

Chapter Two

Constructing India: Crown Policies

He who views only to produce of his own country may be said to a single world; while those who see and consider the productions of other climes bring many worlds in review before them. We are but on the borderland of knowledge; much remains hidden, reserved for far off generations, who will prosecute the examination of their Creator's works in remote countries, and make many discoveries for the pleasure and convenience of life. Posterity will see its increasing museums and the knowledge of divine wisdom flourish together; and at the same time antiquities and history, the natural sciences, the practical sciences of the manual arts will be enriched...

Linnaeus, Museum Adolphi Friderici Regis, 1754

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Once the EIC withdrew from India and the Crown administration was in place, they reviewed all the policies from their financial implications. The Raj officers turned their attention to the next stage of their 'inquiries' for data collection, i.e. crafts artifacts of daily and festive use. So far, the collections of the crafts and artifacts were conducted by individuals in a sporadic manner and they often resorted to blatant loot or vandalism. In any case they were not above suspicions. The Great Exhibition had placed India at the centre stage due to its wealth of artifacts. All new expositions sought after Indian crafts. Hence, the British exhibition commissioners turned their focus on justifying and creating legally acceptable ways of collecting them. Thus collecting objects and enumerating crafts communities was included as a modality. Design policies needed to be formulated to have a uniform, efficient, and effective collection of data along with a way of processing them for formulating new strategies in marketing or taxation. They could now control the production and marketing of Indian crafts by regulating taxes on the export and restricting the manufacture.

In this chapter we will first deal with the context in which early art schools started in India and how the British Government quickly took over these and started more in different parts of India. The debates about the pedagogic stance or exercises are interspersed with their inclusion in exhibitions. We will then consider the meeting of art academicians and museologists called by E C Buck in 1881 to contemplate on the draft for a scheme for making museums in Calcutta.

Bernard Cohn, in *The Transformation of Object into Artefacts, Antiquities, and Art in Nineteenth Century* (1996), uses the example of Collin McKenzie to show the British intervention in collecting objects along with manuscripts, artifacts and architectural fragments probably started out of curiosity and passion. In those days when EIC administrators were surveying everything in India, no British officer thought of including everyday objects in the list. Mackenzie practically invented the necessity of doing it and perfected it as an art. One of his chief interpreters was Boria, whom Mackenzie first met in 1796. He knew Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Sanskrit. McKenzie found Boria capable of dealing with all sects and considered him as "the first step of [his] introduction into the portal of Indian knowledge".¹ For McKenzie, travelling and collecting evidences, manuscripts, and talking to people was integral in knowing and writing history of many parts of India. In a letter in 1805, he stated the aims of his survey, he wrote from the perspective of a historian:

The elucidation of the History of the several Governments that have rapidly succeeded in this Stage will I conceived be very interesting, as by the Inscriptions, Grants & other Documents that came into my hands ... confirming the utility of this undertaking to the existing Government from a knowledge of Institutions that influence so considerable a part of the Population of the Empire.²

However, the objects which were displaced and put in a newer context, effectively underwent a change in their meaning for ever. In order to

¹ Cohn, 'The Transformation of Object into Artefacts, Antiquities, and Art in Nineteenth Century'.

² Peter Robb, 'Completing "Our Stock of Geography", or an Object "Still More Sublime": Colin Mackenzie's Survey of Mysore, 1799-1810', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 8, no. 2 (July 1998): 181–206.

understand this phenomenon of objectification well, we need to understand the dialectic relationship between object and the user and how possessing or using the object itself decides the meaning that evolves out of that relationship.

In his preface to the compilation of Dr. George Watt's *A Dictionary of the Economic Products of India* (1889), E C Buck specifies the history of how the book materialized along a long process of research, departmental explorations and surveys for several national and international exhibitions.³ According to him, the Imperial Department had called the Agricultural Department of the North-Western Provinces to provide a collection of products for several International Expositions (Paris 1877, Italy, Belgium and Melbourne 1880, Amsterdam and Calcutta 1883). Dr. George Watt, who was originally sent to India as a professor of Botany, was the Assistant Curator of the Economic Section of the Indian Museum. T. N. Mukharji, collected these products and categorized them under direction of Dr. Watt. Over the years, this grew into a compilation of a list of the more important Economic Products of India, which were illustrated by a series of samples or specimens (Plate: 42) arranged in glass-fronted tin cases designated the "Index collection." The results were exhibited in the Economic Court at the Calcutta Exhibition. In his preface, Dr. Watt further revealed that in order to get additional information, he had issued about 300 copies of the catalogues to the officers of all departments through India. Later, a much enlarged and refined version was

³ E. C. Buck, 'Preface', in *A Dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, by Sir George Watt (Superintendent of Government Printing, 1889), 3
<http://archive.org/details/adictionaryecon00agrigoog>.

used to make an entire wall that become a major attraction in the 'Colonial and Indian Exhibition' in London 1886.⁴

Buck perceptively pointed out the complementary role the Exhibitions played in furthering the collection and compilation of the information. In his preface, Dr. Watt pointed out a twin purpose implicit in its requirement: on the one hand, to supply scientific information which may be useful to the administrative officers and on the other, to meet the requirements of the reader in search of definite information regarding Indian economics to advance the material interests of India, and to bring the trade and capital of the West into more direct contact with the resources of the Empire.⁵

After the 1857 transfer to the Crown rule, Indian trade suffered further decline which could be due to two causes. The first was the end of the East India Company's monopolies on Indian trade; ancient crafts and marketing tactics could not compete in a new free-trade environment which was seen as favouring Western industrial production. According to Thomas Prasch, the other reason given for the decline of Indian crafts was the growing European demand for Indian production, prompted in part by the very success of the Great Exhibition and its successors⁶. Indian craftsmen were strained by the capacities of traditional producers and were tempted to alter their traditions to play to the European market. Viceroy Trevelyan revived the proposal to introduce design schools in India like those in England proposed by Henry

⁴ Watt incorporated their additions and corrections into the 1889 compilation. Buck, 'Preface', viii.

⁵ Ibid, vii.

⁶ Thomas Prasch, "A Strange Incongruity": The Imaginary India of the International Exhibitions', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 34, no. 5 (1 December 2012), 4.

Cole in early 1840s. He favoured Cole's model since "[art] is taught there systematically, beginning with the principles of geometry, drawing, [and] perspective".⁷

Trevelyan seemed not to note how instruction might change the direction of Indian art. But he did see a reconnection to the museum complex and to design issues on the home front. The installation of such schools in India, and thus the preservation of Indian arts manufacture, he argued, "shall benefit ourselves as much as them," since "the results of Indian art would be displayed for the imitation of the world, [and] would be quite as important in its relation to European art as it would be in its relation to Native art".⁸ Trevelyan thus brings his argument full circle: Indian arts revivify British design, but British school-of-design art education rescues Indian art, in part so that it can continue to revivify British design by its display in museums and exhibitions.

But the contradiction in his speech leaves enough room to expose his assumptions and wishes about which he is not explicit. As he Trevelyan continued to lament that the competitive disadvantage of Indian goods vis-à-vis English manufactured goods—resulted "partly from levying no duty upon English manufactures imported into India, and partly by levying a heavy a heavy duty upon Indian manufactures imported into England, in addition to the natural manufacturing superiority of England"—had had dire impacts on Indian artisanship, and had indeed "swept away great branches of manufacture, and . . . caused great distress in India".⁹ He was implying that

⁷ George Otto Trevelyan, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay, By His Nephew, George Otto Trevelyan* (M.P. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958), 156.

⁸ Ibid, 156.

⁹ Ibid, 156.

with industrial manufacturing and free trade were undermining the traditional economy of India, the mechanism for preserving traditional artisanship and to save the threatened arts, was through education. The debate on the value of training Indian craftsmen for the changing times was getting more intense. Henry Cole, who was indirectly the master-mind behind the 'reforms' in Indian crafts and design education noticed the pattern of decline as early as 1866, noting that, beyond the fine work selected in 1851, there were

“some most abominable imitations of European patterns. Indeed, there was nothing so bad as when an Indian attempted to copy European art; and he confessed he had some fear lest the schools of design in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, instead of leading the natives to advance in their own styles of art, would create a hybrid style, the most detestable ever seen”.¹⁰

Cole's critique echoes his own earlier attacks on British design in the *Journal of Design and Manufactures*. His worst fears were the negative role Indian Schools might be playing.

Crown Policies

After the 1857 “peasant revolt” the British Parliament wrested powers for ruling India from the EIC and directly appointed Viceroy to look after the administration. On November 1, 1858, Queen Victoria issued a Royal Proclamation, hailed by many as “the Magna Charta of India,” announcing the official end of the Sepoy mutiny and heralding the formal opening of the British Raj.¹¹ Translated in every Indian dialect and dispatched across all of British imperial territories in southern Asia, the message of the Queen was

¹⁰ James Fergusson, 'On the State of Indian Architecture', *Journal of the Society of Arts* 15, no. 735 (1866), 76.

¹¹ James Talboys Wheeler, *The History of the Imperial Assemblage at Delhi* (London, 1877).

unequivocal: the new administration of India by the British government would continue the benevolent work. In 1874, Disraeli came to power; and with a sizable majority vote, could now implement his imperial program. The most enduring legacy of his foreign policy was the purchase of a controlling share in the Suez Canal in 1875. He defended this action as necessary to protect the “highway to our Indian Empire and our other dependencies”.¹² Britain already possessed the Strait of Gibraltar and the Cape of Good Hope, hence Disraeli understood the security of the canal was imperative to British strategic interests.

Disraeli believed the first step in consolidating the British presence was to bind India to the institutions of the Empire and increase the attachment the native principalities had with the British government. With this in mind, he worked towards getting Queen Victoria declared the “Empress of India” in an effort to attract the devotion of native princes and their subjects towards the greatest ceremonial symbol of the British Empire. On January 1, 1877, Lord Lytton summoned the Delhi Durbar, which is the Court of Delhi, and presided over an Imperial Assembly conferring the imperial titles on the British sovereign.¹³

Traditional and newly emerging elites needed to find a different audience with which, and a different language in which, to converse. This audience was, of course, the colonial state which remained in the control of

¹² Benjamin Disraeli, “Suez Canal Shares,” in Hansard (CCXXVII [3d Ser.], 652-661, *British Prime Ministers*, ed. Park, 244.

¹³ Sarvepalli Gopal, *British Policy in India 1858-1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 119.

tiny European elite. Sudipta Kaviraj¹⁴ suggests that whereas capitalist societies are structurally similar, each type of pre-capitalist society is traditional in its own way. Pre-colonial Indian society can be likened to a circle of circles of caste and religious communities. This structure was not altered in any significant manner by Muslim rulers, who carried a different religious doctrine but not a fundamentally different cognitive apparatus.¹⁵ Thus, the complex of institutional mechanisms called the 'state' was literally 'constructed' by colonizers¹⁶ on Indian soil using a tool-kit which borrowed heavily from developments in modern European history. Second, this decentring of social power bore important consequences. Because it was difficult to identify a discrete structure of domination, lower-order defiance was rather infrequent. Third, the loosely articulated social order made for what Kaviraj calls fuzzy identities. Fixation of identities had to await colonial practices of enumeration.

Economically India witnessed the development of a degenerate capitalism, and politically it was given institutions and ideas that were at complete variance with indigenous notions of how political power should be arranged. "This array of ideas, when seen in their totality, constituted the invention of a new political world, or a re-cognizing of the world, and of the position of the society and the state in their modern versions."¹⁷The state had

¹⁴ Kaviraj, 'Imaginary Institution of India'.

¹⁵ Sudipta Kaviraj, *Imaginary Institution of India: Politics and Ideas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 53.

¹⁶ Ibid, 143.

¹⁷ Ibid, 18.

two potentially contradictory objectives: extracting through taxation, maximum land revenue from Indian agriculture, while also increasing, through massive capital investment, industrial and agricultural productivity.¹⁸ The twin ideologies of the *Raj* were both reflected in and helped shape the Colonial political economy of South Asia. Whilst undoubtedly commercial incentives led to the strategic involvement of the EIC in the subcontinent, the transition from Company to Crown rule led to an increased role for the state in the political economy of the region. The colonial state maybe seen as the agent responsible for the fulfilment of what Marx referred to as the 'imperial mission in Asia' in laying the foundations of capitalism.

The first objective, to return to Marx, was '*destructive*', necessitating the underdevelopment of Indian agriculture and the second objective was "generative", i.e., creating wealth for Britain at the cost of the colonies. In 1793 Cornwallis established a regressive '*zamindari*' system of taxation in Bengal, which revolutionized rural South Asian society in the regions where this was implemented. *Zamindars* were landlords who were taxed a fixed amount directly by the Company, irrespective of the quality of harvests, who in turn would tax peasants in order to pay the company. The *Zamindari* system, however, made agricultural improvement difficult and Indian agriculture was characterized by low rates of agricultural productivity. Although the imperial mission stopped short of 'the annihilation of old Asiatic society', it did lead to pervasive rural poverty and, in the 1770s, late 1890s and early 1940s, famines. Just over a decade after independence, 40% of the rural population

¹⁸ Giorgio Shani, 'Empire, Liberalism and the Rule of Colonial Difference: Colonial Governmentality in South Asia', *Ritsumeikan Annual Review of International Studies* 5 (2006): 19–36.

and half the urban population remained under the poverty line and average life expectancy was 40 years old.¹⁹ The second “*regenerating*” objective was, entailing laying “the material foundations of Western society in Asia”²⁰ by bringing India into an emerging world economy, characterized by a single division of labour²¹, through improved communications particularly railways and canals. British industry, however, benefited disproportionately from this capital investment, giving rise to the view amongst Indian nationalists and some Marxists that India was underdeveloped by Britain. Early nationalists such as Dadabhai Naoroji and R.C. Dutt complained that the development of Indian capitalism was being retarded by an unwarranted ‘drain’ of India’s wealth to Britain through the Council Bill system.²²

Through the system of ‘home charges,’ the Government of India had to remit large sums to the home government as payment for all costs of the British administration in India. These charges included: support of the Indian army, state pensions for civil servants and military officers, the maintenance of colonial property and administrative expenditure from famine relief to intelligence gathering.²³ Furthermore, throughout the nineteenth century, the Indian trade surplus helped to balance Britain’s trade deficit with the rest of the world. India’s trade surplus stemmed from its export of raw materials.

¹⁹ Stuart Corbridge and John Harris, *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 12.

²⁰ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (Vintage Books, 1977), 353.

²¹ Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (Academic Press, 1974).

²² Stuart Corbridge and John Harris, *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 14.

²³ Corbridge and Harris, *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy*, 21.

Once the East India Company acquired a large local source of funds in the form of land revenue, it was no longer necessary for Britain to pay for India's textile exports in the form of currency as it had done so far. It could now buy Indian textiles from the wealth that it extracted from India itself. Textiles for exports were bought from the huge amounts of land revenue that now accrued to the Company and its employees. This had long lasting impact on the British stability and on the decline of Indian crafts particularly, textile industries.

The early nationalists complained of India's growing poverty and economic backwardness and the failure of modern industry and agriculture to grow; and they put the blame on British economic exploitation of India. For an example, Dadabhai Naoroji declared in 1881 that the British rule was "an everlasting, increasing, and every day increasing foreign invasion" that was "utterly, though gradually, destroying the country".²⁴ Nationalists opposed the large-scale investment of foreign capital in India, railways, plantations and industries on the grounds that it would lead to the suppression of Indian capitalists and the further strengthening of the British hold on India's economy and polity.

It has been suggested that the colonial authorities never attempted to legitimize colonial rule in the eyes of those whom they governed and thus, following Ranjit Guha and Sudipta Kaviraj, colonial rule cannot be seen as hegemonic relying as it did upon a 'monologue of force' between it and the 'popular, distant masses'. Thus, colonial governmentality differed markedly

²⁴ Bipan Chandra, *History of Modern India* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2009), 210.

from governmentality as it developed in Europe. Thus, while governmentality in Europe treated the 'population' as a homogenous, undifferentiated mass of individuals, colonial governmentality recognized and were built upon seemingly 'primordial' categories of caste and religion.²⁵

For this dissertation, we will restrict our discussion to only where it intersects the design discourse and in making of institutes that dealt with larger aspects of collections and their relationships with people in the impending capitalist age. After Cole's death his young cohorts continued to interpret his precepts and models he had developed for DSA and the Britain. He had laid the norms out for display cabinets and for creating Museums as libraries and as a place of exchange between connoisseurs, craftsmen, technocrats, and aesthetes. Cole was developing the concept of trade museums which was taken up after him by John Forbes Watson who had taken over the Museum of Manufactures after Dr. John Forbes Royle. He had developed the concept of "trade museums", for educating the designers and the manufacturers about raw resources as well as the market in India. In 1866, the India Office in London published the first of a series of eighteen albums containing 700 mounted samples of Indian textiles, together with details of the length, width, weight, and cost of the fabrics, as well as photographs indicating how they were actually worn. (Plate 31) Twenty sets of the sample series were made for distribution to chambers of commerce and design schools in Britain and India.

Dr. Watson was very scientific and highly meticulous in his records and collections. His journals show minute meteorological records, and extensive

²⁵ For Chatterjee (1993), this 'difference' was a reflection of the 'rule of colonial which essentialized the differences between Indians, on the one hand, and between Indians and the rational, enlightened West, on the other.

collections of soils and seeds. (Plate 29, 30) He was connected with an almost unbroken series of International Exhibitions London 1862, Paris 1867, Vienna 1873, South Kensington 1870-4. His proposal for trade and commercial Museums, which he pioneered in a lecture delivered at the Society of Arts in 1867, and to the propagation of which he devoted unremitting attention, received due attention and action during 1880s.

Watson was also responsible for a diverse collection of botanical, zoological, archaeological, antiquarian, ethnographic, and industrial objects at the museum inherited from the East India Company. These ever-expanding collections, reflecting the history and breadth of British involvement in India, were supplied in part by the Indian courts of international exhibitions of the period. Forbes Watson patiently selected his specimens from museum stores in the London suburbs, eventually producing around 30,000 hand-cut and mounted samples.²⁶

Forbes Watson's vision of the portable museum combined the taxonomic obsessions of the naturalist with the instrumental approach of the administrator. Significantly, his collections were not made first hand: the "trade museum" was conceived less as a means of bringing the world to order, than as an attempt to reorder metropolitan museum collections so that they could be put to work in a commercial context.²⁷ Moreover, his encyclopaedic publications were intended less as works of reference for the scientist or scholar than as practical tools for the manufacturer and the administrator: here the comparison with a work such as George Watt's six-volume *Dictionary*

²⁶ Felix Driver and Sonia Ashmore, 'The Mobile Museum: Collecting and Circulating Indian Textiles in Victorian Britain', *Victorian Studies* 52, no. 3 (n. d.): 353–85.

²⁷ Ibid, 364.

of the Economic Products of India (1889), intended as “the nucleus of an extended and systematic enquiry into the productive resources of the Indian Empire,” is telling.²⁸ Watt’s involvement in the Indian display at the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition, alongside that of T. N. Mukharji, the Bengali civil servant and assistant curator of Calcutta’s Indian Museum, needs to be seen in the context of Forbes Watson’s earlier efforts.²⁹

Forbes Watson’s idea of a circulating museum was consistent with the approach being developed by Henry Cole and his circle at South Kensington, as discussed earlier. The circulation department’s own arrangements for the display of art objects were reminiscent of Forbes Watson’s proposals: Contained in five glazed cases, so constructed as to fit together and form a stand, occupying a ground space of 12 feet by 6 feet; the case being formed of square boxes, in which the objects were packed when in transit. In addition to these cases, were seventy glazed frames, for the display of textile fabrics, lace, photographs etc., which were furnished with stands, the whole being so contrived as to admit of ready packing.³⁰ Moreover, the ingenious display cabinets that Forbes Watson described as “trade museums” had their counterparts in Cole’s designs for pillar stands capable of displaying large numbers of drawings, prints, fabrics, and other specimens (Plate 17) These rotating stands, “analogous to the leaves of a book,” were intended as a space-saving strategy at a time when the museum was becoming

²⁸ Buck, ‘Preface’, vii.

²⁹ Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display*, 52-55.

³⁰ Cole, ‘Report’, quoted in Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2001).

overcrowded.³¹ By 1870, the museum superintendent could report that “a greater part of the examples of early textile fabrics have been framed and hung on the new rotating stands,” increasing access and saving space at the same time.³²

More generally, for all his hostility toward the absorption of the Indian collections within the South Kensington Museum, Forbes Watson’s model of the trade museum was broadly consistent with the utilitarian vision of the Cole circle.³³ In this spirit, Forbes Watson once echoed the title of Owen Jones’s celebrated treatise in describing proposals for an Indian textile display as a “very complete grammar of Indian ornamentation, in so far as textiles are concerned”.³⁴ Although Forbes Watson’s grander schemes often fell on deaf ears, he found other ways to realize his ideal “trade museum”—most notably, through the two series of textile sample albums produced under the title of *The Collections of the Textile Manufactures of India* from 1866. (Plate 18, 19) This project drew to some extent on the format of textile manufacturers’ pattern books, while also reflecting the applied natural-history orientation of the India Museum in the preceding two decades.

Draft Scheme

After many trials and tribulations in collecting objects for international exhibitions, Crown administration was determined to regularize and create a

³¹ Ibid, 283.

³² Ibid, 338.

³³ Driver and Ashmore, ‘The Mobile Museum: Collecting and Circulating Indian Textiles in Victorian Britain’, 354.

³⁴ Ibid, 12.

system to make the whole operation more effective. We find beginnings of a systematic thinking for design policies only after 1876 when the transfer of power of Indian Governance to the British Crown was complete. In the beginning, design policies dealt with separate departmental issues in archaeology, PWD, museums, and art schools, as well as problems associated with regional infrastructure and concerns for urban design in bigger cities.

After Disraeli's declaration of the Empress of India title for the queen in 1876, a major colonial exhibition was conceptualized in 1884 to be held in London in 1886. India as the Jewel in the British Crown was to feature in a prominent position; hence the exhibition was to be called the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. The Prince of Wales invited India and all the British colonies to participate in the exhibition in 1881 for displaying the best of their collections in the Metropole. In India, E.C. Buck was the commissioner of CIE and the secretary for the Revenue and Agriculture Department. In order to motivate and energize all major players in Presidencies and Provinces, he organized a major conference in 1881 and an International exhibition in Calcutta in 1883.

For collecting of artifacts for the Great Exhibition the British administration had put together a huge machinery to action for networking with many regions, merchants and craftsmen for collecting crafts objects and articles depicting cultural specialities. But after all the major exhibitions, these efforts went waste as there was no rigorous follow up to preserve them permanently and these ephemeral events remained a place only in the memory and had no physical presence to build upon except a few catalogues.

The fleeting quality of the exhibitions was made enduring either as permanent exhibitions or by merging them into a museum. The costlier treasures were retained back for the Metropole or National museums where they would be interned as permanent collections, while the rest of the artifacts were returned to the owners or to the colonies. Exhibition commissioners realized that they should promote making of colonial museums urgently in order to avoid repetitive actions for collecting additional artifacts for newer exhibitions and to build a significant collection over decades. These museums as permanent institutions served the needs for occasional exhibitions; and further, satisfied the need of the British for creating a heritage and leaving a monument for posterity.

On this occasion, Buck invited administrators, scholars and curators from museums in Madras, Bombay, Lahore, Jeypore etc. to a conference to brainstorm means by which the process of collection could be made more efficient, and the artifacts could be put to better use after the exhibition was over. Members in 1883 conference included Colonel S. T. Trevor, Major D. G. Pitcher, Mr. J. Griffiths, Mr. J. Schaumburg, Dr. G. M. Bidie, Dr. J. Anderson, Major J. Waterhouse, Mr. T. W. Holderness, Major J. B. Keith, Mr. H. L. Tilly, and Dr. J. W. Tyler. T H Hendley and J L Kipling were chairing the committee. At the end of the conference, the experts compiled their deliberations in to a formal document what they called a *Draft Scheme*³⁵ for creating an effective mechanism for the collection of objects and for creating a

³⁵ Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India, in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, dated Calcutta, the 14th March, 1883. Their suggestions were published as "Museums and Exhibitions: Resolution" and "Draft Scheme for the Promotion of Industrial Arts in India" in the *Journal of Industrial Arts of India*, 1883, 1-4, 5-6.

closely knit network of institutes of exhibitions, museums and Industrial schools.

That was not the case with the artistic industries indigenous to the country. A larger question was raised regarding cataloguing and collecting; which in their case seemed insufficient. Was it possible to make any effort to check the deterioration which was so clearly visible in many of these handicrafts? The 1883 committee cautioned against efforts to interfere, which could also lead to the danger of destroying the traditional skills. On the other hand, the arguments favouring interference were the obvious facts that, “Indian art is already being led into new paths to meet European tastes and requirements, that it imitates with little or no discrimination, and that it readily follows ignorant guidance.”³⁶ The committee eventually agreed that the evidence on the whole seemed in favour of some intervention, “if it could be exercised with some discretion and without injury to trade.” In an introspective turn they also mooted that “the plan of fixing the art of a locality by approved designs or standard patterns.... also abandoned as impracticable, and as, even if practicable, likely to involve excessive interference and supervision.”³⁷ However, learning from the mistake of Henry Cole for exhibiting examples of bad design in Marlborough House they agreed the museums must exclude “decadent” designs and “articles of bad design or workmanship from its collection.” The committee unanimously granted that the chief objective of the Museum was preservation of every good example of the

³⁶ ‘Draft Scheme for the Promotion of Industrial Art in India, as Finally Revised in Accordance with the Proceedings of the Art Committee’ (Calcutta, 11 December 1883).

³⁷ Ibid.

art of the past, and that such specimens would prove the surest guide to the native workman.

The idea accordingly put forward in the original scheme was that an Art Committee would be formed in any locality in which an industrial art exists, and a Provincial Committee in every province in connection with the Provincial Museum and School of Art, and that these committees should endeavour to guide and aid the workmen by means of schools, exhibitions and museums. Under this scheme the local museum was to be the repository of the best types of the art of the locality, and duplicates of these were to find their way to the Provincial museum. A uniform method of numbering was to be adopted to assist the art collector and the purchasing public. In the three cities of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay the establishment of Presidential Museums, which should gather up the approved art of all Provinces similarly chosen and numbered, was also recommended. Lastly, an art journal was suggested which should deal with the industrial arts of each province, with a view to their practical improvement and advancement.

These doubts had also been expressed by the Committees representing the several Local Governments, which had just finished its work. The committee had recommended that the duties of Local Committees be omitted from the scheme, not because it undervalued the assistance which a body of residents interested in the art of a locality might render, but that it considered it safer not to assume that this assistance will be always forthcoming, nor would it advise Local Governments to act upon any such assumption. The plan of fixing the art of a locality by approved designs or standard patterns has been also abandoned as impracticable, to minimize

undue excessive interference and supervision. There remained the question of Museums and functions, and in regard to this the Committee had recommended that each Providence would maintain a Museum in which every industrial art indigenous to the Province would be adequately represented: that the Museum authority or authorities be allowed to occasionally visit the localities where such arts existed, and to do what they could, in concert with the residents or local bodies, to encourage the producers, and to help them to obtain orders to advertise their manufactures. The only influence which the Museum would thus exercise over an industrial art would be the indirect one of excluding articles of bad design or workmanship from its collection.

As with other policies for the colonies, the British Government had established standards and measures in colonies different from the ones in the Metropole. The asymmetry in these policies denotes the assertion of power to exploit the colony's resources to further the interests of textile lobbies in the Metropole. The British were free to choose from the patterns of design and techniques; but there the academic and commercial aim of the documentation ended. Indians were not encouraged to study or imitate western crafts or design, as that was considered to be the "ugliest sight."

The *Draft Scheme* acknowledged the sentiment so familiar to the British aesthetes by quoting Fergusson: "A very real danger to the Indian Art lies in facile imitation of European designs and European methods. To restrain rather than to strengthen this tendency should be the aim of Art-education throughout the country, and the Committee considered Museums might render valuable aid by storing up the best examples of oriental designs

and processes.”³⁸ More immediately, by the early 1880s, British India had a large network of museums, exhibitions and art schools within its major cities, Madras, Bombay, Lahore and Calcutta among them. There was a critical mass of Anglo-Indians and governmental officials sponsoring, organizing and managing such institutions, as well as a critical mass of material culture and funding. The interests of such individuals and groups converged with the wider ones of the Government of India in many, although not all, cases. Convergence was the case when Kipling prepared and Griggs published the specimen edition of the *Journal of Indian Art* in 1883. It was “laid on the table” at the Arts and Museums Committee meetings of the Revenue and Agriculture Department near the end of that year.³⁹ The meetings were convened to determine strategies for promoting the “Trade in Indian Products and Industrial Arts.” Edward C. Buck acted as President of the Committee, which included influential Government of India political and cultural figures, such as museum curators and art-school administrators. Many of the members were trained art historians from the South Kensington School of Art. They were active in academics or museology and they contributed articles and illustrations to the *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*.

Buck continued to play a forward role in supporting the publication of the *Journal* for promoting the trade in South Asian arts and crafts, notably in the European and American markets.⁴⁰ He did so in his capacity as the

³⁸ Ibid, 4.

³⁹ ‘Proceedings of the Art Conference Held in Technical Institute at Lahore on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th January 1894’ (Calcutta: Government Central Printing Office, 1894).

⁴⁰ ‘The Late Sir Edward Charles Buck, K.C.S.I.’, *Journal of Indian Art and Industry* 17 (1917), 73-74 and Buck, ‘Report on Practical and Technical Education’ (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1901), 39.

leading officer in the Revenue and Agriculture Department, a branch of the Government of India with a surprisingly wide-ranging portfolio.⁴¹ After deliberating on it, the Arts and Museums committee members, Kipling among them, recommended in Buck's proposal offering official encouragement to the multi-pronged scheme to promote Indian art. Among the elements of the project were regional museums, exchanges with foreign museums, annual exhibitions, overseas sales and "an Art Journal, to be published quarterly." Members were confident that the *Journal* would assist the Government's general objectives by providing "(a) the history of particular arts and handicrafts, especially with reference to designs and forms; (b) the economic advancement of existing arts and handicrafts."⁴²

Importantly, the committee argued that the second, or commercial, objective "should predominate," and that contributors should be sure to let readers know where art products could be purchased and at what price. That goal worked quite well with the Government's efforts to display and sell art wares at various international exhibitions and stores in India and abroad. The *Journal* would not only facilitate communication, knowledge and sales, but might also serve as an intermediary, inviting suggestions as to how Indian art could be made "most serviceable for European requirements." Not

⁴¹ E. C. Buck, '(Confidential) Historical Summaries of Administrative Measures in the Several Branches of Public Business Administered in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture. Drawn up in 1896' (Calcutta: Government Central Printing Office, 1897).

⁴² 'Proceedings of the Art Conference Held in Technical Institute at Lahore on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th January 1894' (Calcutta: Government Central Printing Office, 1894).

surprisingly, the key figures would be art and art-school “officers of the various Provinces”, such as Kipling and Hendley.⁴³

Participation in international exhibitions had established Indian crafts as a sure source for big profits and trade. This had prompted the governmental engine to invest in the art schools and museums. Buck was motivated to draft the *Schema* for many reasons. His proposed Draft Scheme envisioned the whole country as a network of museums and art schools supplying artifacts for the busy industry of exhibitions-in-the-making. The scheme drawn up by the government proposed to start a School of Art in every major town famous for its crafts or natural resources in their province.⁴⁴

Following the success of the Crystal Palace, Governments in England and India took immediate action to encash the accolades Indian crafts received in the world expositions. The museum as an institution had already acquired a significant position in the Government’s pursuit to fully exploit the potential of Indian design. The commissioners, along with their British and native experts, collected high-quality artifacts in their regions, displayed selected items permanently in the museums, and set up art colleges linked with the museums where artists could enhance their learning by referring to the museum collections as a library. Thus, in the example of the Metropole, the British Government bought up several Indian and Oriental objects from the Great Exhibition to stock its new Museum of Ornamental Art, which was

⁴³ ‘Draft Scheme for the Promotion of Industrial Art in India, as Finally Revised in Accordance with the Proceedings of the Art Committee, held in Calcutta on the 11th, 14th, 18th, and 22nd December 1883’ (Calcutta, December 1883); ‘Report of the Conference as Regards Museums in India, Held at Calcutta on Dec. 27th to 31st’, (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1908), British Library.

⁴⁴ ‘Revised Draft Scheme’.

established in 1852 which eventually became the Victoria and Albert Museum. While, the provincial governments in India set up close to nine museums to highlight local crafts, and developed plans for many more.⁴⁵ The government proposed a detailed plan for fully expanded tripartite divisions of Art Schools, Exhibitions, and Museums that were supposed to teach to create, display and market regional artifacts and crafts. It was recommended that the designs which would be approved by the principal of the school of Arts and Industry were to be included in the provincial museum and each design would be given a registration number.⁴⁶ A duplicate collection of all the objects from all the museums, bearing the same registration numbers, would be kept in a museum (South Kensington Museum) in London, and also published in widely distributed catalogues. Anybody who wished to buy any of these objects would simply have to send an indent quoting the registration number. Complete exhibitions could be swiftly ordered by these means; if time was very short, the provincial museums could ship off their own collections to an exhibition; for the museum could always re-stock by ordering fresh examples of the same goods from nearby artisans.⁴⁷ Even when the large orders would come, artisans would not be able to let their standards drop, because their new work could always be compared with the original samples held or documented by the museum.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 10.

⁴⁶ A uniform method of numbering was to be adopted to assist the art collector and the purchasing public. In the three cities of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay the establishment of Presidential Museums, which should gather up the approved art of all Provinces similarly chosen and numbered, was also recommended.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 13.

The resolution for Museums and Exhibitions classified Indian manufacturers into two classes, viz., ordinary manufactures and art-manufactures. In order to achieve their objectives, the *Draft Scheme* suggested that a permanent sample collection of the commercial products of each Province be formed and continuously maintained at a central place within the Province. Similarly, better finished sample collections of the commercial products of all Provinces would be formed at the Presidency towns in the principal trading ports of Madras and Bombay. In order to make commercial applications of the crafts and industrial arts more efficient, the *Draft Scheme* strongly recommended that a description of the uses to of each product must be supplied along with the submission of the products.

Hoffenberg studies complaints received during the international exhibitions. Alexander Dobbie, an influential local manufacturer, wrote to the executive commissioner that exhibitors were selling items manufactured outside of the building.⁴⁸ His letter represented the fears of many local merchants in England, Australia, and India that expositions would threaten their businesses. Dobbie expressed the perceived threat to the exhibitions' promises to make direct the relationship between producer and consumer, reveal production processes, and introduce into the colonies only new products. Dobbie argued that sales should be limited to those items "manufactured in the Exhibition," whose quality could be verified by observation, and to other goods, which were "of such a novel character as not to interfere with the ordinary trades' people." Those suggestions mirrored the

⁴⁸ Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display*, 261. This section is based on summary of this section of the book.

“Sales and Delivery” regulations established by the executive commissioners at the 1883 – 84 Calcutta International Exhibition. Stall holders were required to pay a weekly fee to preserve their sales privileges, and they could only sell “duplicates” of exhibits or items “made in the Exhibition and shown by Manufacturers.”⁴⁹

Art school administrators and museum curators also provided the “man-on-the-spot” complement to the critical writings on Indian Art by prominent high cultural figures in Britain (e.g. Owen Jones, William Morris and John Ruskin) and to the public advocacy efforts of British and Anglo-Indian voluntary groups.⁵⁰ Those included the ubiquitous Society for the Encouragement and Preservation of Indian Art, whose members met and published in London and seemingly every corner of the Raj.⁵¹

As such, they were part of an imperial, if not nearly global, grid of cultural and artistic experts, bureaucrats, institutions, and publications—not to exclude labourers and their products, as well. There was a sense of mobility on this *fin-de-siècle* era of culture, a mobility that coloured the visual and

⁴⁹ Statesman and Friend of India, September 28, 1883, 3. Quoted in Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display*, 94.

⁵⁰ Partha Mitter discusses those and other critics in his various publications concerning Western and English views of Indian Art. Please see: *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) and *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁵¹ For contemporary accounts and activities of the Society for the Encouragement and Preservation of Indian Art, please see ‘Society for the Encouragement and Preservation of Indian Art’, London, 1895, National Art Library, London, Box III.4.d; *The Society for the Encouragement and Preservation of Indian Art. Catalogue of a Loan Exhibition of Embroidery by Indian Women, at Chestnut House, 142 Regent Street, W., London, 1893*, National Art Library, Box I.43.MM; *The Indian Magazine and Review*, 22:252 (December 1, 1891), 599-603; “Indian Art Work,” *The Pioneer Mail*, December 24, 1891, 839-840 and *Oudh Branch of the Society for the Encouragement and Preservation of Indian Art, Lucknow. Minute of Meetings 1-4, February 16, 1897-March 17, 1897*, British Library Tracts, 1897-1912, BL 7806.E.7.

textual history of India, Great Britain and its Empire. The interest in the question of “ornament” alone was shared by societies and authorities throughout not only the Empire, but much of Europe at the time, as well.⁵² This was not only a matter of aesthetics and applied art, but perhaps also of wider philosophical and social questions. There were the usual concerns about how to raise Indian revenue with manufactures and exports. The Government of India had assigned the great promise of the Calcutta International Exhibition of 1883-1884, for which Kipling was expected to organize the central India court and ensure both some uniformity and a general “artistic effect” among the many South Asian exhibits.⁵³

In many ways, Lockwood Kipling and the *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*, were made for each other.⁵⁴ His career in India and the illustrated periodical were both products of England’s imaginative embrace of traditional India and both resulted from the productive interplay among the widely-spread imperial artists and art experts. Such interests and agency converged at the government’s schools of art and industry, and at international exhibitions, such as the Calcutta International and Colonial and Indian Exhibitions. India’s extensive displays at such shows included many organized by Kipling and his students at the Mayo School of Art. The *Journal* produced special monthly numbers during the London exhibition including illustrations and

⁵² Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, trans. Evelyn Kain [1890] (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992).

⁵³ “E. C. Buck, Esq., C.S., Secretary to the Government of India to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 20, dated Calcutta, the 8th January 1883,” *Proceedings of the Revenue and Agriculture Department, February 1883*, Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library, P 2059, 1.

⁵⁴ Peter H. Hoffenberg, ‘John Lockwood Kipling, W. H. Griggs and the *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*’, 2003, 22.

commentaries complementing the displays found in the various Indian art courts. That was consistent with Buck's proclamation that the exhibition and periodical were both "educational," linked together in the larger project of saving the Indian art now facing seeming degradation and neglect. He argued at the time that without wealthy patrons and facing competition from "a cheaper and less artistic class of goods from Western countries," local art and craftsmanship were in permanent decline. Waxing rather optimistically, Buck concluded that the Colonial and Indian Exhibition and the *Journal of Indian Art* would both promote the sales of traditional art, create a "new generation of artisans," and thus reverse that decline.⁵⁵ Kipling was an active contributor and participant in both projects. He collected, created and described exhibition and museum displays in India and abroad, and served as both teacher and administrator within the Raj's system of art-schools, first in Bombay, later in Lahore.⁵⁶

Here, then, were enhanced images of Indian Art produced by the interplay of Indian and British innovations, science and art, and made available to English and European critics and consumers at the historical moment that museums, exhibitions, and department stores were also displaying seemingly more realistic and authentic representations of seemingly ancient crafts. Publisher, editor and contributors all intended the *Journal* to be a piece of artwork itself; it was to inform and entertain as art and

⁵⁵ Edward C. Buck, "Preface," *Guidebook to the Art Ware Courts at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*, Oriental and India Office Collections, T10784.

⁵⁶ John Lockwood taught his Bombay students at what Rudyard recalled as "a marvellous place filled with smells of paints and oils, and lumps of clay." Lockwood was hired as Professor of Sculptural Architecture. From: *Something of Myself and Other Autobiographical Writings*, Thomas Pinney, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 4.

about art. Contributors were interested in Indian art as objects of material culture, but also as the products of traditionalist labour, tools, functions and aesthetics. At the same time, the *Journal* advertised state-of-the-art illustrative technologies developed and practiced in both Britain and India.

Mukharji was one of many South Asians employed in the Raj's vast system of libraries, art schools, museums, literary societies, and other public cultural projects.⁵⁷ He undertook exhibition duties in his official capacity as exhibition assistant for the government of India's Department of Revenue and Agriculture. The department was initially organized in 1871 and then broken up and reconstructed between 1879 and 1881.⁵⁸ It was funded as part of the general scheme to organize knowledge about the country, continuing the century-old practice in British India of scientific surveys and statistical compilations.⁵⁹ The department's original charge was to "collect, collate, and disseminate information as to the condition of India in its agricultural aspects."⁶⁰ That general objective included the study of famine, application of the economic questions, and development of new materials for export.

⁵⁷ "Memorandum of Measures Adopted, and Expenditure Incurred, in India, for the Promotion of Literature, Science and Art, since the Assumption by Her Majesty, the Queen of the Direct Government of the Country", Oriental and India Office Collections, V/27/900/1; and "Resolution on Museums and Exhibitions," *Journal of Indian Art and Industry* 1 (1884 – 86), 1– 6.

⁵⁸ Sir Edward Buck, (Confidential) Historical Summaries of Administrative Measures in the Several Branches of Public Business Administered in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture. Drawn up in 1896, Calcutta: Government Printing Office, 1897.

⁵⁹ C. A. Bayly, "Knowing the Country: Empire and Information in India," *Modern Asian Studies* 27 (1993), 3 – 43, and *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780 – 1880*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997; Deepak Kumar, *Science and the Raj, 1857–1905*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995; and Marika Vicziany, "Imperialism, Botany and Statistics in early Nineteenth-Century India: The Surveys of Francis Buchanan, 1762–1829," *Modern Asian Studies* 20 (1986), pp. 625– 60.

⁶⁰ *Times*, June 11, 1886, 4.

Officials were responding to the demand for efficient management of agricultural and commercial projects and the quest for markets.

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