

Clio's Scroll



The Berkeley Undergraduate History Journal
Vol. 15, No. 1

Fall 2013

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Special Thanks to:

University of California, Berkeley History Department
Leah Flanagan, Undergraduate History Advisor
Townsend Center for the Humanities
The Associated Students of the University of California

Clio's Scroll: the Berkeley Undergraduate History Journal is an ASUC-sponsored journal produced in conjunction with UC Berkeley's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, a national history honor society. It aims to provide undergraduates with the opportunity to publish historical works and to train staff members in the editorial process of an academic journal. It is published each semester with the generous support of the Townsend Center for the Humanities, the Associated Students of the University of California, the UC Berkeley Department of history, and the Office of Student Life. Clio's Scroll is not an official publication of the Associated Students of the University of California or of the University of California, Berkeley. The views expressed herein are the views of the writers and not necessarily the views of the ASUC or the views of UC Berkeley.

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“History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illumines reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life and brings us tidings of antiquity.”

-Cicero

NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

We are proud to present the Fall 2013 edition of *Clio's Scroll*, Berkeley's Undergraduate History Journal. *Clio's Scroll* seeks to promote undergraduate research and publication on topics of historical interest. The chosen articles cover a breadth of historical study, but they are brought together by a common interest in exploring cultural interchange and narratives of pluralism. From Napoleonic Europe and the height of the British Empire to twentieth century San Francisco, these articles explore the impacts of cultural *mélange*. They were chosen for the depth of their inquiries, the strength of their arguments, and the captivating quality of their writing styles.

We are indebted to our Associate Editors, whose professionalism and passion was essential to the creation of this edition. In addition, we are grateful to Zee Zee Copy for making possible the publication of this journal. Finally, we would like to thank the Berkeley History Department and Undergraduate Advisor Leah Flanagan, the ASUC, and the Townsend Center for Humanities for their continual support.

It is our hope that these articles will provide you with new perspectives and an enjoyable reading experience.

Sincerely,
The Editors

**THE FAILED BLOCKADE: SARTORIAL
INTERCHANGE DURING THE NAPOLEONIC
WARS**

Laura Hsu

*Who would not rather get him gone
Beyond the intolerablest zone
Or steer his passage through those seas,
That burn in flames or those that freeze,
Than see one nation go to school,
And learn of another like a fool.
To study all its tricks and fashions
With epidemic affectations...
-Butler, *The Examiner*, 1814*

Butler penned the preceding poem during the Napoleonic Wars as a scathing indictment against elite Britons who continued to mimic foreign—that is, *French*—fashions. He goes on to describe them as “foreigners at home” who “seem so estranged” that they must have been

laid down in Britain “by witches.”¹ By the time of Butler’s writing, Europe had already recognized France as the capital of luxury and *la mode* for over a century.² For Britons like Butler, however, this recognition presented a conflict of interest, for besides recognizing France as an “emporium of fashion,” Britain also recognized France as an archenemy.³ Indeed by this time, the two countries had been engaged in intermittent warfare for almost a century, resulting in the culmination of the Napoleonic Wars. Warfare necessitated separation, which the two countries manifested in their assiduous enactment of economic blockades. Yearning for style, elite Britons thus faced a difficult dilemma. To wear French fashion was to wear the enemy’s fashion. This essay surveys how British moralists sought to sway the British beau monde away from French styles through arguments of morality, satire, and sexual politics. Ultimately, however, while Britain and France’s economic blockades proved to be moderately successful, the cultural blockade on fashion failed. Fashion proved to be an internal struggle of national consciousness. For British moralists, the goal was not to tangibly separate British fashion from French fashion, but rather to reinforce the boundaries of Britishness.

In February of 1790, John Bell published the first issue of *La Belle Assemblée: or, Bell’s Court and Fashionable Magazine addressed particularly to the Ladies*.⁴ Bell targeted *La Belle Assemblée* at the “most exclusive and polished circles of society.”⁵ As such, *La Belle Assemblée* framed fashion as a function of luxury beyond basic necessity. After

¹ Butler, “French Fashions,” *The Examiner*, September 4, 1814, 572.

² Joan DeJean, *The Essence of Style: How the French Invented High Fashion, Fine Food, Chic Cafés, Style, Sophistication, and Glamour* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 1–19.

³ Britannicus, “On the French Fashions,” *La Belle Assemblée: or, Bell’s Court and Fashionable Magazine addressed particularly to the Ladies*, August, 1811, 89.

⁴ Stanley Morrison, *John Bell, 1745-1831: A Memoir*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 61.

⁵ Quote taken from *Ibid.*, 63.

all, industrialization and imperialism had brought Britain considerable wealth, putting the British high society in a position to indulge in luxury. British historian Eric Hobsbawm has further noted that transportation improvements due to industrialization increasingly oriented British consumption toward the global market.⁶ These factors led historian Maxine Berg to conclude that by the end of the eighteenth century, “the lifestyle choices of affluence [were] associated with distinction, diversity and individuality, and these are set within a framework of globalization.”⁷ To the elite readers of *La Belle Assemblée*, exoticness—or foreignness in all its elitist glory—became a badge of luxury. It is thus no surprise that *La Belle Assemblée* revealed a plethora of foreign allusions in regards to dress. Its May 1806 issue described Grecian robes trimmed with French ribband, Parisian mantles decorated with French grey floss silk, Egyptian broaches, jackets made of Circassian cambric, walking dresses of Japanese cambric muslin, Polish mantles, and full dresses with Grecian fronts, the last of which was to be worn with a Circassian turban.⁸ Meanwhile, the September 1811 issue recommended that women wear “a short round French coat” over “a short round dress of India jacconot muslin” with “a large French bonnet, composed of fine India muslin... trimmed round the face with a deep frill of Mechlin lace” when out walking. Not to forget shoes, the magazine suggested that readers complete the outfit with “shoes of white Morocco.”⁹ A perusal through *La Belle Assemblée*’s archives readily reveals how colors, textiles, and styles became occasions to demonstrate worldly know-how. For an increasingly affluent and cosmopolitan British bourgeoisie, foreignness became emblematic of luxury.

Yet, the allusions to French fashion in British periodicals cannot simply be explained as falling under the

⁶ Maxine Berg, “In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past and Present* 184 (2004): 88.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

⁸ “Fashions for May, 1806,” *La Belle Assemblée*, May 1806, 171.

⁹ “Fashions for September, 1811,” *La Belle Assemblée*, September 1811, 101.

umbrella of exoticism. For one, references to France and Paris numerically abound in nineteenth-century women's fashion periodicals. While *La Belle Assemblée* occasionally referenced colors, textiles, and styles related to Spain, Morocco, Sweden, Egypt, and China, the magazine repeatedly referenced France, oftentimes alluding to the country multiple times in a single article. While Greece, Japan, and Poland all appeared in the "Fashions for May 1806" column, none of them rivaled France in recurrence, with France making four appearances in just one page.¹⁰ The implication is subtle but clear. *La Belle Assemblée* saw France as the legitimate capital of fashion and celebrated French styles and textiles as innately superior. Indeed, the magazine even understood fashion as a French phenomenon, habitually peppering its columns with French terms. In April 1808, the magazine described a design as "à-la-Militaire" and a hairstyle as "à-la-rustique,"¹¹ while in April 1811, it noted "satin or French silk are in estimation with some *elegantés*."¹² The magazine also occasionally chose to refer to clothing items by their French names such as *chapeau* and *bandeaux*.¹³ Even the magazine's name is revealing; *La Belle Assemblée*, a luxury magazine targeted at elite British women, chose to adopt a French name. For many elite Britons, fashion came colored in French cognizance. One could not speak of fashion without becoming implicated in Frenchness.

To French Studies scholar Joan DeJean, *La Belle Assemblée*'s reverence for France is not surprising. According to DeJean, fashion began "to be considered something inherently and indisputably French" after Louis XIV's seventeenth-century reign.¹⁴ Consequently, *La Belle Assemblée* was not the only publication to become fixated

¹⁰ "Fashions for May, 1806," *La Belle Assemblée*, May 1806, 171.

¹¹ "Fashions for April, 1808," *La Belle Assemblée*, April 1808, 141-142.

¹² "Fashions for April, 1815," *La Belle Assemblée*, April 1815, 129.

¹³ "Fashion for March, 1808," *La Belle Assemblée*, March 1808, 94

"Fashions for May, 1806," *La Belle Assemblée*, May 1806, 171.

¹⁴ DeJean, *The Essence of Style*, 36.

on Frenchness. Even publications beyond the purview of fashion periodicals linked luxury fashion to Frenchness. Rather significantly, these periodicals targeted a variety of readers besides the British bon ton, thereby suggesting the ubiquity of the linkage between fashion and Frenchness. *The Weekly Entertainer; or Agreeable and Instructive Repository* abashedly admitted “in fact, the luxuries and opportunities at Paris are allowed, by all candid judges, infinitely to surpass those of the English capital.”¹⁵ The *Monthly Magazine, or British Register* reluctantly agreed. Despite rallying against French textile imports, the magazine admitted that “the most costly French cambric” had a particular “fineness” and “beautiful appearance.”¹⁶ British periodicals agreed—if rather grudgingly—that France perfected luxury in a way that other countries, including Britain, had yet to reach.

Following these periodicals’ pro-French sentiments, British elites recognized France as the legitimate center of style and continuously looked to the nation across the Isles for sartorial inspiration. Unsurprisingly, then, fashion became a contentious topic during the Napoleonic Wars as aestheticism increasingly came at the price of patriotism. Elite Britons were able to overcome this dilemma by conceptualizing fashion as a strictly personal choice. British moralists, however, could reach no such complacency. For them, fashion transcended individual choice; fashion could never be a solely private endeavor when contextualized in terms of national wellbeing. Writing editorials or letters to the editors of various periodicals, these moralists worried that the adoption of French fashion eroded British solidarity and patriotism. As the *Theatrical Inquisitor* direly pointed out, fashion had the ability to “render the spirit of the nation more patriotic, when one dress unites all the individuals in it, and distinguishes them from other nations.” The

¹⁵“French Luxuries,” *The Weekly Entertainer; or Agreeable and Instructive Repository*, June 1810, 509.

¹⁶“Monthly Commercial Report,” *Monthly Magazine, or British Register*, February 1812, 92.

article went on to explain that it was simply “absurd” for an Englishman to wear Parisian styles “in climates where the season, the mode of life, and the bodily frame require a very different covering.”¹⁷ Similarly, a reader of *The British Lady’s Magazine* felt compelled to write a letter to the editor emphasizing the inherently unpatriotic nature of adopting French fashions.¹⁸ Honestus writing in *The Tradesman: or, Commercial Magazine* examined the threat to British solidarity from a slightly different perspective. He argued that the importation of foreign luxuries would destroy Britain’s domestic economy because the wealthy would not be reinvesting money in the country. This would cause a trickle-down effect in which all workers would eventually be deprived of their wellbeing. Social unrest would then prevail.¹⁹ Despite disputes over the causal mechanism of such a phenomenon, British moralists agreed that the act of wearing French fashions involved a rejection of patriotism. To wear French fashion was to put oneself before national wellbeing.

In order to protect British solidarity and wellbeing, British moralists had to address the individual choice of fashion and sway elite Britons away from French fashions. To this end, many moralists argued that the inherent problem with French fashion lay in the innate immorality of French culture. As one article in *The Hibernia Magazine, and Dublin Monthly Panorama* pointed out, “in France... native innocence and chastity are frequently turned into ridicule.”²⁰ The *Encyclopædia Londinensis* elaborated that this immorality stemmed from the French people’s

¹⁷ “Miscellanies: On the National Dress,” *Theatrical Inquisitor, and monthly mirror*, April 1813, 138.

¹⁸ U-NO-HOO, “French Bonnets at the Theatre,” *The British Lady’s Magazine*, July 1815, 4.

¹⁹ Honestus, “National Luxury and the Cause of National Degeneracy,” *The Tradesman: or, Commercial Magazine*, October 1810, 334-337.

²⁰ “Customs of the French Ladies,” *The Hibernia Magazine, and Dublin Monthly Panorama*, November 1810, 298-299.

frivolity. According to the encyclopedia's entry on France, the French simply disposed of manners upon realizing that "virtues were too unfashionable to be imitated."²¹ *The Lady's Monthly Museum, or Polite Repository of Amusement and Instruction* evaluated French society in an equally unsavory light. When describing "Madame Buonaparte," Napoleon's infamous wife, *The Lady's Monthly Museum* proposed that one must exhibit notoriousness in order to "be fashionable in the immoral French capital." According to *The Lady's Monthly Museum's* rationale, it was thus no surprise that Madame Buonaparte came to occupy such a prominent position in French society. *The Lady's Monthly Museum* saw Madame Buonaparte as a symbol of waste and frivolity, noting that Madame Buonaparte "never puts on any plain gown twice... changes her dress four or six times every day" and goes through "three dozen of the best *English* cotton stockings, and two dozen of *French* silk stockings, every week."²² All of this served to contrast with elevated British morality. *The Scourge, or, Literary, Theatrical, and Miscellaneous Magazine* was even less subtle in its criticism of French culture, directly stating "that profligacy of manners and degeneracy of morals, [*sic*] are inveterate evils in the French character."²³ To the British moralists, French culture embodied immodesty, wastefulness, and immorality. It was therefore not the actual styles that were so offensive per se, but the moral qualities they came to represent.

Indeed, art historian Aileen Ribeiro emphasizes that Britain had a long tradition of looking down upon fashion as morally dubious. This characteristic, she further notes, was uniquely absent amongst French consciousness.

²¹ Excerpt from Mr. Wilkes, "France," *Encyclopædia Londinensis*, Vol. VII taken from "Present State of Manners and Fashions in France," *The Weekly Entertainer*, June 9, 1806, 441.

²² "Madame Buonaparte," *The Lady's Monthly Museum*, December 1807, 243-244.

²³ "On the French Character, Manners, and Morals," *The Scourge, or, Literary, Theatrical, and Miscellaneous Magazine*, January 1815, 26.

²⁴ Two significant points can consequently be drawn. First, in reflection of longstanding cultural values, British moralists had understood fashion as shallow and immoral for hundreds of years prior to the Napoleonic Wars. During the Enlightenment, this suspicion towards style burgeoned thanks to the work of thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Walter Vaughan.²⁵ Therefore, the Napoleonic Wars did not create a new debate on the morality of fashion but merely brought a longstanding debate to the fore. Secondly, this skepticism towards fashion historically separated British consciousness from French consciousness, as the French did not have a historical legacy of rejecting fashion on moral grounds.²⁶ French fashion therefore posed a double threat to British morality. If fashion appeared problematic by itself, then French fashion—which the British moralists characterized as particularly immoral—appeared doubly dangerous. Unsurprisingly, then, morality lay at the base of British moralists’ arguments against French fashion. These moralists tried to sway British elites away from French fashion by emphasizing that French immorality was unfit for morally elevated Britons. As one writer prototypically warned in the *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, “female chastity has ever been, and ever *must* be, the main source of all virtues.” He concluded that fashion—in particular, *French* fashion—led to a degeneration of chastity.²⁷ Henry, the brother of a correspondent for *La Belle Assemblée*, similarly lamented, “more mischief results from finery, and more young women are ruined by it, than from any real dereliction of principle.”²⁸ In a similar vein, Cœlebs,

²⁴ Aileen Ribeiro, *The Art of Dress: Fashion in England and France, 1720-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 1-17.

²⁵ See *Ibid.*, 117 and Ribeiro, *The Art of Dress*, 1.

²⁶ See Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004).

²⁷ John Bowles, “Remarks on Modern Female Manners, as distinguished by Indifference to Character and Indecency of Dress,” *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, October 1802, 260.

²⁸ Emily, “A Tour Through France,” *La Belle Assemblée*, February 1815, 59.

a reader of *The British Lady's Magazine*, wrote a letter to the editor criticizing French fashion as uneconomical, praising instead “the true English style of simple neatness.”²⁹ For all these moralists, French fashions needed to be avoided on the grounds that they threatened to undermine individual morality as characterized by the traits of chastity and thrift.

Other British moralists saw fashion as too morally dubious to even be salvaged. As *The Weekly Entertainer* explained, “we know better what it is to attack the absurdities of the superficial.”³⁰ Accordingly, these moralists sought to sway the British bon ton through satirical arguments. The frivolity of fashion could only be rebutted by more frivolity. Some moralists chose to veil their satirical arguments in aesthetic critiques. In his efforts to promote “the true English style of simple neatness,” Cœlebs mockingly wrote to *The Lady's Journal* that women wearing Vert-François dresses looked “deformed” under “the envious mountain” of “plaits, fullings [*sic*], and stuffings [*sic*]” that comprised the back of the dress. To drive his point home, he concluded that one lady’s “amazingly broad double frill” collar made her head look “like that of St. John in the charger.”³¹ *The Weekly Entertainer* published a comparable article in October 1814. The article satirically pointed out that of all the pretenses of “ladies well dressed,” the latest French fashions “are the most ridiculous.” Indeed, these fashions are so aesthetically displeasing that “the lower orders in London” are left grinning and laughing.³² These moralists certainly sought to fight fire with fire. Believing that fashion was too shallow to even be worth approaching seriously, they used satire to mask their moral apprehensions. Recognizing that elite Britons looked to France for aesthetic inspiration, they worked to

²⁹ Cœlebs, “The French Revolution in Dress,” *The British Lady's Magazine*, April 1815, 250-251.

³⁰ “French Fashions,” *The Weekly Entertainer*, October 3, 1814, 795.

³¹ Cœlebs, “The French Revolution in Dress,” *The British Lady's Magazine*, April 1815, 252.

³² “French Fashions,” *The Weekly Entertainer*, October 3, 1814, 792-795.

discount the aesthetic legitimacy of French fashions.

Other British moralists furthered this satirical approach by tingeing aestheticism with issues of health and physical wellbeing. According to this group of moralists, wearing French fashions came at the risk of life or death. *Universal Magazine* wrote about “young ladies being burnt to death, occasioned by the flight and inflammable nature of their dress, which is another of the fatal consequences of this strange mode of apparel,”³³ while *The Literary Panorama* suggested that current modes of fashion were so unsuitable for the British climate that they “may make any man shudder.”³⁴ *The Lady’s Monthly Museum*, after admitting that makeup could make a lady look more attractive, warned readers of its dangerous effects. The article cites Miss B---- and Lady C---- as “melancholy proof of it.”³⁵ According to the article, “[their] flesh fell from [their] bones before [they] died” due to makeup use. The article then ascertains that these are not singular cases either, for “a London physician, perhaps, were he at liberty to blab, could publish a bill of female mortality of a length that would astonish us.”³⁶ Whether one would really die from wearing French fashions was questionable. Nonetheless, the underlying premise prevailed. Even if French fashions appeared aesthetically superior, they still needed to be avoided.

Yet other moralists approached the problem with arguments regarding sexual politics. They pointed out that the unattractive nature of French fashions would drive men away from women. This, as Sherborne stated in his letter to the editor in *The Weekly Entertainer*, was of grave consequence, for it had the ability to “materially... destroy social order.” Thus, Sherborne recommended that

³³ “Remarks on the Reigning Taste in Female Dress,” *The Universal Magazine*, April 1803, 266.

³⁴ “On Fashions and Dress,” *The Literary Panorama*, February 1808, 1059.

³⁵ The Late Poet Cowper, “On Painting the Face,” *The Lady’s Monthly Museum, or Polite Repository of Amusement and Instruction*, August 1812, 86.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

“if the ladies duly value this consideration, they will, I am convinced, immediately desist from following a fashion so disagreeable, inelegant, and unbecoming.”³⁷ *The Satirist, or Monthly Meteor* proposed a similar line of argument, albeit it in a more comical manner. *The Satirist* combined arguments of sexual politics with satire in its October 1808 article titled “Whiskered Ladies!” “Whiskered Ladies!” parodied fashion, reporting that the latest trend in women’s fashion consisted of facial hair. Noting the unattractiveness of female facial hair, *The Satirist* warned women that by thoughtlessly following trends, they might be inadvertently driving away men.³⁸ Meanwhile, *The Lady’s Monthly Museum*, fused morality with sexual politics. According to *The Lady’s Monthly Museum*, women who painted their faces—if done well—“might be more admired by others.” Nonetheless, because this acquisition “might bring her virtue under trials,” it still needed to be avoided at all costs. Forming the base of this sexual-political critique was the belief that French fashions would erode the natural order. This argument is thus particularly significant because it explicitly shifted the dangers of French fashion from individual morality to national wellbeing. In the framework of sexual politics, French fashion had the capacity to undermine the national fabric of Britain by destroying relationships between British men and women.

Although the moralists cited a variety of different arguments against French fashions, they were united by a sense of urgency. Whether they stated it implicitly or explicitly, they all recognized that fashion heralded national consequences. They even coined their own term for the impending phenomenon. *The Scourge*, *The Weekly Entertainer*, and *The British Lady’s Magazine* all warned of

³⁷ Sherborne, “Long Bonnet Fashion,” *The Weekly Entertainer*, July 1814, 592.

³⁸ Barbara Beardless, “Whiskered Ladies!,” *The Satirist, or, Monthly Meteor*, October 1808, 243.

British fashion becoming too “Frenchified.”³⁹ Meanwhile, *Universal Magazine* noted that “of all the dangers to which this country is now exposed,” Frenchification was the direst. Indeed, the article went on to describe Frenchification as “a much more formidable enemy than Bonaparte himself, with all his power, perfidy, and malice.”⁴⁰ Another article in the magazine warned of the “long trains of evils that inevitably attend on the habits of luxury,” contending that if Britain continued its current course, it would disintegrate like the Roman Empire.⁴¹ In a letter to the editor of *The Weekly Entertainer*, Sherborne similarly foresaw a dangerous future. He remarked, “I really almost cease to wonder that France is so internally unquiet, when the females of that country contribute in so great a degree, by their fashions, towards it.”⁴² Sherborne thus suggests that Britain, like revolutionary France, might be on the path to massive social and political upheaval if Britons do not change their dress to more morally sound styles. *The Scourge* aptly summed up British moralists’ concerns, noting “if some speedy and effectual check be not opposed to this emigrating system, in a short time we shall lose our national character, we shall be completely *Frenchified—quod Jupiter omen avertat!*”⁴³ To British moralists, Frenchification certainly posed a frightful threat. To them, the adoption of French fashions by British elites not only threatened individual morality but also national solidarity and security.

In recognizing the phenomenon of Frenchification,

³⁹ For examples, see the January 1815 issue of *The Scourge*, the July 25, 1814 issue of *The Weekly Entertainer*, and the April 1815 issue of *The British Lady’s Journal*.

⁴⁰ John Bowles, “Remarks on Modern Female Manners,” *Universal Magazine*, October 1802, 260.

⁴¹ “Remarks on the Reigning Taste in Female Dress,” *Universal Magazine*, April 1803, 267.

⁴² Sherborne, “Long Bonnet Fashion,” *The Weekly Entertainer*, July 1814, 592.

⁴³ “On the French Character, Manners, and Morals,” *The Scourge*, January 1815, 28.

British moralists declared that there existed an essential difference between Britishness and Frenchness. Moreover, they believed that one should not cross the boundaries between Britishness and Frenchness, hence their uneasiness with French-inspired elite fashion styles. They declared that French styles were incompatible with the British mode of being, for French styles were aesthetically and morally unfit for Britons. According to *Hibernia magazine*, French women lacked the “modesty” and “delicacy” of “our fair ones.”⁴⁴ *The Literary Panorama* concurred, noting that French women lacked the charm and pleasant complexions of British women.⁴⁵ *The Weekly Entertainer* bluntly agreed, referring to French fashion as “a monstrosity which, however it may suit French ladies, was certainly never intended for the English.”⁴⁶ Consequently, French women were justified in wearing French styles, for they needed the fashions’ ostentatiousness to mask their inherent shortcomings. British women, however, could only “become themselves again” by renouncing French styles.⁴⁷ As *The Weekly Entertainer* conclusively stated, British women had to “dispense with these outlandish habiliments altogether . . . if [they] still wished to be thought an Englishwoman.”⁴⁸ To British moralists, French fashion represented a manifestation of the “them.” Thus, in the moralists’ antagonistic “us versus them” mentality, French fashion affronted the “us,” threatening to overrun the boundaries of Britishness. The dilemma posed by fashion was a question of British consciousness and understanding of the self.

Despite the moralists’ loud warnings, the British beau monde continued to wear Frenchified fashions. The

⁴⁴ “Customs of the French Ladies,” *The Hibernia Magazine*, November 1810, 298-299.

⁴⁵ “On Fashions and Dress,” *The Literary Panorama*, February 1808, 1061.

⁴⁶ “French Fashions,” *The Weekly Entertainer*, October 3, 1814, 792.

⁴⁷ Sherborne, “Long Bonnet Fashion,” *The Weekly Entertainer*, July 1814, 593.

⁴⁸ “French Fashions,” *The Weekly Entertainer*, October 3, 1814, 792.

April 1808 issue of *La Belle Assemblée* recommended that ladies wear loose curricula coats with “French lappels [*sic*]” when walking, while in the evening, ladies wear their “hair in the Parisian style” and cover their hands in “French kid gloves.”⁴⁹ In April 1815, the magazine stated that “French cambric high-dress[es],” French bonnets, mantles made of French silk, French fans, and hair adorned with French roses were en vogue.⁵⁰ These issues were not anomalous, either; *La Belle Assemblée*’s archive rarely yields an issue without a mention of France. To the British beau monde, luxury came steeped in Frenchness. While British moralists agitated over the effects of French styles on British national identity, British elites remained focused on luxury. For them, fashion remained a personal choice. Aestheticism prevailed over morality, health, or sexual politics.

During the Napoleonic Wars, Britain and France both sought to limit each other’s trading capacities by enacting various blockades. In 1803, Britain declared a blockade on various French ports after the disintegration of the Peace of Amiens. In 1804, it expanded the blockade. Napoleon conspicuously responded with his own embargo in 1806 known as the Continental System. While Britain and France’s trade blockades accumulated “mixed success,”⁵¹ the two countries could never achieve a true cultural blockade. Thus, although British moralists used various arguments from morality to satire to sexual politics in order to try and sway elite Britons from French fashions, British fashion periodicals continued to praise French *couture* throughout the Napoleonic Wars. To this end, the problem lay in the elite’s and the moralists’ differing conceptions of fashion. To the elites, fashion represented a solely individual choice. On the other hand, the moralists understood fashion in the

⁴⁹ “Fashions for April, 1808,” *La Belle Assemblée*, April 1808, 141.

⁵⁰ “Fashions for April, 1815,” *La Belle Assemblée*, April 1815, 129.

⁵¹ Lance E. Davis and Stanley L. Engerman, *Naval Blockades in Peace and War: An Economic History since 1750*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 28-29.

context of national identity. Thus, while the moralists saw Frenchification as “another *French Revolution*” (indeed, this one more harmful “than its prototype”), elite Britons saw Frenchified fashions as harmless aesthetic pleasure.⁵² Moreover, this continued sartorial interchange did not reflect a unique British character flaw. As fearful as British moralists were of Frenchification, French moralists also feared that imported English styles were eroding French patriotism.⁵³ For both countries, fashion’s greatest danger came from its threat to national identity and solidarity. Indeed, the question of fashion was one of distinction and not separation. While separation depended on forcefully barricading oneself from outsiders, distinction relied on self-understanding and consciousness. What truly mattered was not keeping French fashion out, but keeping Frenchness and Britishness distinct. French fashion seemed to challenge the basic morality that so prominently underpinned the essence of Britishness. An external blockade could never successfully keep French fashions away, for it was French fashion’s symbolic value that posed the most frightening threat. France maintained its position as the legitimate fashion capital and continued to challenge the boundaries of Britishness. Fashion became the failed blockade.

⁵² Cœlebs, “The French Revolution in Dress,” *The British Lady’s Magazine*, April 1815, 250.

⁵³ For example, see “Manners of the French,” *La Belle Assemblée*, October 1814, 141. The French correspondent suggests that some French ladies have adopted English dress styles and that moralists see this as a decline in the “public spirit” of France.

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A CACOPHONY OF IDEAS: THE COLONIAL EXHIBITS OF THE GREAT EXHIBITION, 1851

David Kilgannon

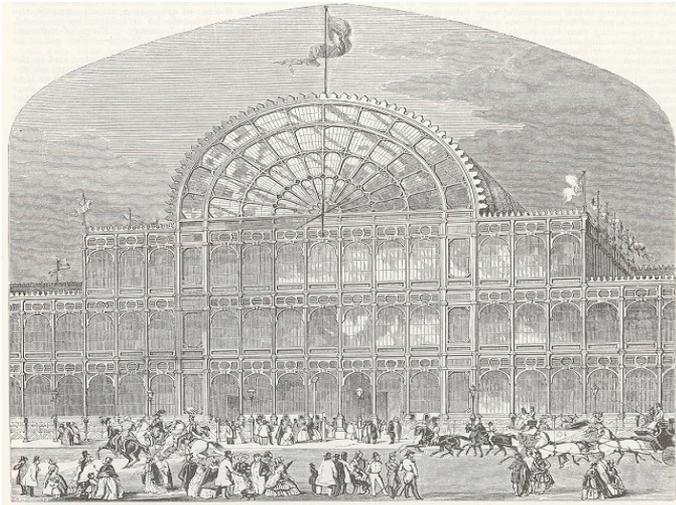


Figure One: Exterior View of Paxton's Crystal Palace, 1851.

Introduction

On the closure of the Great Exhibition in October 1851, Queen Victoria noted in her journal how ‘This great and bright time is past.’¹ Admittedly, Victoria was writing in a distinctly personal context; the exhibition had proved wildly popular, bringing a new level of support for her previously mocked German consort, Albert. However, Victoria’s statement could be read on an international, and more specifically imperial, level. The year 1851 followed in the astonishing successes of the ‘Second Imperialism’ period of the late 18th and early 19th century, where the British position in India became institutionalised and whole scale exploration of Australia began in earnest.² There were few events, perhaps excepting the Irish Potato Famine (1845-1852),³ which broke this era of unmatched ascendancy for the British Empire. Yet, the mid 1850s would mark the beginning of a noted move towards consolidation of this existing empire,⁴ led in response to threats to British hegemony, including the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

At the very centre of these two periods stood the year 1851, with the Crystal Palace positing itself as a potent symbol of ‘international brotherhood and mutual dependence.’⁵ Indeed, the relative importance of the Great Exhibition can hardly be overemphasised; for the very first time, the working and middle classes were allowed

¹ Robert Wilson. *The Life and Times of Queen Victoria: Volume 2*. (London: Cassell, 1897) p. 490

² John Darwin. *The Empire Project: The rise and fall of the British world system*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p. 23

³ Anthony Brundage. *The English Poor Laws 1700-1930*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) p. 84

⁴ Niall Ferguson. *Empire: How Britain made the Modern World*. (London: Penguin, 2004) p. 167

⁵ Jeffrey Auerbach. *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A nation on display*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999) p. 161

an insight into the ‘necessarily alien nature of empire,’⁶ through their viewing of the Exhibition in Hyde Park. The sheer variety of goods from ‘diamonds to spinning jennies to printing presses’,⁷ created undeniably strong impressions on these ‘pioneer tourists’, whose accounts are filled with wonder at the glorious spectacle of it all. Yet, this was not a simple show of Imperial might, nor did it represent a truly benign image of the British colonies. Rather, the image of the British possessions at the Great Exhibition was a highly controlled one, designed to promote key thoughts, ideas, and stereotypes. Through an examination of source materials (primarily *The Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition*), as well as a selection of prominent Historical interpretations, this paper shall endeavour to delineate the various images of the colonies and their broader historical context, through their portrayal in Hyde Park during the summer of 1851.

Consumerism, Capitalism and the Colonies

‘The Crystal Palace will at once become a perfect epitome of the world’s industry’

Guide to the Great Exhibition⁸

The Great Exhibition was clearly a free trade event. This status created contentious debates in 1851, and remains a topic of discussion among historians. Yet, the Exhibition’s true status can be evinced simply from the fact that the Russian foreign ministry, on being offered the chance to

⁶ Paul Greenhalgh. *Ephemeral Vistas: History of the Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World’s Fairs (Studies in Imperialism)*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990) p. 54

⁷ Charlotte Brontë, . *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë, Volume Two: 1848-1851*. Margaret Smith (ed.). (London: Clarendon Press, 2000) p. 625

⁸ *Guide to the Great Exhibition with a plan of the Crystal Palace*. P. 36. (London: G. Rontledge, 1851). Available online at: <http://books.google.ie/books?id=sBFx8QPDhhMC&dq=The+Crystal+Palace+will+at+once+become+a+perfect+epitome+of+the+world%E2%80%99s+industry%E2%80%99&source=gbs_navlinks_s>

exhibit, remained ever conscious ‘that the Exhibition’s fundamental goal was to promote free trade.’⁹ For the Exhibition’s position to be apparent to Tsarist ministers in St. Petersburg, it must have been abundantly clear to the average viewer at the Crystal Palace, despite organizer’s best attempts to portray the event as decidedly non-partisan. The mid-Victorian period, in which the Exhibition took place, stood witness to the growth of a rapidly globalising capitalist economy, one that would fundamentally change the nature of the world’s commerce through its use of free trade driven mercantilism.¹⁰ This section shall attempt to demonstrate the way these new economic forces came to influence perceptions of the colonies, transforming their image at the Great Exhibition into one of peripheral resource centers of the Empire.

Undeniably, certain Colonial Exhibits remained far more complex than such a restrictive taxonomy implies. The most notable being the Indian Exhibit, deemed ‘half the fun of the whole show,’¹¹ containing an almost cacophonous mixture of goods ranging from ‘rich silks and cottons... cereals, dyes’¹² to ‘agricultural machines and models of traditional boats.’¹³ Yet, at the same time, the Indian subcontinent was experiencing a program of mass de-industrialization, as it became a major producer of cheap raw materials like cotton for the rapidly expanding British cloth

⁹ David C. Fischer. ‘Russia at the Great Exhibition’ in *Britain, the empire, and the world at the Great Exhibition of 1851*. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008) p.125

¹⁰ Paul Johnson. *Making the Market: Victorian Origins of Corporate Capitalism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p. 27

¹¹ Christopher Hobhouse. *1851 and the Crystal Palace*. (London: John Murray, 1937) p. 116

¹² Michael Leapman. *The World for a Shilling*. (London: Headline Review, 2002). p. 134

¹³ *Ibid.*, 135

industry.¹⁴ Thus, even if not portrayed so at the Exhibition, most colonial nations were being cast in a distinctly peripheral role around the ‘economic sun of Britain.’¹⁵ This can be seen most lucidly at the Exhibition when examining smaller colonial nations, where their individual exhibits consist solely of exportable raw materials of clear use to the British nation.

Examples abound of this kind of representation at the Crystal Palace. For instance, the island of Newfoundland’s exhibit consists of a singular good, ‘samples of cod liver oil purified.’¹⁶ This trend becomes even more pronounced when looking at the Caribbean, where nearly every Island is represented solely in terms of available, exportable, raw materials. Admittedly, there are a few notable exceptions; Saint Kitt’s exhibited a traditionally made fish pot, produced by ‘John Morris, a black laborer’,¹⁷ while the Bahamas exhibited some manufactured products including ‘Hemp prepared from the Yucca leaf.’¹⁸ However, in general, the islands exhibit raw materials alone, with St. Helena donating raw coffee and rock salt,¹⁹ while the island of Montserrat is shown through ‘A box of Maize...[and] a box of arrow root.’²⁰

It was not solely smaller nations, which were confined to such broad classifications. At the Canadian exhibit, we can see a similar focus on raw materials and basic items; an

¹⁴ Paul Young. *Globalisation and the Great Exhibition*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) p. 133; Lara Kriegel. ‘Narrating the Subcontinent in 1851: India at the Crystal Palace’ in *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary essays*. (Manchester; Manchester University Press, 2001) p. 169

¹⁵ Eric J. Hobsbawm & Chris Wrigley. *Industry and Empire from 1850 to the present day* (New York: The New Press, 1999). p. 116

¹⁶ *Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the works of Industry of all nations, 1851*. p. 172

¹⁷ *Idid.*, 173

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 175

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 172

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 172

emphasis that is not apparent when examining the exhibitions of comparable nations like the United States. The Canadian exhibit features a vast array of raw materials, varying from foodstuffs like peas, beans, buckwheat flour or oats;²¹ to timber planks and blankets made from horsehair.²² Yet, in a manner similar to the smaller nations, there is a little focus on manufactured products, beyond items specifically needed to cope with indigenous conditions i.e. the harsh Canadian winter,²³ with snowshoes proving a particularly popular sight among Exhibition audiences.²⁴

This may appear to be a microanalysis of the various Exhibits, beyond the realm of any meaningful use. However, this pattern of colonial reductionism at the Exhibition has a much wider significance, beyond the confines of the Crystal Palace. Historians of the Mid-Victorian era show a rare consensus on the pivotal role the Exhibition played in affecting manufacturing,²⁵ indeed the event began with the sole aim of improving the aesthetic standards of British industry.²⁶ Any colonial exhibit solely of raw materials would seem logical and inconsequential in an exclusively manufacturing-based Exhibition. Yet, the Great Exhibition was far more than the sophisticated trade-show that Henry Cole first conceived for the *Royal Society of the Arts* in the 1840s. Throughout the Crystal Palace there were clearly a wide variety of items that lacked any industrial function; instead serving an educational role by providing an example of indigenous culture, like the Howdah donated by Nawab Nazim of Bengal, or serving as entertainment for visitors, like Hermann Ploucquet's taxidermy samples, the

²¹ Ibid., pp. 168-169

²² Ibid., pp. 168-169

²³ Michael Leapman. *The world for a shilling*. p. 135

²⁴ Michael Leapman. *The world for a shilling*. p. 135

²⁵ Jeffrey Auerbach. *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A nation on display*. p. 101; Paul Young. *Globalisation and the Great Exhibition*. p. 125

²⁶ Jeffrey Auerbach. *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A nation on display*.



Figure Two: One of Plouquet's highly popular *Comicality* exhibits, using kittens. Plouquet utilised his taxidermy skills to create a wide variety of similar scenes, using various different species of animals. They proved hugely popular during the Exhibition, being mentioned in multiple visitor accounts.

Comicalities.²⁷

Thus, a clear dichotomy can be seen; where certain nations are permitted to exhibit culturally specific items bereft of industrial worth, like the *Comicalities*, while the colonies are relegated to a secondary, producer state role. This exclusion of indigenous colonial culture can be seen across the Exhibition, with one notable example being the British protectorate of the Society Islands. *Her Majesty* Queen Pomare donated to the Exhibition '8 fine mats, 5 bonnets, 3 pieces of white cloth' along with an Indian vase, with her complements.²⁸ However, when these goods arrive at the Exhibition we can clearly see how they are drained of any ethnic background, in favor of focusing on their material value, with the Catalogue presenting them as artifacts

²⁷ Michael, Leapman. *The world for a shilling*. p.168

²⁸ Paul Young. 'Mission Impossible: Globalisation and the Great Exhibition,' p. 16

‘stripped of any indigenous cultural resonance... offered up not as curios or exotica, but as raw materials.’²⁹ The catalogue does give an extensive analysis of the items themselves, with the bonnet’s material being categorized as *Taca pumalifida*.³⁰ Yet, such an analysis clearly lacks context, with the casual Exhibition goer being granted no insight into the role such items play in the small, distant, Pacific Island. The Exhibition aimed to bring nations together in ‘mutual dependence.’³¹ Yet, this does not seem to extend to cultural awareness of the colonies, with little visible effort being made to portray the colonial nations beyond their production role in this globalising economic market. As Auerbach so succinctly summarizes, ‘The Exhibition turned the Empire into a cog in the manufacturing process.’³²

This ‘cog’ is linked to the other ascending economic force, visible at the Crystal Palace- consumerism. While the system of Imperial Economics affected perceptions of the colonial possessions at the Exhibition, so too did the preconceptions of the Exhibition visitors themselves. The preceding decade of the 1840s, the ‘hungry forties’, were characterised by falling growth levels, reduced exports and general economic stagnation. In contrast, the 1850s was a marked period of growth in the economy,³³ with inflation and Gross Domestic Product both rising considerably.³⁴ The available market for goods, alongside the public’s purchasing power, was rising. In the Exhibition Hall, all exhibits remained without prices, as organisers saw such cold commercialism as incongruent to the Crystal Palace’s altruistic aims of the public’s gradual advancement

²⁹ Ibid., 16

³⁰ *Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the works of Industry of all nations, 1851*, p. 297

³¹ Jeffrey Auerbach. *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A nation on display*. p. 161

³² Ibid., 101

³³ K.T. Hoppen. ‘A Maturing Economy’ in *The Mid-Victorian Generation*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) p. 276

³⁴ Ibid., p. 276

through education. Many commercial exhibitors found the idea entirely unsatisfactory, using alternative methods to inform their potential customers.³⁵ Yet, while an un-priced exhibition was cultivated from the notions of Enlightenment era philosophy, it in fact promoted the basest of consumer desire. An exhibition without prices promoted a new level of consumerist desire and ‘capital fetishism,’³⁶ as everything became available, with luxury products seeming accessible to even the average working class labourer. This consumerist desire affected the manner in which visitors interpreted the colonial exhibits, enforcing the simplistic model of the colonies as resource centres. A variety of accounts describe the erratic, frenzied behaviour of some Exhibition visitors, with *The Illustrated London News* mentioning how the mass crowds can be seen ‘Backwards and forwards, from compartment to compartment ... rushing ... convulsively’.³⁷ Similar accounts abound of ‘open mouthed gapers’³⁸ astonished by the vast variety of sights in the Crystal Palace. Consumerism promoted a desire among Exhibition visitors for the luxurious ‘Puffs, Powders, Patches...Billet-doux,’³⁹ of the exotic colonial lands. This desire accentuated the Imperial economic vision of the colonies as resource centres for exotic goods, helping to naturalize and promote these ‘manifold imperial drive[s].’⁴⁰

³⁵ Michael J. Turner. *Independent Radicalism in Early Victorian Britain*. (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004) p. 70

³⁶ Gerald Allan Cohen. *Karl Marx's theory of History*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000) p. 122

³⁷ Paul Young. *Globalisation and the Great Exhibition*. p. 122

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.123

³⁹ Alexander Pope. ‘The Rape of The lock: A heroi-comical poem’ (Canto I). *Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Forth Edition) (New York: Norton Publishing, 1996), pp. 546-564.

⁴⁰ Paul Young. *Globalisation and the Great Exhibition*. p. 153

The Eastern Paradigm

'Thou hast a mystery about thee, Koh-I-noor'
Samuel Warren⁴¹

Yet, unsurprisingly, the approximately six million visitors to the Crystal Palace in 1851 did not interpret the Exhibition through a singular economic outlook; while outside forces, like Imperial Economics, affected the colonial Exhibits, so too did the perceptions of the General British Public visiting the Crystal Palace. This section shall attempt to examine the way in which Exhibition visitors' preconceptions and stereotypes, driven by generic Oriental texts like *The Arabian Nights*, affected their perceptions of the colonial exhibits.

The use of a reference text, like *The Arabian Nights*, to explain the exotic colonial exhibits can be viewed as a largely benign action; a return to familiar archetypes by a public unused to such sights. The postcolonial theorist Edward Said would disagree, polemically arguing in *Orientalism* (1978) that these archaic conceptions of the East, held by a general populace, are 'fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient.'⁴² Indeed, none of these archetypes utilised around the proverbial 'East' remain totally innocent in their intent, as can be seen in *Exchanging Old Goods for New* (See Figure 3). Similar satirical images, with distinctly malevolent edges, abound at the Great Exhibition, frequently associating the exotic with the barbarous (See Figure 4).⁴³ Yet, when we approach the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, many historians, including Christopher Hobhouse, argue that the Exhibition reveals little of use about the British public's attitudes towards their nation's Imperial periphery.⁴⁴ Indeed, Hobhouse concludes with a decidedly definitive air when he declares that 'it was just a glorious

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 127

⁴² Edward Said. *Orientalism*. (New York: Doubleday, 2003) p. 204

⁴³ Paul Young. *Globalisation and the Great Exhibition*. P.120

⁴⁴ Christopher Hobhouse. *1851 and the Crystal Palace*. P. 150



Figure Three: In Exchanging Old Goods for New a highly caricatured image of the Jewish Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli tempts Victoria with a new Imperial Crown, in the run up to her coronation as Empress of India (1876). In his stereotyped clothing, sinister features, and exotic goods, the figure of Disraeli captures many British preconceptions of the Orient.

show.⁴⁵

Yet, such sweeping statements suffer from extreme historical myopia, ignoring how a coherent reference paradigm is utilised across both exhibition literature and visitors' accounts; with Britons using *The Arabian Nights* to explain the sights of the Oriental section at the Crystal Palace. Books like *The Arabian Nights* 'stood for the wonderful against the mundane, the imaginative against the prosaically and reductively rational,'⁴⁶ during the Victorian period. Indeed, *The Arabian Nights* remained wildly popular (and widely read) throughout Victoria's reign (1837-1901); with its influence visible across the Victorian Literary canon, from Edgar Allan Poe's *The Thosand and Second Tale of Scheherazade*,⁴⁷ to Alfred Lord Tennyson's 'Recollections of *The Arabian Nights*.'⁴⁸

When we examine the accounts of visitors to the Exhibition a recurrent emphasis towards *The Arabian*

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 150

⁴⁶ A.S. Byatt. *On Histories and Stories*. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001) p. 167

⁴⁷ Edgar Allan Poe. 'The Thosand and Second Tale of Scheherazade' in *The Science Fiction of Edgar Allan Poe*. (London: Penguin Books, 1976), pp. 135-154

⁴⁸ Alfred Lord Tennyson. 'Recollections of *The Arabian Nights*' in *The Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson*. (Wordsworth Editions, 1994), pp. 28-31.

Nights as the means to describe the sights of the Oriental Exhibits, can clearly be seen. The author Charlotte Brontë, who remained an eternal sceptic towards the notion of a Great Exhibition,⁴⁹ described the Crystal Palace in terms of a genii;⁵⁰ while the Quaker politician John Bright praised the Exhibition as ‘beyond the dreams of the Arabian Romances.’⁵¹ One anonymous account (quoted in Young) seemed to make the connection between *The Arabian Nights* and the Oriental Exhibits explicit, saying how: ‘The mind instinctively reverts to the well remembered tales of Eastern Imaginative Literature.’⁵² Accounts abound using a largely similar lexicon, with the Indian Exhibit being repeatedly compared to an Aladdin’s cave.⁵³

Yet, such descriptions seem warranted when compared with the sheer effluence of goods available to view in these areas of the Palace. The Chinese Exhibition alone,⁵⁴ while created without any support from the Chinese state,⁵⁵ contained an eclectic blend of ‘porcelain, textiles, jade,

⁴⁹ Dismissing the entire endeavour as ‘only a series of bazaars under a magnified hothouse’. Brontë, Charlotte. *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë, Volume Two: 1848-1851*. Margaret Smith (ed.) Pp. 603-604

⁵⁰ Brontë, Charlotte. *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë, Volume Two: 1848-1851*. Margaret Smith (ed.) Pp. 603-604

⁵¹ Paul Young. *Globalisation and the Great Exhibition*. p. 120

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 121

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 121

⁵⁴ While not strictly a colony, in the aftermath of the First Opium War (1839-1842) the British had taken control of significant interests in China, including Hong Kong Island.

⁵⁵ The reigning Chinese Emperor Hsien-feng, remaining hostile due to the British takeover of Hong Kong under the Treaty of Nanking (1842), the previous decade. He ordered that the apparatus of the Chinese state should refuse to cooperate with all measures involving the British, including the Great Exhibition. [Source: Anna Sommers Cooks. *The Victorian and Albert Museum: The making of the collection*. P.129] This meant that the Chinese Exhibition was constructed from a variety of different sources including ‘H.M. Consul Shanghai’ (*sic*), members of the British Horticultural Society and private individuals like ‘J. Reeves Esq.’. [Source: *Great Exhibition Catalogue* pp.208-209]

furniture, bronzes, ivory, lacquer and silk paintings.⁵⁶ This was by no means the largest of the Exhibitions, with Vanke highlighting how the Ottoman's contributed some 3,300 various items for viewing.⁵⁷

Yet, while Exhibition visitors' use of archaic archetypes from *The Arabian Nights* may be understandable (and even rather apt), they are not without problematic elements. Figure Four is a cartoon from Thomas Onwhyn's satirical book *Mr. and Mrs. Brown's Visit to London to see the great Exhibition of All Nations*. In the book's description of an average British working class family's experience at the Great Exhibition, there is a notable incident where they confront several 'natives' from the colonial 'Cannibal Islands.' In contrast to the 'noble slave'⁵⁸ portrayed across the vast range of 18th century fiction, here we are presented with a malignant depiction of indigenous peoples; with overtly simian features, as they ravenously stare at the family's youngest child Johnny, the islanders encapsulate many dominant fears around the exotic 'racial other', with the caption overtly mentioning their offering 'a price for him.' Once again, this depiction fits easily into the paradigm of *The Arabian Nights*, as one of the Tales in the text, *The Forth Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor* details how a tribe of sinister 'black men,'⁵⁹ tempted Sinbad's crew with a hallucinogenic herb, with ultimately cannibalistic aims. Thus, we can clearly see the balancing of the exotic/savage binary, as developed in *The Arabian Nights*, at play in the perceptions of the colonies at the Great Exhibition.

Admittedly, this unfamiliarity with the 'racial other'

⁵⁶ Francesca Vanke. 'Degrees of Otherness: The Ottoman Empire and China at the Great Exhibition of 1851' in *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008) p. 196

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195

⁵⁸ Aphra Behn. *Oroonoko: or, The Royal Slave*. (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

⁵⁹ 'The Forth Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor' in *The Arabian Nights*. Available online at: <http://www.wollamshram.ca/1001/Dixon/dixon01_12.htm> (Accessed: 12/4/12)

can also manifest itself in less insidiously racist ways. For instance, Henry Sutherland Edwards' *Authentic Account of the Chinese Commission* (Figure 5) shows how these racial binaries are enforced in a less extreme manner. In this extended satirical poem, we can see many mildly xenophobic sentiments expressed towards the 'Oriental Barbarians'. This barbarism is most apparent when the Europhile member of the Emperor's commission is put to death for his structured, considered assessment of the Exhibition; while his colleague's rapidly delivered rant on the flaws of Western Civilization results in his promotion. The front cover of the poem repeats many of the same sentiments as the central characters are portrayed in outdated stereotyped 'Oriental' clothing, with beards and features that are more Mongolian than Chinese, indicating the Victorian audience could see little discernable difference between the two.⁶⁰

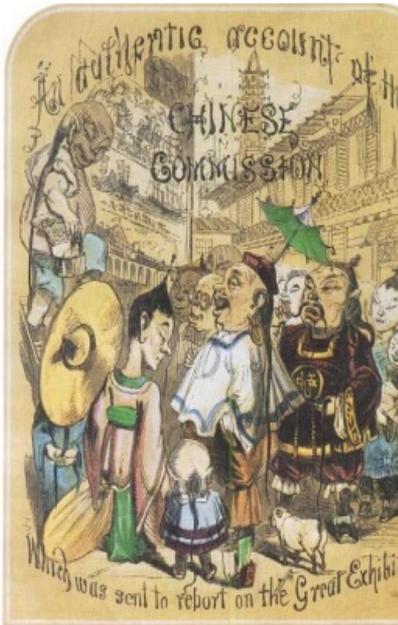


Figure Five: The Cover Plate of Sutherland Edward's text. The depiction of the Chinese visitors is clearly stereotyped with caricatured features and costume.

⁶⁰ Indeed, in the Exhibition Hall Asian goods tend to be intermingled freely across national lines; with the Exhibition organisers showing no impetus to separate the 'Japanese Wares' included in the Chinese section, clearly implying that these nations were interchangeable within the Victorian consciousness.

The White Man's Burden

*'Her subjects pours
 From Distant shores
 Her Injians and Canajians
 And also we
 Her kingdoms three
 Attind with our allegiance'*⁶¹

William Thackeray's poem 'Mr. Maloney's account of the Crystal Palace,'⁶² published in *Punch* in April 1851,⁶³ encapsulates many of the popular Victorian cultural stereotypes of the provincial Irishman. Embodying the vices of sloth, slovenliness and ignorance, Maloney shows amazement at the variety of sights in cosmopolitan London, describing in an archetypal drawl how 'with conscious proide/I stud insoide/ And looked the World's Great Fair in.'⁶⁴ While clearly written within the genre of satire, an element of disquiet can remain on reading such an overtly callous, biased portrayal of a colonial subject. While the Crystal Palace predates Kipling's infamous 'White Man's Burden' poem by more than forty years,⁶⁵ this section shall attempt to examine the way in which the Great Exhibition enforces the notional idea of the British nation's 'social duty' to their colonial subjects.

This sense of duty can be delineated most clearly when we contrast colonial nations with a largely Anglo-Saxon (Caucasian) ancestry, like Australia, to nations with large indigenous populations, like India or the British

⁶¹ Christopher Hobhouse. *1851 and the Crystal Palace*. P. 174

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 174

⁶³ Natasha Alvandi Hunt. *Transistive Spaces: Mid-Victorian Anxiety in the face of change*. (Doctoral Thesis: University of Southern California, 2011) p. 19

⁶⁴ Christopher Hobhouse. *1851 and the Crystal Palace*. P. 174

⁶⁵ The Kipling poem was published in McClure's magazine in 1899.

Caribbean possessions. A clear contrast can be seen between the two groups; where at the Exhibition the ‘white colonies’ development and innovation is emphasized, while the indigenous possessions are shown to require the assistance of the empire to attain the necessary ‘societal advancement.’⁶⁶ To look at the example of Australia in the Exhibition’s catalogue we can clearly see this positive emphasis on the colonies’ advancement and innovation. While they may have sent ‘a smaller collection than we should have expected,’⁶⁷ their collection remains focused on core Australian industries experiencing exponential growth; for example mining, where the Catalogue highlights how the Burra Burra mines ‘present one of the most striking examples of successful mining speculation’⁶⁸ ever seen, while descriptions of exhibits in Van Diemen’s Land are variously termed as ‘tasteful’ or simply ‘great.’⁶⁹ In a similar manner, we can see how the Exhibition presents Australian local produce, such as spiced beef from Sydney,⁷⁰ as a justifiable product; readily available and fit for British consumption with purchase details included for the potential customer.⁷¹ Alongside enforcing the economic growth of Australia, the country is variously presented as a *Terra Nullius*, with no mention being made of either the indigenous aboriginal people or the potential dangers to be encountered in the Australian outback. Instead the Exhibit contains cultural curios including kangaroo skins, a platypus and the teeth of a sperm whale.⁷²

⁶⁶ Peter James Marshall. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). p. 221

⁶⁷ Kylie Message & Ewan Johnston. *The Colonial Magazine and East India Review* quoted in ‘The world within a city: The Great Exhibition, Race, Class and Social Reform’ in *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*. . (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008) p. 39

⁶⁸ *Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the works of Industry of all nations, 1851*. P. 177

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 179

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 178

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 178

⁷² Michael, Leapman. *The World for a Shilling*. P. 136

This must be contrasted to many of the colonies with significant indigenous populations like India or China,⁷³ where there is a clear avoidance of a purely positive optimistic depiction. For instance, the Chinese Exhibit features ‘a Chinese medicine root,’⁷⁴ without explanation as to its use, availability or properties in the *Exhibition Catalogue*. This dismissal of native ideas holds true across the entire Exhibition, as Western modes of thinking are unconsciously emphasized as native goods are ignored.

This balancing of ‘mutual dependence’⁷⁵ alongside the negation of the colonies’ cultural legacy seems incongruent, bordering on the nonsensical. Yet, at the Great Exhibition the two made perfect sense. In October 1851, the popular preacher William Forster published *The Closing of the Great Exhibition or, England’s Mission to All Nations*.⁷⁶ In this polemical piece of political rhetoric, Forster enforces the pivotal role Britain needed to play on the new world stage, a role that required the exporting of British morals, ideas and ideals to the colonies. For Forster, the British nation must strive ‘to raise other nations in the scale of social order.’⁷⁷ Therefore, the colonies must, for Forster, be homogenized to British values, culture and ways of thinking. The various Oriental Barbarians would, through Imperial Economics, become the embodiment of good British social values.

⁷³ While not strictly a colony in 1851, the Qing Dynasty had ceded Hong Kong to Britain, following the First Opium War, under the Treaty of Nanking (1842).

⁷⁴ *Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the works of Industry of all nations, 1851*. p. 208

⁷⁵ Jeffrey Auerbach. *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A nation on display*. p. 161

⁷⁶ Paul Young. ‘Mission Impossible: Globalization and the Great Exhibition’ in *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*. p. 10

⁷⁷ William Forster, *The Closing of the Great Exhibition or, England’s Mission to All Nations: A Discourse*. p. 14.

Conclusions:

This research paper has attempted to examine the various ways the Great Exhibition, and its visitors, construed the colonial possessions in Hyde Park, during the summer of 1851. Yet, to argue that these interpretations are in any way definitive, or that the taxonomy is restrictive, is an act of extreme historical oversight. Just as India at the Great Exhibition could be at once ‘miniature, gigantic, governable, unruly and uncontainable,’⁷⁸ the Exhibition offers the viewer multiple interpretations and meanings, often contradictory, negating any attempts at universalism. The Great Exhibition represented the product of these highly contested value systems. It was ultimately a protean event, rather than the Hegemonic chant of power many historians tend to reject it as; and it was clearly much more than a ‘glorious show.’⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Lara Kriegel. ‘Narrating the Subcontinent in 1851: India at the Crystal Palace’ in *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays*. p. 169

⁷⁹ Christopher Hobhouse. *1851 and the Crystal Palace*. p. 150

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**THE CHANGING FACE OF THE SAN
FRANCISCO JAPANTOWN:
A WESTERN ADDITION STORY**

Aileen Ma

On April 15, 2013, The Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival celebrates its 45th year in San Francisco's Japantown. If past years are any indication, the festival will welcome upwards of 200,000 people, and showcase Japanese culture while displaying the diversity of the local Japanese and Japanese American community. But what exactly is Japantown, who make up the members of its community and how did it find its home in the Western Addition? An exploration of the changes in Japantown's landscape reveals the extent to which public space can be racialized as a commodity, as well as the complex and often less than organic relationship between community and space.

One of only three remaining Japantowns in the

United States today and by far the oldest, San Francisco's Japantown owes its continued existence in large part due to the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907. Though Commodore Perry forced Japan out of isolation in 1853, it was not until the late 1890s when Japanese immigration to the United States began to grow. Nevertheless, most Japanese sought to improve their prospects and then return home.¹ In 1906, the Japanese Community in San Francisco used Japan's new status as the victor of the 1905 Russo-Japanese War to garner international attention for a very local cause--a city resolution which would segregate Japanese American children just as Chinese American children had been banned from integrated schools before them. The result of diplomatic talks between Japan and the United States was the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907. In exchange for the integration of Japanese American children into schools, immigration of Japanese labor to the United States would be halted indefinitely.² This in turn forced the existing largely male Issei (first generation) migrant population to choose between settling down or returning to Japan for good. As those who decided to stay wrote home seeking arranged marriages, a permanent community began to form.³

Whereas today we see a sparkling Japanese American shopping complex, embellished with a gem of a peace tower, Nihonjin machi, or "Japanese peoples' town" as it was first known, found its home in the Western Addition due to both exclusionary real estate practices, as well as the devastating aftermath of the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906. Prior to the earthquake, a majority of Japanese businesses and boarding houses (which catered primarily to incoming Japanese laborers and visitors) were spread out across the city in several clusters.

¹ Okazaki, Suzie Kobuchi. *Nihonmachi: A Story of San Francisco's Japantown* Sko Studios, 1985, 10.

² Brooks, Charlotte. *Alien neighbors, foreign friends: Asian Americans, housing, and the transformation of urban California*. University of Chicago Press, 2009, 27.

³ Laguerre, Michel S. *The Global Ethnopolis: Chinatown, Japantown and Manilatown in American Society*. Macmillan, 1999, 57.

Among these were South Park (South of Market, between Second and Third Streets and Brannan and Townsend), Dupont Street (Grant Avenue) on the edge of Chinatown, as well as the Western Addition.⁴ As white middle and upper-class families fled the city center for the suburbs after the earthquake, older single-family homes were now available for rent to immigrant families. The post-quake Western Addition was a diverse district composed of neighborhoods of German, Russian-Jewish, Eastern European-Jewish, Japanese, and African American families.⁵ The selection of the Western Addition then, was largely due to the fact that its buildings, which had survived the earthquake, were vacant and available, and required fewer resources to rebuild.⁶ In a sense, the upheaval of the earthquake provided the Japanese as well as other residents of the city with unprecedented if unexpected mobility.

Much as Chinatown became a segregated ethnic enclave not merely out of immigrants' need for cultural familiarity, so too did widespread institutionalized racism make it near impossible for Japanese immigrants to rent housing in less diverse neighborhoods even for those willing to pay the premium. Homeowners created private agreements, known as racial restrictive covenants, which barred residents from reselling to anyone not wholly "of the Caucasian Race", and the Real Estate Board instituted a boycott of all real estate agents doing business with the Japanese. As *Issei* Japanese were classified as "aliens ineligible to citizenship" and thus unable to own property, many resorted to purchasing land in their *Nissei* children's names instead. Nativist sentiments were so widespread in fact, that even City leaders rallied to "save" Bush Street, "a beautiful boulevard to the beach [from]

⁴ Okazaki, Suzie Kobuchi. *Nihonmachi: A Story of San Francisco's Japantown*. Sko Studios, 1985, 35.

⁵ Groth, Paul Erling. *Living downtown: the history of residential hotels in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, 113.

⁶ Horiuchi, Lynne. "Object Lessons in Home Building: Racialized Real Estate Marketing in San Francisco." *Landscape Journal* 26.1 (2007): 61-82.

becoming a Japanese street".⁷ That arsonists lit a Japanese residence on fire in the white, working-class area of Russian Hill, only further accelerated Japanese exodus to the Western Addition.⁸

Today, the San Francisco Japantown is defined by the San Francisco Planning Department as being located in the Western Addition, in the areas between Laguna and Webster, and Geary and Bush Streets. Located almost exactly in the center of the city, the Western Addition derives its name from its incorporation into the original street grid as the first plat added to the western edge of the city (Groth, 332).⁹ While today it is a neighborhood in its own right, it was initially formed as merely a district adjacent to the original confines of downtown San Francisco, a 16 by 12 block area bordered by Van Ness, Fell, Divisadero and California Streets, and divided into four quadrants by Geary Boulevard and Fillmore Street. Besides the quadrant that is Japantown, another quadrant of interest in the Western Addition is the Fillmore, San Francisco's historic black neighborhood, which dates back to the 1930s.¹⁰

A close comparison of a series of maps detailing the change in Japanese American Businesses at Post & Buchanan Streets between the years of 1910, 1940, 1950, 1970, and 2000 reveal many gradual shifts in the demographics and culture of the neighborhood.¹¹ The transition of the church on 1760 Post Street is a particular example of this. In 1910, the building is listed as Plymouth Congregational Church. In 1940, it is listed

⁷ Smith, "Anti-Japanese Agitation in Hollywood". Los Angeles Population Schedules 1920, 26.

⁸ Brooks, Charlotte. *Alien neighbors, foreign friends: Asian Americans, housing, and the transformation of urban California*. University of Chicago Press, 2009, 26-28.

⁹ Groth, Paul Erling. *Living downtown: the history of residential hotels in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, 332.

¹⁰ Seyer-Ochi, Ingrid. "Lived Landscapes of the Fillmore." *Innovations in Educational Ethnography: Theory, Methods, and Results*. George Spindler and Lorie Hammond, eds (2006): 173.

¹¹ Pease, Ben. "The Heart of San Francisco's Nihonmachi (Japantown)". Pease Press. 1998-2003, 2-6.

as First Evangelical & Reformed Church in 1940, and what used to be an adjacent dwelling is listed as a community house affiliated with the church. In 1955, it is listed as an African American church, the Mount Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, with the adjacent building now taking the form of a youth center and church offices. Finally in 2000, the church building is shown to have been bulldozed and replaced by Japan Bowl, which was demolished in September of that year to make way for Japan Center.

The seeming resilience of many of the Victorian buildings in the neighborhood brings up an intriguing question: if these Victorian painted ladies were able to withstand the Great Earthquake and some more, why then were they condemned as uninhabitable sites of blight in need of Urban Renewal? If the San Franciscan cultural elite was under the influence of the City Beautiful movement, they certainly were not alone in thinking that the ills of the city could be cured through better architecture, if not a complete departure from the decrepit inner city to the safe pastures of suburban life. Though plans to target Japantown for “slum clearance” were formulated as early as 1942, when many of its residents were being interned, it was not until 1948 that the area was selected as one of the first large-scale urban renewal projects in the nation. As described by the National Housing Act of 1949, areas of “urban blight” were defined by major influxes of new residents, overcrowding, cases of tuberculosis, and populations other than those of European descent.¹² In this sense, Japantown’s diverse and multi-ethnic neighborhood of Southern Blacks who migrated to obtain wartime manufacturing jobs and Japanese Americans who had returned from internment camps certainly fulfilled that set of criteria. The mixed-use land elements of Japantown too were seen as blighted and incompatible with a rising standard of modern living that held suburban nuclear

¹² Graves, Donna, and Page & Turnbull, INC. *San Francisco Japantown Historic Context Statement*. San Francisco: Prepared for the San Francisco Planning Department as part of the Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan, 2009, 13.

family residences as the ideal. As evidenced from maps of the time period, numerous residences are shown in the backrooms of stores and on the floors above businesses.¹³ In 1952, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency published a tentative plan of the area's redevelopment, citing its main reasons as the Western Addition's "substandard and slum housing conditions, overcrowding, lack of recreational space and intermixture of deleterious influences."¹⁴ In all, by the end of the 1960s the area that now constitutes Japantown had removed over 8,000 residents and demolished 6,000 units of housing. Though residents were given vouchers with the promise of newer and better housing to return to in the future, the city's redevelopment agency chose instead to build condominiums, and upgrade Japantown from an ethnic enclave to a tourist attraction. As a result, San Francisco's African American population has plummeted dramatically, and resettled in areas such as Bayview, Hunter's Point, and the East Bay. Despite heavy protesting from the Japanese American and Asian American community, Japantown was acquired by Japan-based companies eager to expand their ventures in the U.S. market. By 2000, the Kinetsu Enterprise owned two malls in Japan Center, two hotels, and a bowling alley (now demolished) considered by many as one of Japantown's last true community gathering places. The rest of Japantown belonged to a Chinese investor and the Kinokuniya Bookstore.¹⁵ A glance at the Pease maps mentioned earlier shows just how much of the original Japantown has been bulldozed to make way for the new Japantown shopping complex. In retracing the demarcations of the Geary Expressway, and seeing the number of dwellings that had to be torn down to accommodate the new malls, it

¹³ Pease, Ben. "The Heart of San Francisco's Nihonmachi in 1950", "The Heart of San Francisco's Nihonmachi (Japantown)". Pease Press. 1998-2003.

¹⁴ San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. "The Tentative Plan for the Redevelopment of Western Addition. Project Area Number One and Related Documents." (September 1952.)

¹⁵ Tsukuda, Yoko. "Place, Community, and Identity: The Preservation Movement of San Francisco's Japantown." 2009, 148.

becomes evident that Japantown's boundaries have contracted.

The Peace Tower, a gift from San Francisco's sister city Osaka, after which Japantown was at one point named Little Osaka, is particularly interesting as it highlights the extent to which Japantown has been exoticized for the purpose of commercial tourism. Departing from the actual architectural cultural traditions of Japantown, in which early residents simply moved into Victorian buildings and stopped renovating (with the exception of places of worship that is), these changes signal Japantown's shift away from being an ethnic enclave whose purpose is to provide a home for the cultural group and toward the creation of a market place that trades commercially on the notion of orientalized exoticism.¹⁶ In fact, early San Francisco Redevelopment Agency meeting minutes refer to the settlement as a "Japanese colony," further racializing Asian Americans as foreigners in their own land and constructing an imagined Orient intended to titillate fascination with *japonaiserie* while erasing the history of racism directed at the city's Japanese Americans.¹⁷

In contrast, the attempted development of the Fillmore in recent years seems a much more tragic failed attempt at commercializing what was once a buoyant jazz scene. A walk through of the area reveals many relics of the Western Addition's rich African American past. At No. 1712 on Fillmore and Post streets, the purple Victorian is home to Marcus Books, an independent bookstore specializing in black writers. Similar to the fates of many other buildings from the same era in the area, it was relocated from its original location on Post Street (the current Buchanan Street mall) during the redevelopment of neighborhood in the 1960s. Formerly known as Jimbo's

¹⁶ Graves, Donna, and Page & Turnbull, INC. *San Francisco Japantown Historic Context Statement*. San Francisco: Prepared for the San Francisco Planning Department as part of the Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan, 2009, 10.

¹⁷ Lai, Clement. "The Racial Triangulation of Space: The Case of Urban Renewal in San Francisco's Fillmore District." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102.1; 2012, 158.

Bop City, it was a major music hot spot in the old Fillmore, then known as the Harlem of the West.¹⁸

Though the name “Japantown” denotes the almost exclusively Japanese identity associated with the neighborhood, it is important to acknowledge the neighborhood’s rich African American history. Three main factors fostered the growth of the thriving historic Black Fillmore Community: economic hardship sustained by Southern sharecroppers throughout the great depression, a huge increase in wartime defense industry job recruitment in the bay area, as well as the Japanese internment that followed Pearl Harbor in 1942.¹⁹ In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou recounts what she saw during this period as a child growing up in the Western Addition:

“In the early months of World War II, San Francisco’s Fillmore district, or the Western Addition, experienced a visible revolution.... The Yakamoto Sea Food Market quietly became Sammy’s Shoe Shine Parlor and Smoke Shop... The Japanese shops which sold products to Nisei customers were taken over by enterprising Negro businessmen, and in less than a year became permanent homes away from home for the newly arrived Southern Blacks. Where the odor of tempura, raw fish and cha had dominated, the aroma of chitlings, greens and ham hocks now prevailed. The Asian population dwindled before my eyes.... No member of my family and none of the family friends ever mentioned the absent Japanese. It was as if they had never owned or lived in the houses we inhabited”²⁰.

Established in 1995, the Fillmore jazz district plan

¹⁸ Downs, Tom. “28.” *Walking San Francisco*. 5th ed. Wilderness Press, 2006, 192.

¹⁹ Broussard, Albert S. *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954*. University Press of Kansas Lawrence, 1993, 134.

²⁰ Angelou, Maya. *I know why the caged bird sings*. New York: Random House. Print. 203-204.

was the Redevelopment Agency's most recent attempt to commercialize the district. Also termed the Fillmore Community Benefit district plan, it appeared to be a sorry attempt to make amends for urban renewal efforts that uprooted the community in the first place. The redevelopment program closed in 2009, and save for a few condominium buildings and a neighborhood of empty businesses and boiling resentment, the revitalization of the neighborhood was largely to no avail.²¹ Original plans in 1970 that would create a Fillmore Center celebrating and highlighting African American culture much like the cultural and trade center located in Japantown never came to fruition. This was partially because of lack of funding, but mostly due to developer reluctance to pump money into what was seen as an unsavory neighborhood.²²

Although both Japan Center and the proposed Fillmore center originated from developers' desire to recognize cultural and racial otherness for the purpose of profit, the contrasting outcomes of both plans make very interesting case studies on the racial othering of neutral spaces in America. In the case of the Fillmore Center, this otherness was seen a dangerous, problematic neighborhood one would rather not drive into with one's car windows down, something San Francisco would rather forget about; whereas in the case of Japan Center, this otherness was viewed as so outside the realm of black and white race relations as to be rendered an escapist foreign imaginary whereby one could visit Japan without even leaving the safe space of one's own city.

What does it mean for the members of a community then, to allow a corporation to develop a hollowed out Disneyland-esque version of a community that once was, or to be passed over entirely without even being represented in

²¹ Smith, Matt, and Zusha Elinson. "Redevelopment Agency Couldn't Jazz Up Fillmore." *The Bay Citizen*. Web. 13 Apr. 2013. <<https://www.baycitizen.org/news/development/redevelopment-agency-couldnt-jazz/>>.

²² Lai, Clement. "The Racial Triangulation of Space: The Case of Urban Renewal in San Francisco's Fillmore District." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102.1; 2012, 160.

development at all? Even though Japantown has gone from a sphere of neighborhood congregation to a shopping center one visits as a consumer, community organizers remain invested in Japantown as a symbol of Japanese American community fit into a landscape with Japanese identified elements.²³ The complex relationships between space, community, and idea that this brings up are particularly interesting in the context of the *Sansei* and *Yonsei* (third and fourth generation) Japanese American youth of today. Considering that a large number of Japanese American youth that are multi-racial, and that most Japanese American youth have even less exposure to Japanese community by virtue of not having grown up in Japantown, how then does the space of Japantown figure into their own identities?

According to Leslie Shieh's study for the Japantown Task Force on Young Adult Perceptions of Japantown, to many Young Adults, Japantown could be Anytown, USA. Young adults surveyed associated Japantown with specific activities, such as watching a movie or eating sushi. They rarely considered Japantown as place to visit just for the sake of visiting or hanging out with friends.²⁴ While one might be compelled to present the Peace Plaza outdoors area and its stone benches as direct evidence of how organic community gathering is built into the fabric of Japantown, the reality of it is quite the opposite. Outside of a particularly sunny day, or the Cherry Blossom Festival, few people congregate beside the Peace Tower, and few people are eager to utilize the space alone, beautiful though it may be. Rather, most people are to be found within the maze-like structures of Japantown's malls. Due to the privatization of the majority of Japantown's land, the unwelcoming structure of Japantown is unsurprising, despite the presence of architectural elements of the Peace Tower, and Peace Plaza which are conceptually inviting.

²³ Tsukuda, Yoko. "Place, Community, and Identity: The Preservation Movement of San Francisco's Japantown." 2009, 150.

²⁴ Shieh, Leslie. *A New Framework for Looking at San Francisco Japantown: Gathering Places for Young Adults* 2000, 16.

While the Western Addition is the official home of the San Francisco Japantown, in actuality, relics and living history of Japanese San Francisco are scattered throughout the city. The Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park, originally built as part of a World Fair, is a prime example of this. The designation of a specific center as Japantown then seems to be a response to the increasingly dispersed and multi-racial Japanese population, as well as a bid to root the intangible components of a community in the tangible, and by extension preservable, elements of a historic neighborhood. Retelling the uniquely Western Addition tale of San Francisco's Japantown as well as the tales of those who have experienced its rise and fall first hand is not only imperative to understanding San Francisco's cultural landscape, it is also a vital key to the rediscovery of Japantown itself. With the retelling of Japantown's journey from that of a diverse Japanese American as well as African American enclave to its current incarnation as a painstakingly engineered tourist attraction, community members may be motivated to further reclaim Japantown as a site for active community engagement. At the very least, those who learn the history behind the changing face of the San Francisco Japantown may find it hard to forget a vivid tale of how policies, individual choice, and corporate interests work in conjunction to influence elements of our landscape we so often unassumingly inhabit today.

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