products. Prize Essays of the Edinburgh International Forestry Exhibition, 1884* (Edinburgh, 1885).

<sup>59</sup> See company archives at, London Metropolitan Archives, GB 0074CLC/B/207-8.

substance when set, was, for instance, used for coating electric wires and also for making cheap buckles and buttons. So great was the British demand for forest goods, that the conservation of forests for future sustainability of supply became a major concern for Indian colonial governors.<sup>60</sup> As with other areas of botanical commercial exploitation in India, many of the early forest administrators in India were Scottish medical scientists, including Dr Hugh Cleghorn (1820-1895) physician and botanist, who catalogued forest products for the 1851 Great Exhibition and endowed a chair of forestry at Edinburgh University, which was one of the first in Britain.<sup>61</sup>

The Edinburgh 1886 exhibition, held on the Meadows, was the first of the 'spectacles' aimed at a mass audience and included historical displays as well as modern industry, but it was largely Scottish in its contents and was overshadowed by the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London.<sup>62</sup> There were few India products for viewing in Edinburgh, other than textiles for India and other empire markets, such as those of Robert Wemyss & Co, Manufacturers and Indigo dyers of Kirkcaldy, with their 'Blue linens (yarn dyed) warranted Indigo for English, Irish and Australian markets' and 'Bengals (stripes and checks) and blue linens for East and West Indies and South Africa.'<sup>63</sup> The Glasgow 1888 exhibition was altogether on a grander scale, explicitly designed to overshadow Edinburgh and building on the London and Manchester events of the previous two years. Indeed, the general manager, South African H. A. Hedley, had previously managed several major exhibitions in England. The India stands, which formed a

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<sup>60</sup> See, J. Tulley, 'A Victorian ecological disaster. Imperialism, the telegraph and gutta-percha.' *Journal of World History*, 20.4 (2009) pp. 559-79.

<sup>61</sup> P. Das, 'Hugh Cleghorn and forest conservancy in India.' *Environment and History*, 11 (2005) pp. 55-82. S. Ghosal, 'Pre-colonial and colonial forest culture in the Presidency of Bengal.' *Human Geographies*, 5 (2011) pp. 107-116.

<sup>62</sup> *Cameron's Guide Through the International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art (and Old Edinburgh), Opened 6 May 1886* (Edinburgh, 1886).

<sup>63</sup> *International Exhibition Catalogue* p. 93. Indigo is a plant product, and the best was imported from India.

significant part of the Glasgow event at a time when Indian markets dominated several local industries, such as Turkey red printed cottons, which are discussed below, included many displays and artefacts that had already been seen in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London in 1886, with a number of people involved in both events, including Caspar Purdon Clarke, a museum official then working for the South Kensington Museum. The Glasgow India displays were organized by John Muir, proprietor in the Glasgow firm of James Findlay & Co, manufacturers of cotton since the mid-eighteenth century, but at that stage in the company history moving into tea dealing and India plantation owning along with Jute manufacture in India.<sup>64</sup> John Muir, a sophisticated entrepreneur with an eye to new trends in mass consumption of India-produced goods, was a frequent visitor to India, and had been there in 1886 when arrangements were made with the Viceroy and several regional governors to identify and ship out a great array of 'art manufactures' for display in Glasgow. One of the Indian government officials involved in the selection of works for display was T. N. Mukharji, a Bengali civil servant who made collections for various India courts in the 1880s, including the 1883 Amsterdam Exhibition, the 1886 London exhibition and the exhibitions in both Glasgow and Melbourne in 1888. Mukharji was also a specialist botanical collector, who donated a vast collection of specimens, including dyes, to the National Museum of Victoria in 1887.<sup>65</sup> He wrote an extensive publication – *The Art Manufactures of India* – to accompany the Glasgow exhibition. He was also the author of a travel guide – *A Visit to Europe* (1889) – detailing his experience of visiting London for the 1886 exhibition. Contemporary reports of the Glasgow 1888 event make little mention of Mukharji's contributions.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Monica Clough, 'Muir family (per. 1849–1992)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2007 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52088>, accessed 19 July 2012]

<sup>65</sup> C. McKeich, 'Botanical fortunes. TN Mukharji, international exhibitions and the trade between India and Australia.' *reCollections: A Journal of Museums and Collections*, 3:1 (2008). Online.

<sup>66</sup> See, A. Burton, *At the Heart of Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian England* (Berkeley, 1998); A. Burton, 'Making a spectacle of Empire: Indian travellers in fin-de-siecle London.'

The Glasgow 1888 exhibition was striking for the presence of Indian craftsmen and shop workers as part of the displays, who were part of a contingent of workers also seen in London in 1886, though not in Manchester in 1887. This is how a contemporary described this first display of colonial artisans outside London:

The portion of the department which receives earliest attention from visitors is that reserved for the Indian artisans, a party of nine men engaged in various avocations. It lies to the west of the trio of courts and it has half a dozen stalls, such as are to be seen in an Oriental bazaar for the accommodation of the workmen. ... Four of the spaces are used as workshops and another serves the purpose of a salesroom, while the remaining one is a retiring apartment, concealed with a curtain, the design of which arrests notice. ....All [of the workmen] are natives of Bengal, with the exception of the two woodcarvers... and they appear in native costumes, which are at once becoming and comfortable....The walls of the courts have a warm tone imparted to them through being hung with brightly tinted carpets and native printed textiles, chiefly from Kashmir and the North-West Provinces, the great stretches of these being relieved with shields flanked by arms.... The recess at the back of the Bengal screen is converted into a stall, where Messrs Ardeshir and Byramji, Bombay, have a great variety of Indian goods for sale. In this place business is conducted by Mr Ardeshir, a Parsee, with two assistants of the same race.<sup>67</sup>

The Indian artisans comprised two woodcarvers, two potters, two jewellers and three confectioners and the goods that they produced on site were sold to visitors. The India section also included museum artefacts from various private and public Scottish

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*History Workshop Journal*, 42 (1996) pp. 127-46. J. Childers, 'Outside looking in: Colonials, immigrants and the pleasure of the archive.' *Victorian Studies* 46.2 (2004) pp. 297-307. Quereshi, *Peoples on Parade*, ch. 7.

<sup>67</sup> *The Scotsman*, 28 June, 1888.

collections to enhance its cultural credentials. The colourful exoticism, the smells and even the tastes of India clearly captivated visitors. In addition to the India court itself, the Glasgow 1888 exhibition had an extensive 'Indian Pavilion' mounted by Doulton & Co., the London-based manufacturer of pottery and ceramics (much of it for that new domestic luxury, the bathroom) which housed female potters making hand-thrown commemorative wares, some in India-influenced designs, for sale to the public.<sup>68</sup> Doulton had shown a version of the same pavilion the year before at the Manchester exhibition of 1887. As part of the Glasgow exhibition's extensive refreshments provision, India themes continued in the so-called Royal Bungalow, operated by a local licensee, which housed the Lucknow and Delhi rooms, and in the General Gordon buffet, serving Indian curries made by Indian cooks and waiters in traditional dress, along with Howell's oriental-styled tobacco kiosk and several India and Ceylon tea pavilions.<sup>69</sup>

Attractive young women staffed many exhibition displays. They were there as shop girls in the department store stands and the working machine sections included numerous female operatives engaged in such things as sweet and pastry making. Indeed, displays of living individuals making 'things' for purchase were dominated either by colonial 'natives' or by young women, each group acting as exhibition objects alongside the goods they made. It is striking that immediately opposite the main India craft displays and Indian workmen in Glasgow were the stands for home-based artisans and their crafts. This feature was first seen in Edinburgh in 1886 where the Artisan's Court, with 400 distinct displays, often just single items, with space given free of charge, was the largest in the exhibition as a whole, and ranged through wood carving and inlay, brass and metal work, clocks and jewellery. 'Women's Industries' sections of the Artisan's Courts of both Glasgow and Edinburgh included fine antique textiles, embroidery and tapestries lent by noble female patrons, and also middle class women who were part of the 'arts and crafts' movement, often with art college training, engaged in a range of

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<sup>68</sup> *Supplement to the North British Daily Mail*, 24 May, 1888. *The Glasgow Herald*, 23 August, 1888.

<sup>69</sup> Kinchin, *Glasgow's Exhibition*. p. 46.

craft production on site in ways that looked remarkably similar to the India pavilion. This is not surprising when you consider that the famous proponent of the British arts and crafts movement, William Morris, also supported the promotion of Indian 'art manufacture' as a moral good designed to protect the integrity of Indian culture.<sup>70</sup> In addition to middle-class female craft producers at the Scottish exhibitions and the Indian artisans making craft-goods for sale, there were the popular and widely photographed displays of Shetland knitting girls and Fair Isle weavers in native costume against a background of goods and furniture indigenous to those distant parts of Scotland, including, in Edinburgh, four giant whale jaw bones erected to form a structure to support a tent in which the knitting girls could sit.<sup>71</sup> Edinburgh 1886 was the first time that a working display of knitting girls had been mounted, though Shetland shawls had featured in international exhibitions since Crystal Palace in 1851, when the London retailers Standen & Co., who first introduced such goods to the metropolitan market, exhibited a white bridal veil with Turkey red borders.<sup>72</sup> This encouragement of such home-based industry was part of a bigger movement to generate income for women in distant rural areas and preserve local culture that had many parallels with the same movement in India.<sup>73</sup> In the process of encouraging such skill and industry, effected through the founding of craft training schools for girls, the granting of prizes and commercial quality control and marketing, emphasis was also developed, in

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<sup>70</sup> P. H. Hoffenberg, 'Promoting traditional Indian art at home and abroad. "The Journal of Indian Art and Industry", 1884-1917.' *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 37:2 (2004) pp. 192-213. J. Codell, 'Indian crafts and imperial policy. Hybridity, purification and imperial subjectives.' In Potvin and Myzelev, eds., *Material Cultures*, pp. 149-70.

<sup>71</sup> Shetland Museum and Archives NE04535. SCRAM online.

<sup>72</sup> Shetland Museum and Archives Photo No. 01398. SCRAM online.

<sup>73</sup> See, J. Helland, *British and Irish Home Arts and Industries, 1880-1914: Marketing Craft, Making Fashion* (Dublin, 2007).

Scotland much as in the Indian case, on the moral integrity of the village as a site of traditional values and purity of design preserved through craft work.<sup>74</sup>

The Glasgow 1888 exhibition was a highpoint for India displays in Scotland. Later international exhibitions here as elsewhere in Britain deployed other colonial and exotic novelties to attract the crowds, such as Zulu warriors in Glasgow in 1901, or, at the 1908 Scottish National Exhibition in Soughton Park in Edinburgh, a Senegalese village, which comprised seventy natives of French Senegal with their children, living and working in 'bee-hive' huts, who had also featured earlier in the same year at the Franco-British exhibition in London alongside other 'native' villages and their inhabitants, including Irish and highland Scottish examples.<sup>75</sup> By the 1890s, India goods and artisans were so familiar they generated limited comment. 'India goods are well represented at the stand of Messrs Bhungara, Framjee Pestangee & Co, London. They have a very fine display of carved ivory, sandalwood, and brass work, the special features of which are too well known to need description. And they have native workmen illustrating the process of wood carving.'<sup>76</sup> Also, as this quote suggests, India displays were now supplied by London-based Indian merchant companies, such as Ardeshir and Byramji of Bombay, who had extensive retail premises in Oxford Street and furnished most of the exhibition of goods for the Edinburgh International Exhibition of 1890, including embroidery, curtains, jewellery and silver plate.<sup>77</sup> Many London shops stocked Indian wares at the turn of the century, including the Regents Street department store, Liberty & Co., famous for popularising 'arts and crafts' design, which was a major importer and retailer of 'art manufactures' from India, Japan or the middle east of the sort that typically featured in great exhibitions.

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<sup>74</sup> A. McGowan, "'All that is rare, characteristic or beautiful": Design and the defense of tradition in colonial India, 1851-1903.' *Journal of Material Culture*, 10.3 (2005) pp. 263-86.

<sup>75</sup> See, S. Mathur, 'Living ethnological exhibits: The case of 1886.' *Cultural Anthropology*, 15.4 (2000) pp. 492-524. A. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siecle Europe* (Basingstoke, 2010).

<sup>76</sup> *The Scotsman*, 25 June, 1890.

<sup>77</sup> *The Scotsman*, 1 November, 1890.

### **Displays of India Goods in Scottish Shops and Bazaars**

Victorian shops, exhibitions and museums have long been associated with commercialised cultures of spectacle and display, with all deploying similar devices to captivate and inform their audiences.<sup>78</sup> The first major Scottish commercial sale of India goods took place in Edinburgh in February 1840 at the Hanover Street premises of auctioneers, C. B. Tait & Co. The goods for sale were described as ‘rare and costly articles of vertu, including superb Indian china jars, dessert dishes, plates etc...splendid Indian goods in card boxes, tea chests, richly cut ivory card cases and chessmen, gongs etc..several superb inlaid pearl cabinets.’ The auction comprised the bankrupt stock of what was described as ‘one of the most fashionable shops in the Kingdom’, presumed to be in London, and also included French and European luxuries and British-made plate and silverware.<sup>79</sup> It is not surprising that Edinburgh should have such a sale, or that it was considered worth moving such goods to Scotland rather than selling them in London since Edinburgh had a wealthy population that could purchase such commodities when available, many with personal or family connections with India service. Similar auctions featured from time-to-time throughout the century.

By the second half of the century there was considerable overlap between ‘great exhibitions’ with their elaborate displays of goods, much of it for sale, and displays in large shop premises. The main Glasgow store to stock such things and much more besides, was the Royal Polytechnic Warehouse, founded by John Anderson (1817-1892) in 1845 and occupying various premises in Glasgow’s central shopping district before finally settling in Argyle Street, where it continued trading into the 1920s.<sup>80</sup> The

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<sup>78</sup> T. Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (London, 1991).

<sup>79</sup> *The Scotsman* 29 February, 1840.

<sup>80</sup> F. Russell, ‘Anderson, John (1817–1892)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/58399>, accessed 19 July 2012]



Polytechnic Warehouse, claiming from its early advertising to be 'one of the sights of Glasgow',<sup>81</sup> employed almost 300 shop workers by the 1890s. In addition to retail sales in clothing, drapery and home wares, it had a restaurant and hosted popular events to attract customers, such as lectures, waxworks, exhibitions of various sorts and Christmas shows for children. Exotic merchandise was often sourced directly from great exhibitions, when display wares were sold off cheaply at the end of the event. So, in 1875, the Polytechnic Warehouse advertised 'a great sale of Indian, Chinese and Japanese exhibition goods....the greater part purchased from the Commissioners of the London and Vienna international exhibitions.' Among these goods were what were described as 'a large assortment of single Exhibition Articles...consisting of Articles that can only be seen in Exhibitions and Museums.' Fine Kashmir shawls, those most iconic, valuable and desirable objects of Indian craft production, headed the list.<sup>82</sup> This was long before the first of the Scottish international exhibitions and highlights the role of retail premises in providing information on India and on oriental luxuries more generally for a popular and particularly female audience.

Another sort of 'selling' exhibition that featured prominently in late nineteenth-century Scotland, notably in Edinburgh among elites and middle classes, was the fund-raising charity 'bazaar', which often included Indian themes and the name itself is, of course, Indian in origin.<sup>83</sup> A typical event of this sort was the Royal High School Athletic Club Bazaar held in the Music Hall in Edinburgh in December 1898, whose purpose was to raise funds to buy a new playing field. The earl of Aberdeen opened the bazaar and 'old boys' sent numerous goods for sale from overseas. The displays included 'over 300 curios and weapons' donated by Sir H. M. Nelson, former Premier of Queensland, and

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<sup>81</sup> *The Glasgow Herald*, 1 June, 1867.

<sup>82</sup> *The Glasgow Herald*, 5 March, 1875. On the trade in shawls see, M. Maskiell, 'Consuming Kashmir: Shawls and empires, 1500-2000.' *Journal of World History*, 13.1 (2002) pp. 27-39

<sup>83</sup> See, for a comparative Dublin case, S. Rains, 'Modernity and consumption in nineteenth-century Ireland: The Araby bazaar and 1890s popular visual culture.' *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 5.3 (2007) pp 285-300.

collected by him from 'among the native races in various parts of Australia and British New Guinea'. These were exhibited on the 'Foreign and Colonial Stall', while on the 'Art Stall', and reinforcing the commonly articulated aesthetic worth of Indian crafts, there was a 'valuable and interesting lot of Indian goods, generously sent to the bazaar by Lord Elgin, the ex-Viceroy' who was a former private pupil of the High School headmaster.<sup>84</sup> More spectacular still, and described as being 'quite national in its scope', was the Scottish Children's League of Pity Bazaar held in the Waverley Market in Edinburgh in October 1903, which aimed to raise £12,000 in support of a popular charity and involved most of Scotland's great titled ladies. The event comprised stalls from each county and was a great exhibition and high society spectacle, as well as a sale of goods. According to contemporary account, 'the scheme of decoration is Oriental in character and is supposed to have some remote connection with the Delhi Durbar. The stalls on the north and south sides of the Market have their frontages set off by Indian architectural and garden scenes painted on canvas.' There were various oriental gateways represented, which were a popular device in India exhibitions, including, a great painted version of the Agra Gate in Delhi.<sup>85</sup> The Berwickshire stall was under the charge of Lady Miller of Manderston, and comprised 'a beautiful collection of Indian goods which her ladyship, who is a sister of the Viceroy of India, had selected when she was at the Durbar.'<sup>86</sup>

### **The Influence of India on Industry and Design**

Exposure to Indian raw materials, goods and designs through shops and bazaars, museums and exhibitions of artefacts and images had significant impact on Scottish commerce and on industrial output and design. This is no where more apparent than in

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<sup>84</sup> *The Scotsman*, 1 December, 1898.

<sup>85</sup> D. Swallow, 'Colonial architecture, international exhibitions and official patronage of the Indian artisan: The case of the gateway from Gwalior in the Victoria and Albert Museum.' In T. Barringer and T. Flynn, eds., *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London, 1998) pp. 52-67.

<sup>86</sup> *The Scotsman*, 22 October, 1903

the Turkey red printed cotton textile industry, which, at its highpoint in the second half of the century, produced vast quantities of cheap and colourful cottons using a colour-fast printing technique (resistant to frequent washing and bright sunlight) for export to empire markets and to India in particular.<sup>87</sup> The relationship between Indian textiles and textile design and the evolution of the British cotton industry and other areas of textiles goods production such as shawl manufacture is well charted. Starting with the calico industry in the later seventeenth century, which borrowed heavily and flagrantly from Indian design conventions to produce cheap and colourful printed cottons that transformed popular dress culture, an industry that began in London was largely superseded by Lancashire and Scotland by the later eighteenth century.<sup>88</sup> Design motifs such as the 'boteh', widely seen as Indian in origin, with Persian antecedents, were appropriated by many manufacturers in Britain and Europe, and copyrighted in various permutations, but eventually came to be called 'paisley' after the Scottish town that produced the best-known hand-woven imitation Indian shawls.<sup>89</sup> By mid century, Indian-produced artisan textiles were overwhelmed in India by British manufacturers, who took Indian designs, reproduced them in multiple forms and colours and exported them more cheaply to satisfy a growing sub-continent demand. Such manufacturers sometimes travelled personally to India to better understand their markets and conditions of trade. They included one of the great Glasgow Turkey red entrepreneurs, John Matheson of William Stirling and Sons, whose travels and observations of 1861-2 were published in 1869.<sup>90</sup> In some parts of Britain, the relationship between British production and Indian textile traditions generated concern to preserve design standards and integrity. The Manchester silk industry, for instance, was anxious to maintain a high

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<sup>87</sup> See, G. Jackson and C. Munn, 'Trade, commerce and finance.' In W. Hamish Fraser and I. Maver, eds., *Glasgow: Volume II: 1830-1912* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 66-67.

<sup>88</sup> See, for a recent overview of research, G. Riello and P. Parthasarathi, eds., *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850* (Oxford, 2009).

<sup>89</sup> V. Reilly, *The Paisley Pattern. The Official History* (Glasgow, 1987); F. Ames, *The Kashmir Shawl* (London 1986); Kriegel *Grand Designs*, ch. 2.

<sup>90</sup> J. Matheson, *England to Delhi: A Narrative of Indian Travel* (London, 1869).

status oriental product and used local exhibitions, such as the Manchester Royal Jubilee Exhibition of 1887, to mount an impressive display of quality silk wares.<sup>91</sup> However, in Scotland, and in the production of Turkey red printed cottons in the Vale of Leven, it appears the integrity of Indian design and the 'good design' movement was largely irrelevant. Scottish entrepreneurs like John Matheson certainly exploited knowledge of India design to generate market position, but sales potential not design purity dictated most product decisions and they had no interests at all in protecting traditional Indian village crafts in the face of modern machines and international trade. Indeed, John Matheson in the 1860s welcomed the demise of Indian craftwork as it brought advantage to British commercial undertakings.

While revolving in wide, lofty chambers, the swift cylinder machines of Manchester and Glasgow are turning off each one 600 yards of cloth (more or less) per hour, the manufacturing industry of India jogs slowly along in little holes and corners, after its own primitive plan; both classes of production competing with one another, and finding customers in the bazaar. It is yet, to some extent at least, a question of machinery and capital versus manual labour with a diet of rice and chupatties. Not very long ago, the late Colonel Baird Smith estimated that about two-thirds of the population of India were clothed with indigenous cotton manufactures. Such a calculation was then only conjectural, nor could it be rendered with much greater accuracy now. We can only conclude, as a matter of general observation, that the native fabrics are slowly but surely giving place to the products of British industry.<sup>92</sup>

Indian design information for the Turkey red manufacturers came from agents based in Bombay or Calcutta, who sent local samples for copying and also sent samples of successful lines from competitors, engaging in a form of design plagiarism that was rife

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<sup>91</sup> See, B. M. King, *Silk and Empire* (Manchester, 2009) ch. 6.

<sup>92</sup> Matheson, *England to Delhi*, pp. 359-360.

in the industry and frequently challenged in the courts.<sup>93</sup> Design information also came from government initiatives, such as Forbes Watson's 'trade museum', which influenced art college students in Glasgow or Paisley who subsequently worked for the Turkey red firms. It came from viewing India wares at international exhibitions at home and abroad, and Turkey red manufacturers were themselves major exhibitors at home and abroad alongside the India courts.<sup>94</sup> Several Scottish Turkey red firms were represented at the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, including H. Monteith, Archibald Orr Ewing & Co and William Stirling & Sons. The latter's displays in the 'world's exhibition' section were focussed on a widely reported 'exhibition handkerchief'. Described as being of 'questionable taste' in the *Glasgow Herald*, the handkerchief or bandana (about the same size as a modern square head scarf) comprised a series of views of the Crystal Palace, with the figure of Britannia at the centre, surrounded by the 'usual military trophies, flags, muskets and cannon, all of which are intertwined with sprigs of laurel, for peace, and the thistle, rose and shamrock, for the Three Kingdoms.' There was a border with designs emblematic of the 'four quarters of the globe.' 'For Asia there is a recumbent figures, with a drawn scimitar, while an elephant browses off the tall trees overhead. A border of tropical plants, with a boa intertwined on one side, and a monkey clinging to the twigs on the other, finish this compartment.' A final outer border included designs representing the means whereby the world trade in Turkey red textiles was made possible; 'steam boats and sailing craft – railway trains with passengers and goods' trucks – for Europe and America; a caravan with loaded camels for the overland journey; and elephants etc for India.'<sup>95</sup>

By 1888, when Glasgow hosted the first of the Scottish international exhibitions, Turkey red manufacturers were regular attendees at such events and, since India represented

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<sup>93</sup> National Museums Scotland. Turkey red pattern book collection. Bombay patterns. See footnote 4.

<sup>94</sup> S. Tuckett and S. Nenadic, 'Colouring the nation. A new in-depth study of the Turkey red pattern books in the National Museums of Scotland.' *Textile History*, May 2013 forthcoming.

<sup>95</sup> *The Glasgow Herald*, 21 February, 1851.

their main market, Indian themes were highlighted in their displays, frequently using display techniques that were also seen in museums. The stand occupied by F. Steiner & Co. of Manchester included several full size figures or mannequins of Indian women in glass cases, showing colourful fabrics against dark skins and jewellery. The use of full size figures was also prominent in the display mounted by Scottish firm Archibald Orr Ewing & Co, which generated much comment.

While the gaudy of lines of these [textiles] find only limited favours under our cloudy skies, it is in the Oriental countries, and in contrast with dark skin, that their full value is appreciated. The firm have, therefore, done well in showing at one end of their stand a figure of an Indian female dressed completely in their fabrics. The figure stands holding a basket on the head and is complete even to the gold bangles, anklets, necklet and earrings. No one can fail to see with what effect the warm and glowing colours of the Turkey red fabric tell in contrast with swarthy skin of the oriental.<sup>96</sup>

The fabrics in question, today surviving only as samples in pattern books, included frequent use of Indian figurative designs involving dancing female figures – the romanticised ‘nautch girls’ that featured in many travel accounts, including John Matheson’s *England to Delhi* - peacocks, elephants, monkeys and leopards along with variations on the ‘paisley’ motif. Some design motifs had traditional symbolic significance for the different ethnic or religious groups of India, but designers deployed them with little regard for their real meaning, as was sometimes apparent when new Turkey red designs were returned to Scotland as ‘not suitable’.<sup>97</sup> The main concern for all textile manufacturers in Scotland was whether or not they would find a market and sell. Much of the market in India, as at home, was for simple designs, such as stripes or checks in red or blue. Indigo-blue striped cloth was influenced by both Indian design

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<sup>96</sup> *Supplement to the North British Daily Mail*, 26 September, 1888.

<sup>97</sup> Tuckett and Nenadic, ‘Colouring the nation.’ *Textile History*.

conventions and also by a valuable dyestuff with colourfast qualities that was imported from India. Indigo-stripped cloth was an export staple for Scottish manufacturers and it was also ubiquitous in the late nineteenth century British home textiles and clothing markets. All markets evolved and India was as fluid and fashion-driven as the west, with India agents for Scottish producers always eager for novelties to sell to local retailers. Contemporary designs for export to India in the 1880s included representations of steam trains and other features of modern industrial life. Needless-to-say, none of these conformed to 'tradition' or to contemporary British notions of good design.<sup>98</sup>

The relationship between Indian design and industry, and British-made products designed for the Indian market was inevitably complex, evolving over several centuries. There were changes in the goods exported from India to Britain, which at the start of the nineteenth century was dominated by raw materials such as indigo or cotton wool, expanded to include other staples such as wood and wood products, or grain, and by the mid and later nineteenth century had also expanded to included the kinds of manufactured craft goods – 'art manufactures' - that dominated the India courts at the great exhibitions.<sup>99</sup> There were changes also in the goods that Britain exported to India, which were still dominated by textiles, but involved increasing quantities of modern machinery that allowed India to develop its own competitive industries, which eventually and inevitably undermined Scottish-produced textiles.<sup>100</sup> India design had mutated over many decades to accommodate European and British taste, and though a strong movement existed by the late nineteenth century to protect and promote 'traditional' design and manufacturing in India, the reality was that tradition had long been compromised and there was a well-established and constant process of design migration between east and west, with Indian merchants and craft producers absorbing

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<sup>98</sup> For examples see details and website cited in footnote 4.

<sup>99</sup> *Annual Statement of the Trade and Navigation of British India with Foreign Countries, and of the Coasting Trade between the Several Presidencies, with Miscellaneous Statistics relating to the Foreign Trade of British India from Various Periods to 1866-67* (Calcutta, 1869).

<sup>100</sup> Jackson and Munn, 'Trade, commerce and finance.'

other 'oriental' craft traditions and designs for their export goods when they found a ready market.<sup>101</sup> Thus the impact of a mass awareness of India goods was not as dramatic for Scottish design practice as the sudden exposure to Japanese design and goods that happened in the 1870s, which influenced the Scottish arts and crafts movement and designers like Charles Rennie MacIntosh, particularly following the Japan exhibition in Glasgow in 1878.<sup>102</sup> Needless-to-say, as soon as Japanese goods were seen in Britain and became fashionable, Scottish Turkey red manufacturers began producing printed cotton textiles with quasi-Japanese designs for sale at home and also for export to Japan.<sup>103</sup>

For Turkey red textile manufacturers, access to information about India was enhanced by exhibitions, but also came from other sources, such as private communication by agents or design mutation via intermediaries and competitors. This was also true for earlier producers of India-influenced Scottish textiles, including the Paisley shawl weavers and merchants. So how important was the impact of exhibitions of India in nineteenth century Scotland and with what lasting effect? As this essay has shown, exhibitions of India were numerous, complex and ever evolving in their themes and purpose and cultivated audiences. Outside London, Scotland exhibited more of India than any other part of nineteenth-century Britain. This was true of panoramas, museum collections, commercial 'great' exhibitions and shop displays. Indian craftsmen, who first appeared in London in 1886, by-passed provincial England to feature in Glasgow in 1888 and in all Scottish exhibitions thereafter, generating massive popular interest. There was nothing equivalent to the Glasgow 1888 India displays in the Manchester

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<sup>101</sup> For an example, see V&A Collections, octagonal small wood table with ivory and ebony inlay. Mass produced in Hoshiarpur, India from Turkish design for export to Europe and often associated with Victorian men's club and smoking rooms. [www.collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O77358/table-unknown/](http://www.collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O77358/table-unknown/)

<sup>102</sup> A. Lovelace, *Art for Industry: The Glasgow Japan Exchange of 1878* (Glasgow, 1991) Hoffenberg, P. H. (2004) 'Promoting traditional Indian art at home and abroad. "The Journal of Indian Art and Industry", 1884-1917.' *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 37:2 (2004) 192-213.

<sup>103</sup> Tuckett and Nenadic, 'Colouring the Nation.'



exhibition of 1887, though Manchester in 1887, consistent with an earlier interest in north America evidenced through panoramas, did host the first provincial display of Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, which included 'cowboy and Indian' performers and a travelling menagerie – a spectacle that first visited Scotland in the 1890s.<sup>104</sup> It is hard not to conclude that the main impact of exhibitions of India, outside the evolving economic impact in areas like textile design, forest product development and the Scottish handicraft industries, was on a unifying popular visual and consumer culture in a country where India service and indirect employment was important for rich and poor alike. India as spectacle, as colours and sounds, smells and tastes, fantasy and fashion, captured the Scottish imagination throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. In the words of the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, celebrating the links between India and Scotland at an India Round Table Conference in the Usher Hall in 1931, at a point in time when the British relationship with India was fast unravelling - 'India [is] a land of ancient civilizations, of culture, of wealth, of romance, and, for [us] in these northerly latitudes and duller climate, a land of colour and sunshine.'<sup>105</sup>

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SEPTEMBER 2012

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<sup>104</sup> See, National Fairground Archive, 'Buffalo Bill's Wild West'. At [www.nfa.dept.shef.ac.uk/history/shows/wildwest.html](http://www.nfa.dept.shef.ac.uk/history/shows/wildwest.html)

<sup>105</sup> *The Scotsman*, January 10, 1931.