

The V&A: empire to multiculturalism?

*Ruth Adams**

King's College, London

Abstract

The paper considers the influence of Empire at the Victoria and Albert Museum, with particular reference to the display of collections from the Indian Sub-Continent in the late 20th century. It offers an analysis of the discursive practices of the Museum drawing on postcolonial theoretical positions, in particular Said's concept of 'Orientalism'. Questions are posed regarding the extent to which the Museum has adequately addressed and reflected Britain's transformation from an imperial power to a post-colonial, multicultural society, and the need to articulate shared histories and strategies of inclusion.

Keywords: V&A, Empire, India, Postcolonialism, Multiculturalism

Introduction – The Indian Collections at the V&A

The Victoria & Albert Museum in London was, from its origins in the Great Exhibition of 1851, a propagandist for the British Empire. As Mitter and Clunas suggest, it represented

an important adjunct of the empire, classifying and displaying the art of non-European nations in an assertion of political control over them. [...] Imperial policy varied from country to country: thus, the display of Indian arts underscored the Raj trusteeship of the races, tribes and castes of India (Mitter & Clunas 1997: 221).

Indian artefacts were particularly treasured, partly because of the special status of India - 'the jewel in the crown' - within the British Empire, but also for their intrinsic beauty. In 1879 the V&A acquired most of the large collection of the East India Company's Museum, and early displays at South Kensington 'echoed the imperialistic notions that underpinned the India Museum's formation, with weapons and other artefacts displayed as trophies.' (Dunn & Burton 1997: 63). The perceived 'specialness' of this collection was demonstrated by the resistance to a scheme, proposed in 1908, for the rearrangement of the entire South Kensington Museum, dividing holdings into a materials based arrangement which would group them according to techniques of production rather than culture of origin, a strategy which was deemed to be of likely greater utility to manufacturers and students of design. Admirers of the Indian collection believed its quality and cohesiveness should exempt it from such taxonomic pragmatism. As Burton relates: 'A very vigorous press campaign, and a deputation to the Board of Education led by Lord Curzon [former Viceroy of India], averted this threat and the Indian Museum retained its identity.' (Burton 1999: 164). The collection remained intact until 1955 when the buildings in which it was housed were demolished to make way for extensions to Imperial College; an Indian Gallery was established in the main Museum building, but constraints of space meant that much of the collection had to be put into store. In the early 1970s the Indian collections were, for a few years at least, amalgamated with the 'Far Eastern Section' to create an Oriental Department. Plans were mooted in the early 1980s to display a bigger proportion of the Indian holdings in the newly refurbished Henry Cole Wing, but eventually the decision was taken to use the space to display the V&A's collection of prints, drawings, paintings and photographs.

India achieved independence from Britain in 1947, but as Malcolm Baker notes: 'The imperial basis of the collections not only is an issue lodged in the Museum's past but also has vital implications for the way the institution is perceived in its postcolonial present and future' (Baker 1997: 20). This paper will consider how the V&A has addressed this imperial history through an examination of the ways in which its collections from the Indian Subcontinent were exhibited in and by the Museum in the late 20th century. Did the V&A perpetuate imperialist attitudes and assumptions, or did it strive to sympathetically reflect the multicultural society that it by then served? Did it engage with the challenges posed by postcolonial theories and endeavour to incorporate these within its discursive frameworks? Did it respond adequately and appropriately to the imperative that 'the presence of Asian artefacts in particular may not stand in need of apology, but still rightly demands constant and self-critical explanation' (Clunas 1997: 236). The discussion will focus on a number of representative exhibitions from the 1980s and the 1990s, some staged in Bradford, Yorkshire with the involvement of the V&A, others within the Museum itself.

Museums and Imperialism

Museums, by their very nature, offer a fertile context to interrogate issues of imperialism and the postcolonial. Historically, the national museums of colonial powers, through both their holdings and their display, have vividly illustrated and thus helped to sustain imperialist discourses. As Edward Said has argued,

the power [...] to represent what is beyond metropolitan borders derives from the power of an imperial society, and that power takes the discursive form of a reshaping or reordering of 'raw' or primitive data into the local conventions of European narrative and formal utterance, or [...] the systematics of disciplinary order (Said 1994: 119).

As a primary site for the development of taxonomic techniques, Museums illustrate in a very explicit fashion the 'systematics of disciplinary order'. Britain's national museums thus played a role in defining both the 'core' and the 'margins' of the Empire, and the shaping of perceptions of the cultures putatively illustrative of both.

Postcolonial challenges

However, the comfortable assumptions of imperial dominance were challenged by the growth of resistant, nationalist politics within many colonial territories throughout the 20th century, the dissolution of the majority of European empires in the decades after the Second World War, and latterly by the development of postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory interrogates and makes visible the discursive formations that not only sustained imperialist political power structures, but even after their decline continued to inform attitudes to the world beyond 'the West' and to individuals and communities from the former colonies, growing numbers of whom were now living in what were now, at least nominally, postcolonial cities in post imperial nations.

Postcolonial theory broadened the study of empire beyond the concentration on government papers and trade records that had previously characterized imperial history, by insisting 'on the need to address and analyse a wider range of imperial texts, which disclose much more about systems of power and domination' (Cannadine 2002: xvi). The development of postcolonial theory, therefore, makes it viable to consider museums as an integral part of imperial and post-imperial history, in part because it expands the range of textual analysis but also because of its emphasis on the important role played by discourse. Museums are primarily discursive institutions which seek, through modes of taxonomy, display and interpretation, to make otherwise mute or ambiguous objects intelligible. However, as postcolonial theory has demonstrated, these discursive frameworks are never neutral, may obscure as much as they reveal, and can also function to reinforce the hegemony of imperialism through partial representations of non-Western cultures.

Orientalism

Said has characterized the imperialist vision of the world beyond the West as 'Orientalism'¹:

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said 2003: 3).

The role that museums can potentially play in sustaining such a discourse is again evident, as they themselves might be described as 'corporate institutions', within which 'a formidable scholarly corpus, innumerable Oriental "experts" and "hands," an Oriental professorate, a complex array of "Oriental" ideas (Oriental despotism, Oriental splendor, cruelty, sensuality)' (Said 2003: 4) are vested with an authority to organize, speak about and speak *for* colonized territories and cultures. Orientalism can thus function to deny the non-Western 'other' a voice, and the scope for self-definition or self-determination. Consequently Homi Bhabha argues that the 'right to narrate' is an essential predicate of postcolonial equality and should be facilitated and exercised across the full range of cultural expression.

That Orientalism is a discourse particularly germane to an institution such as the V&A is reinforced by Said's assertion that 'none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture.' (Said 2003: 2). The V&A is, of course, a veritable showcase of 'material civilization and culture', and while its Oriental holdings were often deployed to didactic and political ends, they were also frequently shown 'simply' as beautiful works of art. While the latter might seem a relatively value-neutral mode of display, Bhabha cautions against the reduction of the imperial to the ornamental, and argues that an aestheticization of colonial holdings can lead to a denial, or at least the effacement, of uncomfortable histories. Bhabha asserts that:

There is no simple parallelism or equidistance between different historical pasts. A distinction must be maintained – in the very conventions of presentation – between works of art whose pasts have known the colonial violence of destruction and domination, and works that have evolved into an antiquity of a more continuous kind, moving from courts to collectors, from mansions to museums. Without making such a distinction we can only be connoisseurs of the survival of Art, at the cost of becoming conspirators in the death of History (Huddart 2007: 47).

Patrick Wright cautions too that it is vital to be alert to the fact that 'the national past is capable of finding splendour in old styles of political domination and of making an alluring romance out of atrocious colonial exploitation' (Wright (1985: 254). As Duncan and Wallach argue, cultural or political histories can be more easily obscured in an aesthetic display in which artefacts become only a moment in *art history*; art history itself of course being the cultural expression, and visual corroboration of the European enlightenment project that provided the ideological underpinning of the age of empire. Said observes 'how culture participates in imperialism yet is somehow excused for its role' (Said 1994: 128), through the 'perennial escape mechanism of saying that a literary scholar and a philosopher, for example, are trained in literature and philosophy respectively, not in politics or ideological analysis' (Said 2003: 14).

That this is still a live issue is demonstrated by the fact that in 2002 the Directors of eighteen major museums² in Europe and the USA issued a joint 'Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums'. As Saloni Mathur observes:

The statement argued that these venerable institutions were "universal museums" because their collections transcended national boundaries and served a public not belonging to a single nation-state. The directors therefore announced their right to keep objects acquired under all historical circumstances, strategically deploying the notion of the universal museum to counter bids for restitution and repatriation... (Mathur 2005: 704).

The Declaration argues that:

Today we are especially sensitive to the subject of a work's original context, but we should not lose sight of the fact that museums too provide a valid and valuable context for objects that were long ago displaced from their original source.³

This statement appears to pay lipservice to Bhabha's call for an explicit acknowledgement of the circumstances of the acquisition of objects, but nonetheless proposes the monolithic, universalizing museum as the most favorable context to encounter different cultures and to compare and evaluate them aesthetically.

Ornamentalism

There are clear parallels here with historian David Cannadine's interpretation of British imperialism. He writes:

the phrase that best describes this remarkable transoceanic construct of substance and sentiment is *imperialism as ornamentalism*. [...] the British created their imperial society, bound it together, comprehended it and imagined it from the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth in an essentially ornamental mode. For ornamentalism was hierarchy made visible, immanent and actual (Cannadine 2002: 122).

The Museum might thus be regarded as the Empire in microcosm. Arguing that Said's model of Orientalism over-states the construction of 'otherness' within colonial discourse, Cannadine stresses the emphasis the British laid on the *similarities* between their culture and that of the colonies. The hierarchy he refers to is not only that which existed *between* Britain and India, but that which operated *within* both societies; the Raj perceived strong parallels between their own ideas of class and the Indian caste system. Following the 'Indian Mutiny' of 1857, the Empire sought to rule more by consensus than by force, and did so in part by co-opting the various, often localized, ruling elites within India and 'ordering into a single hierarchy all its subjects, Indian and British alike' (Cannadine 2002: 41).

This is an interpretation that positions itself outside of, and in opposition to postcolonial theory (which Cannadine regards as reductive, sacrificing historical complexity for polemical force) and might therefore be regarded as reactionary. However, Cannadine's interpretation offers useful insights into imperial ideology and policy, and his emphasis on aesthetic materialism provides a relevant and arguably complementary contribution to an historical analysis of the V&A. I would argue that the British Empire, the West more generally, and the V&A as their representative, have historically employed strategies of both Orientalism *and* Ornamentalism, constructing both 'otherness' and 'sameness', sometimes simultaneously, depending on the demands of particular circumstances. However, both strategies are utilized to achieve the same goal; that is, the maintenance of an imperialist, Eurocentric hegemony. The means may differ but the ends remain the same.

'Otherness' and 'sameness'

One of the earliest postcolonial texts, Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, expressed an anxiety that the colonial subject would become alienated from himself, learn to see himself as 'other', desire to be white, and thus attempt an aspirational imitation of his imperial masters, losing his own identity in the process. However, later approaches acknowledge that while the relationship between the imperial centre and the colonies was (and remains) by no means an equal partnership, it was most certainly an association which exercised a profound effect on both parties. Bhabha, for example, offers a more radical interpretation of Fanon's model which argues that 'mimicry' of their rulers can enhance the potential for resistance for the 'translated' colonial. This mimicry is not a slavish imitation, but an exaggerated copying which is also a form of mockery. Bhabha writes:

[C]olonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a *subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*. Which is to say, that the

discourse of mimicry is constituted around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference (Bhabha 1984: 126).

As Huddart suggests: 'having introduced this slight difference, colonial discourse is unable to control the consequences brought about by that difference – particularly the colonized's agency that is implied by the slippages of meaning' Huddart (2007: 59). This then induces in the imperial classes a considerable degree of anxiety, not least because 'the resemblance was a reminder of the shaky foundations of racial stereotypes, and therefore the unjustifiable nature of colonialism' (Huddart 2007: 61). We see here again the interplay between sameness and otherness, the difficulty sometimes of distinguishing clearly between them and, perhaps, the potential risks for imperial powers of adopting an Ornamentalist approach to colonial rule.

As Said proposes, 'to ignore or otherwise discount the overlapping experience of Westerners and Orientals, [...] is to miss what is essential about the world in the past century.' (Said: 1994: xxii-xxiii) The translation of cultures endemic to colonialism results in their hybridization. Bhabha argues that hybridity is an important concept because it poses a challenge to notions that cultures are pure, timeless or essential, and instead emphasizes their invented, adulterated and transitional nature. This, in turn, destabilizes ideas (both repressive and Romantic) of either an untainted primitivism or an inherent Western supremacy. Thus, material culture and museums can be powerful communicators of both a hegemonic imperialism and, potentially, postcolonial resistance and complexity. Consequently, as Annie Coombes suggests, a critical engagement with and analysis of the ways in which artefacts are displayed and the discourses they are made to illustrate is necessary because:

there is still a considerable distance between the utopian desire to envision a truly 'cosmopolitan' society, representative of a 'post-colonial' context, and the conditions upon which such a social transformation might depend. In particular, perhaps, we need to interrogate the complex meanings attributed to the transculturated or 'hybrid' object in the narratives of western metropolitan art and ethnographic museums, and to ask what relations of power and transgression it might articulate there (Coombes 1997: 218).

As we have seen, although by the end of the late 20th century the British Empire was no longer a political reality, imperialist attitudes nonetheless persisted, not least in museums. Britain has struggled with its reduced status in the postcolonial context and it seems reasonable to suggest that exhibitionary practices were used to maintain the *appearance* and thus a vestige of colonial power, and to transmit and sustain imperial ideologies, even though, or rather *because* the political realities had changed. As Said observed, Orientalism is 'a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with a political power in the raw' (Said 2003: 12).

India on Show in Bradford

Nonetheless, from the 1980s the V&A began to demonstrate a greater willingness and an enthusiasm to actively address and engage with its own imperial past and Britain's postcolonial present. Interestingly, early initiatives were based not at the South Kensington site, but in Bradford, Yorkshire, a city with a large Asian population. Under the aegis of Bradford Art Galleries and Museums, an exhibition of highlights from the V&A's Indian collections, entitled *Petals from a Lotus*, was held at Cliffe Castle, from October 1983 to July 1984. In his diaries the then Director Roy Strong recounts that this project had initially been mooted by Robert Skelton after he became Keeper of the Indian Collections and Strong had given him 'a brief to start thinking about the ethnic minorities in the UK', but stresses also that he regarded it as 'part of the whole project of decentralising the V&A' (Strong 1998: 418).

The 'Foreword and Acknowledgements' of the exhibition catalogue highlight the assistance which was received from the V&A and its staff in staging the exhibition, in particular Strong, Skelton and Assistant Keeper Deborah Swallow. The author, Robert Hopper, City Arts and Museums Officer, also emphasizes the role played by the Asian population and their community relations representatives in Bradford, and the help offered by the Embassies and

Consuls for Pakistan and Bangladesh and the High Commission of India. There is a clearly expressed desire to make the exhibition as inclusive as possible:

In preparing *Petals from a Lotus* we have consciously avoided a dogmatic, scholarly approach in favour of an exhibition which is accessible in all respects to the layman – whether Asian or not – who may have little or no knowledge of the subcontinent, its history and culture (Hopper 1983: 6).

A wish that the exhibition should play an active role in facilitating a tolerant, multicultural society is also underlined: ‘we hope that all visitors to this exhibition will delight in what they see, and experience a more profound understanding and respect for the peoples of the Indian sub-continent, past and present’ (Hopper 1983: 6).

The events staged in connection with the exhibition demonstrate a wish to illuminate the objects on show and indicate also the active involvement of V&A staff, with Robert Skelton and Deborah Swallow each giving a lecture. There was an evident effort to engage as broad a demographic as possible; film showings and cookery courses included in the programme sought to locate the art on show within a broader (contemporary) cultural context and in a form more accessible than objects in glass cases. The exhibition and related events may well have been successful in their inclusive aims but the text in much of the catalogue often reiterates ‘Orientalist’ preconceptions, presents India and Indians as ‘Other’, and speaks *for* the Asian community (in both the subcontinent and Bradford), rather than offering them the opportunity to speak for themselves.

For example, John Lowry’s essay, ‘An Introduction to the Arts and History of the Indian sub-continent’, notes that outside the cities, ‘India has tribal people who still live in an almost prehistoric society, and an enormous rural population living in small towns and villages’ (Lowry 1983a: 7). Such claims seem to support not only the idea that India, or at least aspects of it, remains ‘primitive’, but also reiterates that part of Orientalist discourse, which Dipesh Chakrabarty has described as a tendency to view Europe and the West as “‘the primary habitus of the modern,” which relegates non-western history to a mere episode in Europe’s history and explains the development of non-western culture as an incomplete historical transition to the modern.’ (Mathur 2005: 705)

Elsewhere in Lowry’s text, the benefits of colonial rule are emphasized: Britain introduced an education policy, legislative codes, a civil service and an efficient army; roads, ports, railways, postal and telegraph services were also developed. These, and the use of English as a common language were a unifying influence and helped to spread western ideas (Lowry 1983a: 19).

Lowry claims that this attempt to make India more like Britain stimulated an awareness of difference; the British imperialist presence revived amongst Indians an interest in traditional cultures and religions, and aroused a nationalist consciousness. While this is not untrue as such, it offers a very partial version of events, which needs clarifying with some subtlety. Although reference is made to Indian independence movements, the uninformed reader might be left wondering what motivated these ungrateful nationalists, given the apparently benign and progressive nature of British rule. Paradoxically, while on the one hand traditional India is portrayed as unaffected by imperialism, on the other the suggestion appears to be that the transformation of the colonial ‘periphery’ by the British left the ‘core’ unaffected; an inference fatally undermined by the exhibition’s location in an unmistakably postcolonial city.

A shared history was, however, explored in Mary Chatterjee’s lecture on ‘The North of England and the Indian Textile Connection’, and in the other publication relating to the exhibition, *Petals from a Lotus: Visitor’s Guide and Catalogue*, also with text by John Lowry, some interesting observations are made regarding the hybrid arts which arose under imperial rule. He writes:

Increased trade spread European (particularly English) goods and culture throughout India and Indian culture became better known in Europe. Indian chintz was fashionable in Britain in the 18th century and European painting and furniture appeared in the courts of India’s rulers (Lowry 1983b: 4-5).

However, there is relatively little exploration of the political context that gave rise to such hybrid culture.

The shared history underpinning the location of the exhibition is acknowledged by another essay in the catalogue, entitled 'The Asian Community in Bradford: A Personal View'. The text of this is in many ways unimpeachable; it sets out to challenge negative stereotypes about the British Asian population, to indicate the diversity within this community, and to give some indication of their everyday cultural lives. The latter are contrasted with the contents of the exhibition, which were predominantly ancient artefacts, religious sculpture, courtly treasures from the Mughal era, or works produced for, or under the influence of various Western imperial powers. Given the nature of the exhibits, it is stressed that these are as likely to be as 'foreign' to the vast majority of Bradford Asians as they are to the European visitor. However, the author of the piece is John Salmon who, it seems relatively safe to assume, is not Asian. As it seems improbable that there would not be amongst Bradford Asians an individual sufficiently knowledgeable about his own community to write a similar piece, we might reasonably question the choice of author. A sympathetic interpretation might be that if, as seems likely, the article was aimed at a largely white readership, they might be more willing to accept a positive interpretation of the Asian presence in the city from 'one of their own'. However, it might also be assumed, more critically, that this represents a reluctance to allow the Asian community to tell their own story, a denial of the 'right to narrate'. In this particular context, the 'right to narrate' should perhaps ideally have been applied not just to the writing of catalogue texts, but also to the curation of the exhibition itself.

While the V&A collaborated on a couple of further India-related exhibitions on the same site, Roy Strong was enthused by the idea of 'establish[ing] a permanent outstation' (Strong 1998: 418) of the V&A in Bradford, in the form of a South Asian Arts and Crafts Centre. This project, launched in 1987 was, like the earlier exhibitions, initiated not by the V&A, but by Bradford City Council in 'an effort to promote tourism and establish itself as a major cultural centre' (Voak 1987: 42). The proposed plan, although it was ultimately not to proceed, was to house up to one third of the Museum's Indian holdings in the Great Mill at Saltaire. The idea was to create a 'living', multicultural 'folk' museum, on a multi-purpose site with shops and restaurants. To promote the scheme, Strong visited Bradford and his 'delegation did a huge up-front with everyone, both the city and the Asian community.' Strong (1998: 418-9) Although the Saltaire plan fell through, other similar sites in Bradford were also considered and while these too were ultimately not to proceed, it was, as we will see, a scheme that was perpetually mooted.

The 'Spoils of Empire'

In the period of Elizabeth Esteve-Coll's directorship, from 1987 to 1995, the V&A demonstrated a more concerted and sustained effort to represent and engage with multiculturalism. Greater awareness began to be evident in gallery and exhibition planning and execution at South Kensington, and also in the Museum's rhetoric; but, it should be noted, a change in attitude was often neither universal nor brought about without prompting. There was still, often, a reluctance to fully acknowledge the circumstances of acquisition. Dr Deborah Swallow, curator of the Indian Gallery, was quoted in 1988 as saying:

We are trying to get away from the "Spoils of the Empire" image that the collection has. [...] There *is* a historical reason for our having these things, but we want to get past the reasons about *why* we have them, and get on with using them as a stimulus for design... (Claridge & Graham 1988: 68).

The perception persisted that the V&A was still not fulfilling its obligations either to its South Asian collections or its now multicultural, postcolonial audiences; exacerbated by the fact that, since the closure of the Indian Museum more than thirty years previous, no more than five per cent of the collection had been on public display. The bulk of it languished in an overcrowded and sometimes leaky warehouse in Battersea. Balraj Khanna, Chairman of the Indian Arts Council of Britain initiated a high-profile campaign, arguing that unless more of the collection were displayed it should be returned to India. The issue was investigated in a British television programme in the summer of 1987, with questions asked in the Indian parliament in spring 1988.⁴

In the summer of 1988, Khanna appeared on another television programme, *Hidden Treasures of the V&A*, during which he debated the issue with Roy Strong and Robert Skelton. Khanna recalled that:

We really attacked each other. They insisted that most of the items had been legitimately acquired and that it would set a very unfortunate precedent for other countries if they decided to return the Indian art treasures. I countered by insisting that it was morally wrong to hang on to things which they simply can't show. I added that it would be noble on their part to return a part of our national heritage to us (Puri 1988: 2).

However, whether Khanna objected to the V&A's holding of Indian artefacts *per se*, or merely their rather 'dog-in-the-manger' attitude to them is difficult to assess, as the emphasis varies according to the source of accounts. A report in *India Today* suggests that he had 'asked the museum to return to India all the objects that were stolen from there' Jain (1988: 99); however, in a contemporaneous account in *The Times*, he is quoted as saying:

It is a great shame these things should be rotting in the crypts. They should be exhumed and be seen and if that is not possible they should be returned to India from where they were looted in the first place. Mr Skelton is a devoted keeper who loves India and his collection. He should have been given the financial capacity to display it (Billen 1988: 5).

'Nehru and the making of modern India'

Relationships with other sectors of Indian officialdom appeared to be more harmonious, however, as in the summer of 1989 the Museum staged a show entitled 'Nehru and the Making of Modern India' in collaboration with the Indian High Commission. This was to mark the birth centenary and celebrate the life of India's first Prime Minister. Designed by the Oriole Design Group from New Delhi, and 'Using images, texts and objects, the exhibition takes the viewer on Nehru's journey of discovery and reveals the key points in Indian history leading up to the moment of independence and the birth of a modern nation.'⁵ The exhibition appeared to adopt a more rounded 'social history' approach rather than the aestheticism prevalent in the past:

Nehru is inseparable from the ethos of India. In the exhibition he emerges as representative of a vital force which persists in the country today. That force carries with it a consciousness that encompasses a diversity of religious thought, variety in social and community life and the freedom of personal choices.⁶

It is unclear, however, to what extent this shift in perspective was due to the fact that the exhibition designer was an Indian brought in from outside the V&A, as were all the objects displayed, which were provided by the Indian High Commission. While there is something to be said for a relinquishing of authorial control by the Museum, clearly the Nehru exhibition did not represent an opportunity to get more of the V&A's Indian collection out of storage and on display.

Perhaps surprisingly, some parts of the explanatory and promotional texts appear to be neither well considered nor inclusive, and demonstrate a perpetuation of imperialist ideas and some effacing of colonial history. It is noted that Nehru enjoyed the education of an English gentleman, at Harrow, Cambridge and the Bar, but with little indication why. Likewise, while it is mentioned on several occasions that Nehru spent eighteen years in prison, nowhere is this clarified by the information that this internment was actually imposed by the British authorities on account of his involvement in nationalist politics. Nehru's English education, the text claims, led to him approaching his home nation, on his return, as a 'friendly westerner', 'amazed both by India's diversity and by the continuity of its traditions over the centuries.'⁷ However, within the exhibition, 'The journey encourages the viewer to approach history through the eyes of an easterner, and aims thus to simplify the seeming complexity of an alien culture.'⁸ This seems an odd approach given that, only two paragraphs above, it is stated that this was a view unavailable even to Nehru himself and, furthermore, the more 'eastern' his perspective became, the more alive he himself became to the 'complexities' of his native culture. Nehru's

dual perspective is stated rather baldly and within the terms of an Orientalist discourse in the Exhibition press pack,⁹ which claims: 'His oriental spirit tempered by occidental rationalism is at the heart of modern India.' There seems here a missed opportunity to explicitly engage in an examination of imperial history and the resultant ambiguity of colonial identities, as exemplified by Nehru.

For example, at least part of the explanation for Nehru's quasi-aristocratic education can be found in Thomas Babington Macaulay's 1835 speech in the British Parliament on the necessity for education in India. Macaulay argued that it was not feasible to continue to control India by force, and that they needed to create a 'go-between' class of educated Indians to help them govern the country and maintain their hegemony. This class of men would become, Macaulay suggested, 'a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern - a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect' (Bhabha 1984: 128). It is perhaps to this policy that we can attribute Nehru's perspective as a 'friendly westerner'. Was then Nehru illustrative of Fanon's model of the colonial subject alienated from himself, or evidence of Bhabha's more radical interpretation of the 'translated' colonial? Without reference to vital historical facts and explanatory theories, the uninformed visitor might be left more mystified than enlightened with regard to Nehru's trajectory from 'English gentleman' to the leader of a newly independent India.

It was initially planned that the Indian High Commission and the V&A should take joint responsibility for the content and marketing of the exhibition; however, internal correspondence suggests that the potential dilution of the V&A's authorial control generated some anxiety within the Museum. A memo dated 3 February 1989, from Graham Wiffen in the V&A's Press Office states:

I assume that the purpose behind this is to shift responsibility (and therefore effort and costs) to the IHC. In theory, this sounds fine. But in reality, these are all things that would normally be organised by Press Office and Special Events. We would not like to find ourselves in a position where we ended up performing a clean-up operation because things had not been done according to V&A rules and in an appropriate style.

It would be better for us to be seen to be in control from the outset.¹⁰

It is not entirely clear from the archival material whether the Museum ultimately took control of the authorship of the exhibition, and whether it was therefore responsible for the related explanatory material. However, given that the documents relating to this are in the V&A's internal 'house style', it is perhaps reasonable to assume that they did so. In addition, the content of the documents seems to reflect the V&A's own agendas. For example, an answer drafted in response to expected press questions about why the Nehru exhibition did not contain objects from the V&A's collection states:

The V&A has lent a space to the Indian High Government for this particular exhibition, which we see as a timely opportunity to announce the V&A's plans to continue its programme of refurbishment with the opening in October 1990 of a new permanent display of Indian Art from 1550 to 1900.

The implication is that the Nehru exhibition was less an end in itself than a (perhaps rather opportunistic) taster for the planned new permanent Nehru Gallery of Indian Art and, more to the point, an opportunity to launch a £2 million fund-raising programme for the new gallery: 'The money raised will fund the refurbishment of the gallery, the conservation work and an extensive educational programme.'¹¹

The Nehru Gallery of Indian Art

The same document also suggests that the V&A was still feeling somewhat on the back foot with regard to issues of restitution and display. The putative answers argue that due to the fragility of many of the artefacts, 'it will never be advisable to show more than a small proportion of the Indian collection at any one time.'¹² This was perhaps just as well, given that the 'new' Nehru

Gallery would essentially be just a refurbished version of the old Indian Gallery, and no bigger; but the V&A nonetheless argue against restitution because:

India has its own great collections, as well as countless architectural and sculptural treasures which have survived *in situ*. We firmly believe that India's cultural heritage should be shown and known internationally, above all in Britain with its long historical connections with India and its large and dynamic South Asian community.¹³

In many ways the organization and ethos of the new Nehru gallery appeared to be a model of inclusiveness and cultural sensitivity, as the press release is at pains to point out:

The gallery will highlight the ways in which the refined craft traditions which serviced the courtly cultures were a key to India's trading importance in the period, and will show the impact of colonial rule on Indian culture.

Plans are being made to provide services for schools; a gallery teaching programme for visiting schools and public programmes for families and adults while contacts and exchanges between teachers in Britain and South Asia will be encouraged. The aim is to make the V&A a national centre for public education on Indian culture and art.¹⁴

Inclusiveness and cross-cultural collaboration were also demonstrated by the make up of the Appeal Management Committee, which boasted roughly equal numbers of Indian and Anglophone names. However, the design of the gallery – a recreation of a Mughal temple – was to be undertaken by a UK firm.

When the gallery opened, in November 1990, it was largely extremely well received, not least because it was regarded as an acknowledgement by the Museum of the role it could and should play in a postcolonial society:

“With a community of nearly one million people of South Asian origin living in Britain,” Elizabeth Esteve-Coll wrote, “it's not only time to display more of that collection, but actively to use it to explain the richness and diversity of our multi-cultural heritage.” Rightly concerned about the museum's failure to attract this Asian audience, Ms Esteve-Coll launched a[n ...] appeal for a [...] Gallery of Indian Art within the V&A's premises (Cork 1990: 14).

The gallery was commended particularly for ‘linking the cultural histories of the subcontinent and Britain, the use of different levels of labelling and explanation and [...] providing introductory texts, and leaflets in some of the Indian languages.’¹⁵ In the *Times*, Richard Cork wrote approvingly that ‘Colonialist scorn is here being replaced by open-minded enthusiasm’, Cork (1990: 15) although he is perhaps a little optimistic regarding the potential for cultural initiatives to make good historical misdeeds; ‘the errors committed by British paternalism are now being handsomely atoned for at the V&A.’ (Cork 1990: 15)¹⁶

Even more effusive was a review in *India Weekly*, which commended the exhibition, and reflected somewhat dolefully that:

Of the magnificence of our inheritance there can be no doubt. Nor, perhaps, of our frequent abuse of it, or rather neglect, which is a form of abuse. That is a humbling thought and it almost reconciles one to the tragic aesthetic drain from India over centuries and particularly during the age of Western dominance of Asia when the drain became virtually a haemorrhage [...]

What also must be admitted is that others have probably appreciated and looked after our artistic riches better than we would have done or are doing. I.S. (1990: unpaginated).

This type of ‘safe pair of hands’ argument is precisely that which has often been advanced to justify both the initial removal of artefacts and a resistance to subsequent restitution. It is a

contention that is often based much more on assumptions about the 'superiority' of Western cultural guardianship rather than empirical evidence. As Khanna argued, that some 95% of the Indian holdings spent the best part of thirty years hidden away in a less than waterproof warehouse must surely constitute abuse through neglect. Given this, it is perhaps not surprising that Lynda Murdin again raised the issue of an out-station of the V&A in Bradford, in a review of the Gallery in the *Antique Collector*.

Other reports, while not questioning the quality of the exhibits or the efficacy of display, suggested that that the gallery raised as many questions as it answered, and that the V&A still had some way to go to reach its stated goals of inclusiveness, political transparency and cultural sensitivity. For example, *Asian Times* reflected that: 'The amazing collection of 35,000 items [...] makes one wonder about the morality that went into their accumulation' (Asian Times 1990: unpaginated). The (anonymous) reporter is not impressed with the Museum's account of the collection's origins, that it was largely accumulated not by the V&A itself but the East India Company:

If you remember, the East India Company, was the the [sic] first British team who went to trade with India and ended up ruling the country over the years. Some of the more priceless items on show appear to be much more than willing donations from the Indian Rajas or the later governments.

No one but the most desparate [sic] would have parted willingly with the jade wine cups owned by the Mughal Emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan; [...] or the musical tiger, belonging to Tipoo Sultan. The List is endless (*Asian Times* 1990: unpaginated).

Even the article's final recommendation is tempered with reproach; 'the exhibition is worth seeing – one cannot hope to see such exquisite art even in India.' *Asian Times* (1990: unpaginated)

Other reviews identified a lack of sensitivity to past and current political and religious sensibilities. One in *Dawn* reports that Pakistanis in the UK were angered by the fact that the gallery had been named after Nehru:

They feel that the V&A Museum should not have used the name of an Indian politician, respected though he is, because he is not above controversy. The most significant and attractive part of the gallery relates to the Mughal and Muslim period of Indian history. The artefacts displayed were collected by the British in undivided India, and are, therefore, not attributable purely to the present day India or to anyone [sic] of its leaders (Ali 1990: unpaginated).

Although the Museum answered such complaints by pointing out that the entry panels to the Gallery would be in five different Asian languages, and that 'individual artefacts would be fully labelled with their provenance' (Murdin 1990: 107), some of their responses were downright patronising: 'The great British public do not understand the term South Asian and they do understand India. We more than see the problem, but otherwise you would have a very, very long name' (Murdin 1990: 107). Others appeared rather disingenuous at best:

Ms Deborah Swallow, the curator of the Nehru Gallery, laughed at the suggestion that perhaps the Victoria & Albert Museum considered Nehru as one of the great Mughals, to have chosen him for the honour. She said that the museum is not interested in politics and its choice of name for its new gallery was in view of Mr Nehru's deep interest in Indian culture. He also symbolised a close connection between Britain and India (Ali 1990: unpaginated).

Both Murdin and Pratapaditya Pal take issue with Swallow's contention that the naming of the gallery was not politically motivated, the latter arguing, on the contrary, that Nehru's name was invoked partly because it was felt that it would appeal to Anglo-Indian entrepreneurs, and might encourage them to contribute financially. In fact, when the Gallery opened, the fund was still almost £1 million short. Although nearly 60% of the money raised had come from the Indian

community worldwide, donations were considerably lower than expected. Pal attributes this shortfall to a lack of cultural understanding on the part of the Museum. Cultural philanthropy, the article contends, is not endemic to Indian culture, the rich preferring to give their money to human rather than material causes. It may also have been the case that many Indian entrepreneurs felt disinclined to compensate financially for the shortcomings of the cultural stewardship of their former colonial rulers.

The Visitor Survey of the Nehru Gallery, undertaken in late 1991 and early 1992, reveals some interesting findings. Though the sample is relatively small, 100 visitors, the survey suggests that the demographic visiting the Gallery was almost identical to that of visitors to the Museum as a whole, with Asian visitors constituting 10% of the sample. Secondary analysis showed

that only 2 of the 6 visitors who had come with children were of Black/Asian origin. Although the sample is small, it is nevertheless surprising, given the eagerness of Asian families, where other Asian collections are concerned, to introduce their children to their heritage. It would suggest that the initiative of Nehru Gallery's Education Section to introduce the gallery to locally-based Asians is well-directed, and could have implications for further research.¹⁷

It is not clear from the survey, however, on what evidence was based the claim that Asian families were avid visitors to other, similar collections, and although it is diplomatically stated, there is evidently some disappointment that the Education and outreach programmes had not achieved their intended outcomes.

'The Peaceful Liberators: Jain Art from India'

By 1995, and the end of Esteve-Coll's tenure, it appeared that the V&A had taken quite a number of criticisms on board with respect to the display of artefacts from former colonies. The exhibition, 'The Peaceful Liberators: Jain Art from India', which ran from November 1995 to February 1996, appeared to be a model of cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication. All but one of the list of names composing the Honorary Council of the exhibition were Indian, and the press pack included sheets entitled 'What Is Jainism?' and 'Jainism Today' – both of which offer (apparently) well-informed and sympathetic accounts of the religion, its history and culture. There was also evidence that the Jain community visited the exhibition, with one reviewer noting 'an offering of a coconut and rice grains in a fivefold pattern [...] placed in front of one shrine suggesting as much' (Cranfield 1995: unpaginated).

However, John McEwan, writing in the *Sunday Telegraph*, while praising the show, bemoaned the fact that the V&A's Indian Collection was still 'squeezed into the small Nehru Gallery and a bit of passageway', McEwan (1995: 11) and expressed the view that the Jain show could once again put back on the agenda the 'inspired idea' of 'opening a V&A of the north, largely devoted to the Indian collection, in Bradford' (McEwan 1995: 11). Nicholas Cranfield, writing in the *Church Times*, worried that apart from a 15-minute video presentation at the end of the exhibition:

Little else in the exhibition's design and organisation otherwise encourages either knowledge or understanding. If it is art – and much of it is outstanding art at its most beautiful: [...] this would perhaps not matter. But these are the sacred images of an ancient faith: little does that faith justice (Cranfield 1995: unpaginated).

Given the nature of the publication for which Cranfield is writing, his comments may be assumed to have a particular slant, but they also hark back to earlier issues of the aestheticisation of objects with complex and contested histories. Nonetheless, the 'Educational Events and Activities' boasted a number of targeted workshops for 'Youth and community organisations and schools interested in multicultural education'.¹⁸ These might be regarded as an advance in their potential for enlightenment within the context of a post-colonial city.

However, demonstrating that museums find themselves subject to competing and sometimes irreconcilable pressures, anecdotal sources suggest Esteve-Coll was subject to criticisms that she was now lavishing too much attention on minority groups and foreign cultures

at the expense of their 'native' equivalents. Such complaints were evidently based more on perception than fact, however, as only three out of the eight new galleries which opened between 1988 and 1995 were devoted to 'eastern' artefacts, and none of the five which were then in the planning stage; likewise, only three of the sixteen major exhibitions staged between 1991 and 1996 dealt with non-European topics.

Conclusion – postcolonial challenges revisited

If, then, we examine the V&A's activities in relation to its collections from the Indian Subcontinent in the light of the postcolonial positions introduced at the start of this paper, what conclusions can be drawn? Clearly in the period the V&A was established, the prevailing view would have been that it had no obligation other than to represent the margins to the core, in order to reinforce the status of the latter. In the contemporary context, however, the fact that the histories of margins and core are inextricably linked can no longer be ignored.

The various initiatives staged in both Bradford and South Kensington represented an attempt to acknowledge and explore shared histories, but they did not, on the whole, relinquish the 'right to narrate' and transfer authorial control from the traditional custodians to the emergent groups now claiming ownership of artefacts, nomenclature and narrative. When subaltern groups were admitted, it was always on the terms set by the Museum, and rarely in the absence of an additional agenda of direct benefit to the V&A (or to its partners in Bradford). Consequently Orientalist discourse, however unconsciously, predominated and was perpetuated; even in the context of exhibitions and events explicitly claiming to interrogate or negate such ideologies, opportunities to do so were often neglected. Romantic ideas about the 'mysterious East' and the 'primitive' were reiterated, due perhaps in part to their appeal and apparent intelligibility to visitors; and although the veil of 'ornamentalism' was sometimes lifted to reveal sometimes painful and contested histories, unavoidably the aesthetic and spectacular qualities of exhibits were prioritized.

This is not to say, however, that there have not been significant attitudinal shifts, at both an individual and an institutional level, but an acknowledgement that the Museum is now operating within the context of a postcolonial society needs to be broadened beyond the sphere of a few galleries and temporary exhibitions and embedded within the Museum's structure and activities as a whole. Currently, as Wajid observes, 'Most museums rely on short-term projects to attract diverse audiences, which in turn means minority staff are concentrated in short-term schemes' (Wajid 2008: 16).

As Wajid's comment suggests, one reason why museums such as the V&A continue to struggle to adequately represent the cultures of others is because ethnic minorities have been, and remain, significantly under-represented within the museums profession. A survey undertaken by the Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation in 1999 found that only 4% of the workforce in museums 'considered themselves to be from an ethnic background', Carrington (2000: 21) while the proportion of those engaged in curatorial functions was even smaller. Although since 1997 and the institution of New Labour cultural policy museums and other cultural institutions have been offered extrinsic motivations to broaden their audience demographic and increase the proportion of visitors from ethnic minority backgrounds, there has been little movement on this front. At least part of the reason for this is likely to be that these communities still feel unrepresented by museums or, rather, they are not represented in terms of their own choosing. Until greater diversity is achieved in the staffing of museums, and the 'right to narrate' is extended as a matter of course to those categorized as 'other', the Orientalist hegemony is unlikely to be dislodged. This is arguably a loss; and not merely because the V&A and like museums are losing out on a section of their potential audience who may currently regard themselves as excluded from, or misrepresented by the institution or, alternatively, because museums are neglecting valuable expertise that could well enrich their exhibitions. As Said argued, the 'overlapping experiences' of Empire have particular significance in the postcolonial context because:

One of imperialism's achievements was to bring the world closer together and, although in the process the separation between Europeans and natives was an insidious and fundamentally unjust one, most of us should now regard the

historical experience of empire as a common one. The task is then to describe it as pertaining to Indians *and* Britishers [...] despite the horrors, the bloodshed, and the vengeful bitterness. (Said 1994: xxiv)

Consequently it might be argued that addressing imperial history and the challenges of postcolonial theory in a bold fashion within museum display and discourse might not only facilitate the recognition of previously excluded narratives and identities, but could enrich and extend the history and sense of self of the 'indigenous' community. Without an acknowledgement of a shared history, and the fostering of an awareness that the rejection of the 'other' essentially entails a rejection of ourselves, museums cannot fulfill their potential to play a part in moving towards greater tolerance and understanding, or make a contribution to the development of a healthy multicultural society of the future. Although the efforts of forward thinking individuals and, as Mathur argues, the impact of 'the new museology' and its concern with 'thematics of museums and representation, histories of exhibiting and display, and museums and minority groups, has done much in the past two decades to challenge the role of museums which reflect and serve the dominant culture' (Mathur 2005: 704), there is more still to be done on this front, as the recent 'Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums' rather suggests. Mathur suggests that the incorporation of postcolonial theory into a critical museum studies is vital to produce a museum practice fit for purpose in a postcolonial world, and 'curators, thinkers, and cultural critics who are alert to the social processes of our time' and able to critically engage with

the ideologies of globalization, the complexities of the nation-state, the unfinished careers of modernity and postmodernity, and the links between culture and power, to name only a few of the pressing themes that are relevant to an account of the museum (Mathur 2005: 703).

Received 5th May 2009

Finally accepted 18th June 2010

Notes

- ¹ The name chosen for the department formed by the amalgamation of the Indian and Far Eastern Galleries, the Oriental Department, in the early 1970s might therefore be regarded as significant in this context.
- ² Including the British Museum, but not the V&A.
- ³ www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/newsroom/current2003/universalmuseums.html
- ⁴ Information taken from draft document – purpose unclear – entitled 'The Exhibition Nehru and the Making of Modern India and the Launch of the Appeal for the New Nehru Gallery of India Art' in Nehru file – Nehru Centenary Exhibition – 1989, located in file RF/1989/220 in V&A archive.
- ⁵ Text taken from sheet entitled 'Nehru and the Making of Modern India: An Exhibition' included in press pack for exhibition, located in file RP/1990/2322 pt 2 in V&A archive.
- ⁶ Text taken from 'Press Release' for 'Nehru and the Making of Modern India: An Exhibition' included in press pack for exhibition, located in file RP/1990/2322 pt 2 in V&A archive.
- ⁷ Text taken from sheet entitled 'Nehru and the Making of Modern India: An Exhibition' included in press pack for exhibition, located in file RP/1990/2322 pt 2 in V&A archive.
- ⁸ Text taken from sheet entitled 'Nehru and the Making of Modern India: An Exhibition' included in press pack for exhibition, located in file RP/1990/2322 pt 2 in V&A archive.

- ⁹ See 'Draft Press Pack' in Nehru file – Nehru Centenary Exhibition – 1989, located in file RF/1989/220 in V&A archive.
- ¹⁰ Document in Nehru file – Nehru Centenary Exhibition – 1989, located in file RF/1989/220 in V&A archive.
- ¹¹ Text taken from 'Press Release' for 'Nehru and the Making of Modern India: An Exhibition' included in press pack for exhibition, located in file RP/1990/2322 pt 2 in V&A archive.
- ¹² Information taken from 'Nehru Gallery opening – Press Questions and Answers' in Nehru file – Nehru Centenary Exhibition – 1989, located in file RF/1989/220 in V&A archive.
- ¹³ Information taken from 'Nehru Gallery opening – Press Questions and Answers' in Nehru file – Nehru Centenary Exhibition – 1989, located in file RF/1989/220 in V&A archive.
- ¹⁴ 'Press Release' from press pack pertaining to opening of Nehru Gallery of Indian Art 1550-1900, p. 1, located in file RF/1989/220 in V&A archive.
- ¹⁵ Text taken from (undated) Press Release in V&A archive, file no. RP/1989/1521 Part 3
- ¹⁶ It is not entirely clear from the article whether Cork is referring to the (judged injurious) impact of Western cultural norms upon traditional/native Indian art, or to the more general means and consequences of colonial rule. In either case, whether the Nehru Gallery represented adequate 'atonement' is debatable.
- ¹⁷ The Nehru Gallery: A Visitors' Survey, Study commissioned by Dr D. Swallow, prepared by Naseem Khan, ALAAP (Asian Leisure And Arts Planners) in association with Dr Paulette M. McManus, Communications Consultant, p. 6
- ¹⁸ Text from Educational Events and Activities pamphlet, under heading 'Bookable Events for Groups and Educators: Free Workshops and Visits for Booked Groups'

References

- Ali, A. (1990) 'Naming of gallery after Nehru angers Pakistanis in UK', *Dawn*, 23 November, no page reference
- Anonymous. (1990) 'How did Tipoo Sultan's Tiger end up at the V&A', *Asian Times* (London), 27 November, no page reference
- Baker, M. (1997) 'Museums, Collections, and their Histories', in Malcolm Baker & Brenda Richardson (eds), *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, 17-21, London: V&A Publications
- Baker, M. & Richardson, B. (eds) 1997, *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, London: V&A Publications
- Bhabha, H. K. (1984) 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', *October*, 28, (Spring) 125-133
- Billen, A. (1988) 'Indian art collection freed from crypt', *The Times*, 23 April, 5
- Burton, A. (1999) *Vision and Accident: The Story of the Victoria & Albert Museum*, London: Victoria and Albert Publications

- Cannadine, D. (2002) *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*, London: Penguin
- Carrington, L. (2000) 'against the odds', *Museums Journal*, November, 21
- Claridge, J. & Maxtone Graham, Y. (1988) unnamed article, *Harpers & Queen*, December, 68
- Clunas, C. (1997) 'The Imperial Collections: East Asian Art', in Malcolm Baker & Brenda Richardson (eds), *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, 230-6, London: V&A Publications
- Coombes, A. E. (1997) *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press
- Cork, R. (1990) 'Rich setting for the gems of the East', *The Times Saturday Review*, 17 November, 15
- Cranfield, N. (1995) 'Jain religious artefacts are far from plain', *Church Times*, 15 December, no page reference
- Duncan, C. & Wallach, A. (1980) 'The Universal Survey Museum', *Art History*, 3 (4) 448-469
- Hopper, R. (1983) *Petals from a lotus: an introduction to the arts and history of the Indian Sub-continent*, Bradford: Bradford Art Galleries and Museums
- Huddart, D. (2007) *Homi K. Bhabha*, Abingdon: Routledge
- Inden, R. B. (2000) *Imagining India*, London: Hurst & Company
- 'I.S.' (1990) 'The Magic of India', *India Weekly* (London), 6 December, no page reference
- Jain, M. (1988) 'Heritage in Exile: No place for Indian art treasures', *India Today*, 30 April, 99
- Lowry, J. (1983a) 'An Introduction to the Arts and History of the Indian sub-continent', in Robert Hopper, *Petals from a lotus: an introduction to the arts and history of the Indian Sub-continent*, 7-48, Bradford: Bradford Art Galleries and Museums
- Lowry, J. (1983b) *Petals from a Lotus: Visitor's Guide and Catalogue*, Bradford: Bradford Art Galleries and Museums
- Mathur, S. (2005) 'Museums and Globalization', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 78 (3) 697-708
- McEwan, J. (1995) 'Anything to avoid hurting a fly', *Sunday Telegraph*, 31 December, 11
- Mitter, P. (1997) 'The Imperial Collections: Indian Art', in Malcolm Baker & Brenda Richardson (eds), *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, 222-9, London: V&A Publications
- Mitter, P. & Clunas, C. (1997) 'The Empire of Things: The Engagement with the Orient', in Malcolm Baker & Brenda Richardson (eds), *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, 221, London: V&A Publications
- Murdin, L. (1990) 'Midnight's Children', *The Antique Collector*, November, 106-107
- Pal, P. (1990) 'The authentic "Indian environment"', *The Saturday Statesman*, 29 December, no page reference

- Puri, N. (1988) 'Hidden Indian treasures of the V&A', *The Sunday Statesman*, 6 March, 2
- Said, E. W. (1994) *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Vintage
- Said, E. W. (2003) *Orientalism*, London: Penguin
- Strong, R. (1998) *The Roy Strong Diaries: 1967-1987*, London: Phoenix
- Voak, J. (1987) 'Directorship of Sir Roy Strong: A Chronology of Major Events, Acquisitions and Exhibitions 1974-1987', in Hugh Casson (ed) *The V&A Album: Gold Edition, 27-48*, London: De Montfort Publishing Ltd
- Wajid, S. (2008) 'Becoming a museum trustee seems like a good way for minorities to shape policies, so why are the opportunities available not put to better use?', *Museums Journal*, February, 16
- Wright, P. (1985) *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain*, London: Verso

*** Ruth Adams**

Dr Ruth Adams is Lecturer in Cultural & Creative Industries at the Centre for Cultural, Media & Creative Industries Research at King's College, London. She completed her PhD thesis on the V&A at the London Consortium in 2005. Her research interests include heritage and national identities, youth subcultures, the relationship between cultural institutions and society, and between cultural consumption and social class. She is currently undertaking research on the Royal Festival Hall.

Contact Details

Postal Address:
Room 6C, Chesham Building
King's College, London
Strand
London
WC2R 2LS

Email: ruth.3.adams@kcl.ac.uk
Office Telephone: 020 7848 1065
Mobile Telephone: 0797 225 4029
Fax: 020 7848 2415