EUT – Ricerca


La versione elettronica ad accesso aperto di questo volume è disponibile al link:
http://www.openstarts.units.it/dspace/handle/10077/10348

Opera sottoposta a peer review secondo il protocollo UPI - University Press Italiane

ISBN 978-88-8303-582-1

Volume distribuito in open access e disponibile presso:
http://www.openstarts.units.it

© Copyright 2014 – EUT EDIZIONI UNIVERSITÀ DI TRIESTE

Proprietà letteraria riservata.
I diritti di traduzione, di memorizzazione elettronica, di riproduzione e di adattamento totale o parziale di questa pubblicazione, con qualsiasi mezzo (compresi i microfilm, le fotocopie o altro), sono riservati per tutti i Paesi

EUT - Edizioni Università di Trieste
Via Weiss, 21 – 34127 Trieste
http://eut.units.it
https://www.facebook.com/EUTEdizioniUniversitaTrieste

Cover: graphic design by Verena Papagno, based on the framework of the geodesic dome, United States pavilion at the 1967 Montreal World’s Fair (Parc Jean-Drapeau, Île Sainte-Hélène, Montreal, Quebec, Canada), designed by the architect Buckminster Fuller. The building is home today to the Biosphère Environment Museum.
Copy editor: Giulia Iannuzzi
Moving Bodies, Displaying Nations
National Cultures, Race and Gender in World Expositions Nineteenth to Twenty-first Century

edited by Guido Abbattista
Contents

Guido Abbattista
Concepts and Categories in the History of World Expositions: Introductory Remarks 7

Leonardo Buonomo
Showing the World: Chicago’s Columbian Exposition in American Writing 21

Elisabetta Bini
Drawing a Global Color Line: “The American Negro Exhibit” at the 1900 Paris Exposition 39

Elisabetta Vezzosi
The International Strategy of African American Women at the Columbian Exposition and Its Legacy: Pan-Africanism, Decolonization and Human Rights 67

Roberta Gefter Wondrich
Exhibitionary Forms in Ireland: James Joyce’s Exhibits of Irish Modernity 89

Maria Carolina Foi
Wiener Weltausstellung 1873: A ‘Peripheral’ Perspective of the Triester Zeitung 121

Sergia Adamo
Dancing for the World: Articulating the National and the Global in the Ballo Excelsior’s Kitsch Imagination 143

Matteo Pretelli
Italian Migrants in Italian Exhibitions from Fascism to the Early Republic 173

Anna Zoppellari
The Painting and Writing of Gustave Guillaumet 197

Cristiana Baldaazzi
The Arabs in the Mirror: Stories and Travel Diaries relating to the Universal Expositions in Paris (1867, 1889, 1900) 213

Guido Abbattista
Humans on Display: Reflecting on National Identity and the Enduring Practice of Living Human Exhibitions 241

Abstracts 273
Notes on Contributors 283
Index 287
This collection of essays presents the results of a two-year project carried out in 2012-2013 at the University of Trieste by a group of researchers from various disciplines working under the direction of this author. We hope the variety of approaches and methods that inspired the studies may convincingly illustrate some of the original and interesting perspectives from which national, international, universal and world expositions can be explored.

World’s fairs and expositions have aroused increasing interest among scholars in the last two decades. As the authors of a 2006 essential bibliography point out,

research on the history of international exhibitions and world’s fairs is burgeoning and […] sources on the topic have proliferated enormously in recent years. As a consequence, the field has grown tremendously and now involves disciplines as diverse as History, Cultural Geography, Urban Studies, Art History and the History of Architecture, among others.¹

Scholars now have a growing number of specialized publications and reference texts in several languages at their disposal, including an *Encyclopedia of World’s Fairs and Expositions*² as well as works on particular expositions, single national experiences or on

---


specialized aspects of the expositions. Italy is no exception. Seminars, workshops and research projects are being organized in growing numbers, especially as new world’s fairs like Expo 2015 in Milan are approaching. Expositions have been the subject of many Italian studies, not just on the history of Italian exhibitions but also on the peculiar phenomenon of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European expositions.


5 See for instance the British Society for the History of Science April 2013 seminar on “Modernity on Display: Technology, Science and the Culture Wars at International Expositions circa World War II” at the University of Westminster and the ensuing, forthcoming collection of essays. At the congress of the European Network in Universal and Global History (ENIUGH), Paris, 4-7 September 2014, a special session has been devoted to “Expositions internationales confrontées aux déchirures du siècle, 1850-1950”. Other examples include the workshop “The World’s Fair Since ’64”, organized by the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation of the Smithsonian Institution and scheduled for October 2014; and the international conference “World Exhibitions in Europe. Players, Publics, Cultural Heritages between Metropolis and Colonies 1851-1939” to be held at the University of Padua in November 2014.
Interestingly, junior historians and new online history journals are also increasingly attracted by this beguiling and potentially mesmerizing topic. The enduring interest may be explained not only by the fascination exercised on researchers but also by the simple and obvious fact that world’s fairs, under the aegis of the “Bureau International des Expositions” (BIE), are part of a contemporary phenomenon that takes place in a global economic and cultural setting dominated by marketing, appearances, images and representation. To understand how significant international expositions have been to the modern history of the West, consider that 55 international expositions have been officially ‘registered’ and ‘recognized’ by the BIE. Of these, 33 were held in the sixty years following the 1851 Great Exhibition in London and 22 have been held in the 70 years since WWII, with three more to be held between now and 2020 (including Expo 2015 in Milan). Since the late twentieth century we have therefore been witnessing a revival of the frequency enjoyed by the expositions early in their history. Furthermore, if we count all the different national and international expositions not sponsored by the BIE, we arrive at figures that are even more remarkable. In addition to Yeosu 2012, Milan 2015, Astana (Kazakhstan) 2017 and Dubai 2020, the aforementioned *Encyclopedia of World’s Fairs and Expositions* lists 106 expositions that took place in more than 20 countries between London 1851 and Shanghai 2010. Most of the host countries are Western or have Western origins, with some Asian twentieth-century latecomers and Africa still excluded. The sheer number and frequency of world expositions prove that they continue to be events of undeniable interest and prestige attracting hundreds of thousands of international visitors. Their constant, almost ritual recurrence also shows that they can adapt to variable, erratic global economic dynamics, power relations and international political priorities. Indeed, we can see that the world’s financial, economic and environmental plights and increasingly insecure international circumstances may have affected world expositions, but they have not stifled them.

Leaving aside their latest transformations and importance to contemporary history, world expositions – as either unitary subjects of historical research or events to analyze according to specific thematic aspects – have recently received a lot of attention from scholars in many distinct research areas because of the complexity and multiplicity of

---

6 The most recent example is the monographic issue of the Italian online journal of history *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea* on *Le esposizioni: propaganda e costruzione identitaria*, a c. di F. Evangelisti e A. Pes, 18, 2 (giugno 2014), open access, last accessed 1 August 2014 http://www.studistorici.com/2014/06/29/sommmario-numero-18/. The sixteen essays collected in this issue exemplify an attempt to apply a cross-thematic dissection technique to mainly European national case-studies from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

their structure, elements and components. As mentioned above, these fields include economic, social, political and cultural history; the history of art and architecture; the history of science and technology; media and communication studies; sociology; anthropology; ethnology; migration studies; literature and linguistics; gender studies; urban studies; and the performing arts. The scholars in these fields have been stimulated and spurred by various aspects of the expositions and have proposed interpretations based on characteristics congenial to their particular disciplines. The vast majority of fields based on social enquiry have benefited from studying world, international or national expositions. Their relevance to history in general and various aspects of transnational and global history in particular – an obvious consequence of their nature – has also been widely acknowledged. As triumphal pageants and secular collective rites displaying phantasmagorias of the real and invented economic, scientific and artistic resources of the most advanced Western powers, they have attracted all the world’s countries – be they members of formal/informal empires or nations and peoples aspiring to be gradually integrated into the network of global relationships shaped by the progress of capitalistic modernization. The recurrent key theme of the ‘triumph’ is well symbolized by the centrality that in all expositions have had great, high, magnificent, technologically ground-breaking buildings: worth mentioning in this regard are renowned examples as the London Crystal Palace at the Great Exhibition, 1851, the Tour Eiffel in Paris 1889, the Rotunde in Vienna, 1873, the Grand Palais and Petit Palais in Paris, 1900, but also less famous cases as the “Faro” (lighthouse) of the Town Aquarium at the Milan “Sempione” Exposition of 1906, the Exploratorium Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco, 1915, the Palau Nacional in Barcelona, 1929, the U.S. pavilion and the Havoline Mercury Tower Thermometer at the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition in 1933, the Atomium in Brussels, 1958, the Unisphere in New York, 1964-1965, the United States Pavilion, then Biosphère Museum for the Montreal Expo, 1967, the Sunsphere in Knoxville, 1982, the China Pavilion in Shanghai, 2010.

Western exceptionalism and imperialist expansion; the celebration of the market and an affluent society; and the exaltation of economic and scientific-technological progress have been the main raisons d’être and the deepest ideological motivations for producing these great international exhibitionary events. Expositions have also displayed many other social phenomena tied to capitalist modernization whose development and success the expositions themselves have driven on a global scale: ‘commodity culture’, consumer and mass-consumer behavior, commercial advertising, fashion and taste, communication tools and techniques; public opinion and the press, leisure, sport and physical activities.

The relationships between the public and the private spheres expressed by and inside the great world expositions have also proved particularly interesting from the standpoint of power strategies and their protagonists. The term ‘power strategies’ is used here in two
ways. One form of power strategy derives from the disciplinary, regulatory actions carried out by modern nation-states through their political, administrative, economic, military, professional and intellectual elites. The planning, organization and staging of exhibitions represents one way those elites have exercised ‘governmentality’ at the same biopolitical level that has presided over other institutional articulations of power and knowledge – everything from the prison to the museum. From this standpoint, by establishing rules of inclusion and exclusion; by recognizing civil society and professional/cultural organizations; and by establishing criteria, procedures, canons, standards, measures and orthodoxies, thus creating hierarchies of quality and official ranks of merit, the expositions have largely reflected governing systems of order and authority.

Another perspective may be taken with respect to this ‘top-down’ viewpoint, one that considers the individual or the collective members of a society as subject to the identity-building power of the political institutions of the nation-state – be it liberal, authoritarian or totalitarian. This second outlook might be defined, to put it simply, as a ‘bottom-up’ perspective and derives from sociologist Tony Bennett’s 1988 theorization about the “exhibitionary complex”. In Bennett’s view, private persons, groups belonging to civil society, and knowledge, art and culture producers put their own power or market strategies into practice as free agents, with the aim of acknowledging and recognizing their identities in public exhibitions. Publicity is the true, modern dimension through which such social agents can obtain a legitimate existence within a national, international or cosmopolitan community. Regardless of whether the approach is Foucauldian or à la Bennett, the key factor is always power: power as monocratic agent structuring the world, down to the individual subjects or citizens; or power as the search for public visibility by social agents acting within an increasingly democratic scenario more and more dominated by public opinion and the collective dimension of cultural communication. Rather than being mutually exclusive, these two standpoints supplement each other, thus proving highly evocative and fruitful sources of inspiration for historical or sociological analysis.

Historians have often considered world’s fairs and universal expositions as unitary objects of analysis, articulated yet homogeneous cultural artifacts to be explained by coherent interpretations relating them to general historical contexts. They have also been analyzed against a background of complex political, institutional and social processes: nation building, imperialism, industrialization, modernization and related

social conflicts.¹⁰ In accordance with this standpoint, interpreters have considered world expositions as special places and occurrences to support national, patriotic, paternalistic and humanitarian projects produced by clear-cut worldviews. By emphasizing the close ties between world expositions and the dynamics of international political and commercial competition or imperial rivalries against the common background of advocating for ‘Western civilization’, these outlooks have proved highly stimulating and rewarding for researchers. Modern European and Western history has oscillated between the dramatic extremes of patriotism, nationalism and cosmopolitanism; war and peace; national sovereignty and international order. International and universal expositions have registered and given expression to this tidal movement that continues to characterize the Western world in an attempt to dominate and discipline it by imposing coherent and self-explanatory worldviews.

Although our contributors have taken this viewpoint into account, we agreed that “these complex events [world expositions] mirror ideological and national rivalries as well as domestic social, economic and political struggles. In short, they are remarkable indices of important historical tensions”.¹¹ We therefore pursued topics that would highlight plurality, conflict and difference rather than uniformity, harmony and consensus. Our plan was to look at the international and universal expositions as composite stages with various creative players in as many different positions, not just as self-enclosed and self-referential scripts with fixed texts, official discourses and preset meanings. We tried to approach expositions as living, multi-faceted performances rather than as a carefully planned, pre-determined series of dioramas inspired by coherent ideas. What mostly attracted our attention were the peculiar dimensions of ‘movement’, ‘motion’ and ‘mobility’ that characterizes human social and cultural behaviors. We have addressed the expositions as scenarios in which autonomous subjects sought identities and demanded participation; as kaleidoscopes of evolving meanings and creative behaviors to be ‘discovered’ through interpretation, not just ‘taken as they supposedly were or intended to be’.

The use of the term ‘bodies’ in the title of this collection therefore alludes to problematic aspects like temporary and extraordinary mass public gatherings articulated along social, cultural, gender or race lines. We imagined the exposition as a grand happening of bodies in movement, bodies to be transported, exhibited, seen, carefully


observed and described or just commented upon, but also handled, dressed, lodged, fed, safeguarded, moved, touched. The physicality; the physical presence inside the great, mass expositions of large aggregates of people; their differences in appearance, language and habits; their ability to talk and to act; the traces they left and the ways they helped shape, not just pass through, the events are among the most interesting aspects to be investigated and are particularly central to the so-called living ethno-exhibitions or public expositions of (unusual, strange or never-before-seen) human beings.

Living ethno-exhibitions, the public display of (mostly) non-European living human beings and their habits and cultures continue to represent deliberate, intentional and carefully planned expressions of a hierarchizing exhibitionary impulse. Inspired by a Manichean narrative of civilization-versus-savage-or-barbarous-worlds, they are perhaps the crudest interpretation of the idea of the exposition, making human beings considered ‘other’ the living protagonists of the exhibition itself. According to the latter definition, however, a ‘living human exhibition’ is something more than just the display of non-European anthropological otherness in the context of the great world expositions. In fact, it can be considered the very essence of the exposition. The living exhibition of human beings, after all, ‘is’ the exposition. A nation, with its values, culture, history, arts; the products of a nation’s economic capacities, technology, inventiveness; its military power and its athletic prowess are not the only subjects on display. There are also people’s bodies, individual and collective; a nation’s peoples – a cosmopolitan public, in fact – in all their social and cultural varieties. At the same time, the exposition must also represent the know-how required to keep such a wide variety of human specimens under control: the ability to attract nationals and foreigners to the exhibitionary venues, to organize and schedule their movements and logistics. The exposition represents, finally, the ability to receive, accommodate and put on parade an international gathering of world peoples. This is how the largest and most ambitious European and North American exhibitionary initiatives came to be characterized as large, all-pervading shows – animated spectacles and celebrations where fiction and reality, public performance and personal conduct, image and representation, description and narration continually intersect with and influence each other.

When we talk of physical human bodies in movement within the great expositions, we signify something more than just their ‘mobility’. As an evocative interpretive key, ‘movement’ also alludes to ‘performance’ and ‘emotion’, to events – generally large, collective events related to the great expositions – that are ‘being performed’ and are ‘moving’. These aspects point to three fundamental constituent moments of the expositions. First, people – social classes, groups defined by political, economic, professional or religious identities, ethnic groups and races – must move to go to the exposition from their place of residence, and they need safe and affordable transport to
do it. Indeed, expositions only exist thanks to efficient and dependable national and international transport systems. Several great expositions have even coincided with the introduction or opening of new, futuristic means or lines of transportation, which in turn became their sources of inspiration. Second, the mass of visitors is obligated to move continuously once it is inside the exposition, which cannot exist without such a circulating crowd. Various kinds of transport, routes, guides, signs and new languages for conveying directions had to be invented to facilitate and regulate all such transfers. Third, mobility is more than just the physical condition of human bodies transported from one place to another. It involves a psychological disposition as well. In fact, the idea of ‘movement’ also refers to the complex psychological sphere of emotions involving ‘movements’ of the heart, mind and soul. Movement is an act that makes somebody change his or her physical location. Everybody in the expositions is subject to the kind of movement that involves passage from one gallery to another, from one national pavilion to the next, from a particular sector of the expositive area to another one. However, that act of transfer is accompanied by a sequence of ever-changing emotions; transfer ‘moves’ because it triggers and at the same time is activated by emotive reactions or passions and generates an emotional form of understanding. Through movement, the exposition becomes the realm of individual and collective emotions.

Moving inside an exposition could also be described metaphorically as a form of network navigation. Visitors navigate networks such as the connected national or regional marketplaces arranged logically and geographically, the sea of commodities surrounding them and the gigantic wunderkammer of global technological wonders through which they pass. Visitors find themselves at the center of the biggest market in the world where international, imperial, global capitalism exhibits its potential. Furthermore, expositions require visitors to navigate a world recognizable for its recreated, artificial and symbolic geographies and peoples. According to one of the most popular and widely circulated metaphors in official exposition propaganda and literature, visitors can ‘tour the world’ within a limited, planned and controlled space. Finally, an exposition is a living, moving experience that generates a rich range of visual impressions and sensorial/emotional knowledge. It involves the temporary practice of getting a ‘walking education’ and learning through unprecedented ways of observing the world from original, technological viewpoints – a practice often continued in museums as permanent legacies of the expositions. Ferris wheels; panoramas; toboggans; watch posts; towering steel structures, buildings and symbolic monuments; captive balloons; elevators; funicular railways and monorails; balconies and stands for mass spectacles, including historical or ethno-anthropological reenactments or artistic performances: all of these exceptional vantage points have allowed people to watch, from above or behind barriers, what and how they have never seen before.
Such movement must of course be directed, organized, planned and properly staged. Horseraces; military parades; gymnastic displays; boat races; solemn entries and pageants of sovereigns and statespersons; political gatherings; scientific or academic congresses; religious assemblies; and grand choreographies offer collective occasions for identities, roles, skills, functions and doctrines to be publicly exhibited and recognized. Moreover, expositions are locations where new identities emerge, both in reality – as with political movements or scientific paradigms – and in fiction – as with all the forms of representation inspired by the events, including literary (everything from chronicles and short stories to romance novels and thrillers); figurative (artworks of different kinds); and performative (theater, music concerts, parades, ballets, circuses).

Considering all this, we came to think of the expositions primarily as ‘generative’ performances. We therefore sought out the different expressions of this generative power not only as clues to help us understand the history of world expositions but also as aspects that continue to characterize these events today.

Such premises may illuminate why ‘bodies’, ‘movement’, ‘race’ and ‘gender’ have worked alongside ‘nations’ as inspirational concepts for our enquiries. Race and gender continue to represent the dividing line between inclusion and exclusion in Western processes of nation-building in a more persistent and resistant way than class and ideology, especially now that the religious barriers inside the Christian world have been relatively overcome – or at least reduced to the fundamental opposition of Christian vs. non-Christian. Our decision to observe the expositions from the vantage points of race, gender and ethnicity (including the latter’s ‘orientalist’, ‘exoticist’, ‘primitivistic’ or ‘racist’ variations) came out of our desire to explore, on a case-study basis, the tensions and contradictions of the apparently coherent world that the expositions intended to celebrate. We have tried to uncover bugs in the software that drives how the expositions have been structured. We wanted to determine what these bugs could tell us about how Western societies themselves have been structured – much more effectively than all the catalogs, guides, manifestos, broadsides and advertisements for progress, modernity and civilization that have accompanied all the expositions and helped shape their official, institutional message. By adopting this approach, we were able to consider a wide variety of social and political actors outside the elites: African Americans; women; migrants; national, regional and peripheral minorities; freaks; colonial subjects; and human ‘others’. We intended to explore how to turn these subjects into protagonists and agents who pursue subjectivity by way of being ‘in’ and speaking through the expositions. Using the testimonies of artists, fiction writers, journalists, performers and common eyewitnesses, we looked into case-studies that disclose the tensions, fissures, personal anxieties and contrasting outlooks resulting from the complex design of the expositions.
Based on these methodological reflections, we addressed literary, artistic, socio-political and ethno-anthropological topics related to select North American, French, Habsburg, Italian and international fairs. We also tried to develop each analysis both chronologically and geographically well beyond the single event by taking the expositions as starting points for examining more complex, enduring phenomena. The 1893 Chicago’s World’s Fair, or Columbian Exposition, for example, has usually been interpreted in light of the concomitant process to consolidate and nationally revive the United States in a period of economic crisis and a troubled search for identity. In his essay, Leonardo Buonomo analyzes some lesser-known literary works issued from or inspired by the 1893 exposition. He shows how various kinds of literary fiction, varying in both genre and quality, drew inspiration from the exposition for having given a voice to all the social, cultural and racial anxieties and contradictions accompanying the invention of the American soul during this crucial period of American history. His enquiry also highlights how the beauty, harmony, ethnic authenticity and disorderly vitality presiding over the erection of the White City and the Midway Plaisance – the two main symbolic locations of the Chicago Fair – motivated the work of his writers. Finally, Buonomo shows how the scenes, plots, gazes, emotions, characters and language in these texts served to define the limits and conditions of participation and inclusion in the Nation for various categories of ‘Other’ in an unequal society.

The attendance of Afro-Americans to the Chicago’s World’s Fair in 1893 and subsequently the Paris Expo in 1900 forms the core of the essays by Elisabetta Bini and Elisabetta Vezzosi. Bini focuses on the great Paris Exposition, one of the most important ever held in the Western world both for its ambitious scale and for the symbolic significance of its date. This circumstance lent historic significance to the first official participation of African Americans in an international exposition – after representation had been denied to them at the 1893 Chicago Fair. “The American Negro Exhibit” would be followed by a series of successive participations in North American expositions and therefore represented a turning point in the history of African American movements. Bini’s analysis underlines not only the role played in Paris by such prominent African American figures as W. E. B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington and Thomas J. Calloway, but also the opportunity that participating in the Paris Exposition offered in terms of boosting anti-racist African American activism, even if there were clashes and strategic divergences between the promoters. Bini’s contribution convincingly shows how a typical triumphal celebration of Western society and economy could be used for discussing race relations and advancing the cause of black Americans on a transnational scale.

Vezzosi enriches this point by exploring how African American women’s movements managed to successfully exploit world expositions to promote Pan-Africanism, especially at the Chicago and Paris fairs of 1893 and 1900 respectively. By looking at all the ways
African American women were active within the international community at large and the expositions in particular helps us understand how profoundly the Western capitalist eulogistic constructions of the expositions could be used to promote the social, political and cultural causes of minorities. In relation to these kinds of initiatives, the expositions did not just showcase a coherent image of progress. They gave voice to influences and debates that would lead to the creation of a global community of the ‘darker races’ and, through this, to the launch of anticolonialist, social justice and human rights movements.

An interesting and relatively unknown case in which expositions gave a particular social and cultural community the opportunity to promote its contributions to its nation’s progress was that of the Italian national colonies of emigrants overseas – consisting predominantly of numerous groups of people (13 million in 1880-1915 alone) transplanted to far-off countries in Europe and the Americas. Interestingly, these were white ‘colonial’ subjects voluntarily putting themselves on display in their mother country – a decidedly paradoxical yet instructive example when compared to the African villages where the often-no-less-voluntary presence of black colonial subjects on exhibition simply confirmed the enormously alluring power of the exhibitions. Matteo Pretelli’s essay is devoted to “Italians abroad” and “Italian work” overseas as represented in twentieth-century Italian expositions. Pretelli focuses on the years when the issue of fully integrating emigrated communities into the patriotic discourse about the nation and the construction of national values was recognized more intensely than ever before: 1922-1952, from the beginning of the Fascist period to the early Republican years. During both these moments there was a need to consolidate all the nation’s components within the new political and institutional regimes, and the expositions represented particularly appropriate showcases for patriotic discourse that could connect the histories of emigrants to national historical traditions – e.g. the Italians as fearless overseas travelers, discoverers, merchants and colony-founders, from time immemorial – and to celebrate the contribution of Italian emigrants to national accomplishments and greatness. Pretelli aptly stresses that during both periods – Fascism and the Republic – the inclusion of Italian emigrants in Italian national expositions or Italian pavilions in international expositions abroad responded to political strategies and projects, with instrumentality as their common feature. The author concludes that, apart from obvious differences in public rhetoric, language and images, “the representation of Italian migrants was instrumental to Fascist imperial ambitions, as well as to the pursuit of newfound international legitimization by post-war centrist governments”.

As mentioned above, our project sought to encourage the study of world’s fairs and international expositions by assuming ‘peripheral’ viewpoints, so to speak, and by

12 See below, p. 195.
observing the exhibitionary events not so much through the official, ostensible messages they wanted to convey but rather through the eyes of particular marginal, foreign or minor participants. Roberta Gefter, Cristiana Baldazzi, Maria Carolina Foi and Anna Zoppellari all responded to this solicitation by selecting very original topics: early-twentieth-century Ireland during the ‘Celtic Revival movement’; Arab (North African) visitors in Paris in 1900; the participation of the culturally Italian Habsburg seaport of Trieste in the Vienna Exposition, right after the 1867 Austro-Hungarian Compromise (Ausgleich) and the birth of the dual imperial monarchy; and, finally, the interplay between travel, writing, painting and the practice of the Parisian expositions in the work of a French Orientalist painter. All four of these contributors looked at the expositions not as single, fixed events, located in given static times and places. The 1907 Dublin International Exhibition; the 1900 Paris Expo seen through the eyes of distinguished Tunisian and Egyptian visitors; the “Wiener Weltausstellung 1873”; and the 1867 Paris Exposition perceived through literary and artistic descriptions all appear as structured, subjective sets of meanings that are themselves products of national, cultural, linguistic or psychological strains, anxieties or outright conflicts rather than peaceful, ecstatic, lively public displays of progressive, modernizing success, self-identification and complacency. Original outlooks and meanings have been discovered by observing the content of certain important international expositions and categories of participant through, for example, the artistic experience of a journalist-painter like Gustave Guillaumet, whose texts and images helped shape and put on display French colonial Northern Africa at the 1867 Paris Expo; or through the literary creativity of James Joyce, in whose Dubliners and Ulysses the “exhibitionary complex” was variously textualized in its different expressions, thus releasing a powerful inspirational energy. The case of the Arab visitors analyzed by Baldazzi is even more illuminating in that it illustrates how differing, intersecting identity-building processes, involving both Arab national pride and admiration for the West, were at work at the successive Parisian expositions that took place during the second half of the nineteenth century; as well as how those experiences of traveling and visiting were interpreted in the light of Arab literary traditions and contemporary cultural and political priorities. Finally, by making use of the Triester Zeitung – one of the most relevant but neglected voices of the German-speaking press in late-nineteenth-century Trieste – Foi shows how the interplay between the local economic and social realities and the centralizing impulses of the recently restructured Austro-Hungarian empire conditioned the attitude and participation of the peripheral Italian seaport of Trieste in the 1873 Vienna Universal Exposition.

Finally, Sergia Adamo has analyzed in her essay a particularly meaningful case and a very instructive one when talking of expositions from the point of view of the ‘moving bodies’. The importance of the great Italian artifact of the Ballo Excelsior – one of the most
important and successful phantasmagorias in the history of modern dance spectacles – lies not just in the fact that it was first performed in 1881 in coincidence with the Milan National Exposition. What is most relevant for both dance history and cultural studies is that its aesthetics and ideological implications drew substantial inspirational elements from the Milan Exposition. And Adamo convincingly shows how the great ballet was conceived for staging the idea of human diversity in the context of world progress and the primacy of Western civilization; and how its successive performances and re-editions revealed an impressive capacity to respond to the need of articulating the national and the global.

I will permit myself a conclusive word concerning my own contribution to the collection, the last in the book. This article could be read as a supplement to my book Umanità in mostra. Esposizioni etniche e invenzioni esotiche in Italia (1880-1940) (Humans on Display: Ethnic Exhibitions and Exotic Inventions in Italy, 1880-1940), which resulted from several years of research on the exhibition of living human beings and was published in late 2013. Not only did the completion of that book largely coincide with the implementation of the research project that led to the present publication but it was also the project’s source of inspiration in several ways. Many of the ideas and suggestions for our program came from specific viewpoints and issues addressed in Umanità in mostra, including the focus on the expositions (observed in the book through the living ethno-exhibitions) as hierarchical representations of world societies and cultures; the power of words and images to shape reality; the appraisal of different expressions of agency in and through the expositions; the expositions as the result of the interplay between plans, ideological discourses and official descriptions; and the daily, factual and discursive or performative construction of the events.

In this contribution, I return to the theme of alien bodies on show but with a greater focus on contemporary expositions, the actions and movements of the subjects on display and the emotions they both stirred and felt themselves. I also address the unexpected twists and turns that certain ethno-exhibitions have experienced when the movement and transportation have involved not savage peoples brought to Europe from overseas but white Western tourists traveling to distant lands eager to observe the human and animal remnants of savage life (from a safe perspective). First, I briefly discuss the consistency and complexity of Italian ‘colonial culture’ as addressed in recent books on Italian colonial policy and public opinion. By analyzing the shabby, amateurish living ethno-exhibitions of late-nineteenth-century Italy from a historical perspective, I challenge the idea that an appreciable ‘colonial culture’ existed in Italy before the early twentieth century. I go on to examine how the continued persistence of human exhibitions around the world – not just in Western countries – implies the existence of a sort of deep, unrestrainable drive, impossible to eradicate, to publically display the
physical body of the ‘other’, thus helping us to understand some crucial and enduring aspects of the exhibitionary complex.

Of course, the study of world’s fairs and international expositions allow for many different approaches. It is like digging into an inexhaustible mine of meanings, images, words, acts and actors. In fact, it is almost impossible to reduce phenomena like the expositions, whose most relevant peculiarities may be multiplicity, ambiguity, instability and fluidity, to a simplistic interpretation. The aim of the research collected in this book has been to contribute to the specialized scholarship some evidence of what results from this critical outlook.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to the University of Trieste’s research program “FRA 2011”, which funded a substantial portion of this research. Dr. Giulia Iannuzzi carried out the painstaking work not just of copy-editing but also of coordinating the entire publishing process. EUT-Edizioni Università di Trieste supervised the production of this book with their usual expertise and cooperation. All the essays herein were submitted to public critique in a workshop that took place in Trieste in February 2014. For their careful reading and critical comments I would like to thank the five commentators from Padua, Genoa, Rome and Palermo who convened on that occasion: their observations contributed significantly to improving our work and helped these essays arrive at their final form.

Turin, August 2014

Acknowledgment: this text, originally written in English, has been most competently revised by Michelle Tarnopolsky, to whom I would like to address my heartfelt thanks.
Leonardo Buonomo

SHOWING THE WORLD: 
CHICAGO’S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION IN AMERICAN WRITING

Much has been written on the history of World’s Fairs and their significance as powerful statements of the host country’s view of both itself and the world, especially with regard to the politics of race and ethnicity. Signaling the emergence of the United States as a major player on the international scene, the World’s Columbian Exposition, or World’s Fair, held in Chicago in 1893, has understandably attracted considerable attention on the part of scholars and critics. What has been left largely unexplored is, surprisingly, the substantial body of writing which emerged from that event. The present essay intends to draw attention to this rich, intriguing literary legacy by analyzing a number of representative works.

The numerous texts inspired by Chicago’s 1893 World’s Fair include guidebooks, newspaper and magazine articles, memoirs, travelogs, as well as works of fiction and poetry published, for the most part, within a few years of the event.1 Much like the Fair itself, which set the aesthetically ambitious and educationally-minded buildings of the so-called White City alongside the miniature ethnic villages of the Midway Plaisance, the Ferris Wheel, and Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, this body of writing varies greatly in terms of aspiration, ambition, and assumed audience. It runs the whole gamut from high-brow to low-brow. Among the many American authors who set their sights on the Fair, one finds a number of well-known names (Frederick Douglass, Henry Adams, Frances Hodgson Burnett, William Dean Howells) and a host of minor figures, now largely forgotten, of whom some at least once commanded a sizable readership (Clara Louise Burnham, Julian Hawthorne, Charles McClellan Stevens). In their effort to put into words their response to the Fair, they had recourse to a variety of literary genres and registers, but whatever their distinctive approaches and varying degrees of talent, these writers were united in recognizing the Columbian Exposition as a landmark in the

political, social, and cultural history of the United States. They took note, in particular, of the ways in which the Exposition offered abundant matter for reflection on all aspects of American society. In a period marked by economic depression, massive immigration, and unabated post-Civil War racial tension, the Exposition brought together an unprecedentedly large number of Americans from all walks of life and confronted them with representatives and reproductions of foreign cultures and lifestyles. It thus provided American authors with a unique opportunity to gain insights into their country’s distinctive traits and to ponder on its political and cultural ranking in the world. In what is, arguably, the best-known literary response to the Fair, Henry Adams significantly noted how an unprecedentedly coherent national identity emerged from the strange, gargantuan pageant staged in Chicago. While the spectacle that had confronted him there conjured up biblical images of heterogeneity and confusion (“Noah’s Ark” and “Babel”),² it had ultimately left him with the prevailing impression that “Chicago was the first expression of American thought as a unity”.³ What Adams had seen was, in Maurice Neufeld’s words, the unity of a “newly industrialized nation”, the first “challenge to the world that America was entering the world markets as a seller of goods”, and the launching of “American imperialism”.⁴

The Chicago Fair was called **Columbian** in honor of the four hundredth anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s discovery of the New World. With that name it claimed the event, which for many marked the beginning of modernity, as part and parcel of the distinctive heritage of the United States. Moreover, it called attention to Columbus’s place in the country’s mythology, reconfiguring him as a proto-American:

> For the United States, which had been prone to view the Western hemisphere as its special province, Columbus could be seen as the original prototype of the American adventurer/hero who, like Boone or Crockett or Carson, blazed trails into an unknown wilderness so that others might follow and begin building the American Empire.⁵

A showcase of American progress and achievement in technology and the arts, the Chicago Fair emphatically announced that the United States was ready to compete with, and even surpass, the countries that had hosted previous editions of the World’s Fair, particularly France and England. In the intentions of its promoters and organizers, the

---

Columbian Fair “would conclusively demonstrate the passing of world leadership from the Old to the New World and would symbolize the fulfillment of the mission and vision of Columbus”.\(^6\) Admittedly, the very scope of these ambitions, and the unmistakably boastful tone in which they were expressed, betrayed the existence of a lingering inferiority complex that the United States, and particularly its cultured and wealthy elites, still felt toward Europe. This complex was further apparent in the choice of a neoclassical style for the White City, and the decision to entrust its realization primarily to East Coast-based, European-educated architects, much to the chagrin of those who, like Louis Sullivan, advocated the promotion of a modernist and authentically American style. Clearly the United States still had something to prove to the Old World, namely that even in the realm of aesthetics, harmony, and elegance, it could match the Europeans, and perhaps even beat them at their own game. As John E. Findling has observed, the “formal, distinguished styling of the buildings indicated good taste and signified that there was indeed an American civilization that could function on the same aesthetic plane as European civilization”\(^7\).

What distinguished the World’s Columbian Exposition from previous fairs was its hybrid nature, the fact that the meticulously planned and organized area that housed the Exposition proper was contiguous with a mile-long strip of land, called the Midway Plaisance, which was devoted to *live*, supposedly *authentic* ethnological shows – i.e. reproductions of foreign villages and towns – as well as to cafes, restaurants, and various forms of entertainment. If the lofty, elegant structures and grounds of the White City reflected the fastidious tastes of a cultured elite (“simulating for a mass audience its own sense of beauty, control, hierarchy, and self-secured success”),\(^8\) the Midway Plaisance had something of the vital, manic vulgarity of a country fair of old. A popular counterpart to, and a distorted mirror image of, the academically sanctioned paintings, crafts, and ethnological exhibits of the White City, the Midway Plaisance suggests the subversive energy Mikhail Bakhtin called *carnivalesque*\(^9\). Significantly enough, while the Fair’s director of works, Daniel Burnham, and the renowned landscape designer Frederick Law Olmsted, maintained strict control over the look and management of the White City, the handling of the Midway Plaisance, initially entrusted to Harvard-educated Frederic Putnam, the Fair’s “chief of ethnology”, was later assigned to wunderkind impresario Sol Bloom (the child of Polish immigrants) by virtue of his exceptional ability – thanks to

---


Leonardo Buonomo

his background in Vaudeville and other forms of popular amusement – to know exactly what the public at large wanted.  

The dichotomy between high and low, order and disorder, spiritual and worldly, which found expression in the heterogeneous layout of the Columbian Exposition as well as in its proximity to growing, noisy, dirty Chicago (tellingly nicknamed the Black City), provided a rich source of inspiration for a number of writers who visited it. Conjuring up images of otherworldly purity and virtue with the dominant whiteness of its buildings, with its obviously exemplary character, and its seeming imperviousness to the debasing influence of money (access to all exhibits was free), the White City inevitably called to mind one of America’s founding myths: John Winthrop’s definition in his sermon “A Model of Christian Charity” (1630) of the Puritan settlement of Massachusetts Bay as “a city upon a hill”. In Winthrop’s “vision”, as Alan Trachtenberg has noted, “America itself might be a Celestial City, a city of man redeemed by the white city of God”. Together with the Bible (the source of Winthrop’s expression), the other book which could be found in most nineteenth-century American homes, John Bunyan’s The Pilgrim’s Progress (1678), offered popular children’s writer Frances Hodgson Burnett (best-known as the author of The Secret Garden and Little Lord Fauntleroy), the perfect template for a story about Chicago’s Fair.

In her retelling of Bunyan’s allegory, Two Little Pilgrims’ Progress: A Story of the City Beautiful (1895), Burnett follows the adventures of two orphans, Robin and Meg, who run away from the farm on which they live with their stern and unimaginative aunt, to travel to the Fair they have heard so much about. It is Meg, in particular, who repeatedly quotes Bunyan to her brother during their journey and subsequent exploration of the Fair, and interprets what she sees as the modern fulfillment of events forecast in that famous book, just as a typological reader of the Bible would. Thus the White City ap-

15 E. H. Burnett, Two Little Pilgrims’ Progress: A Story of the City Beautiful (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1895).
16 A similar interpretation of the Fair can be found in The Adventures of Uncle Jeremiah and Family at the Great Fair by Charles McClellan Stevens (who published it under the pseudonym of Quondam). In this book the character of the title is a Civil War veteran (he fought under General Sherman), a farmer, and a deacon, in short a representative of, and spokesman for, national unity, rural virtue, and piety. Upon his arrival in Chicago he declares he will not buy a guidebook to the Fair because the Bible has already prepared
Front cover, *Two Little Pilgrims Progress: A Story of the City Beautiful*, by Frances Hodgson Burnett.
pears to them as a new *Celestial City*, while the Midway Plaisance suggests a more exotic but considerably milder, less dangerous counterpart to Bunyan’s notorious *Vanity Fair*. As for Chicago, where the children come into contact with the harsh realities of urban squalor, poverty and degradation, the analogy that inevitably comes to mind to anyone familiar with Bunyan’s story is with the *City of Destruction* (i.e. this world) which Christian flees in search of salvation. Like many other works of fiction inspired by the Fair, Burnett’s novel includes detailed descriptions of the buildings, grounds, and exhibits, but more often than not these scenes are transfigured through the eyes of the awe-struck children. Thus, for example, upon entering the area of the White City called the Court of Honor, the children walk

 softly, almost as if they felt themselves treading upon holy ground. To their youth and unworn souls it was like holy ground, they had so dreamed of it, they had so longed for it, it had been so mingled in their minds with the story of a city not of this world. [...]  

It was so white – it was so full of the marvel of color – it was so strange it was so radiant and unearthly in its beauty.

It is only thanks to the deus ex machina-like intervention of a kindly and very wealthy widower, named John Holt, that Robin, Meg, and their friend Ben (a poor, sickly boy they meet in Chicago) can also experience the otherwise unaffordable wonders of the commercially-driven Midway. In addition to taking care of all expenses, Holt significantly takes on the role of protector of the children (he will end up adopting Robin and Meg in the novel’s denouement) during their tour of the Midway. Even though there is nothing really sinister or unsavory about the Midway as recreated by Burnett, it is worth noticing that the children, who can walk freely and safely on their own around the American-made White City, need to be escorted when coming into

---

17 Echoes of the dangers and temptations of Bunyan’s *Vanity Fair* can be heard aplenty in a number of mystery novels which use the Columbian Exposition as their setting, such as: L. L. Lynch [E. Murdoch Van Deventer], *Against Odds: A Detective Story*, in *Fairground Fiction: Detective Stories of the World’s Columbian Exposition*, ed. D. K. Hartman (Kenmore, NY: Motif Press, 1992), 1-252; A. K. Sims [J. H. Whitson], *Chicago Charlie: The Columbian Detective*, in *Fairground Fiction*, 259-433; and J. J. Flinn, *The Mysterious Disappearance of Helen St. Vincent: A Story of the Vanished City* (Chicago: Geo. K. Hazlitt & Co., 1895). With its kaleidoscope of faces, languages, and cultures, the Midway functions in these works as the perfect terrain for confidence men and assorted criminals, as a place that favors deception and disguise and where upright Anglo-Saxons venture at their peril.  

18 Burnett, *Two Little Pilgrims’ Progress*, 95.
contact with foreignness. For all the magical, fairy-tale aura in which Burnett envelops the Otherness of the Midway, the impression remains that its mixture of languages and ethnicities calls for the normative presence of an American adult alongside the children:

“We’ll go now. We will hobnob with Bedouins and Japanese and Turks, and shake hands with Amazons and Indians; we’ll ride on camels and go to the Chinese Theatre. Come along”.

And to this Arabian Nights’ Entertainment he took them all. [...] They rode on camels down a street in Cairo, they talked to chiefs of the desert, they listened to strange music, they heard strange tongues, and tasted strange confections.19

The exemplary quality of the White City is also strongly emphasized in William Dean Howells’s The Letters of an Altrurian Traveler, which appeared serially in The

19 Burnett, Two Little Pilgrims’ Progress, 155-156.
Leonardo Buonomo

_Cosmopolitan_ in 1893-1894. A supplement to Howells's utopian novel _A Traveler from Altruria_ (serialized in 1892-1893, published as a book in 1894), _Letters_ gives us access to the descriptions and comments on American life that Aristides Homos, the “traveler” of the title, sends to his friend Cyril back home. Based, as its name suggests, on the spirit of altruism, the society to which Homos and Cyril belong was intended by Howells both as a model that the United States should strive to emulate and a device by which to set in bold relief, and denounce, the growing social inequality he saw around him. In his second letter to Cyril, Homos tells of his visit to the World’s Columbian Exposition which Howells himself, personally invited by Daniel Burnham, had seen in September, 1893. As the Altrurian’s letter eloquently testifies, Howells had been deeply impressed by the White City, which seemed to him the perfect example of what America could achieve if, for a change, the common good prevailed over selfishness, competitiveness, and purely economic concerns. With its elegant neoclassical buildings, the White City evoked the nation’s capital and the promise of perfect democracy on which the United States had been founded, a promise whose fulfillment in Howells’s time seemed to recede further and further into the distance.

Since Howells had conceived of Altruria as the ideal to which America should aspire, or as an alternative America, i.e. America as it was meant to be, it comes as no surprise that the prevailing feeling that Aristides Homos conveys in his letter is the pleasure of recognition. In the White City he feels at home because it is as if a piece of Altruria had been magically transported to Chicago, the metropolis that seemed to be well on its way to matching, and perhaps even surpassing, New York as the epitome of America’s ruthless capitalism. What made the creation of the White City an extraordinarily significant event in American history was that “for the first time in their pitiless economic struggle, [...] commercial interests submitted to the arts, and lent themselves as frankly to the work as if there had never been a question of money in the world”. Admittedly, as James Gilbert has pointed out, “Howells could conclude that the White City was unblemished by commercialism only by referring to the exteriors of buildings, for inside the grand plaster buildings were thousands of commercial exhibits”. As seen from Howells’s selective angle of vision, however, the White City owed its pristine beauty to the generous, lofty spirit in which it had been conceived and erected. It was that spirit which rendered

22 In a similar vein, Howells’s friend Hamlin Garland wrote in _Crumbling Idols_ that “the Columbian Exposition has taught [Chicago] her own capabilities in something higher than business”. H. Garland, _Crumbling Idols_ (Chicago: Stone & Kimball, 1894), 152.
24 Gilbert, _Perfect Cities_, 93-94.
it far superior to the surrounding buildings representing the various American states and a number of foreign countries. Designed for narrower motives, namely to bespeak local or national pride, these structures could at best aspire to the title of “picturesque”.\textsuperscript{25} If the White City was Altruria writ small, or the ideal America, the Midway Plaisance, where “everything must be paid for”, was perfectly in tune with America as it really was, for there one could see “the competitive life of the present epoch”.\textsuperscript{26} Subverting the widespread belief in Western and, more specifically, American superiority over other cultures, a belief which in many ways informed the World’s Columbian Exposition, Howells suggested that the American model might be a corrupting influence:

You strike at once here the hard level of the outside western world; and the Orient, which has mainly peopled the Plaisance, with its theaters and restaurants and shops, takes the tint of the American enterprise, and puts on somewhat the manners of the ordinary American hustler.\textsuperscript{27}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{25} Howells, \textit{Letters}, 32.
\textsuperscript{26} Howells, \textit{Letters}, 24.
\textsuperscript{27} Howells, \textit{Letters}, 24.
\end{flushleft}
The contrast between the White City and the Midway, and the fact that Chicago had proved to be a happy, if highly unlikely, choice as the site for the Exposition (winning over New York, Washington, and St. Louis), are also very prominent in Clara Louise Burnham's *Sweet Clover: A Romance of the White City* (1894). Chicago, then the American capital of the meat packing business, “had a reputation for vulgarity, crudeness, and commercialism that made something like the White City (in the very denial of these qualities) almost inevitable”. This reputation lent itself to an interpretation of the Fair in metaphorical terms, as did the tremendous achievement of its creators, most notably Daniel Burnham and Frederick Law Olmsted, who had managed to build a fairy-tale city on a stretch of scraggly and swampy ground on the shores of Lake Michigan (“the White City rose like a perfect superb lily from its defiling mud”). Like Burnett, Burnham drew upon *The Pilgrim's Progress* to describe the impact that the White City had on visitors: “It was with reverence and a species of awe that Van Tassel gazed about him. The Court of Honor had given him his first approach to a realization of the possibilities of the Celestial City”. Tellingly, she used the character of a strict and pious New England spinster named Miss Berry, a living link to America's Puritan heritage, to drive home the dual nature of the Fair. As Miss Berry puts it:

That Midway is just a representation of matter, and this great White City is an emblem of mind. In the Midway it's some dirty and all barbaric. It deafens you with noise; the worst folks in there are avaricious and bad, and the best are just children in their ignorance, [...] and when you come out o’ that mile-long babel where you've been elbowed and cheated, you pass under a bridge – and all of a sudden you are in a great, beautiful silence. The angels on the Woman's Buildin’ smile down and bless you, and you know that in what seemed like one step, you've passed out o’ darkness into light. [...] perhaps dyin' is going to be somethin' like crossin' the dividin' line that separates the Midway from the White City.

As the representative of an older, simpler America, Miss Berry perfectly embodies a type that can be found in several works about the Fair, both fictional and non-fictional. Hers is the voice and point of view of small-town, rural, insular America that Burnham

---

30 Burnham, *Sweet Clover*, 152.
and other American writers confronted with the exoticism of the Midway primarily as a way to poke gentle fun at the parochialism of a vast part of their country. Thus Miss Berry, referring generically to the “naked savages” she has seen in the Midway, argues that the only constructive way in which she could interact with them would be to “go into that Pleasance [sic] with plenty o’ hot water and Castile soap, and some sensible clothes [to help] those poor critters to a more godly way o’ livin’”.\textsuperscript{36} It takes one of the most ambitious, intercultural events hosted in the White City, the World’s Parliament of Religions of September, 1893, to shake her previously adamant beliefs in the superiority of Western (more specifically, Anglo-Saxon) culture and Christianity (more specifically, Protestantism). Calling attention to the educational, enlightening influence that the White City could exercise on its visitors, Burnham notes that Miss Berry, a devout attendant of the interreligious congress, “was one of thousands whose complacent generalization of ‘the heathen’ received a blow”.\textsuperscript{35}

Both the White City and the Midway offer precious insights to the attentive observer in Julian Hawthorne’s \textit{Humors of the Fair} (1893). Hosting an unprecedentedly large gathering of Americans of different provenances and backgrounds, the Columbian Exposition represented an ideal field of investigation for the student of the national character. Hawthorne thought that his fellow countrymen were no less on display at the Fair than the foreign delegations which, in various ways and in different parts of the Exposition, were expected to epitomize their respective nations: “It occurs to me that We, The Visitors, are not the least interesting part of the World’s Fair. We are the People”.\textsuperscript{36} In addition, he suggested that the proximity of American and Foreign made all the more conspicuous what he regarded as the distinctive traits of the former. The multicultural spectacle that, however objectionably, the Exposition certainly provided, prompted Hawthorne to ponder on America’s own diversity which was becoming increasingly noticeable with the growing immigration of the early 1890s:

Well, we are a remarkable sight. We are not a homogeneous lot, by any means. The country has engulfed more than it has as yet been able to digest; but it has nevertheless set its stamp on all of them; you see they are all Americans. There is no American type of face and figure, as there is a French type, and an English and a German; but there is an American look, and an American manner, and an American language and way of speaking; the rest may or may not come in time.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{34} Burnham, \textit{Sweet Clover}, 200.
\textsuperscript{35} Burnham, \textit{Sweet Clover}, 395.
\textsuperscript{36} Hawthorne, \textit{Humors of the Fair}, 34.
\textsuperscript{37} Hawthorne, \textit{Humors of the Fair}, 34-35.
What united the different American faces that met Hawthorne’s gaze at the Fair was more than anything else an attitude, a way of confronting the world that evinced democratic, republican self-confidence. And one of the great merits of the Columbian Exposition, in his view, was that it had made this defining national trait more conspicuous than ever. Even though *Humors of the Fair* contains its fair share of blatantly racist remarks leveled at those who, in the language of the time, belonged to the dark races, its author is, significantly, at his most dismissive when he mentions the American upper classes. Given the egalitarian vocation of the United States, the upper crust of American society appeared to Hawthorne as the real Other at the Fair, the one truly foreign presence which was really incongruous there:

Fine Society [...] has no real power or place in America whatever; it is a grotesque exotic, and having no roots, it will presently wilt and be improved out of the way. The United States consists of the common people, and will be governed by it; they (the people) make it, own it, and will run it, as this Fair amply demonstrates.\(^\text{38}\)

Like many of his contemporaries who wrote about the foreigners on display along the Midway, Hawthorne never questioned the authenticity of the various ethnic villages or of the Street of Cairo (“Cairo Street… [is] the veritable Cairo in concentrated form”),\(^\text{39}\) nor did he have any qualms about the ethics of having people perform their culture for the entertainment of their hosts (“The Plaisance… is a Universal Canal, in which the student of Human Nature cannot do better than fish”).\(^\text{40}\) His comments are also fairly representative in the way they rank foreign nationals, singling out for appreciation the Javanese, while reserving the most offensive observations for the people of the African Kingdom of Dahomey (now Benin). Interestingly enough, he mentioned with approbation the growing acquaintance between Americans and foreigners that the Fair promoted (at a time when social interaction between whites and non-whites in the United States was very limited) and was willing to admit that the comparison between local and foreigner was not always in favor of the former:

It must be confessed that in grace, adaptability and courtesy, and generally in dignity and self-possession, the Orientals have the better of us. They catch our style much quicker than we do theirs. At the same time they do not fall into the mistake of surrendering their own individuality.\(^\text{41}\)

\(^{38}\) Hawthorne, *Humors of the Fair*, 40 (emphasis added).

\(^{39}\) Hawthorne, *Humors of the Fair*, 185.

\(^{40}\) Hawthorne, *Humors of the Fair*, 156.

\(^{41}\) Hawthorne, *Humors of the Fair*, 154.
The *authenticity* of the Javanese village derived, in Hawthorne’s view, even more from the bearing of its inhabitants than from the accuracy with which their dwellings and customs had been recreated at the Fair. It stemmed from their ability to behave as if they were indeed back in their own country, secure in the comfort of age-old gestures and practices and seemingly impervious to the intrusive, sometimes downright uncouth scrutiny of the Americans. Inasmuch as the latter inevitably became themselves objects of observation within the great cosmopolitan spectacle of the Fair, they seemed to Hawthorne to suffer by comparison with the Javanese:

the inhabitants carry on their fairy handicrafts, with as absolute a composure and unconsciousness of observation as if they were in solitude on the other side of the planet, instead of being the cynosure of innumerable American stares. This self-possession, genuine and not assumed, is a touch beyond anything we could accomplish in that direction; we are always self-conscious when we are being stared at, and we show it. The Javanese can give us lessons in this, and in other points of dignity and good manners besides.

Hawthorne was not alone in thinking that his fellow Americans should be encouraged to abandon, or at least reconsider, their assumptions about themselves and the foreigners with whom they came into contact at the Fair. In a series of newspaper articles about the Columbian Exposition, which originally appeared in 1893 and were published in book form in 1895 as *White City Chips*, Teresa Dean called attention to the crucial question of point of view. Interestingly enough, she chose the reactions of American spectators to some of the ethnic dances performed at the Midway as an example of deplorable cultural rigidity. Describing the exhibition of the Algerian dancers, for example, she noted that it was “as much of a study to watch the people who attend it as it is to watch the dancers”.

The study of the spectators’ expressions (both facial and verbal) during and after the show plainly revealed that most of them had “great difficulty in understanding that they must view the performance from the standpoint of the customs of a very foreign country”. Judging on the basis of American cultural standards of beauty, elegance, and propriety, they inevitably found Algerian dancing “coarse” and indecent. Singling out

---

42 Like Hawthorne, Stevens singled out the Javanese as “the politest people of all”, while he censured the customer-like rudeness and arrogance of his fellow Americans, ranking them even below the Dahomeyans (“the strangest of all” people) in terms of good manners: “But the palm is left to the American for a whole-souled disregard of the feelings of others. The show was brought here for the special benefit of the visitor; he has paid his money, and he has the right to do as he pleases”. Stevens, *Adventures of Uncle Jeremia*, 125, 126.


44 Dean, *White City Chips*, 89.

45 Dean, *White City Chips*, 90.
for censure the indignant response of two “respectable” elderly American ladies, Dean denounced their inconsistent, biased prudishness:

Two women [...] left the theater yesterday with anger written all over them from head to foot. And yet those two women would think nothing of attending burlesque opera, and expressing great admiration for the dainty scarcity of clothing, or the success of the most reckless high kicker.  

Later in the book, telling of one occasion on which she accompanied three American ladies to see the notorious “danse du ventre” at the Egyptian Theater, Dean reminds her readers that

the dances of these people are peculiar to their country, and that the Arabian ideas of grace, refinement and science are not based on the American plan. And it takes an exceedingly generous mind not to view the performances from an American standpoint”.  

Of particular interest to Dean was the presence of Native Americans at the Fair. She was keenly aware of the very peculiar nature of the roles in which they had been cast by the Fair’s organizers. Native Americans inhabited both the White City, as living specimens in the educational exhibits of the ethnological department, and the Midway, where a section had been reserved for them. In addition, they constituted one of the main attractions of the Wild West Show. Displayed as testimonies of North America’s pre-European past and as the local, flesh-and-blood material on which white anthropologists could conduct their research work, they were also grouped together with the foreign villages and settlements, and thus implicitly categorized as other than U.S. citizens. They were simultaneously claimed as part of the American heritage and denied admittance into modern America. Dean became particularly sensitive to their predicament after striking an acquaintance of sorts with a young Apache curiously named Antonio who was helping Frederic Putnam with the ethnological exhibit. Before meeting him, she had been told of his diffidence toward white visitors and the sarcasm to which he had recourse when he became the target of their curiosity:

he feels that he has become to the passing public a representative savage, and that they to him are worse savages than he has ever known before. As I said in yesterday’s column, he has dubbed them the “uncivilized white people”.  

46 Dean, White City Chips, 90.
47 Dean, White City Chips, 156.
48 Dean, White City Chips, 217.
The disfranchised status of Native Americans\textsuperscript{49} or, as she called them, “the first and only true Americans”,\textsuperscript{50} appeared to Dean all the more egregious when compared to that of the mass of needy newcomers who were changing (and not for the better, to judge from her choice of words) the cultural and ethnic makeup of American society:

I looked at Antonio as he sat there with his keen appreciation of all situations and in his high intelligence, and I could not help but think how easy it was for the lowest scum of immigration to come to this country and become voting citizens and yet the rights of such men as he were questioned.\textsuperscript{51}

Like all the writers we have encountered so far, Dean was conspicuously silent about the Exposition’s treatment of another minority: African Americans. That she and the other authors had few opportunities to notice their presence is very likely, for the very good reason that the African American presence was barely visible. Denied any public recognition in the form of a building, an exhibit, or a department, and excluded from all forms of decision-making, organization, and management of the Fair, and even from the ranks of the Columbian Guard (the Fair’s police), African Americans soon realized, to their dismay, that they were being left out of the self-portrait the United States proudly presented to the world. The only, much belated concession that the Exposition’s managers made to the outraged African American community was to set aside August 25\textsuperscript{th}, 1893, for a \textit{Colored Jubilee Day}, a decision that many African Americans found insufferably patronizing and one that only added insult to injury. In order to inform the public of this blatant discrimination, former slave and author Frederick Douglass, together with journalist and social activist Ida B. Wells, launched a fund-raising initiative to pay for the publication of a pamphlet in English, French, German, and Spanish to be distributed freely to the Fair’s visitors.\textsuperscript{52} In his introduction to the pamphlet, titled \textit{The Reason why the Colored American is not in the World’s Columbian Exposition} (1893), Douglass expressed his discomfort at seeing his race represented in the most popular part of the Fair, the Midway, by the Dahomeyan village (recycled from the Paris Exposition

\textsuperscript{49} It was only in 1924 that the American Congress granted citizenship to Native Americans with the Indian Citizenship Act. However, they continued to be denied the right to vote, which was regulated by state law, well into the middle of the century. J. Page, \textit{In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000-Year History of American Indians} (New York: Free Press, 2003), 354.

\textsuperscript{50} Dean, \textit{White City Chips}, 48.

\textsuperscript{51} Dean, \textit{White City Chips}, 219.

of 1889). That presence, in his view, had no other purpose than to confirm widely held beliefs about black inferiority:

[America] has brought to her shores and given welcome to a greater variety of mankind than were ever assembled in one place since the day of Pentecost. Japanese, Javanese, Soudanese, Chinese, Cingalese, Syrians, Persians, Tunisians, Algerians, Egyptians, East Indians, Laplanders, Esquimoux, and as if to shame the Negro, the Dahomians [sic] are also here to exhibit the Negro as a repulsive savage.\(^\text{53}\)

Another contributor to the volume, F. L. Barnett (editor of the black newspaper the Chicago Conservator), was quick to recognize and point out the unintended, sinister implication of the color that characterized the Fair’s most representative buildings:

Theoretically open to all Americans, the Exposition practically is, literally and figuratively, a “White City”, in the building of which the Colored American was allowed no helping hand, and in its glorious success he has no share.\(^\text{54}\)

Emphatic confirmation of this assessment could be found in Frederick Douglass’s own predicament, since he took part in the Fair not as a representative of the United States, but rather as a commissioner for the delegation of Haiti.

Two additional examples of the marginal African American presence at the Fair are also worth mentioning because they are fairly indicative of its racial policies. As Barbara Hochman has aptly reminded us, African Americans were present as characters in the text and illustrations of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s anti-slavery novel Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852),\(^\text{55}\) prominently displayed in the Woman’s Building “to support a self-congratulatory narrative of moral and social progress in U.S. culture”.\(^\text{56}\) Safely framed within an exhibit that consigned the problem of slavery to the past and ignored the terrible racial violence which had never ceased to plague the country after the Civil War, African Americans could be displayed, as it were, as part of a landmark in America’s social and cultural history. No less significant was the participation in the Fair of Nancy Green, a former slave who had been hired by the R. T. Davis Milling Company to bring to life the turbaned mammy figure associated with their pancake mix: Aunt


\(^{55}\) H. B. Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly, ed. E. Ammons (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1993).

Welcoming visitors and making pancakes in a booth shaped like a giant flour barrel, Green presented an image of antebellum, nurturing, jovial, subservient blackness (derived from the tradition of the Minstrel Show) which most white Americans found immensely reassuring and which would remain a powerful popular icon for many years to come. The fact that even though no African American woman had been admitted onto the board of lady managers of the Fair, Aunt Jemima was nevertheless exhibited as the representative of black womanhood, spoke volumes about the image of racial hierarchy that the United States wished to present to the world.

Even though, as we have seen, the authors considered in this essay (and indeed the many others who could have been added to this selection) found in the Fair, and specifically in the White City, an ideal against which they could measure the shortcomings of American society, the majority of them overlooked one of its most glaring flaws: the marginalization of African Americans. It was as if, in harmony with the image that the organizers and creators of the Fair had intended to present to the world, the white American writers who portrayed this event needed to believe in, and sanction, the perfection of its city beautiful. Only as long as it appeared to be free of the defiling influence of the market, the more troubling aspects of industrialization and technology, as well as the pervasiveness of racial discrimination, could the White City function as the emblem of what America could and should become.

---

Elisabetta Bini

**Drawing a Global Color Line:**

**“The American Negro Exhibit” at the 1900 Paris Exposition**

On January 18, 1909, Thomas J. Calloway replied to a letter by W. E. B. Du Bois asking where “The American Negro Exhibit” was being stored, after it had been displayed at the 1900 Paris Exposition and, the following year, at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo and the South Carolina Inter-State and West Indian Exposition in Charleston. Calloway, a long-time friend of Du Bois and Special Agent for the Negro Exhibit in Paris, reported that “practically all of the Paris Exhibit prepared by you is in tact [sic] and is stored in the Library of Congress. It is not displayed there and I am sure that the Librarian will not object to letting you have it”. Du Bois never claimed the exhibit he had worked so hard to organize and arrange, leaving all the material at the Library of Congress, where it had been initially placed by assistant librarian Daniel A. P. Murray, and where it remains to this day.¹

Over the last ten years, scholars have devoted an increased attention to the study of “The American Negro Exhibit”, focusing in particular on its visual language and on Du Bois’s participation in it. This chapter analyzes an aspect that scholars have largely overlooked, namely the relationship between the exhibit and changing forms of African American activism. Drawing on a range of different sources from U.S. as well as French archives, I argue that “The American Negro Exhibit”, or, as it was called in Paris, “L’Exposition des Nègres d’Amerique”, represented a turning point in the history of black political involvement, at a national and transnational level.²


Having been excluded (or heavily marginalized) from the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition and the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition, some of the most prominent African American intellectuals and activists considered the Paris Exposition as a unique opportunity to showcase the progress the black community had made in the U.S. after the end of the Civil War, while also highlighting the emergence of new forms of racism, symbolized by the Black Codes. They assembled hundreds of photographs, charts, graphs and publications to present African Americans’ achievements in the realms of education, industry, politics and literature. Dozens of individuals and institutions contributed by sending material to Calloway, and offering their own specific interpretation of race relations in the U.S. However, the final layout of “The American Negro Exhibit” reflected the leading role Booker T. Washington had acquired among African Americans in the late nineteenth century, and devoted particular attention to black Americans’ hard labor and technical training, rather than to the widespread racism that characterized the American South. In the context of the Paris Exposition, such a view was acceptable – and, indeed, supported – by the U.S. government, which used it as a tool of foreign policy, to promote its newly acquired imperial role.

The Paris Exposition took place at a crucial moment in the history of race relations, as racism and racial segregation were drawing what historians Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds have defined as a “global color line”.3 While the 1896 Supreme Court decision on the Plessy vs. Ferguson case legalized the “separate but equal” doctrine in public facilities, thus legitimizing segregation, racial violence characterized as never before Europe’s colonial conquests of African territories, and the Second Boer War in particular. The process of assembling the material for “The American Negro Exhibit” led many black leaders – and especially Washington and Du Bois – to reflect on changing race relations in the U.S., and their wider international implications. In the Summer of 1900, many of them participated in the First Pan-African Conference, which took place in London, and put together people from Africa, the West Indies and the U.S., and came to believe that “the American South in the age of Jim Crow would shape, for better or for worse, a global color line”.4

“The American Negro Exhibit”, along with the First Pan-African Conference, represented a turning point, and led to a radicalization of black politics, with African American leaders taking different, and increasingly divergent, stances on race relations in the U.S. and globally. On the one hand, Washington and his followers became ever

---


4 A. Zimmermann, Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 64.
more convinced that African Americans’ enfranchisement should be achieved through self-help, education and labor, and that the forms of racial integration promoted in the U.S. by the Tuskegee Institute should serve as a model for African colonies. On the other hand, Du Bois argued that emancipation could only be achieved by recognizing blacks’ civil and political rights and challenging racism globally. For the first time in Paris, he presented his famous statement, “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line”, which he used again in his speech at the First Pan-African Conference and, a few years later, in his book *The Souls of Black Folk*. For Du Bois and other African Americans, Africans and Caribbeans, the Paris Exposition thus became a way of forging new transnational alliances, and laying the stepping stones of Pan-Africanism.5

I. *LE BILAN D’UN SIÈCLE*

The 1900 Paris Exposition represented one of the greatest events of its time, in terms of the variety of its pavilions, the number of its visitors not only from France and Europe but from around the world, and its impact on public opinion. It was organized just as the nineteenth century was coming to an end, and aimed at celebrating the technological, social and economic success that had characterized the previous hundred years, while at the same time announcing a new century of progress (not surprisingly, its motto was “le bilan d’un siècle”). As Richard D. Mandell has argued, it took place “in a time that still had faith in optimistic and philosophical systems, hopes for social reform, joy in expanding material wealth, and confidence in the moral benefits of art”.6 The Exposition radically transformed the city of Paris, from an architectural and urban point of view, as it led to the building of new museums, bridges and train stations (the Pont Alexander III, the Grand Palais and the Petit Palais, the Gare d’Orsay and the Gare de Lyon, just to name a few). It stayed open for six months, between April and November 1900, and was visited by over forty-eight million visitors, more than any other previous World Exposition. Among them there were members of the middle classes, students, workers, trade union delegations, and people from the colonies.7

---


Drawing of the 1900 Paris Exposition.
Compared to the 1889 Paris Exposition and even the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition, in 1900 colonies figured much more prominently in the general layout, as well as in the different activities organized for the public. As in the past, colonies were assigned a separate area, across the Seine from the Eiffel Tower, signaling a physical, social and cultural separateness. Whereas French colonies occupied half the grounds – with Algeria playing a central place at the entrance of the area –, the other half included colonies belonging to other European nations. More than four hundred people from Africa and Asia were brought to Paris first to build and decorate the pavilions, then to pose “as residents and merchants in the reconstructed villages and bazaars”. By displaying goods and people from the colonies, the pavilions aimed at celebrating the richness of Asian and, to a lesser degree, African architecture and, most importantly, the civilizing effects of French and British policies and the economic importance of colonial possessions. At the same time, they allowed visitors to engage in the exotic experience of taking a stroll through an “Oriental” village and stopping in a café or restaurant to eat “a strange mixture of French and native cookery, which possesses the charm of novelty”, as one guide put it.

The U.S. considered its participation in the Paris Exposition to be particularly relevant. Most members of the U.S. Commission had been involved in organizing the Chicago Columbian Exposition just a few years earlier. These included Special Commissioner Moses P. Handy, General Commissioner Ferdinand Peck, and Commissioner Bertha H. Palmer, who in Chicago had organized the Women’s Building and, as the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs put it, was “d’origine française, [… et] par son mariage attelée à la famille du President Grant, occupe aux États-Unis une situation des plus marquantes”. The U.S. had played a marginal role at the 1889 Paris Exposition and, having become an economic and imperial power (after the Spanish-American war of 1898), wanted to be recognized as a member of the most important nations of the world. As Handy put it, “The industrial progress of the United States and the evolution of its material resources during the hundred years which the Exposition is to crown have


11 Ministère des Affaires étrangères to Ministre du Commerce, 30 April 1900. AN, F/12/4229.
been unequaled by that of any other nation. It is not too much to say that the United States now stands the greatest nation of the world in all the great lines of industry”.  

In Paris, the U.S. was eager to showcase its achievements in agriculture, mining and industry, as well as in the fine arts and sciences. Accordingly, the funding provided by the government was four times that of the 1889 Paris Exposition. In 1897, President William McKinley urged Congress and the Senate to approve the U.S. participation at the Exposition, as a response to the “wish and expectation of our investors and producers that they may have adequate opportunity again, as in the past, to fortify the important positions they have won in the world’s competitive fields of discovery and industry”. The aim was to offer “proof to the world of American greatness”, while also establishing ties with new potential markets, at a time when Europe was becoming increasingly important, as an outlet for American production. McCormick Harvesting Machines Company, whose products had conquered the American West and were making inroads into Russia and Italy, as well as South Africa, for instance, was at the forefront of U.S. displays.

Despite its prowess, the U.S. struggled to establish its position at the Paris Exposition. The location of its building, and its main features, became a matter of controversy between the Americans and the French. During his first visit to Paris in 1897, Handy protested that “the space [...] reserved for the United States was very little more than that awarded us in 1889”, and made it clear to the organizers that the U.S. needed an area “commensurate with the dignity and importance of the country, and adjoining in every case countries of the first rank”. The U.S. demanded a larger ground and, most importantly, that its building be placed on the Seine rather than behind other pavilions. The American sense of inadequacy, of being a late-comer, was clear in the “proportions grandioses” it assigned to its main building. As Alfred Picard, Commissaire Général of the Paris Exposition, lamented,

notions avons accepté, non sans quelque hésitations, les proportions grandioses que vous avez tenu à donner à votre Palais. [...] la façade de votre porche se détache en vigueur sur la ligne des Palais étrangers [...] on ne rencontre en réalité aucun point

---

13 *Message from the President of the United States*, 14 April 1897. AN, F/12/4229.  
d'où ce porche et le dome élevé qui le surmonte n'apparaissent d'une manière prépondérante.\textsuperscript{17}

The U.S.’s new imperial dimension played a particularly important part in shaping the image the nation wanted to present. In Paris, the U.S. showcased its recent annexations – Cuba and Hawaii – by exhibiting their products and artifacts in the Trocadéro, and repeatedly pointed out that they did not constitute colonies, and were thus not to be placed across the Seine. Significantly, the American Commissioners kept silent on the Philippines, where the U.S. was fighting a particularly vicious, and racist, war against its only colony.\textsuperscript{18}

II. “The American Negro Exhibit”

The initial budget approved by the U.S. Congress for the Paris Exposition did not include any funds for African Americans. Such decision immediately became the object of debate, since blacks aimed at securing their presence and participation at such an important venue. Indeed, after having been excluded from the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, African American intellectuals and activists lobbied to have a voice in fairs and exhibitions. While the U.S. government assigned them a “Department of Colored Exhibits” at the 1884-1885 World’s Cotton Exhibition in New Orleans, blacks were entirely absent from the National Board of Commissioners in charge of organizing the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, although they were ultimately able to secure the presence of one African American, Hale Parker, as a member of the Missouri delegation.\textsuperscript{19}

For many African Americans, participating in the Expositions had a profound political meaning, and went hand in hand with the forms of enfranchisement achieved after the end of the Civil War. Blacks sought representation in the Board of Commissioners, as they did in the public and political realm. During the Columbian Exposition, some of


\textsuperscript{19} C. R. Reed, \textit{All the World is Here! The Black Presence at White City} (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002); M. O. Wilson, \textit{Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).
the most important African American leaders – including Frederick Douglass and Ida B. Wells - wrote a short pamphlet, *The Reason why the Colored American is not in the World's Columbian Exposition*, which highlighted the contribution blacks had made to American progress and civilization. Douglass, in particular, denounced the forms of racism that existed in the U.S., symbolized by lynching in the South, and pointed out that they represented a challenge to the rhetoric of progress so prevalent throughout the pavilions. The pamphlet also critiqued the demeaning representations of Africans – embodied by the presence of Dahomeyans – that characterized the “native villages” in the Midway Plaisance. African Americans thus questioned the hierarchical opposition, so typical of Social Darwinism, between white and black, civilization and savagery, as well as the representation of African men as emasculated (or ungendered) and, thus, uncivilized.  

In order to avoid the controversies that had accompanied the Columbian Exposition, the organizers of the 1895 Atlanta Cotton States Exposition and Nashville’s Centennial Exposition assigned Washington and other African American leaders the task of raising funds, while at the same time allowing blacks to have their own exhibits in a separate Negro Building. It was in the context of the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition that Washington established his position as a leader acceptable to conservative whites, with his famous “Atlanta Compromise” speech, delivered at the opening ceremony, in which he argued that blacks and whites should “be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress”. Washington encouraged African Americans to focus on achieving technical skills through work and education and establish their economic position, thus laying the foundations for their future civil and political equality with whites.  

---


The “Atlanta Compromise” speech received immediate international attention, while Washington increasingly linked his interpretation of race relations in the U.S. to wider global transformations. In the late 1890s, he started presenting the South as a model of racial adjustment and African Americans “as an elite group that could bring ‘civilization’ and an aptitude for hard work to nonwhites anywhere”. He supported the presence of African Americans in the U.S. Army fighting the Spanish American war, and promoted the idea that blacks trained at the Tuskegee Institute could become a select class of skilled workers capable of “uplifting” colonized people.

Washington came to represent someone the U.S. government could trust to showcase American race relations internationally. In 1898, the National Education Association Advisory Board asked him to join the U.S. Commission in charge of selecting the exhibits to be shown at the 1900 Paris Exposition. During a trip he took to Europe in the Summer of 1899, Washington met with Auguste Laugel, a professor at the École Polytechnique, a strong supporter of abolitionism, and a commissioner for the Exposition. The links he established across the Atlantic were crucial in securing a presence for African Americans in Paris, given the fact that Laugel was “deeply interested in all that concerns the colored race and America”.

For the U.S. government, the exhibit became a tool of foreign policy, showing the progress made by African Americans, and “silenc[ing] criticism of America’s presence in the Philippines, Cuba, and other nations where there were dark-skinned people”.

When the time came to lobby for participation in the 1900 Paris Exposition, Thomas J. Calloway, a black lawyer who had already served as a state commissioner during the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition, made sure to ask Washington – a former colleague of his at Tuskegee Institute - to send a letter to Congress, in order to assure some funding. In his proposal, Calloway used a language that could be shared by many Congressmen, and argued that the race relations introduced in the South after Reconstruction could become a model for European colonies in Africa:

> Since most of the countries of Europe are now engaged in colonizing Africa, it is the opportunity of the United States to show the lines upon which it is attempting racial adjustment. To the statecraft of Europe the ‘Negro Problem’ is destined


to become a burning reality in their African colonies, and it is our privilege to
furnish them the best evidence at hand to prove that the only solution that will
ever succeed is that of an equal chance in the race of life without regard to “color,
race or previous condition”.26

Washington sent a letter to McKinley asking for “a separate educational exhibit
representing the progress of the Negro race”, and suggested that Calloway be nominated
as its organizer. In January 1900, just a few months before the opening of the Exposition,
Congress approved $15,000 (on a budget of $919,600) for what would become “The
American Negro Exhibit”, the first exhibit about African Americans to be shown outside
the U.S. Based on a recommendation by Washington himself, the U.S. Department
of Education and Social Economy assigned Calloway the task of “compiling data and
collecting material for an exhibit on the progress of the American negroes in education
and industry”.27 The display was to be placed in the Palace of Social Economy, the
first of its kind in an international exposition, devoted to “social economy, hygiene
and organized charities”. As one guide put it, in the Palace “many important questions
[would] be settled”,28 such as wages, child labor, labor regulations, “institutions for the
intellectual and moral development of workmen”, and hygiene.29

Physically, as well as culturally, “The American Negro Exhibit” was located far
away from the “African villages” that characterized the colonial section and offered a
degrading representation of blacks.30 For the U.S. government, as well as for African
Americans, blacks were to be presented alongside working class associations, using the
language of social reform that characterized many associations at the time. Indeed,
many people who were involved in defining the politics of the Progressive Era in the
U.S. viewed the Paris Exposition as a way of promoting their activities, and engaging
in what was already a transatlantic dialog among social reformers. The jury for social
economy included, besides W. H. Tolman, Secretary of the League for Social Service,
and Westel F. Willoughby, Head of the Bureau in the Labor Department, also Jane
Addams, who at the time was involved in running Hull House, the first settlement house

26 Reprinted in The Appeal, 13 October 1900.
28 A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to Paris, xxvi.
29 Handy, Report of the Special Commissioner, 10-11.
30 For an analysis of the forms of disciplinary power associated with expositions: T. Bennett, “The
in the U.S., and was also a delegate to the International Women’s Congress in Paris.\textsuperscript{31} The French Ministry of Commerce and Industry received hundreds of applications from American organizations, such as the Tenement House Committee of New York, the New York League for Social Service, the Young Women’s Christian Association, the Massachusetts Temporary Home for Working Mothers, and the American Federation of Labor, just to name a few.\textsuperscript{32}

The exhibits shown in the Palace of Social Economy were profoundly different from those of the rest of the Paris Exposition. While most of them emphasized the technological achievements of the nineteenth century, or offered visitors the possibility of living an exotic experience and escaping from everyday life, social reformers adopted the rather dry language of sociology, statistics and photography to document both the progress and continued problems of the working classes, women and African Americans. The use of massive amounts of statistics, graphs and photographs might have drawn the visitor away from actually engaging with the field of social economy. As Tolman put it,

\begin{quote}
The value of the [Social Economy] exhibit would have been very greatly enhanced if it could have been made more self-explanatory [...] Business men strive to make their exhibits attractive and interesting, well knowing the advertising value of these characteristics. In the same way, similar care should be shown in the Department of Social Economy.\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

Nonetheless, the organizers considered the exhibits to be a success, since, “while social economy is no new science, its application and interpretation have received great development within the last decade”.\textsuperscript{34} While they remained accessible only to an elite of people involved in social reform, they had the important effect of consolidating a transatlantic and, increasingly, transnational discussion about labor, race and gender.\textsuperscript{35}

The U.S. had a room of about ten square meters at its disposal and selected its exhibits very carefully, “cramm[ing] into their [...] space a larger stock of material than

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{31} Liste des jurés proposés par les Etats-Unis, n.d., AN, F/12/4229; Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World’s Fairs, eds. T. J. Boisseai and A. M. Markwyn (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010).
\bibitem{32} AN, F/12/4236.
\bibitem{34} Tolman, “Social Economics in the Paris Exposition”, 315-316.
\end{thebibliography}
Interior of “The American Negro Exhibit”.

Elisabetta Bini
in any display but France’s itself”. It chose material from the Department of Labor, documenting pension and factory inspection systems and labor unions, from the League for Social Service, and placed several models of New York’s tenement houses, promoted by the Tenement House Committee, at the center of the room.

Calloway’s call for participation was met with great enthusiasm. Six black universities – Fisk University, Howard University, the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, Shaw University, the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, and the Haines Industrial Institute – sent material concerning the education of African Americans. Daniel Murray, a librarian at the Library of Congress, compiled a list of books and pamphlets written by African Americans and tried, as he himself put it, “to secure a copy of every book and pamphlet in existence, by a Negro Author, the same to be used in connection with the Exhibit of Negro Authorship at the Paris Exposition of 1900, and later placed at the Library of Congress”. Andrew F. Hilyer, of the National Negro Business League, made a list of all the businesses owned by African Americans in the South for a “Collective Exhibit of Negroes in Merchandise, Factories, and Allied Occupations”. Du Bois “prepare[d] a statistical display of sociological work”, based on his recent publication, The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study. The exhibit received fifteen different prizes, including a Grand Prize, gold medals for Calloway and Du Bois, and for the Tuskegee Institute, and a silver medal for Washington’s monograph, The Education of the Negro. The meaning of the exhibit was summarized in one article, which pointed out that the display showed “to what extent colored men became thinkers and scholars in days when it was a crime to teach negroes to read and write”, a tradition that had a long history in the black diaspora.

“The American Negro Exhibit” occupied one corner of the room and displayed a wealth of material about African Americans’ achievements in the U.S. since the end of the Civil War, in education, occupation, business and culture, and presented “a general sociological study of the racial conditions in the United States”. Its aim was to challenge the most common stereotypes about blacks, and some of the main arguments used to

36 Rodgers, Atlantic Crossings, 15.
Elisabetta Bini

justify lynching and the denial of political, economic and social rights to blacks. In a
tletter he sent to Washington, Calloway emphasized the urgency of the matter,

While I deplore as deeply as any other member of my race the matter of drawing
the color line at any time where it is not already drawn by the other race, there
are times, and this is one, when we owe it to ourselves to go before the world
as Negroses. Every one who knows about public opinion in Europe will tell you
that the Europeans think us a mass of rapists, ready to attack every white woman
exposed, and a drug in civilized society [...] How shall we answer these slanders?
Our newspapers they do not subscribe for, if we publish books they do not buy
them, if we lecture they do not attend. To the Paris Exposition, however, thousands
upon thousands of them will go and a well selected and prepared exhibit [...] will
attract attention [...] and do a great and lasting good in convincing thinking
people of the possibilities of the Negro.41

It should come as no surprise that the organizers of “The American Negro Exhibit”
attributed such an important role to photography. In the late nineteenth century,
watching people being lynched and “looking at the pain of others” was part and parcel
of building a society that revolved around racism, sexism and violence. Thousands of
photographs and postcards of lynched men were distributed across the South and became
part of many people’s everyday lives, just like images of mutilated people became part
of Europeans’ support for colonialism.42 In the many conferences Ida B. Wells held in
England at the turn of the nineteenth century, photographs of lynched men played a
prominent role. They were used to draw the attention of international public opinion
to the violence that characterized the American South, and encourage support for an
anti-lynching law in the U.S.43

Calloway put together hundreds of photos – displayed in swinging panels – taken by
African American professional photographers, who were opening their studios in many
cities of the South, and aimed at offering a different image of the black community,
one that challenged existing stereotypes. Most of the pictures exhibited in Paris were
shot by Thomas Askew, a photographer from Atlanta, who was closely linked to the
city’s growing black middle class. In order to document African Americans’ lives and
achievements in the South, Calloway hired Harry Shepherd, who had been the first black

41 Harlan, The Booker T. Washington Papers, 226-227; M. Hodes, White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex
42 D. Apel and S. M. Smith, Lynching Photographs (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007);
Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America, ed. J. Allen (Santa Fe: Twin Palms Publishers, 2000);
43 Ida B. Wells published some of these pictures in Southern Horror: Lynch Law in all Its Phases (New
York: The New York Age Print, 1892).
Drawing a Global Color Line

photographer to open a studio in St. Paul, Minnesota. Between February and March, 1900, Shepherd traveled with Calloway and shot hundreds of pictures of black colleges and universities (including the Tuskegee Institute) in Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina and Tennessee, and used his trip to organize blacks against racial segregation. The pictures of the Hampton Institute, on the other hand, were taken by Frances Benjamin Johnston, one of the first female photojournalists, who had also worked for the White House covering the Spanish-American war. She was present in Paris as delegate to the International Congress of Photography, and organized an exhibit of images taken by other female photographers.

“The American Negro Exhibit” was characterized by a multiplicity of different, and sometimes contrasting, interpretations of race relations in the U.S. However, its final layout reflected the preeminence Washington had acquired not only among African Americans but also in high political circles. As Marcus Bruce has argued, “Washington viewed the American Negro Exhibit to the Paris Exposition of 1900 as one more opportunity to broadcast and publicize the work of Tuskegee and confirm his status as the preeminent African American leader of the nation”. Not only was his portrait hung at the very top and center of the displays (while a small statue of Frederick Douglass was placed on one side), but most of the photographs presented emphasized African Americans’ achievements in education and business, rather than highlighting racial tensions.

“The American Negro Exhibit” placed particular emphasis on the experiences of the so-called New Negroes, which were so crucial to Washington’s understanding of race relations. The exhibit aimed at building what historian Deborah Willis has called “a New Negro visual aesthetic”, which revolved around young blacks who were establishing their position as middle class, respectable, men and women in the decades following the Civil War. The photographs never represented poverty, or even the experience


47 Willis, “The Sociologist’s Eye”, 53.
of slavery, and focused instead on African Americans’ success in the South. Many of them portrayed leaders of the black community, such as Reverend Henry Hugh Proctor, minister of Atlanta’s First Congregational Church; others focused on skilled workers’ lives in factories owned by African Americans, such as the Coleman Manufacturing Company; still others emphasized women’s role as teachers. As Miles Everett Travis has convincingly argued, with few exceptions the images portrayed blacks as groups of students and laborers, capable of establishing their success and becoming members of American society through hard work and discipline, rather than individuals who had the right to be enfranchised.  

A different image of race relations in the U.S. came out of the material arranged by Du Bois, one that contested Washington’s interpretation. Du Bois had known Calloway for many years, since the two had studied together at Fisk University, where they had directed *The Fisk Herald*, the first African American university newspaper. After having earned his doctorate at Harvard University, Du Bois had devoted most of his time to the sociological study of blacks, first in Philadelphia, then in the South. Once he joined the faculty at Atlanta University, he surrounded himself of students interested in examining the condition of African Americans in Georgia. Du Bois considered his participation at the Paris Exposition to be momentous. As he later stated,

> In 1900 came a significant occurrence which not until lately have I set in its proper place in my life. I had been for over nine years studying the American Negro problem [...] I wanted to set down its aim and methods in some outstanding way which could bring my work to the notice of the thinking world. The Great World’s Fair at Paris was being planned and I thought I might put my findings into plans, charts and figures, so one might see what we were trying to accomplish.  

By the time he participated in organizing “The American Negro Exhibit”, Du Bois had started developing his theory of black nationalism, based on the richness of African American and, indeed, Pan-African culture. He had not yet broken away from Washington, and both shared the idea that economic independence was crucial in assuring African Americans’ emancipation. However, Du Bois increasingly critiqued the notion that blacks should be absorbed into a superior white culture, and emphasized the idea that blackness should be desirable and a source of pride, rather than self-hatred. In

---


his famous 1897 essay *The Conservation of the Races*, he called on the need to promote “a Negro School of literature and art”, one that, as Sterling Stuckey has argued, would be “independent of European values and enabling black writers and artists to contribute to the liberation of their people”.\(^{50}\) He was also developing the idea that black nationalism should be guided by what a few years later he called the Talented Tenth.\(^{51}\)

The process of assembling the exhibit, and deciding how to represent African Americans to an international audience, led Du Bois to think in new ways about the question of race in the U.S. and globally. In one section, he presented the results of his research on African Americans in Georgia, which followed in the footsteps of his previous work, *The Philadelphia Negro*. Du Bois received $2,500 from Calloway and, with the help of several students and research assistants, spent five months collecting hundreds of photographs and statistics that could document African Americans lives’ in a state that he considered to be particularly representative of the American South. In Paris, he displayed dozens of graphs and charts that showed the rates of illiteracy among blacks, their marital status, their employment, along with hundreds of portraits of African Americans. Among the material presented, the public could also find a copy of the Black Code of Georgia, a symbol of the forms of African American disenfranchisement that had followed the Reconstruction period.\(^{52}\)

One of Du Bois’s aims was to blur the color line by demonstrating “that differences between races were insignificant or due to factors other than inherent racial deficiencies”. He did so by comparing African Americans with Europeans, or by challenging racist views about blacks. In one of the charts, for instance, he presented the African American population side by side with that of several European countries, thus allowing visitors “to personalize the black experience”.\(^{53}\) In other charts, he showed how illiteracy among black Americans was lower than that of several European countries, such as Russia, and compared marital status in the U.S. to that in Germany or France. By doing so, he was not only able to catch the public’s attention, but challenged the very notion of racial differences and hierarchies.

---


\(^{51}\) “The Song of Smoke”, *Horizon*, 1899; *Sulla linea del colore. Razzia e democrazia negli Stati Uniti e nel mondo*, a c. di S. Mezzadra (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010).


In this respect, Du Bois’s use of photographs was particularly effective, and allowed him to develop his interpretation of race as a “double consciousness”, which he later defined in *The Souls of Black Folk* as that “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others”. As Shawn Michelle Smith has pointed out, many of the pictures assembled by Du Bois replicated mug shots, while at the same time drawing on the iconographic language of middle class family portraits. They questioned the forms of surveillance carried out against African Americans, and questioned the divide between black criminality and white respectability. Furthermore, many of the images challenged the idea that there existed a clear-cut separation between blacks and whites, by showing bi-racial subjects, or subjects that could not be easily classified as belonging to one race or the other. By displaying such images, Du Bois refused the forms of segregation that followed the Plessy v. Ferguson case, and invited the public to “critically engag[e] in the visual and psychological dynamics of ‘race’ at the turn of the century”.

He introduced his exhibit with the image of the African slave trade, described with the following words: “This case is devoted to a series of charts, maps and other devices designed to illustrate the development of the American Negro in a single typical state of the United States”. Just below the caption, Du Bois inserted his famous statement, “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line”, which he used again during his speech at the First Pan-African Conference, and then published a few years later in *The Souls of Black Folk*. In Paris, and later London, Du Bois advanced a new interpretation of race relations, which emerged in the context of American segregation, but was fully developed through his participation in “The American Negro Exhibit” and at the First Pan-African Conference.

### III. From Paris to London and back

Despite the fact that “The American Negro Exhibit” won several important prizes, it was largely ignored by the American as well as by the French press. The main French newspapers, such as *Le Figaro* and *Le Petit Parisien*, did not even mention it, while *The New York Times* and *The New York Herald* referred to it only in passing. The same was true about the numerous guidebooks published for travelers visiting the Exposition from the U.S., Great Britain and other European countries, which devoted only scant

---

attention to the Building of Social Economy. This was partly a result of the location of the exhibit. If one looks at the general layout of the Paris Exposition, “The American Negro Exhibit” occupied a marginal space and a small one even inside the Building of Social Economy. While we do not have any information about the number of visitors that went to see the exhibit, it is very likely that most of them were more interested in admiring the wonders of electricity, manufactured goods, and the exoticism of the colonies, than the statistics, books and photographs presented in such great numbers by African Americans.

Maybe most importantly, the framework of the Paris Exposition did not allow much space for social and political conflict, since its main aim was to celebrate the progress of the nineteenth century and, in the case of “The American Negro Exhibit”, of the U.S. as a powerful nation. Unlike (white) women, who had their own pavilion in which to host meetings (including one about Harriet Beecher Stowe), African Americans did not organize any conferences. As Calloway put it in a letter to Washington, “What I had hoped to bring about is a Congress on the subject, but thus far I can see no practical way of reaching it [...] the difficulty of securing delegates and attendants in sufficient quantity, to justify in doing so is the difficulty not to be gotten around”.

Nonetheless, for African Americans the exhibit represented an important landmark and a turning point in thinking about race relations, both in the U.S. and internationally. Some of the main black newspapers, such as The Colored American, which was in charge of covering the exhibit, emphasized its relevance, by arguing that,

Few things have been done for us in the last few decades that have counted so much for our dignity and capacity as the winning of so many prizes of high distinction in Paris last summer. The peoples of other countries will know the Negro American better and think more of him hereafter than they have done before, for they have seen him rated among other races at Paris as a man who can do something along all lines of commendable behavior.

While “The American Negro Exhibit” was on display, several African Americans, including Du Bois and Calloway, traveled to London to participate in the First Pan-African

---


57 On the Palais de la Femme: AN, F/12/4356.


Conference, which was held in the summer of 1900 to take advantage of the presence of many blacks in Paris. As Washington put it during his trip to Europe just a year earlier,

I beg and advise as many of our people as can possibly do so, to attend this conference. In my opinion it is going to be one of the most effective and far-reaching gatherings that has ever been held in connection with the development of our race.60

The Conference aimed at “tak[ing] steps to influence public opinion on existing proceedings and conditions affecting the welfare of the natives in various parts of the world”.61 More than forty delegates from England, the West Indies, the U.S., Liberia, South Africa and Ethiopia attended, and discussed the treatment of blacks in South Africa and Rhodesia, as well as the growing forms of racism across the world.62 Du Bois’s participation at the Conference, which was somewhat fortuitous, represented a turning point for him. During the Conference, he gave a lecture titled, “To the Nations of the World”, in which he repeated the statement printed on his plate displayed at the “American Negro Exhibit”, “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line”:

I lived to see a dream come true [...] Just what thoughts were back of the meeting, I do not know, but as I was made secretary, I wrote out my ideas in the resolutions eventually adopted. They were simple and aimed at bringing together in regular meetings Africans, their friends and descendants to discuss and clarify their social problem.63

Among those who participated at the Conference there were several African American women, the most prominent of whom was undoubtedly Anna Julia Cooper, who continued to play a leading role in Pan-African movements. Cooper, who was born a slave, already had a long experience of social and political activism. She was one of the first to write a book about African American women’s lives, *A Voice from the South by a Woman from the South*, and worked as a teacher at the M Street High School, promoting the idea that blacks, particularly women, should achieve their full

emancipation through education. At the Conference, Cooper presented a paper titled “The Negro Problem in America”, and, as a member of the Executive Committee, wrote a series of petitions supporting the right to independence and citizenship of all colonies and subjects. Furthermore, she sent a petition to Queen Victoria, asking to put an end to the Boer War. The public of the Conference included other prominent African American women, such as Ella D. Barrier, a colleague of Cooper’s at the M Street High School and an activist in the so-called “club movement” and in the Colored Women’s League of Washington D.C., and Adrienne Herndon, a faculty member at Atlanta University, and wife of businessman Alonzo Herndon. The only other African American woman to talk at the Conference was Anna H. Jones, who presented a paper on “The Preservation of Race Individuality”.

Most of the African Americans who participated in the First Pan-African Conference traveled to Paris to visit “The American Negro Exhibit”, and were invited to attend a dinner in the U.S. pavilion. As The New York Times put it, the event produced a reunion and most cordial congeniality among colored people, more or less strangers to each other and meeting for the first time under the hospitable roof of the United States Building in a foreign land, but under the Stars and Stripes.

Far from being strangers, many of the twenty-five participants already knew each other and were engaged in various forms of activism, both domestically and internationally. These included Joan Imogen Howard from the State of New York, who was the only African American woman to belong to a state board, and had actively participated in the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, where she presented a series of statistics on blacks’ success; Agnes Moody from Chicago, who served as vice-President of the National

---


Association of Colored Women; and Fannie Barrier Williams, an activist and writer from Chicago.  

The experience of dining with white Americans, and thus enjoying a privilege they were denied at home, pushed some of the participants to further reflect on race relations in the U.S. Cooper, for instance, “remarked sarcastically that while her passport served as a pledge by the U.S. government to protect her abroad, the same government could not, or at least would not, protect her in North Carolina or Louisiana”, while The Colored American pointed out that, “too bad though, that we have to go abroad to get what is promised at home”. In both cases, African American activists remarked on the impossibility, at the turn of the nineteenth century, of being both black and American.

IV. Conclusion

For many African American activists, the experience of putting together “The American Negro Exhibit” and participating in the First Pan-African Conference in London represented a turning point. In the summer of 1900, Du Bois distanced himself from the gradualist approach endorsed by Washington. By traveling across the Atlantic and forging new transatlantic and Pan-African relations, he became increasingly aware of the lack of rights and the forms of racism inside the U.S., and the need to challenge racism globally. In many ways, the ties he established in Paris and London laid the groundwork for the emergence of new forms of activism, revolving around Pan-Africanism and black nationalism which would flourish in the interwar period.

At the same time, the exhibit served to present the American South as a model to be followed internationally, and allowed Washington to promote himself as a leader of black emancipation, both in the U.S. and in the African colonies. Washington became convinced that technical training would allow Africans to become enfranchised and that the students of Tuskegee Institute represented an elite of African Americans, who could bring civilization to non-white people across the globe. The Paris Exposition confirmed his ideas and gave them an even wider international appeal. In the summer of 1900, British and German representatives contacted Calloway to ask him to send some of

---


Tuskegee’s students to their colonies. Baron Von Herman convinced Washington that it would be a good idea to have some educated African Americans in Togo “to teach the ‘Negroes’ there American methods of cotton growing.” Among those who eventually traveled to the German colony there was also James Calloway, Thomas J. Calloway’s brother and a faculty member at Tuskegee. Together with three other people from the Institute, he set up a farm in Tove, about sixty miles from the capital, Lomé, where he planted a type of cotton grown in the American South, which was to be sold to European textile factories.

“The American Negro Exhibit”, on the other hand, continued to have a life of its own. Shortly after the Paris Exposition ended, Calloway started working on transferring the exhibit to Charleston, so that it could be displayed at the South Carolina Inter-State and West Indian Exposition, to be held in 1902. He wanted to continue collecting data and information about African Americans’ status, and asked the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives to have a government bureau specifically devoted to this matter, inside the newly constituted Department of Labor. Before going to Charleston, the exhibit was displayed at the Pan-American Exposition, held in Buffalo in 1901, where African American women played a particularly important role in lobbying for a fair representation for blacks. Once “The American Negro Exhibit” left the grounds of the Paris Exposition and returned to the U.S., however, Du Bois’s voice was increasingly silenced, as Washington took a leading role inside the various Commissions in charge of organizing the Expositions.

70 Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa*, 64.
71 Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa*, 64.
72 Calloway to the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 4 February 1901. BTW Papers, box 38, reel 34.
Ten years ago, in 2004, Michelle Rief wrote an important article based on her innovative and in some respects pioneering doctoral thesis regarding the international activism of African American women between 1880 and 1940. In her article, Rief denounced the lack of substantial research on the global organization of African American women, identifying it as an essential area of study, calling for the longue durée and stressing the importance of the presence of these women at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago for understanding the origins of that activism and reconstructing political networks that would endure well beyond the 1950s. Despite this, only a handful of doctoral theses and articles have since addressed this critical topic. How did African American women use Pan-Africanism as a resource in their battle for racial progress and gender equality? What roles did these women play in the various Pan-African movements? To what extent could they hold leadership positions within these movements, at least during certain

---


phases (e.g. the Pan-African Congresses in London, 1900, and New York, 1927)? The participation of African American women in universal expositions, especially the one in Chicago in 1893, has rarely been explored from the perspective of Pan-Africanism. Yet this context can reveal much about the life experiences that interwove with international ideas and public speeches and brought together women’s rights, the creation of a global community of the ‘darker races’, anticolonialism, peace, social justice and human rights.4

“To-day we stand on the threshold of woman’s era” heralded African American Frances Ellen Watkins Harper5 in 1893 to an audience representing a global community of women at the World’s Congress of Representative Women, a five-yearly conference held by the International Council of Women. This time the conference had been organized to coincide with the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which was attended by over 27 million people from around the world. Over 600 delegates, representing 27 countries and 126 organizations, met for 76 sessions addressing a variety of topics including education, science, religion, charitable works, philanthropy, moral reform, the civil and political status of women, and labor issues. The extraordinary number of attendants to the World’s Congress of Representative Women – some 150,000 – shows that universal expositions represented an expansion of women’s presence in the public sphere.6 In fact, the World’s Columbian Exposition was one of the first to be studied by scholars as an opportunity for women seeking a stage from which to demand rights in specific national and international contexts. In addition to being planners, visitors, organizers, administrators, performers, workers, journalists, artists, intellectuals and architects, these women were also political activists whose appeals wove together gender, nationalism, internationalism, anticolonialism, race, class and human rights. In fact, the World’s Columbian Exposition took place during the Progressive Era, a period of rapid expansion in the U.S. that women’s organizations defined as a “golden age”. It provided a scenario in which women activists could discuss their increasing participation in the labor market, their battle for sexual and reproductive autonomy, and their aspiration to civil and political citizenship through its redefinition, among other things.

6 M. F. Cordato, “Representing the Expansion of Woman Sphere: Women’s Work and Culture at the World’s Fair of 1876, 1893 and 1904” (New York University, PhD dissertation, 1989); T. J. Boisseau and A. M. Markwyn, Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World’s Fairs (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010).
After the Exposition these women returned to their own lives. But in the meantime they had effectively managed the resources entrusted to them and the international meetings they had organized had attracted worldwide attention to many of their demands. They may not have changed history, but they showed the world the value of their appeals and of women’s presence in the public sphere. And although that presence was marked by significant racial discrimination, the Exposition would nevertheless become the source of an internationalized activism among black women whose research – at the crossroads between various disciplinary fields including U.S. foreign relations, transnational movements of women and the involvement of African American women in the Pan-African movement – represented an extraordinary field of ongoing investigation.

I. African American Women at the Columbian Exposition:
the Beginnings of an Internationalist Strategy

Despite the policies of racial exclusion carried out by the Board of Lady Managers – who organized the events and exhibitions held in the Woman’s Building and justified their marginalization of African American women by pointing to their internal divisions and lack of a national organization – not only were these women present but the Exposition also represented an important moment in their activism.

Exposition organizers were so explicit and visible in their exclusion of African American women and men that they did not even ask abolitionist icon Frederick Douglass to produce an African American exhibit, even though he would have been the natural choice. Instead it was the government of Haiti, where Douglass had served as ambassador in 1889-1891, who commissioned him to curate its national pavilion. It was therefore left to a foreign government to assign Douglass “the place denied at home”, as

8 Rief, “Banded Close Together”.
Robert W. Rydell put it.\textsuperscript{12} Wells, who was engaged in an anti-slavery campaign in Great Britain during the early months of the Exposition, gave voice to the unease around that exclusion by publishing a damning pamphlet, \textit{The Reason why the Colored American is not in the World's Columbian Exposition}, which had a major impact on U.S. public opinion and on visitors to the Exposition where it was distributed. The exclusion of African Americans sparked widespread debate over the meaning of citizenship and a non-inclusive democracy, and black women – subjected as they were to both racial and gender discrimination – were precisely the ones to drive it, thus “expand[ing] the civic space that they occupied in Chicago and the nation”.\textsuperscript{13}

Six African American women gave talks at the World’s Congress of Representative Women:\textsuperscript{14} Anna Julia Cooper; Fanny Jackson Coppin; Sarah J. Early, a teacher (“The Organized Efforts of the Colored Women of the South to improve Their Condition”); Hallie Quinn Brown, a teacher; Fannie Barrier Williams, a teacher and the first woman to serve on the Chicago Library Board (1924-1926), who also spoke at the World’s Parliament of Religion; and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, a member of important women’s associations like the Universal Peace Union and the American Woman Suffrage Association, which she founded. Barrier Williams and Harper were asked to deliver two of the keynote addresses, “The Intellectual Progress of the Colored Women of the United States Since the Emancipation Proclamation” and “Woman’s Political Future”. Their presence was somewhat unexpected, considering that in 1892 Hallie Quinn Brown – who had proposed herself as “solicitor of exhibits among the colored people” but only obtained the unpaid position of secretary to the Department of Publicity and Promotions for the Woman’s Building – had sent a harsh letter of protest to the Board of Lady Managers regarding the absence of African American women and men in positions of responsibility in the realm of the Exposition:

\begin{quote}
It seems to be a settled conviction among the colored people, that no adequate opportunity is to be offered them for proper representation of the World’s Fair […] If, therefore, the object of the Woman's Department of the Columbian Exposition is to present to the world the industrial and educational progress of the breadwinners – the wage women – how immeasurably incomplete will that work be without the exhibit of the thousands of the colored women of this country.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
Of the aforementioned women only Fannie Ellen Barrier Williams, the wife of a lawyer and a member of Chicago’s black elite, took part in the organization as the secretary of the Art Department. This sparked heated controversy among the African American women engaged in asserting their presence at the Exposition, since Williams was not part of their group.  

The six speakers at the Congress touched on subjects of great importance that aligned them with the positions of Booker T. Washington or W. E. B. Du Bois, two of the most prominent African American leaders of the day. The sharing of their pro-inclusion demands represented the first significant occasion a women’s network was created that led to the founding of important national organizations and increased sensitivity to and interest in the sphere of international relations, especially subjects related to colonialism and human rights.

The biographies of some of these women – some better known than others – reveal their international interests, which were sparked by their ability to cross national and racial borders, both physically and through intense intellectual work by imagining a transnational space in which to carry out their activism.

Oberlin was the first prestigious college to open its doors to African American men and women before the Civil War. A place devoid of prejudice, the seat of a sort of interracial utopia, Oberlin played a key role in the educations of Anna Julia Cooper – who graduated in 1884, the same year as activists Mary Church Terrell and Ida A. Gibbs Hunt – and Fanny Jackson Coppin, class of 1865. Like Cooper, Coppin had been born a slave. She went on to become the first woman ever to teach at Oberlin and to create the Industrial Department at the Institute for Colored Youth. She later became the national president of the Women’s Home and Foreign Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, which she represented in 1888 at the Centenary of Missions Conference in London. There she joined forces against the ban on women assuming ecclesiastical functions by spreading the word of the missionaries who had founded the Foreign Missionary Society and had worked in Haiti, Santo Domingo, Trinidad and Sierra Leone. After traveling throughout Europe, Coppin lived for a brief

---

16 D. Spain, How Women saved the City (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 221.  
17 See S. Y. Evans, “African American Women Scholars and International Research: Dr. Anna Julia Cooper’s Legacy of Study Abroad”, Frontiers, 18 (Fall 2009): 77-100.  
period in South Africa with her husband, who had become bishop of the AME Church. The impact of her work there, educating missionaries and creating the Bethel Institute, was so great that a Fanny Jackson Coppin Hall was built in Cape Town.

Oberlin also proved an important launching pad for Anna Julia Cooper, a thinker of extraordinary charisma and modernity. Her personality has made her an icon of black feminism and has attracted many studies, both historical and otherwise, especially in recent years. She is best known for her 1892 book *A Voice from the South*, which is considered one of the first interpretations of black feminism. Addressing everything from women’s rights and racial progress to segregation and literary criticism, the book places enormous importance on the education of African American women, which Cooper believed was essential to the “regeneration and progress of race”. Her anti-patriarchal and anti-imperialist theories have led some scholars to describe her as a pioneer in masculinity studies. Referring to African American women of the South in her book, Cooper stressed “the universal triumph of justice and human rights” and women’s rights as human rights. However, the impact of her thought and intellectual and militant work on politics and African American internationalism go far beyond her famous text. Cooper’s theories on how race, class and gender interwove in the U.S. even seem to have influenced the thought of W. E. B. Du Bois. Her transatlantic analyzes of the Haitian Revolution have also inspired many post-colonial scholars of both sexes. “Thus”, according to S. Moody-Turner, “in addition to being a voice of the South, Cooper also should be acknowledged as a key theorist in the emergence of new forms of black internationalism”. However, as Vivian May has argued, Cooper’s role therein was due not only to her participation in salient moments of Pan-Africanism but also to the content of her thesis, a theory supported by a letter written by Jane Nardal, writer and co-founder of *La Revue du Monde Noir*, to Alain Locke in 1927.

Teacher, feminist, human rights supporter, writer, traveler (in 1896-1897 she visited the West Indies, primarily Nassau in the Bahamas): thanks to her leadership role in the

---

21 In 2008 Penn State University dedicated a seminar to her, and the proceedings were published in the *African American Review*, 43, 1 (Spring 2009).


23 Let us recall that women’s rights and the rights of the “girl-child” were only firmly declared as human rights for the first time at the 1993 United Nations conference in Vienna.


Washington Colored Woman’s League Cooper became a vital force in the black women’s movement of the late nineteenth century. As a member of the black intelligentsia, she was the only woman invited by Du Bois to take part in what today we would call a think tank, the American Negro Academy, whose members included Arthur A. Schomburg, Carter G. Woodson, Francis Grimké and Alexander Crummell. In 1900 she spoke at the First Pan-African Conference in London before an audience of Africans and Afro-Caribbeans, together with Anna H. Jones (“A Plea for Race Individuality”), though unfortunately the
text of Cooper’s talk, “The Negro Problem in America”, has been lost. At the conference she and Jones were elected to a six-member executive committee (along with four men). She was also one of the authors of a memorial to Queen Victoria on apartheid in Africa. 26 Although Cooper played down her involvement, calling herself a “Globe Trotter”, 27 she played a key role, especially when it came to anti-imperialist and human rights causes. After returning to the U.S., she was even asked to join an organizational committee for the Pan-African conference to be held in Boston in 1902. However, the conference never took place, probably because the U.S. Department of Defense was monitoring black activists from the Philippines and Cuba, where imminent revolution was feared.

After the Pan-African Congress of 1900, which according to Du Bois “put the word ‘Pan-African’ in the dictionary for the first time”, 28 Cooper visited the Universal Exposition in Paris, including most importantly the “American Negro Exhibit”, 29 accompanied by Du Bois. She continued traveling to Europe in later years. In 1911 she started attending the summer sessions of “La Guilde International, Bibliothèque Militaire” and visiting the France National Archives. In 1925, following an interruption for work and family reasons, she received a degree from the Sorbonne with a thesis demonstrating her Pan-African convictions: “The Attitude of France towards the End of Slavery in the eighteenth century Revolutions in France and Haiti”. 30

Like Coppin and Cooper, Hallie Quinn Brown, who was Dean of Women at the Tuskegee Institute from 1892 to 1893, moved to Europe in 1894 and stayed for five years, working as a lecturer for the British Women’s Temperance Association. In 1899 she represented the NACW at the International Council of Women conference in London, in which Margaret Murray Washington also participated. Quinn Brown lived in Germany, France, Switzerland and England where she taught diction, acted, sang, and recited poems and political speeches by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, among others. She also founded the Colored Woman’s League of Washington, D.C., and served as President of the NACW in 1920-1924. Her most famous work, Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction, recognizes African American women who made history, though it touches very little on the international aspects of their undertakings. 31

---

27 Lemert and Bhan, The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper, 324.
Although Hazel V. Carby\textsuperscript{32} maintains that the black speakers at the 1893 World’s Congress of Representative Women wound up the subject of “a discourse of exoticism that pervaded the [Chicago] fair”, their talks seem to have been fundamental to the future activism of African American women.\textsuperscript{33} The Exposition even generated one of the most important black organizations in America, the National Association for Colored Women (NACW), founded in 1896 and initially presided over by Mary Church Terrell. In fact, it was in response to the reasons given by the Board of Lady Managers for their exclusion of black women from the upcoming Exposition that in 1892 Hallie Quinn Brown created the Colored Woman’s League, which together with Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin’s National Federation of Afro-American Women and other black women’s groups would contribute to the foundation of the NACW.

In Chicago, Anna Julia Cooper gave a talk on “The Needs and Status of Black Women” and made special efforts to promote the role of black women in racial uplift by tying together issues of race and gender. But the focal point of her talk was human rights, which had become increasingly central to the debates and writings of African American women:

\begin{quote}
Let woman’s claim be as broad in the concrete as in the abstract. We take our stand on the solidarity of humanity, the oneness of life, and the unnaturalness and injustice of all special favorisms, whether of sex, race, country, or condition. [...] We want, then, as toilers for the universal triumph of justice and human rights, to go to our homes from this Congress, demanding an entrance not through a gateway for ourselves, our race, our sex, or our sect, but a grand highway for humanity. The colored woman feels that woman’s cause is one and universal; and that not till the image of God, whether in parian or ebony, is sacred and inviolable; not till race, color, sex, and condition are seen as the accidents, and not the substance of life; not till the universal title of humanity to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is conceded to be inalienable to all; not till then is woman’s lesson taught and woman’s cause won not the white woman’s, not the black woman’s, not the red woman’s, but the cause of every man and of every woman who has writhed silently under a mighty wrong. Woman’s wrongs are thus indissolubly linked with all undefended woe, and the acquirement of her “rights” will mean the final triumph of all right over might, the supremacy of the moral forces of reason, and justice, and love in the supremacy of the moral forces of reason, and justice, and love in the government of the nations of earth.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{33} Paddon and Turner, “African Americans and the World’s Columbian Exposition”.
While African American women dominated Cooper’s vision of racial progress, she also argued in favor of universal women’s rights. She believed the full development of their talents through education would open new perspectives for the American nation, both inside and outside its borders. It was clear that the international context at the Columbian Exposition sparked the interest of African American women speakers in particular, along with the many NACW leaders participating in the Pan-African movement. In fact, the diversified activism they would practice during the first decades of the twentieth century would weave together universal women’s rights, human rights, anticolonialism and pacifism.

II. The Gender of Pan-Africanism: the International Council of Women of the Darker Races

The internationalism of the African American women present at the Columbian Exposition and that of the women active in the Pan-African movement would come together through the organizations that some of these women would go on to establish during and after World War I. This was the case with the International Council of Women of the Darker Races (ICWDR) founded in 1922. Initially called the International Council of Women of the Darker Races of the World, its members demanded civil rights and global citizenship for women of color. Its initiators included well-known African American women like Mary McLeod Bethune, Mary Church Terrell and Margaret Murray Washington, as well as less famous women who were nevertheless leaders among women of color at the time, especially in the NACW, including Nannie Helen Burroughs, Addie Waite Hunton, Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Janie Porter Barrett. The African American women speakers and attendees in Chicago involved in its creation were Hallie Quinn Brown, Fannie Barrier Williams, Mary Burnett Talbert and Lugenia Burns Hope. Many of these women had multiple affiliations with various kinds of organizations, including the YWCA, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the NAACP, the National Urban League and the International Council of Women. However, this plural activism limited the space each one could dedicate to the new organization. For some, participating in international conferences and belonging to organizations that were

35 Among the subjects discussed at NACW’s foundational meeting in Washington were the 1900 International Exposition in Paris and the role to be played by African American women. See E. L. Davis, Lifting as they climb, 1933 (reprint, New York: G. K. Hall, 1996), 14-26.
not exclusively black offered a global stage from which to create a cross-ethnic and transnational racial identity that surpassed the borders of the U.S. One example is the speech Mary Church Terrell gave at the 1904 conference of the International Council of Women in Berlin, in which she explained that she was not just representing the women of color of her own country but “the whole continent of Africa as well,” thus tying together the civil rights battles of black women to the international battle of the anticolonial movements.

The ICWDR aimed to spread awareness of the conditions of ‘colored’ women in countries like Haiti, India, China, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Liberia, and to encourage widespread recognition of not only their history and successes but also the ills of co-

---

37 In this sense, see also Materson, “African American Women’s Global Journeys”.

olonialism. Encouraging “racial pride” as a founding element of self-determination in the U.S., the ICWDR promoted a nationalist philosophy whose popularity was increasing within the African American community, while at the same it also identified itself with the battles of the ‘darker races’ around the world. As recorded in its founding documents: “We are a band of women, though small, working with every other group of women to bring about the things for which we all stand – justice and fair play for every woman in every land”. Later, Hallie Quinn Brown wrote of president Margaret Murray Washington’s interest in the conditions of foreign women:

She thought and spoke of them as our sisters, and it was her hope that this Council would bring together the women of the darker races in a close and sympathetic contact.

The agenda of the new organization – centered on education, international affairs and social uplift – was entrusted to study groups that played an important role in the development and spread of African studies. Addie Whiteman Dickerson presided over the Committee on Foreign Relations, within which study groups were formed to examine the conditions of women in Africa and India and the relationship between African American women and women of other ‘darker races’ around the world.

The fact that India and its resistance to British colonialism were at the center of their interests proves that blackness was primarily a political-symbolic dimension. The relationship formed several years later between Mary McLeod Bethune, president of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), and Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit Nerhu testifies to the connection between African Americans and Indians against colonial oppression around the world and is the subject of an interesting book by Nico Slate who makes reference to “colored cosmopolitanism”.

---


41 Unknown author and unknown date, International Council of Women of the Darker Races of the World, Papers of Mary Church Terrell, LOC-MD, reel 2, 4.

42 Brown, Homespun Heroines, 229.

According to the constitution of the organization, members comprised 50 African American women and 50 foreigners of color. Along with vice presidents Mary Church Terrell and Addie Waites Hunton, the organization was led by Margaret Murray Washington who, as mentioned earlier, had been Dean of Women at the Tuskegee Institute in 1889, where she had created the Tuskegee Women’s Club with Booker Washington, whom she later married. She had also led a study group there on the conditions of foreign women. The ICWDR, whose acts were important yet ‘micropolitical’, took the utopian approach of proposing to resolve the problems of “women of the darker races of the world”. As Mary Burnett Talbert would explain a year after its foundation, regarding Sallie Stewart (future president of the NACW, 1928-1933) and her candidature for council membership:

She has an acquaintance with the forward thinking women of China, Japan and Constantinople and Africa. We need women from each one of these groups to join with us in solving the problem of the women of the darker races of the world.\(^{45}\)

The most oft-repeated goals – studying and spreading awareness of the condition of ‘colored’ women around the world and creating international contacts with associations interested in building a global community of black women – were therefore ambitious for such a small, dispersed group and often came up against a scarcity of funds, non-acceptance of the role of women in international relations and limited human resources. Study groups and fundraising for targeted campaigns would constitute the group’s fundamental strategies. For example, the Chicago West African Women’s Club, which was tied to the ICWDR, supported the efforts of Adelaide Casely-Hayford – wife of Afro-nationalist Joseph Casely-Hayford and a teacher for many years in Sierra Leone – to build a school and later a hospital in Liberia. She was even nominated “vice-president for Africa”. In 1922 Emily Williams stayed for several months in Haiti on behalf of the ICWDR and the following year gave talks about the situation on the island. In fact, these three countries were particularly significant. Sierra Leone had been a destination for emancipated Americans and slaves from the West Indies since the nineteenth century, as Liberia was from the 1920s on. And both Liberia and Ethiopia were independent black nations admitted to the League of Nations in 1919 and 1923, respectively.


\(^{45}\) Mary B. Talbert to the International Council of Women of the Darker Races, 21 July 1923, Mary Church Terrell Papers, LOC-MD, reel 7.
Addie Waite Hunton became the president of the ICWDR after Murray Washington's death in 1925. A graduate of Oberlin, Hunton had extensive international experience, having resided in Madagascar, France, Guadeloupe, the Azores and Liberia. She had also been the first chair of the WILPF's Interracial Extension Committee and head of the Peace and Foreign Relations Department of the NACW. Strongly interested in Pan-Africanism, Hunton was primarily involved in the situation in Haiti and wrote a report in 1926 condemning the occupation of the country, which she visited in 1927 as a representative of the ICWDR. In 1929 she helped found the Save Haiti League, which united the protest against occupation with philanthropic and social service work. In 1932 Hunton gave a vibrant speech on the same topic at the NAACP conference and helped WILPF leader Emily Greene Balch draft the book *Occupied Haiti*.

It is difficult to define and articulate the role of African American women's organizations within the realm of the Pan-African movements, both because research in this area remains scarce, recent and often superficial and because, as emphasized by Milfred C. Fierce, the term Pan-Africanism is often used in a simplistic way, without distinguishing between movements and ideologies. The precursor to the first Pan-African Congress of 1900 was the Congress on African Ethnology, also called the Congress on Africa, which was held on August 14-21, 1893, concurrent with the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. It too deserves further research. Conceived by Frederick Perry Noble, participants included Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Thomas Fortune and, probably, Hallie Quinn Brown and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. The London Congress of 1900 (strongly backed by Booker T. Washington, who took part in a preparatory meeting though not the conference) led to the foundation of the Pan-

---


52 Reed, *All the World is here*, 182.
The International Strategy of African American Women

African Association, which was supposed to meet every two years – Boston in 1902, Haiti in 1904 – though this never happened. Six African American women participated in the inaugural congress: Anna Julia Cooper, Anna H. Jones, Fannie Barrier Williams, Ada Harris, Jane Roberts (widow of the first president of Liberia James Jenkins Roberts) and Harriet Loudin. Although it is difficult to trace the presence of African American women in the Pan-African Congresses, it seems that Mary Burnett Talbert, Addie Waites Hunton and Ida Gibbs Hunt attended the second one, which took place in Paris in 1919. Hunton and Hunt were also members of the International Committee of the Third Pan-African Congress of 1921, which was held in London and Brussels and was far more radical. In fact, one result was a document supporting the independence of Haiti, Liberia and Ethiopia. The Fourth Pan-African Congress of 1923 was held in London and Lisbon, and Ida Gibbs Hunt, living in France at the time, co-chaired the organizational board of the congress with Du Bois and presented the talk “The Colored Races and the League of Nations”.

The Fifth Pan-African Congress was supposed to take place in 1925 in Africa or in the West Indies, but the governments of France and England opposed it. Addie Waites Hunton, then vice president of the ICWDR, with its Circle for Peace and Foreign Relations, therefore decided to organize it in New York in 1927. The congress was attended by some 5,000 people and proposed the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Haiti, a proposal approved by the WILPF the year before. Attendees included African Americans Helen Curtis and Addie Whiteman Dickerson, who would become the president of the ICWDR in 1929 following an important career in the world of international causes, including work for the WILPF.  

Correspondence between Dickerson and Du Bois from 1929 seems to indicate the wish of the ICWDR to promote the Sixth Pan-African Congress to be held in Haiti or Bermuda, with the agreement of its leader, Du Bois. However, this plan was never realized either. In fact, the financial crisis prompted by the Great Depression and World War II interrupted the Pan-African Congresses until 1945. Yet the ICWDR continued trying to play an active role in the Pan-African movement. In 1929, for example, Dickerson invited Du Bois to give a talk on the subject at a Council meeting: “I am so anxious that our women shall have some part in the Pan-African that I want you to come and talk with them regarding it, if only in a general way.”

---

Traces of this enduring commitment also include the participation of Dickerson (for the ICWDR) and Hunton (for the WILPF interracial commission, over which she presided) at a meeting of African American leaders (Mordecai Johnson, W.E.B. Du Bois, Walter White, Rayford Logan of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Charles Wesley and Emmett Scott of Howard University) held on July 31, 1933 at the State Department regarding their support for the sovereignty and independence of Liberia. The ICWDR and its leaders, whose views were similar to those of Du Bois, therefore did more than just organize study groups. Their work manifested itself as an active international presence in certain relevant moments for the Pan-African movement, thus demonstrating the wish to interweave race and gender on a global basis, feminism, and the Pan-African drives of the first black women activists. These women shared the experience of being black in America and therefore of dealing with the double discrimination of race and gender. Their experience abroad, among other things, led them to develop a broad vision that demanded civil rights for all African Americans, education and international attention for black women, freedom for colonized peoples, and the creation of a black global community. Yet, even though they conceptualized their oppression within the realm of global racism and colonialism, they never managed to unite this large number of women of different nationalities. Neither were they able, despite their best efforts, to recruit a younger generation of women to carry forth their commitment in the 1930s. As a result, the history of the ICWDR came to an end with the death of its last president, Addie Whiteman Dickerson, in May 1940. If any of its ideals and actions survived it is thanks to one of its leaders, Mary McLeod Bethune, who in 1935 founded the NCNW, a new organization of African American women with a strong global vision and international activism centered on the subjects of race, gender, economic justice and de-colonization. Many ICWDR activists joined the new organization, including Lugenia Burns Hope who in 1937 became the assistant of Bethune, then the director of the Bureau of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration.

---

58 In this sense, see also Materson, “African American Women’s Global Journeys”. 
III. From De-colonization to Human Rights:  
The National Council of Negro Women

While the NCNW had supported the work of the ICWDR from the start,\(^59\) it was not until after the latter’s disappearance in 1940 that the NCNW’s international work began to increase. Not only did it start sending representatives to Europe, the East Indies and Cuba (where it planned to launch summer seminars in partnership with the Asociación Cultural Femenina), but the organization also began welcoming the representatives of women’s associations from the Philippines, Liberia, Mexico, Costa Rica, France, China, Haiti, Great Britain and Belgium to its annual meetings. In fact, the NCNW sought to foster this process of internationalization by encouraging the study of international relations within religious, civic and education groups; membership in international associations; and the strengthening of relationships with women in ethnic groups closely tied to Cuba, Haiti, South America and the Orient.

In 1943 the NCNW joined the Women’s Action Committee for Victory and Lasting Peace, which aimed to bring all American women together to build a world of peace and justice by spurring the U.S. government to cooperate internationally and open its borders. A few years later, the NCNW joined the Committee on Women in World Affairs, which campaigned for the nomination of qualified women to international organizations. This passionately sought objective was further pursued by attending the conference “How Women may share in Post-War Policy making”, organized by Eleanor Roosevelt in Washington D.C. in 1944, at which Bethune demanded such nominations include “qualified negro women”, who tended to be more marginalized than white women on the public scene.

Appointed by the State Department to the delegation of black consultants of the NAACP sent to the foundation of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945,\(^60\) Bethune immediately introduced the subject of the participation and leadership of black women in the construction of the new world order. Hers was certainly an optimistic vision, given that the few women present in San Francisco were aware that the agenda being carried forth by many internationalists through the League of Nations – e.g. monitoring the conditions of women around the world; making the juridical legitimization of married women as independent citizens an international legal standard;


spreading women’s suffrage to all countries – was left incomplete after having come to a standstill in the early 1940s.\textsuperscript{61}

One of Bethune’s objectives was to build international women’s networks, and she established a special synchronicity with some of the observers at the conference. One of these was Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit\textsuperscript{62} (the sister of Jawaharlal Nehru) who was present in San Francisco in a non-official capacity but would go on to lead the Indian delegation to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{62} Mary McLeod Bethune: Building a Better World, eds. A. T. McCluskey and E. M. Smith (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 250 and 259.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}

During the foundational phase of the United Nations, the language of rights unified the critical leadership of women – Mary McLeod Bethune, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Charlotta Amanda Bass – who were fairly diverse in terms of political experience and existential trajectories. In 1952 Bass would become the national chairperson of the Sojourners for Truth and Justice, an organization of women protesting the racial violence taking place in the U.S. South that fostered relations with the African National Congress Women’s League, the women’s branch of the African National Congress that was fighting apartheid and colonialism.\footnote{See J. Castledine, “‘In a Solid Bound of Unity’: Anticolonial Feminism in the Cold War Era”, \textit{Journal of Women’s History}, 4 (2008): 57-81.}

After her controversial experience in San Francisco, Bethune continued passionately weaving together her remarks in favor of civil rights, de-colonization and human rights with those on the conditions of African American women, and women of the ‘darker races’ in general, as well as the leadership roles they deserved to acquire within international organizations. The San Francisco conference, which was disappointing for Bethune because it failed to lead to a firm new anticolonialist awareness, did not exhaust the internationalist strategies of the NCNW. On the contrary, they would reach their apex in the years to follow. During the second half of the 1940s, in addition to sending delegates and observers to international meetings everywhere from Europe and Cuba to Trinidad and the West Indies (though the strongest ties would remain those with Haiti and Liberia), the NCNW organized annual International Nights with important institutional guests; promoted World Security Month and United Nations Day; and joined the Women United for the U.N. and the Conference Committee of the United States Organizations for the United Nations.

Although the international commitment of many NCNW members was significant, it was mainly Bethune who pressured the United Nations to create the Commission on the Status of Women in 1946.\footnote{On the differences between U.S. women’s associations regarding the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women, see H. Laville, “A New Era in International Women’s Rights: American Women’s Associations and the Establishment of the UN Commission on the Status of Women”, \textit{Journal of Women’s History}, 4 (2008): 34-56.} She was also the one to participate in the first postwar meeting of the International Council of Women in Philadelphia in 1947, in which the role of women in international organizations was widely discussed. Finally, it was Bethune who joined the National Committee on Atomic Information, taking sides as
early as late 1945, together with the NCNW, against the military use of atomic energy and its control on the part of the United Nations.65

The internationalist commitment of the NCNW and Bethune confirms Raffaella Baritono’s argument whereby such commitment actually increased among women during the Cold War, despite the reassertion of the division between public and private spheres and the complexity of the task for American women of keeping nationalism and transnationalism together.66 The dawn of the Cold War and pre-McCarthyism are precisely what made life difficult for the NCNW and its international relations. In 1943 the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) started investigating Bethune for communist sympathies because of her relationships with the National Negro Congress and her support of the Spanish Refugee Campaign, the American Committee for the Protection of Foreign Born and the Washington Committee for Democratic Action.67 In 1946, while still under investigation, Bethune decided to protect the NCNW by distancing herself from Vivian Carter Mason, a close collaborator who had been fundamental in connecting Bethune to various women's organizations around the world, including the Women's International Democratic Federation, a coalition of women from 43 countries that focused its political action on human rights, and whose American branch – the American Congress of Women – was accused of being a communist organization. In fact, Mason had been investigated for her affiliation to this group, as well as a visit she had made to Moscow. Although Bethune firmly maintained her anti-communist stance, she nevertheless denounced the spy-like, persecutory methods of the HUAC more than once, and her break with Mason was temporary. Bethune would even back Mason as the third president of the NCNW from 1953 to 1957. Bethune's anti-communist commitment was in fact moderate and did not preclude criticism of U.S. politics.68

In 1946 the Executive Board of the NCNW asked the director of the Women's Bureau, Frieda S. Miller, to appoint Bethune to the Human Rights Commission.


68 Resolution passed 16 November 1946 by the Annual Convention of the National Council of Negro Women, National Archives for Black Women's History (henceforth cited as NABWH-NCNW), Records of the National Council of Negro Women, series 5, box 23, folder 6.
However, because Eleanor Roosevelt (who even tried to promote Bethune’s inclusion herself) was already a member, the request was denied since it would have been hard for another American woman to be nominated.69 The NCNW’s interest in human rights endured, and at its 13th annual convention in 1948, on the eve of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it clarified its positions on the subject, ardently weaving together the issue of universal human rights with that of the civil rights of African Americans in the U.S.:

We believe that human rights are not a mere extension of civic rights, but that all rights, civil, social and economic, form one complete whole and are therefore necessary – one to the other. Thus it is that only in a society where each citizen has the right to work with a just reward and adequate leisure and to enjoy the fruits of that labor in civil peace and social security, can there be a sound economy with useful citizens living in a practical freedom.70

In a 1949 letter to President Truman Bethune stressed the internationalist commitment of the NCNW and suggested black women who could be sent as delegates to international conferences – especially the Inter-American Conference on Peace and Security to be held in Rio De Janeiro – based on their skills and interests in the field of international relations and their familiarity with South America, international jurisprudence and public affairs.71 That same year Bethune announced the Council’s commitment to double its efforts to strengthen ties of friendship between women of ‘darker races’ through information exchange and publications that could lead to common projects to improve the conditions of women,72 and recommended Edith Sampson as president of the Town Meeting Seminar Group. This role led Sampson to travel the world during the early Cold War years, not only in support of the cause of democracy against communism73 but also to promote the work of the NCNW and thus spark the interest of women in India, Japan and Pakistan. It was during this time that Sampson attended the annual meeting of the Pakistan Women’s Organization, which would become an honorary member of the NCNW.

69 Letter from Mame Mason Higgins, secretary of the Board of the NCNW, to Frieda S. Miller, director of the Women’s Bureau, 29 April 1946, and Miller’s answer to Higgins 2 May 1946, NABWH-NCNW, Records of the National Council of Negro Women, series 5, box 34, folder 9.
70 National Council of Negro Women, Findings National Conventions, 1941-1950, MMLBP, reel 19, 16.
71 Bethune to Harry S. Truman, 19 February 1946, NABWH-NCNW, series 5, box 8, folder 134.
The need to orient part of the Council’s international work toward anti-communism did not significantly undermine its political work, which continued unabated. Bethune herself visited Haiti and Liberia several times and in 1952 was nominated to represent the U.S. government at the ceremony to re-elect President William Tubman. Three years later, in 1955, Bethune died. A year prior she had attended the World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament in Switzerland and had spoken at length with Fadhil Jamali, the former premier of Iraq and a delegate at the upcoming Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, about her firm belief that African and Asian nations, united by common politics, could give an important response to the world and influence the conference, whose echoes would reach her shortly before her death.

IV. Conclusion

The NCNW would continue its internationalist work for several years, recovering the legacy of the ICWDR and of some of the African American women who had founded it and had spoken at and attended the Columbian Exposition of 1893. In fact, Materson refers to the ICWDR as a place of transition between nineteenth-century strategies of racial uplift and “newer global race consciousness ideas”, tying together the contributions of African American women to the Columbian Exposition with the foundation of the NCNW in 1935 and its future internationalist developments. However, the ICWDR clearly had a much more significant function, albeit within the limitations described above. Often, its leaders not only supported the Pan-African movement but also organized related events, most importantly the 1927 Pan-African Congress in New York. While the ties between African American women’s organizations like the NACW, the WILPF and the NCNW and their participation in universal expositions remain largely to be investigated, we can imagine a study of the period stretching from the Columbian Exposition in 1893 to the first Conference of African Women and Women of African Descent in 1960 in Accra (after Ghana had become a republic), in which many African American women took part. One of these women was Dorothy Height, then president of the NCNW.

I. Exhibitionary Forms in Ireland: A Survey 1851-1907

The forces operating behind all exhibitionary forms in Europe in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have always been considered in the light of the power-relationships that determined the historical, economic and political fate of colonizing and colonial countries. Given the sophisticated array of exposition studies which have cropped up over the past three decades, it may seem a truism to point out that “the exhibits of colonies and dependent peoples at international exhibitions reflected attitudes and policies of the colonizing powers”; still, it is an appropriate truism to start with in the case of a study which considers the relevance, or better the cultural resonances, especially in literature, that the expository forms had in Ireland, the first English colony – the first colony to decolonize in the British Empire, and ultimately, the one and only extant partitioned nation in contemporary Europe. If, according to Declan Kiberd in his influential theorization in *Inventing Ireland*, the very anti-colonial, “modern” and national identity of Ireland partly resulted from a creative “invention” of its greatest writers and intellectuals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the notion of tradition-invention deserves to be mentioned among these preliminary reflections. As Burton Benedict observes,

Two sorts of tradition-inventing went on at colonial exhibitions. One was promulgated by the colonial powers and attempted to depict the peoples and cultures of Empire as though they were part of a single whole; the metaphor of family was often used with the colonial power described as ‘mother’. [...] a second exercise in tradition-inventing which may have been less conscious and which operated to a large extent in opposition to the first [...] was the invention of

---

separate traditions to each colony or dependent group which promoted their own national and ethnic identities.\(^2\)

Although exhibitions in Ireland were never considered as “colonial”, the earliest associations with the imperial pageant of the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Irish exhibits had been encompassed within the British context while retaining a specificity of sorts, thus testifying to the notoriously disputed colonial status of Ireland. As Louise Purbrick underlines, Irish objects, of which there were around three hundred, were collocated in the British section of the Great Exhibition and did not form a separate collection. Ireland was considered “part of an Empire” and called a “province” of it; “it was also often claimed as a ‘sister isle’, ‘sister land’, ‘sister kingdom’, sometimes given the romantic titles ‘Erin’, ‘emerald isle’ or ‘Green Isle’, and, occasionally, identified as a nation”.\(^3\) It was, in other words, both assimilated and distanced in the politics of display of the first grand parade of all nations of the Great Exhibition.

Purbrick notes that “naming Ireland [...] was not necessarily an assertion of personality but of regional difference”, and that it “had no place in the Great Exhibition’s hierarchies of nations, at least from the “official” or organizers’ perspectives”.\(^4\) This was a strategy which partially obfuscated the actual colonial history of the country, and which aimed at presenting it as involved in an industrializing (i.e. modernizing) process. The political significance of this emphasis on Ireland as a developing country – and its ensuing contradictions – pointed to the necessity for further industrial development as a justification of English imperial rule, and would resurface in all the literary utterances on exhibitionary forms which took place in the following decades. Along with the two general defining categories of “national” and “industrial”, Purbrick states that two different ideas of the state of the Irish nation emerged from the Great Exhibition: nationhood was based and represented by the modernization of industry and was a goal of the future or had existed in the past when rural Ireland had been productive.\(^5\)

\(^3\) L. Purbrick, “Defining Nation: Ireland and the Great Exhibition of 1851”, Britain, the Empire and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851, eds. J. Auerbach and P. Hoffenberg (London: Ashgate, 2008), 47–76, 52, 53.
\(^5\) Purbrick, “Defining Nation”, 75. Some of the most famous Irish artifacts were also displayed, and would be in subsequent major exhibitions, such as the the early eighth-century Tara Brooch, discovered only in 1850, along with some Celtic Revival jewelry. Purbrick also remarks how, despite the chronological contiguity, the Great Exhibition made no mention of the Great Famine.
Exhibitionary Forms in Ireland

Exhibitions in Ireland would, from then on, look back primarily to the English model and subsequently to the French and American versions, and engage with the exhibitionary system in order to signal emancipation from the inferior status as a “sister kingdom”/internal colony, and promote economic advancement and the construction of a defined national identity. A contemporary report on the 1853 Industrial Exhibition offers an interesting consideration of some of the political and ideological implications that are invariably attached to the development of the exhibitionary phenomena in the Irish colonial context:

the 12th of May 1853 was a great day for Ireland; for on that day the triumphant experiment of 1851 was repeated in the centre of our beautiful metropolis. On the influence of such an experiment on the welfare of England’s sister kingdom there can be little doubt; for, though the Exhibition of 1853 is on a much smaller scale than that of 1851, it is in many respects an advance of it.6

Under British colonial rule, Ireland had been the site of several general exhibitions in the course of the nineteenth century, mostly organized by the Royal Dublin Society, all mainly devoted to manufacturing, raw materials and artifacts of Irish origin. By the early 1880s, though, “these exhibits took a decidedly partisan turn” and a nationalistic outlook gained growing consensus, as attested by the Cork Exhibition of 1902, which featured an “increased awareness of Celtic heritage”,7 and combined an emphasis on the industrial development of Ireland along with its distinctive arts, crafts and manufacturing traditions. These two domains were in fact invested with a clear political significance by the changing cultural climate of the Irish fin de siècle, particularly since 1893, with the foundation of the Gaelic League by Eoin Mc Neill and Douglas Hyde, which aimed to revive the use of the Irish language, to valorise the Celtic heritage at large and to de-Anglicize the country by pursuing an anti-colonial, decolonising agenda. Ireland’s attitude toward the cultural discourses of modernity between 1880 and 1939 was to be – to say the least – controversial. As John Wilson Foster recalled, the Celtic Revival and High Modernism basically shared the same chronological span: 1880-1925.8 while on the one hand the Celtic Revival dictated the cultural agenda of nationalist Ireland with a distinctly anti-modern bias, on the other it also showed a great interest in some tropes such as

---


8 J. W. Foster, Colonial Consequences: Essays in Irish Literature and Culture (Dublin: Lilliput Press 1990), 44.
myths, the mythical past and primitivism which were also cultivated by high modernism. The two poles are, therefore, not diametrically opposed, as conventional literary history has long contended, despite the convinced localism and nationalism of the revivalists. It comes as no surprise, then, that a greater and “international” new Irish Exhibition that looked to English, French and American models would arouse suspicion among the prevalently nationalist elite, at a time when – only a month before the official opening – the Cumann na nGaedheal political association founded by Arthur Griffith became the Sinn Fein League, and a year later the Sinn Finn party, which would pursue the cause of Irish independence.

From the outset, with the earliest steps taken in 1903 on behalf of the movement for the revival of national industries, the organization of the Dublin 1907 Exhibition was supported by the Anglo-Irish elites of MPs, peers, the landed gentry and members of the judiciary, clergy, landowners and professional figures. Among them were the Earl of Pembroke, who offered the land for the chosen site at Ballsbridge, the President, the Marquis of Ormonde, the patron, the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Aberdeen and his wife, the Countess of Aberdeen, and, notably, the “Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee” which run the show, the rich entrepreneur William Martin Murphy, owner of the Irish Daily Independent, a Catholic newspaper popular among the middle classes, and a major shareholder in the Dublin United Tramways Corporation.

The political boycott of the Exhibition was, in fact, openly proclaimed and championed by the main nationalist forces operating at the time, as is persuasively attested to by a poster representing Ireland as a dispirited woman holding a Celtic harp and opening her arms as in dismay, at whose feet lie three men, one wearing a fez, all grabbing for or holding parcels of goods, among which one or two are wrapped in paper displaying the Union Jack.

---

9 Who had also been responsible for the Irish industrial exhibits at the Chicago Fair of 1893.

10 This important tycoon figure embodies the crucial link between expositions and the transportation system, and his name occurs at the beginning of the twelfth chapter (“Cyclops”) of Ulysses, which is dominated by the semantic of “gigantism” and expresses Joyce’s harsh critique of the excess of Irish nationalism. Murphy’s occurrence in the text has been defined as a “spectral presence in Ulysses”, and a target of Joyce’s critique as an “Imperial abstraction”. S. Kaufmann, “That Bantry Jobber: William Martin Murphy and the Critique of Progress and Productivity in Ulysses”, Joyce, Benjamin and Magical Urbanism, eds. M. Boscaglia and E. Duffy (European Joyce Studies Series) (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2011), 210-223, 211.
When in Dublin don’t go to the Exhibition: The Anti-nation Exhibition being held this Year in Dublin should be boycotted by the Irish People. N.p.: n.p., 1907. Reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

Most of the negative publicity was reported in the weekly publication The Leader, directed by the London-based Irish Journalist and advocate of protectionism and so-called “Irish Irelandism” D. P. Moran, who considered the Exhibition a travesty and condemned the whole enterprise. The promotion of the event was nonetheless quite persuasive, and the newspapers and guidebooks of the time were invariably reporting and advertising all means of transport to Dublin. Amusements and entertainments were among the chief attractions, as was customary in the exhibition network: among them regimental and other bands, concerts, a water-chute and a helter-skelter, and, most notably, the real highlight represented by the Somali village. The Exhibition largely followed in the footsteps of its most celebrated antecedents, not only the 1851 Great Exhibition but the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the 1900 Exposition Universelle of Paris, insofar as the complex was erected especially for the event, and along the lines of the White City of Chicago, another “Great White City”. The building was massive and

12 So called by Stoker in the title of his article. Interestingly, the architectural plan of the Herbert Park premises of the Dublin Exhibition recalled that of the 1902 Turin Exposition, with a ground plan formed by a set of galleries and pavilions gathered around a central rotunda. See W. Hughes, “Introducing Patrick to
imposing, all white with a central dome dominating the city and a Central Palace with an octagonal court “of Florentine character” from which four radial wings extended in the form of the Cross of St. Andrew. The complex included a Palace of Mechanical Arts and a Palace of Fine Arts, a Colonial Avenue and an important ‘Tuberculosis Exhibition’ which was included in the Home Industries section during the last month. Patronised by the Countess of Aberdeen, it consisted of 21 lectures – later published in a volume – on the aspects of the disease which was rampant in Ireland at the time.

Like most exhibition buildings, the Herbert Park complex was destined to enjoy an ephemeral splendour: after the closing, the buildings were dismantled and the materials disposed of and smaller units were sold and relocated while the main area was later reconverted with the reinstatement of Herbert Park in 1911. Even though it never acquired the status of a major event in the course of Irish social history, all things considered, the Dublin Exhibition proved very successful. Contemporary and later historical reports do not entirely coincide, but it is worth quoting this recapitulation in a publication of the Royal Dublin Society which celebrated the centenary of the Exhibition a hundred years later:

The exhibition showed what could be accomplished in Ireland. The economy and business of the country thrived as a result and the spirit of the country was lifted. So many visitors came to the exhibition that a new tourist industry began to take shape. The main promoter, William Martin Murphy and his Dublin United Tramway Company benefited from the requirement for transport to and from the exhibition. Even the nationalist opposition which had been evident before the exhibition opened realised that the Irish International Exhibition of 1907 had been an unqualified success.¹³

On the whole, the Exhibition had a far more extensively commercial character than all previous Irish Exhibitions, and this is a central element from which to depart in considering its cultural contextualization. Significantly, Thomas Richards, author of one of the major critical works on English commodity culture, places the Irish Exhibition in the advertising-ruled phase of expositions, as an instance of a failed attempt at informing the nation with the utopia of commodification:

In 1851 advertisers had not been invited to participate to the Great Exhibition. By 1914 advertisers and their entrepreneurial allies organized most of the commercial

exhibitions held in Great Britain, including the only moderately successful Dublin Exhibition of 1907, which had failed to convince Dubliners that their city was in the process of becoming an utopia stocked with manufactured objects. The business of advertising had become the business of presenting and re-presenting commodity culture to the English, and, increasingly, to the Irish and the Indians and the South Africans. Its influence was felt in every sphere of life.\textsuperscript{14}

Richards’ reference to this partial failure with regard to the (utopian) ideological rhetoric operating through the exhibition brings me to the introduction of what is by far the most interesting and exhaustive textual coverage of the event written by a literary personality of the time, Bram Stoker, an article which the Irish writer wrote for the “Irish Number” of the periodical \textit{The World’s Work (An Illustrated periodical of National Efficiency and Social Progress)}, which had an English and North-American readership. Resident in London since 1878 and working as acting and business manager to Henry Irving and the Lyceum Theatre, Stoker had already written \textit{The Snake’s Pass} in 1880 and \textit{Dracula} in 1897 and had been writing for the \textit{Irish Daily} and periodical press and, later, for publications outside Ireland, as “a frequent and experienced participant in the discourses that mobilise and support journalism, publicity and transport”. Discourses which William Hughes rightly defines as “both transnational and infra-national […] in that they operate \textit{between} the different identities which make up the United Kingdom but always within the assumption of the unity symbolised in that national concept”.\textsuperscript{15}

Stoker’s apparently effaced Irishness and his ambivalent cultural and political allegiance to Irish cultural identity has been the object of much recent scholarly interest, and the interesting coinage of a “metrocolonial” subject put forward by Joseph Valente\textsuperscript{16} aptly encapsulates the same tensions, contradictions and competitive allegiances which can be traced in reflections on Ireland and the so-called “exhibitionary order”, in Timothy Mitchell’s definition.\textsuperscript{17}

Stoker’s commissioned article is important insofar as it articulates a presentation of the forthcoming Irish Exhibition in terms of a cultural critique of

\begin{flushright}

\textsuperscript{15} Hughes, “Introducing Patrick”, 9.

\textsuperscript{16} “Ireland ceased to be a distinct if colonized geo-political entity and assumed the unique and contradictory position of a domestic or ‘metropolitan’ colony, at once a prized if troublesome colonial possession and a despised but active constituent of the greatest metropole on earth, the United Kingdom. From that point until the founding of the Free State in 1922, the Irish people found themselves at once agent and object, participant-victims, of Britain’s far-flung imperial mission – in short, a ‘metrocolonial’ people”. J. Valente, “‘Double Born’: Bram Stoker and the Metrocolonial Gothic”, \textit{Modern Fiction Studies}, 46, 3 (2000): 632-645, 632.

\end{flushright}
contemporary Ireland which effectively captures the rhetoric of the exhibitionary system and locates it in the Irish reality. Pivotal in the report is the contrast between the Ireland of the past and the new Ireland that was to be announced by the Exposition: the article is entitled “The Great White Fair in Dublin” and subtitled “How there has arisen on the site of the old Donnybrook Fair a great Exhibition as typical of the new Ireland as the former festival was of the Ireland of the past”. As an opportunity for a “full expression of Irish pride in an object so worthy to evoke it”, Stoker declares the inevitable controversies attached to these achievements to be irrelevant and identifies the two semantic constituents of national pride and the objectual dimension of the exhibition from the start – the exhibition of objects being itself the encompassing displaying and displayed object. The contrast between the Ireland of yesterday and the Ireland of today is metonymically represented by the location of the exhibition, in the past the site of the Donnybrook Fair, dating from the fourteenth century, which “in time degenerated into a place of such rowdiness that its very name became a synonym for misconduct”, thus epitomising the association between fairs, exposition leisure and sexual promiscuity that will be later discussed with reference to Joyce’s “Araby” and *Ulysses*, and the identification of rural, provincial Ireland with the English stereotypes of the stage Irishman.

The rhetorical strategy of Stoker’s text – only ostensibly a reportage, though in fact a far more complex reading of the event – abounds in significant metonymies and metaphors: firstly through the identification of the subaltern, uncivilised Ireland of the past with the execrable reputation of a popular form such as the Donnybrook Fair, then with the evocation of the Dublin Exhibition as “The Great white city which has arisen as by magic in Herbert Park” that is “in itself a revelation to British eyes”, and, most notably, through the conventional identification of Ireland as “Patrick” (Paddy, the stock character of the inferior, uncouth, naïve and ignorant colonial Irish subject). Thus, Stoker’s championing of the Exhibition as the epitome of the new spirit and the “wonderful things” that are “being done to start the island upon a new career of industrial progress, aside and beyond affairs political” places its main and most relevant significance on the level of the ideological construction of a renewed national image, though one firmly located within the geographical bounds of the Empire.

20 The title, though, bears the word “Fair”, effaced in the first sentence quoted above (italics mine).
Introducing Pat to himself
But there are other purposes to which it will serve – for instance, it will introduce Patrick to his new self. If the value to a country of an International Exhibition is to be measured by the educational facilities thus afforded to its people, there is probably no section of the British dominion which could take from it so much benefit as Ireland can.\footnote{Stoker, “The Great White Fair”, 571.}

Ireland’s “isolation, emphasised by the neglect of many centuries” had lead, in Stoker’s opinion, “to create for its inhabitants a personal ignorance both of itself and of the outside world”, that would be counteracted by the ecumenical spreading of knowledge inherent to the exhibitionary feat. The innovative character of the Dublin Exhibition lies, in Stoker’s eyes, as much in its architectural avant-gardism as in its aesthetics: significantly, he identifies the predominant inspiring style of the complex as the Italian Renaissance (the Palace of the fine Arts being “a building in the chaste severity of Florentine style”) and emphasizes how, with its central building surrounded by wings and pavilions, it marks a considerable advancement in respect of the by then outmoded (he seems to imply) single building template of the Crystal Palace, and in keeping with the “massive palaces of seemingly white marble which are built almost in a night and as speedily taken away”\footnote{Stoker, “The Great White Fair”, 571.} which recall the (unnamed) Chicago White City. In his perceptive analysis, Hughes underlines how Stoker’s anticipation of the Dublin Exhibition may equally be seen to draw the whole concept of international exhibitions away from the Crystal Palace and into a twentieth-century discourse which stresses the expanding economies of the greater world over and above the self-satisfied insularity of the British presence in the exhibitionary arena.\footnote{Hughes, “Introducing Patrick”, 10.}

In other words, Stoker explicitly regards the “British builder” as rather behind in the attempt to keep pace with the evolution of the expository architecture of other cities, “coded implications with which the text has to reckon”, and he valorises the cosmopolitan innovativeness of the Irish enterprise, which strongly recalled the 1902 Turin Exposition with its galleries and pavilions collected around a central rotunda designed by Raimondo D’Aronco.\footnote{Hughes, “Introducing Patrick”, 11.} Italy had been explicitly evoked in one of the opening descriptive paragraphs of Stoker’s article, in significant tandem with the Orient, as if to highlight the artificial – yet natural-looking – otherness of the environment.\footnote{“Given a clear sky of Irish blue and a soft summer sun, one could well imagine oneself in the heart of Italy, or even in the still more luminous atmosphere of the Orient”. Stoker, “The Great White Fair”, 570.} The move away from a retrograde,
isolated past removed from what was going on in the world at large achieved by and metonymically announced by the 1907 Exhibition, is then so significant, in Stoker's rhetoric, as to project Ireland onto the stage of international modernity, even while acknowledging its peripheral condition, and at a time when the cultural elite of the country was proclaiming a return to the Celtic heritage, and Irish modernization was ambivalently regarded as inextricably linked to the imperial British agenda.

More will be said of this crucial nexus of peripherality, modernity and versions of Irish Orientalism with regard to Joyce and in connection with other Irish exhibitionary forms. It is worth pointing out, however, that at the heart of the Revivalist vision there lay a conception of atavism and a return to the Celtic past which was intrinsically tied up with the idea of the future of Ireland, and hence, paradoxically, parallel to the concerns of the Protestant or Anglo-Irish establishment and ultimately, part of the history of Irish modernism. Thus, as Nicholas Daly observes in his *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle*, it was plausible that “If Stoker and *The World’s Work* wished to read the Exhibition as a pageant of Irish modernization, others found in it the vestiges of a very different Ireland”.27 The playwright John Millington Synge, one of the most important personalities of the Revival, who would see his *Playboy of the Western World* alternately acclaimed and condemned in a *succès de scandale* earlier that year at its debut at the Abbey Theatre, visited the Exhibition and went to see its major sideshow attraction, the Somali village, where Africans had been “imported” from British Somaliland in their native dress and patronizingly described by the *Irish Times* as “good humoured, dark but not uncomely” (9 May 1907).

**Monday May 13th/07**

Today I went to see Mrs Payne after dinner but found the house locked up so I went to the Exhibition for a while. I didn't enjoy it very much as I was lonesome again but there are good things in it. The Somali village especially is curious. A bit of the war-song the niggers were singing was exactly like some of the keens on Aran.28

Synge sees in the African war-chant a formal – and cultural – resemblance with the traditional wailing that took place at funerals on the Aran Islands, which he had visited and written about in an essay that same year. *The Aran Islands* has been considered by some as a manifesto of the primitivist strain of the Celtic Revival, and an important repository of ethnographic imagery of ‘primitive’ Ireland as embodied by

---


the Aran islanders, whom Synge had come to know well during his repeated sojourns there in 1898.

Notwithstanding its brevity and its textual status as a mere epistolary reference, this comment on the ethnologic sideshow of the Somali Village in the Dublin Exhibition suggests that Synge was not aware of what really lay behind it; in other words he did not see it as part of a conventional exhibitory network that was made up of itinerant ethnic shows that were immensely popular all over Europe and in America. Nor does his use of the word “niggers”, a term which, at the time, was not considered politically incorrect, indicate a specific sensibility in racial concerns. To put it another way, Synge takes the Somalis’ anthropologic and ethnologic authenticity at its face value, and does not consider their reified condition as yet another (human) exhibit, but, rather, as an extra-European primitiveness, “a common primitive spirit”. An imagined propensity that can also be detected in the theory of the Phoenician origins of the Irish people, mainly ascribed to Charles Vallancey, which was well known and supported by Joyce. This misconception of the (exhibited) primitive or ethnic ‘other’ as a authentic specimen of otherness and atavism is thus indicative of the substantial indifference of Synge – an important figure in the Revival – to the overall apparatus of the Exhibition as a pageant of the advancement of Irish modernity and as a major communicative enterprise, and explains why such a minor textual pronouncement on it has been valorised by Daly for his discussion of Synge’s interest in the relations between the worker in the primitive economy and the artist and in what he rather too suggestively defines as “imagining the survival of a rich seam of pre-modernity, a piece of darkest Africa in Ireland”.  

Overall, then, Stoker and Synge’s accounts of the 1907 event, different as they were, both highlighted its spectacular, aesthetic and hence cultural impact and significance, and endorsed its proposed anthropological models, while they did not seem concerned with the phantasmagoria of commodities and progress, the visible display of the products and emblems of the capitalistic catching up of Ireland with the already industrialized English and world-scene, which will soon be discussed. It is worth noting, rather, how the presence of reconstructed ethnic villages was a common practice in the exhibitionary network which had seen Ireland itself, along other (more) advanced European nations such as Austria and Germany, in particular, ‘on display’ at some major International Exhibitions such as the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893 and Saint Louis one of 1904. Evidently, the presentation of these ethnic reconstructions of a rural,  

---

29 Daly, *Modernism*, 126.

‘simple’, Celtic Ireland was ideologically anachronistic with respect to the reality of the developing country, and it should be framed as in keeping with the wider canvas of the “exhibitionary order” (Mitchell) as sketched by Paul Greenhalgh:

Ireland had to be different, as did Scotland, in order for the English to be able to differentiate themselves and rule. The core-periphery phenomenon can be applied to the whole empire, and can be found throughout the exhibitions in the tendency to emphasize rurality, backwardness and nature when discussing subject nations, and the city industry and culture when discussing the imperial ones. Power was achieved and maintained through industrial technology, and it was through demonstration of it that core countries maintained their hold. To juxtapose a Machine hall with a native village was to provide the clearest possible illustration of power relations in the world.\(^{31}\)

As Greenhalgh specifically points out,

By showing Ireland and Scotland as nations of hand-loom weavers and Gaelic singers, organisers at the exhibitions were relating to them as periphery nations, as part of the empire. A time-worn attitude toward the Celtic races facilitated this, an attitude which has had its derogatory nature obscured by a quasi romanticism,\(^ {32}\)

according to which the literary stereotype of the stage Irishman would be the most benevolent articulation in a system of structural opposition and mutual defining functions between the colonial power and the (internal) colony that has been widely investigated over the past decades by postcolonial critics such as S. Deane, D. Kiberd, D. Lloyd.

**II. The Irish Bazaars, James Joyce and the “Exhibitionary Complex”: “Araby”, “Mirus”, *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*\(^ {31}\)**

The exhibitionary forms in Ireland had not been limited to manufacturing, industrial, national and international expositions, but included the highly popular ‘minor’ version of the bazaar which, unlike the original Oriental model were often large, structured and thematically connoted events, mostly organized for philanthropic purposes which underscored their commercial character. As Paul Tenkotte remarks,

---

Such [...] bazaars and fairs [...], which focused on singular cultural themes, seemed to proliferate in the late-nineteenth century. They were, in reality, ‘miniature international exhibitions’ – their scope, of course, restricted by space, finances and purpose. Nevertheless, they evidenced the growing interest in cultural diversity, as well as the identification of culture with place.  

More specifically, the Irish bazaars enjoyed their widest popularity and largest press coverage during the 1890s; as Stephanie Rains points out, they were “an important part of the social history of Dublin [...] striking examples of an Irish popular culture during the 1890s which was already part of a modernized, international sphere of commodified leisure”. The relevance of these events and their inclusion in the wider exhibitionary system was promptly acknowledged by the contemporary press on the occasion of the hugely popular Araby Bazaar in 1894. The Irish Times commented as follows on the entertaining and multifarious assemblage that the original Oriental Bazaar had become, and on the radically different significance that the word ‘bazaar’ had assumed:

Recent development shows an inclination to depart from the word, and choose some specific name, like ‘Araby’ for instance, to comprehend, not a bazaar only, but a whole group of specific entertainments, massed together for the once in one large area. Nowhere in the United Kingdom has this been more plainly seen than here in Dublin [...]. A marked feature of the modern development of bazaars is the gigantic outlay which their inception and carrying out needs [...]. To be brief, the bazaar appeals to primary instincts – it is exciting, it is varied, it is cheap. Long live the bazaar (The Irish Times, 14 May 1904, 5).  

Being the largest of their kind in the United Kingdom, the annual Irish bazaars were mainly fund-raising events for the Dublin hospitals, which saw the consistent presence of women volunteers from the upper middle-class. They were also enriched by special attractions, much like an International Exhibition, and appealed to the population as areas of entertainment and “Magnificent representation(s)”, devoted to cultural rather than merchandising ventures. It is precisely the memory and background of the Araby “splendid bazaar” of 1894 that James Joyce turned into the stuff of the third short story of

35 This important excerpt was originally quoted by Heyward Ehrlich in his 1998 seminal study on the historical background of Joyce’s “Araby”, then by Stephanie Rains in her article.  
36 Thus the official catalog: “Araby 1894 / Magnificent Representation / of / an Oriental City / Cairo Donkeys & Donkey Boys / an Arab Encampment [...] ‘The Alhambra’ an Orchestra of 50 Performers”, etc.
Dubliners, creatively adapting – and distorting – both personal memories and historical and cultural contexts. Long considered an early dramatization of the young artist’s solitude and vocational call, the story shows a remarkable and thought-provoking alteration of the actual circumstances, and of the social knowledge that contemporary Dublin readers would still share of the original Araby bazaar when Dubliners was published in 1914.

The Araby bazaar was a one-week “Grand Oriental Fête” which ran from May 14th to 19th, 1894, in the Dublin suburb of Ballsbridge, and it was intended to raise funds to reduce the debt of the Dublin Jervis Hospital. It was attended by a total of between approximately 92,000 and 100,000 visitors – about one third of the Dublin population – and it employed 1,760 workers. It was officially inaugurated by the Earl of Aberdeen, in the tradition of official events of major popular impact. Not only was it structured as an Orientalist theme-park, as we would nowadays call such a diverse and rich assemblage, but it “also made a show of scientific and technological progress [...] in the displays that featured recent inventions such as the telephone concerts from Belfast, the electric search-light display and the use of electric lanterns at night [...]”. The official catalog also featured: “Magnificent Representation / of / an Oriental City/ Cairo Donkeys & Donkey Boys / an Arab Encampment [...] ‘The Alhambra’ / an Orchestra of 50 Performers” and, significantly, a firework display “by Brock of the Crystal Palace, London”, etc. All in all, according to Heyward Ehrlich, it was “a theatrical microcosm in the tradition of the nineteenth century panoramas and dioramas”.

Written at the end of 1905, when Joyce had already left Ireland and had settled in Trieste, “Araby” is the third story of Dubliners, the one concluding the ‘childhood’ section and the first to sketch a sort of juvenile portrait of the artist to be, and it presents quite a different picture of the historical referent. The young protagonist, a schoolboy of presumably twelve (Joyce’s own age at the time he visited the actual show in Dublin) is living with his aunt and uncle in a house in North Dublin, and is secretly infatuated with an unnamed girl called “Mangan’s sister” in whose presence he feels shy and awkward. When she tells him she cannot visit “Araby” on account of having to go on a school retreat, the boy promises to go and bring her a keepsake from the bazaar. From then on his mind is fixed on images of the girl and he is prey to a state of nervous anticipation

37 Which was satirised in both “Circe” and “Ithaca”. In addition, other pseudo-scientific attractions were imported, allegedly from Paris and Chicago, such as the Eiffel search-light tower, mentioned in the official catalog.


of the coming Saturday when he will finally be able to get to Araby. But his uncle, who was to give him the money for the train ticket and admission fee, doesn't get home until 9 pm, after loitering and drinking all day despite having been given due notice, and the boy reaches the bazaar at 10 pm, shortly before closing time. In the – by then – dingy atmosphere of the place, he approaches one last open stall, selling only “porcelain vases and china tea-sets” where the young lady treats him dismissively, as she is more keen on flirting with “two young gentlemen” with “English accents”. Unable to buy the promised keepsake for the girl, he leaves as the lights go down, seeing himself “as a creature driven and derided by vanity”, his eyes burning “with anguish and anger”.

The discrepancies between the historical referent and Joyce’s rendition of the bazaar are numerous and significant: to begin with, the event was not a one-day show, as the story suggests, but was run on a weekly basis, with Friday night as its culminating moment, attended by thousands of visitors rather than a few people. The transportation system was organized to support the crowds heading for Ballsbridge, and a visitor would hardly find himself “alone in a bare carriage”. The size, variety and splendour of the venue was obviously quite unlike the small, badly lit and shabby place the boy eventually finds. The magnificence of the show is somehow foreshadowed by the expectations of Mangan’s sister (“She asked me was I going to Araby. I forgot whether I answered yes or no. It would be a splendid bazaar, she said; she would love to go”), and by the boy’s imaginative musings on its resonant Orientalist charm:

The syllables of the word Araby were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me. I asked for leave to go to the bazaar on Saturday night. My aunt was surprised and hoped it was not some Freemason affair.

---

42 Joyce, *Dubliners*, 23, 24. The closing lines recall the boy and narrator’s first self-portrait as the recipient of a vocational call: “Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs’ cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers, who sang a come-all-you about O’Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes” (20). The concluding scene sees the boy empty-handed and the quest for the Holy Grail represented by the chalice is reduced to the banality of two pennies knocking against the sixpence in his pocket as the only material vestige of his thwarted experience of discovery and romance.
43 Joyce, *Dubliners*, 23.
44 Joyce, *Dubliners*, 21.
45 Joyce, *Dubliners*, 21. The allusion regards the bazaar organized by the Freemasons of Ireland in 1882 in aid of the Masonic Female Orphans School, which provoked the indictment of the Archbishop of Dublin. See Johnston, Notes to *Dubliners*, 208-209; also Rains, “Joyce’s ‘Araby’”, 19.
The orientalist theme is also conjured up by the girl’s surname which is an allusion to the Irish poet James Clarence Mangan in whose tragic, isolated life and work Joyce had identified an alternative version of Orientalism of nationalist impetus which suited his mythopoetical ambitions. Mangan had in fact been the subject of an undergraduate essay written by Joyce in 1902 and of a later lecture delivered in Trieste at the Università popolare in 1907.

A crucial aspect of these exhibitionary forms emerges from these considerations and is worth dwelling on: as previously mentioned, bazaars seemed to incorporate their profitable commercial activities within the framework of the magnificent entertainment. While, according to Ehrlich, “in his writings Joyce almost always uses bazaars to mean a place of entertainment rather than a market”, it is quite evident that the misrepresentation of the gaudy diversity and splendour of the original model into the unexpectedly sombre, squalid and small fair of the short story hinges precisely on the bitter disappointment the boy experiences when he realizes that the precious, unique keepsake he wished to buy for his sweetheart – a metonymic token of the enchanted pageant of Oriental otherness – is ultimately reduced to cheap “porcelain vases and flowered tea-sets”.

In a few minutes the train drew up beside an improvised wooden platform. I passed out on to the road and saw by the lighted dial of a clock that it was ten minutes to ten. In front of me was a large building which displayed the magical name.

I could not find any sixpenny entrance and, fearing that the bazaar would be closed, I passed in quickly through a turnstile, handing a shilling to a weary-looking man. I found myself in a big hall girdled at half its height by a gallery. Nearly all the stalls were closed and the greater part of the hall was in darkness. I recognised a silence like that which pervades a church after a service. I walked into the centre of the bazaar timidly. A few people were gathered about the stalls which were still open. Before a curtain, over which the words Cafe Chantant were written in coloured lamps, two men were counting money on a salver. I listened to the fall of the coins.

The “fall” of the coins, an overt image of materialism and commodification of spiritual values echoes the equally overt explicit symbolism of the apple tree standing in the yard where the boy used to play. The frustrated promise of the imaginary journey to the phantasmagoria of a multifariously displayed Orient is thus projected onto both the entertaining dimension and the commercial lure of the bazaar, conflating the two into

---

46 Ehrlich, “‘Araby’ in context”, 315.
47 Joyce, *Dubliners*, 25.
48 Joyce, *Dubliners*, 21.
Exhibitionary Forms in Ireland

a negative articulation of the imperial subtext. In the same way, the emblematic British commodity of the cheap porcelain ornaments and tea sets, representative of Victorian bourgeois complacency, and “obvious emblems of British colonialism”, 49 destined, as they are, to replace the exotic and unique handcrafts of the international, Oriental fair, functions as an effective objective correlative of the disappointing mystification of the Orient. The imperialist subtext is signaled by the gentlemen with English accents 50 flirting with the woman at the stall, and by the boy’s awareness of his useless pretended interest in the tawdry items of the stall:

I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real. Then I turned away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar. I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket. I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark. Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger. 51

The Irish bazaar, though, does not feature only in the “Araby” of Dubliners but reappears through a sort of dual reworking in Ulysses. The “incompletion” 52 of Joyce’s reductionist rendition of the Araby Bazaar is revisited through the appearance, in many episodes of the book, of the later and much smaller Mirus bazaar, which was transposed by Joyce from the actual dates of 31st May - 4th June 1904 to June 6th. A far less significant event, compared to the earlier “Grand Oriental Fête”, the Mirus bazaar had no specific cultural theme – its Latin name vaguely alluded to the marvels of the “scopic” vision that was conveyed by the Great Exhibition of 1851 – but was in fact more by way of being “a leisurely middle class day out”, 53 where people could shop and enjoy the conventional props of funfairs, including those firework displays, which Joyce was to use so ironically in the sexual imagery in “Nausicaa”. According to the Irish Times, the Mirus Bazaar was significantly less successful than the Araby antecedent, also on account of the difficulty in imagining new and original forms

50 S. Rains points to the fact that the women volunteers at Araby would be from the upper classes: Joyce thus seems to transpose the English accent from the woman to her male interlocutors, as if to emphasize the boy’s sense of social inferiority (Rains, “Joyce’s ‘Araby’”, 21), or rather, to evoke the idea of a masculine, aggressive British presence.
51 Joyce, Dubliners, 24.
53 Rains, Commodity Culture, 183.
of entertainment,\textsuperscript{54} as if to confirm – \emph{in parvo} – that “exhibitionary fatigue”\textsuperscript{55} which spread all over Europe during the \emph{fin de siècle} years. This partial failure makes the 1904 bazaar, which Joyce had actually visited and certainly been familiar with, a closer and more plausible model than the disappointing one-day fair depicted in “Araby”, while at the same time it functions as a connecting thread with that wider exhibitionary semantics that is so central to \emph{Ulysses}.

Of the many textual appearances of the Mirus bazaar, it is worth remembering two main (related) aspects: the orientalist fantasies and commodified simulacra and the fireworks as a synecdoche of the ephemeral social excitement produced by the event. The bazaar in \emph{Ulysses}, as a background, recurrent space of leisure and encounter, has an overtly erotic connotation, and associates the social excitement of the organized funfair with the sexual longings and tensions that pervade the narrative: the most eloquent clue to such a reading is offered by the the descriptive note in “Circe”, where the “Mirus bazaar fireworks go up from all sides with phallopysrotechnic designs”.\textsuperscript{56} While in \emph{Dubliners} bazaar Orientalism is negatively connoted, and thoroughly disappointing because it does not display authentic Oriental objects, its counterpart in \emph{Ulysses} is creatively transformed and stylized into a phantasmagorical fantasy of self-gratification, especially in the surreal and oneiric inventiveness of “Circe”. Katherine Mullin connects this significant transition in Joyce’s use of the bazaar as a cultural signifier to the “intertextual resonances of Irish Orientalism that accompany both texts.”\textsuperscript{57} while in “Araby” the young boy is unaware of Mangan’s role in forging a potentially emancipating and political vision of the (Irish) Orient, in “Circe” the Orientalist literary referent is Thomas Moore’s oriental poem \emph{Lalla Rookh}, which originated a genre of popular Irish poetry and music known as the “songs of Araby”, already an object of Joyce’s parody and criticism.\textsuperscript{58} I would also argue that what Mullin convincingly summarizes as “Joyce’s own creative journey from serious cultural critique in \emph{Dubliners} to jocose celebration of the bazaar’s kitsch aesthetics in \emph{Ulysses},”\textsuperscript{59} should be framed within Joyce’s increased concern with and \emph{mise en scène} of that culture of consumption and commodification of which bazaars were part as exhibitionary forms, also through their commercialising images and items of a mass-produced, ‘domesticated’ exotic otherness. A culture of which Joyce was an informed

\textsuperscript{54} Cited in Mullin, “Something”, 41.
\textsuperscript{55} A. C. T. Geppert, \emph{Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe} (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire-New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010).
\textsuperscript{57} Mullin, “Something”, 45.
\textsuperscript{58} Ehrlich, “Araby in context”, 322.
\textsuperscript{59} Mullin, “Something”, 45.
Exhibitionary Forms in Ireland

and fascinated interpreter, by the time he finished writing *Ulysses*, and in which he would project the bazaar as a cultural signifier.\(^{60}\)

As Rains points out, the ultimate significance of the bazaar should be examined in relation to Irish bourgeois modernity: the historical Araby bazaar exerted a widespread cultural appeal that was, primarily, connected to the bazaars’ self-conscious connections to late nineteenth-century modernity and commodity culture. The oriental and exotic themes of the bazaar decorations, goods, and costumes, as well as the clear emphasis upon spectacle, luxury, and public display, act as indicators of an urban middle class in Ireland which felt itself to be part of a broader late-nineteenth-century culture. This broader culture included, of course, consumption and commodification, and it is clear from the evidence of the bazaars alone that Dublin’s population was deeply immersed in it.\(^{61}\)

That Oriental imagery and the Orientalist discourse are central to the cultural, political construction and imagery of *Ulysses*, is too vast and debated a critical subject to be adequately included in the present study, but it is worth mentioning that the kind of orientalist fantasies and the myth of the Orient present in Joyce’s fiction were in fact ‘public’ fantasies, often centered on iconic objects (the camel, costumes, slippers, etc.) derived from orientalist European literature but also “displayed in stage adaptations such as the pantomime versions of ‘Turko the Terrible’ and expositions such as the bazaar in ‘Araby’”.\(^{62}\)

Bloom’s ongoing fantasies of the Orient have a distinctively eroticised and exotic flavor (as in the ubiquitous Orientalism in Victorian culture) and are mostly mediated and circulated by popular culture, and marked by a “a fascination with commercialized simulacra of ‘Oriental otherness’”.\(^{63}\) The oriental theme of the historical Araby bazaar embraced, as already mentioned, quite a variety of geographical and iconic associations in its replica of an Oriental city, and it is significant that these should feature, among other things, images of Moorish and Spanish exoticism – such as the Algesira Stall,

\(^{60}\) Lynne Bongiovanni points to a direct link between the 1851 archetype and the later Irish minor forms in the political role played by commodities: “As the Great Exhibition reinforced the commodity culture that supported English imperialism, the Oriental bazaars captivating Dublin near the turn of the century promoted an objectification of the Orient that encouraged colonial expansion”. L. Bongiovanni, ““Turbaned Faces Going By”: James Joyce and Irish Orientalism”, *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, 35 (October 2007): 35, last accessed 1 June 2014, http://empirestudies.com/2011/09/05/james-joyce/.

\(^{61}\) Rains, “*Joyce’s Araby*”, 22.


\(^{63}\) Mullin, “Something”, 31
run by the Galway sub-committee. This made explicit the Irish-Spanish-Moorish connection that had long been present in Ireland, and that Joyce had foregrounded by creating Molly Bloom, of Jewish-English origins, born and brought up in Gibraltar, as inspired by Galway-born, dark featured Nora Barnacle, his lifelong companion. In its heterogeneous oriental theming, then, the historical Araby is thus an important matrix for further creative reimaginings in _Ulysses_, most specifically as regards the gaudy and exotic costumes worn by women volunteers, which “along with the architectural designs of the stalls, were the principal vehicles of the bazaar’s central theme”. The image of the oriental costume appears as early as the fourth episode, “Calypso”, when Bloom makes his appearance for the first time, and his fantasies introduce the oriental theme that recurs throughout the novel precisely through the picture of an oriental bazaar, overflowing with stereotypes:

Turbaned faces going by. Dark caves of carpet shops, big man, Turko the terrible, seated crosslegged smoking a coiled pipe. Cries of sellers in the streets. Drink water scented with fennel, sherbet. Wander along all day. Might meet a robber or two. Well, meet him. Getting on to sundown.

Bloom, though, is well aware of the (pseudo-) cultural source of this circulating iconography: “Probably not a bit like it really. Kind of stuff you read: in the track of the sun. Sunburst on the titlepage. He smiled, pleasing himself”. Yet in _Ulysses_, this playful, largely fabricated, kitsch oriental/ist repertoire is, nonetheless, underscored by a sense of the Orient as an imaginary, escapist outlet for many of the tensions that racked Dublin and Irish society at the turn of the century. At the risk of oversimplifying Joyce’s faceted and ambivalent brand of Irish Orientalism, this could be said to inevitably share in the pervasive European mind-set about the Orient while imbuing it with a potentially liberating and inspirational flavor for the Irish people in their aspirations to become emancipated from British imperial rule. A parodic enactment of this orientalism also emerges in the master-slave relationship motif developed in “Circe”, where costume dressing and the reversal of gender roles that

---

64 Rains “Joyce’s ‘Araby’”, 19; Ehrlich, “’Araby’ in context”, 317.
65 Ehrlich cites the official catalog and _The Irish Times_ referring to the reconstructed city as a “city like Algeria or Granada”. Ehrlich, “’Araby’ in context”, 316.
67 Joyce, _Ulysses_, 4; 88-92.
68 Joyce, _Ulysses_, 4; 99-100.
culminates in Bloom’s transformation into “Bello” is announced by Molly’s apparition as odalisque:

(He looks up. Beside her mirage of datepalms a handsome woman in Turkish costume stands before him. Opulent curves fill out her scarlet trousers and jacket slashed with gold. A wide yellow cummerbund girdles her. A white yashmak violet in the night, covers her face, leaving free only her lace dark eyes and raven hair.)

Molly’s attire is in keeping with the traditional iconography of the irresistible odalisque, but it is interesting to remark how the detail of the camel-puppet she scolds directly recalls the poster of the Araby bazaar, where the original animal displayed at the bazaar was not live but stuffed, an emblem of the ersatz stylization of the grand Oriental pageant:

69 Joyce, Ulysses, 15; 297-302.
( [... ] A coin gleams on her forehead. On her feet are jewelled toerings. Her ankles are linked by a slender fetter chain. Beside her a camel, hooded with a turreting turban, waits. A silk ladder of innumerable rungs climbs to his bobbing howdah. He ambles near with disgruntled hindquarters. Fiercely she slaps his haunch, her goldcurb wristbangles angriling, scolding him in Moorish.)

Another occurrence of the sexualised oriental pageant that was advertised in the Dublin press and that re-emerges in “Circe” consists in the “beautiful houris” listed in the Irish Times presentation of the Araby bazaar, when Bloom, at the brothel, requires further attentions form the prostitute Zoe with “more houri, more”. A further possible textual infiltration of the historical referent lies in Bella Cohen’s name: the whoremistress who runs the brothel in Nighttown where the whole episode is set, might be reminiscent of Mrs Cohen “gipsy queen, attired in white velvet decorated with Arabian figures in red”.

“Circe” also features the Mirus bazaar, as providing entertainment for one of the minor female characters, Kitty Rickett (“O, they played that on the hobbyhorses at the Mirus bazaar!”), while the first textual occurrence of Mirus is in “Calypso”, when Bloom recalls that Molly first met her current lover, Blazes Boylan, at an earlier fundraising event which would anticipate the bazaar; then in the eighth chapter, “Lestrygonians”, Bloom, out of the National Library, sees a poster advertising the event, which thus enters the narrative through its public promotional announcement:

Hello, placard. Mirus bazaar. His excellency the lord lieutenant. Sixteenth today it is. In aid of funds for Mercer’s hospital. The Messiah was first given for that. Yes Handel. What about going out there. Ballsbridge. Drop in on Keyes. No use sticking to him like a leech. Wear out my welcome. Sure to know someone on the gate.

In addition, Bloom’s utopian fantasy of a multicultural and multi-religious Ireland, the New Bloomusalem, “a colossal edifice, with crystal roof, built in the shape of a huge
pork kidney, containing forty thousand rooms”76 is itself a clear parody of the Crystal Palace as imperial symbol.

The tenth episode, “Wandering Rocks”, the most significant experimentalist textualization of the city in *Ulysses*, follows the movements of most of the characters of the novel through nineteen discrete vignettes against the background of the journeys of the two representatives of the ecclesiastical and civil authority, Father Conmee, rector of Clongowes college (attended by Stephen Dedalus) and the Earl of Dudley, the Viceroy of Ireland, “on his way to inaugurate the Mirus bazaar”77 respectively. Don Gifford maintains that the cavalcade is a fiction, a spatial trajectory which does not correspond to Dudley’s actual hasty arrival from South Dublin;78 however, it could be surmised that Joyce had received further inspiration in devising the vice-regal cavalcade from information he might have learned about the Vice-regal Party, featuring the Lord Lieutenant the Earl of Aberdeen and the Countess of Aberdeen who inaugurated the Irish international Exhibition on May 4th 1907, and from the subsequent state visit of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, on July 10th and 11th, all of which he could have learned from the Irish press or from friends and relatives’ letters. In fact, Joyce had been aware of the relevance of the Dublin International Exhibition, as is attested to by the fact that, in an attempt to arrange a visit to Ireland, he offered to report the Exhibition for the *Corriere della Sera*, the Italian newspaper published in Milan, but his proposal was turned down.79

On the whole, if bazaars in Joyce’s fiction evoke an important association between entertainment, sexuality and, more generally, eroticism in all its frustration or degradation, this association is significant of a general attention to the symbolic potential of the expository spaces and their transformations, which had already emerged in relation to the archetype of the Great Exhibition, the Crystal Palace. Dismantled and reassembled in Sydenham, where it became a huge area of entertainment devoid of its original educational purpose, it had been the setting of a crucial chapter in an 1889 novel by George Gissing, *The Nether World*, where the two protagonists witness the collapse of their love relationship.80 In Joyce’s fiction, this thematic cluster proceeds from the frustration and disillusionment of “Araby”, with the inability on the part of the boy to find an appro-

76 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15; 1548-1549.
77 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 10; 1268-1269.
79 Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 270.
priate keepsake for his sweetheart and his discomfort in the face of the young woman’s flirting with the Englishmen, to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, where the disreputable name of bazaars is alluded to in the description of Stephen as a model youth: “He doesn’t smoke and he doesn’t go to bazaars and he doesn’t flirt”. But it is in the conflation of leisure, commodification and sexuality in “Nausicaa”, the thirteenth chapter of *Ulysses*, that such a connection finds its most complete articulation, as the indirect, visual erotic dalliance between Bloom and the young, uneducated Gerty MacDowell takes place on Sandymount shore (the by then sexualized late Victorian space of leisure), and reaches its climax with Bloom’s masturbation and Gerty’s ecstatic exposure of her body, at the moment when the fireworks of the Mirus bazaar explode in the air.

[...]

In the nuanced, complexly voyeuristic and vicarious nature of the relationship between Bloom and Gerty, this section of the episode comes as a fulfilment of Gerty’s narcissistic fantasies – satirically conveyed by the internally focalized narrative through the mawkish, conventional language of cheap popular novelettes and women’s magazines, which Gerty has uncritically absorbed. Gerty in fact has been introduced to the reader


82 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13; 715-733, 736-740.
Exhibitionary Forms in Ireland

at the beginning of the chapter through an internal focalization which represents, as Thomas Richards proclaimed, “the first text in literary or cultural history to register in great detail the impact of advertising on consciousness”.

83

But who was Gerty?

Gerty MacDowell who was seated near her companions, lost in thought, gazing far away into the distance, was in very truth as fair a specimen of winsome Irish girlhood as one could wish to see. She was pronounced beautiful by all who knew her though, as folks often said, she was more a Giltrap than a MacDowell. Her figure was slight and graceful, inclining even to fragility but those iron jelloids she had been taking of late had done her a world of good much better than the Widow Welch’s female pills and she was much better of those discharges she used to get and that tired feeling.

84

Gerty was dressed simply but with the instinctive taste of a votary of Dame Fashion for she felt that there was just a might that he might be out. A neat blouse of electric blue, selftinted by dolly dyes (because it was expected in the Lady’s Pictorial that electric blue would be worn), with a smart vee opening down to the division and kerchief pocket (in which she always kept a piece of cottonwool scented with her favourite perfume because the handkerchief spoiled the sit) and a navy threequarter skirt cut to the stride showed off her slim graceful figure to perfection. She wore a coquettish little love of a hat of wideleaved nigger straw contrast trimmed with an underbrim of eggblue chenille and at the side a butterfly bow to tone. All Tuesday week afternoon she was hunting to match that chenille but at last she found what she wanted at Clery’s summer sales, the very it, slightly shopsoiled but you would never notice, seven fingers two and a penny. She did it up all by herself and what joy was hers when she tried it on then, smiling at the lovely reflection which the mirror gave back to her! And when she put it on the waterjug to keep the shape she knew that that would take the shine out of some people she knew. Her shoes were the newest thing in footwear (Edy Boardman prided herself that she was very petite but she never had a foot like Gerty MacDowell, a five, and never would ash, oak or elm) with patent toecaps and just one smart buckle at her higharched instep. Her wellturned ankle displayed its perfect proportions beneath her skirt and just the proper amount and no more of her shapely limbs encased in finespun hose with high spliced heels and wide garter tops.

85

In her self-conscious identification of personality with the dictates of modern fashion and consumer culture, Gerty is patently unaware of the structures and social forces which determine her self-perception and mind-set. And, significantly, her narrative seems to

83 Richards, Commodity Culture, 210.

84 Joyce, Ulysses, 13; 78-87.

85 Joyce, Ulysses, 13; 148-187.
hinge on a catalog-like enumeration of brand names and slogans, assimilated through advertising, which ignores syntax, and which recalls the intuition of advertisers who had “as early as the Great Exhibition, seen grammar as an impediment to establishing a bond between consumer and commodity”. Gertie thinks of the objects which “fashion” herself – pairing them with physical features – as items enveloped by a “materialist spirituality”, which have seeped into language, and, in their turn, shape the world for her. Richards diagnoses in Gertie “a thoroughgoing psychological assimilation of the practices, methods, aims, and spirit of the commodity culture in its Irish form”. Her role – introduced by the question “But who was Gertie?” – is also proleptic of the enumerative tour de force and descriptivism of “Ithaca”, and in keeping with Bloom’s ongoing sensory and verbal relationship with material objects and commodities. Thus, the (visual and erotic) exhibitionism at play in the episode is in fact revelatory of the growing spectacularization of advertising, which had seen the gendered body, especially the female body, become “the prevailing icon of commodity culture”. And, what is more, it can be read as a private enactment of that dynamic of seeing and being seen (watching and being watched) that has characterized the development of technologies of vision in expository semantics. An enactment in which the Foucauldian functions of spectacle and surveillance seem to be parodically deflated. That this exhibitionist performance should take place against the background of the Sandymount strand reminds us of the pairing of young women’s bodies as sex objects with leisure areas that became a characteristic of Victorian seaside resorts which had turned into “Crystal Palaces for the libido”.

If the “Nausicaa” episode is the most important Joycean representation of the impact of commodity culture and its related sphere of advertising on individual consciousness, it is by no means an isolated case, since the whole of Ulysses signals the centrality of commodities and objects in the modern city, and thrives on the complexity and the ambivalences of capitalist and consumer culture in the context of the “Hibernian metropolis” at the beginning of the twentieth century, offering a crucial literary inscription of the dominant forms of representation that sustained them.

In so doing, Joyce uses representational techniques, modes and allusions which are, to a large extent, related to exhibitionary semantics, and in the phantasmagoria of commodities which permeates the overall narrative fabric of the novel, two aspects in particular ring a distinctively “expository bell”: the dynamic of circulation applied to commodities and the enumerative and descriptive rhetoric of the catalog, which was

---

86 Richards, Commodity Culture, 214.
87 Richards, Commodity Culture, 218.
88 Richards, Commodity Culture, 205.
89 Richards, Commodity Culture, 228.
also employed in department stores. Thus, the very conjuring of objects out of existence through the rhetorical and linguistic modes employed by the commodity culture of the time becomes a structuring principle and a focus of interest, against the background of Joyce’s abiding concern with the rhetorical trope of *enumeratio*, clearly a staple of the encyclopedic model.90 In the final, famous illustration to Henry Mayhew’s 1851 comic novel (*The Adventures of Mr and Mrs Sandboys and Family, who came up to London to “enjoy themselves” and to see the Great Exhibition*), entitled “The Dispersion of the Works of All Nations from the Great Exhibition of 1851”, a number of sprawling objects floats up toward the sky against the background of the Crystal Palace: this ‘extroflected’, centrifugal outlet of the unlimited reproduction of all the material achievements of modern civilization originally contained in the Great Exhibition is one of the most fascinating and enduring icons that the event bequeathed to the cultural imagination. And this idea of the diffusive circulation of goods and commodities that impact on Bloom, himself an ad-man, an advertising canvasser, and all the other Dubliners is central to Joyce’s representation and criticism of the political condition of Ireland as being – largely unconsciously – complicit with England’s imperial politics, precisely through the consumption of its imported colonial goods and their related advertising. Conversely, middle-class commodity culture in twentieth-century Ireland was among those other aspects of the cultural and social life of the country which were involved in the process of defining Irish national identity.91 Thus, much in the same way that Gertie Mc Dowell’s “pure” Irish beauty is ultimately the effect of British advertised manufactured products,92 the grand parade of imported edible goods that Gabriel Conroy contemplates at the dinner of “The Dead” is a visual (‘scopic’) assemblage that enumerates commodities of imperial provenance, symbols of affluence and abundance which bear the traces of their colonial origin through the allusive military imagery of the “rival ends”, “sentries”, “uniforms”, “squad”, “sashes”:

> A fat brown goose lay at one end of the table and at the other end, on a bed of creased paper strewn with sprigs of parsley, lay a great ham, stripped of its outer skin and peppered over with crust crumbs, a neat paper frill round its shin and beside this was a round of spiced beef. Between these rival ends ran parallel lines of

---


91 Rains, *Commodity Culture*, 198.

side-dishes: two little minsters of jelly, red and yellow; a shallow dish full of blocks of blancmange and red jam, a large green leaf-shaped dish with a stalk-shaped handle, on which lay bunches of purple raisins and peeled almonds, a companion dish on which lay a solid rectangle of Smyrna figs, a dish of custard topped with grated nutmeg, a small bowl full of chocolates and sweets wrapped in gold and silver papers and a glass vase in which stood some tall celery stalks. In the centre of the table there stood, as sentries to a fruit-stand which upheld a pyramid of oranges and American apples, two squat old-fashioned decanters of cut glass, one containing port and the other dark sherry. On the closed square piano a pudding in a huge yellow dish lay in waiting and behind it were three squads of bottles of stout and ale and minerals, drawn up according to the colours of their uniforms, the first two black, with brown and red labels, the third and smallest squad white, with transverse green sashes.\(^{93}\)

By appreciating and consuming the material gratification and hospitality symbolized by the decked table, unaware of their economic and political implications, Gabriel Conroy’s self-congratulatory, complacent attitude is further revealed as indicative of Irish urban middle-class lack of critical and political conscience.

Furthermore, the seductive power of goods and commodities, the Benjaminesque fetishism of the commodity is nuanced and filtered through Joyce’s typical irony when one considers that Bloom the consumer and ad-man ultimately buys very little in the whole novel: although he is steeped in a visual and verbal contemplation of the object-world, in *Ulysses* he actually only purchases some cheap food (though imported, but not colonial, burgundy and gorgonzola sandwich) and a soap, and the talismanic fetish he carries in his pocket is a potato eventually fused into a “potatosoap” in “Circe”. He sensuously contemplates the windows of the most elegant department store in Dublin, but can only let himself be carried away by the sexual, orientalist fantasies these objects trigger off:


\(^{93}\) Joyce, *Dubliners*, 154-155.
High voices. Sunwarm silk. Jingling harnesses. All for a woman, home and houses, silk webs, silver, rich fruits, spicy from Jaffa. Agendath Netaim. Wealth of the world. A warm human plumpness settled down on his brain. His brain yielded. Perfume of embraces all him assailed. With hungered flesh obscurely, he mutely craved to adore.\textsuperscript{94}

The impossibility of actual purchase and consumption in the context of the fetishization of commodities, thus, indirectly recalls the model of the Great Exhibition, where the spectacle of all the assembled commodities would capture the visitors’ interest and imagination, but would not be accessed by purchase.

To conclude, then, even a cursory overview of the structural features of \textit{Ulysses} confirms Joyce’s interest in that network of heritage institutions that shaped the ideas of the nation and of citizenship which Tony Bennett conceptualised under the heading of “exhibitionary complex”,\textsuperscript{95} comprised by “Institutions, [...] not of confinement but of exhibition, forming a complex of disciplinary and power relations”. As evidence of that “ambition towards a specular dominance over a totality”, international exhibitions played a major role in the development of the exhibitionary complex, and “sought to make the whole world, past and present, metonymically available in the assemblages of objects and peoples they brought together”;\textsuperscript{96} and such a metonymic grand assemblage of people, nations, cultures, objects, is a structural and defining character of \textit{Ulysses}. Indeed, Joyce’s work appears to be specifically concerned with those aspects of the development of the exhibitionary complex which are “the tendency for society itself – in its constituent parts and as a whole – to be rendered as a spectacle. This was particularly clear”, Bennett reminds, “in attempts to render the city visible, and hence knowable, as a totality”, even through the public inspection of its non-public sites, in view of “an imaginary dominance over the city, an illusory rather than substantive controlling vision”.\textsuperscript{97} An aspiration which – finding an artistic equal in the narrative medium – makes one think of the kathabasis of “Hades” where Bloom follows Paddy Dignam’s funeral procession and plunges into an imaginary visitation of the very material world of the dead, or of the visit to the maternity ward at the hospital in “Oxen of the Sun”. The fourteenth chapter is also, to some extent, itself an unparalleled linguistic and stylistic

\textsuperscript{94} Joyce, \textit{Ulysses}, 8; 620-639.
\textsuperscript{95} “The institutions comprising ‘the exhibitionary complex’ [...] were involved in the transfer of objects and bodies from the enclosed and private domains in which they had previously been displayed (but to a restricted public) into progressively more open and public arenas where, through the representations to which they were subjected, they formed vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power (but of a different type) throughout society”. T. Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex”, \textit{The Birth of the Museum} (London: Routledge, 1995), 60-61.
\textsuperscript{96} Bennett, “Exhibitionary Complex”, 79.
\textsuperscript{97} Bennett, “Exhibitionary Complex”, 65-66.
Roberta Gefter Wondrich

exhibition where Joyce literally constructs a museum of the English language through a chain of seamless parodies and pastiche of English prose, from Anglo-Saxon to the twentieth-century styles, divided into nine parts which bear references to earlier parts of the book and which also allude to the nine months gestation of the foetus. And this unparalleled, obscure tour de force which parodies an encyclopedia of literary and scientific knowledge is in fact a celebration of the great Irish writer’s revenge on the supremacy of the colonizer’s language and culture.

As an essential institution that features in the exhibitionary complex, the museum also appears as a physical location and important representational space in the eighth episode, “Lestrygonians”, where Bloom seeks psychological shelter and inspects the plaster casts of naked figures in the entrance rotunda of the Dublin Museum, “then officially known as the Museum of Science and Art”.98 In the following “Scylla and Charybdis”, the setting switches to yet another institutional space of disciplined knowledge, that of the National Library, where Stephen Dedalus expounds his brilliant theory about Shakespeare.

Ultimately, then, as the unsurpassed modernist summa of the complexity of the modern city, together with Benjamin’s *Arcades Project*, Joyce’s *Ulysses* can also testify to the progressive conceptualization of the ‘city as exhibition’ itself, which has characterized the evolution of expository semantics in Europe. In *Ulysses* the “Hibernian metropolis” of Dublin is on perpetual display: watched, objectified, turned into a spectacle, peopled by a crowd, it is rendered itself a spectacle of sorts through Bloom’s flaneurish gaze, and through the orchestration of the “the arranger” (the impersonal omniscient narrative voice which alternates with the internal focalization and interior monologues).

If the “popular metaphor” of “the exhibition as a vast picture-book of encyclopaedic scope”99 is, to date, among the most abiding and persuasive in the collective imagination, Joyce’s famous definition of *Ulysses* as “a kind of encyclopaedia”100 should not be overlooked as a substantial connection to the comprehensive scope of the exhibitionary enterprise.101 That Joyce’s own encyclopaedia should be based on cultural hybridization and on the intentional undermining of a unitary cultural identity, and that it should thus avoid both the full endorsement of Irish nationalism and the acceptance of English imperialism aligns it rather with a later, less self-celebratory phase of the expository syntax.

Joyce’s familiarity with and interest in exhibitionary semantics as a whole has, thus far,
only indirectly been considered by some of his numerous and ever-proliferating critical acolytes, yet it has probably not been adequately investigated beyond the bazaar and the commodities/advertising connections, so that further arcades and sections may still remain to be explored. As mentioned, Joyce ostensibly never attended an international Exhibition, and missed the Dublin one of 1907; even so, his unique picture-book is definitely among the most enduring and totalizing expressions of the early twentieth-century modern object-world.
To the Olinsky Family

I. Premise

In recent historiography, the international, world and universal exhibitions have been rediscovered and dealt with as cultural artifacts, as systems capable of working on multiple, interconnected levels and that, drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept, have been described as fleeting “isomorphous chronotopes”.\(^1\) In the last decade, in particular, historians’ growing interest in this particular field of research can be explained by the impact these expositions had in the West, and by the fact that they provide illuminating historical precedents as regards the process of globalization and contemporary visual-virtual worlds. On the model of the first Great Exhibition of London in 1851 and the 1867 Exposition Universelle of Paris, it is instructive to take into consideration the physiognomy that these exhibitions took on in the political and cultural climate of the central European powers. The exposition that took place in Vienna in 1873 was the fifth chronologically and the first ever in the German language area. As it would be seen some years later in the Berlin Exposition of 1879 – smaller in scale but not in importance – the Vienna Exhibition set out to show a network of international relations at a global level into which they endeavored to collocate the Central European powers which had, nonetheless, an almost negligible weight in colonial initiatives as compared to those of England and France. In the case of the Wiener Weltausstellung moreover, it is worthwhile

stellungen, Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO), hrsg. von Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG), Mainz 2013-06-20, last accessed 1 June 2014, http://www.ieg-ego.eu/gepperta-2013-de. I would like to thank Guido Abbattista, Moritz Csáky and Giorgio Negrelli for their reading of the manuscript and Gabrielle Barfoot for the English version.
to single out certain phenomena that were typically Oriental within the overall complex of the Exposition, especially given the fact that it was the first ever to open up to the cultural dimensions of the Far East. However, as it has often been noted, the colonial-imperialistic aspect that was an integral part of the most varied exhibitions of otherness typical of the nineteenth century – and subsequent – expositions does not seem, at first glance, to be the most salient component of the Vienna case.

Nevertheless, certain specific details that can be attributed to an issue that is, by extension, colonial, can be pinpointed in this case too. In recent times a rereading of the cultural and literary history of the Austro-Hungarian Empire has been proposed that takes leave of the Central European categories and the revision of them introduced by the Habsburg myth in favor of testing a conceptual set of instruments deduced from postcolonial studies.

In Central Europe the Vielvölkerstaat, although devoid of a colonial past as such, was, in fact, at various stages of its history, crisscrossed by processes of homogenization and unification in which there were implicit aspects of colonialism that were not merely cultural. In the nineteenth century the most notable example of this was provided by the policy of centralization and Germanization put into practice by Emperor Joseph II. Later, primarily in the second half of the nineteenth century, under the thrust of modernization, the linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural plurality that characterized the Empire certainly underwent a wide variety of hybridization and contamination, however it also produced within itself new cultural differentiations, often constructed on narratives organized around national collective identities. Hence, if the Wiener Weltausstellung of 1873 featured, as we shall see presently, as the setting for a new imperial mission, how was the exhibition perceived and dealt with in those areas of the Empire where the German element was not


3 P. Plener, Sehnsüchte einer Weltausstellung – Wien 1873, last accessed 1 June 2014, http://www.ka-

in the majority? How, in particular, was it viewed in an essentially peripheral or, in other words, ‘external’ and ‘different’ center vis-à-vis Vienna, such as Trieste?

The Vienna Exhibition, in fact, took place during a crucial phase in the history of Trieste, the Adriatic port of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The great season of the harmonious coexistence between the various ethnic, linguistic, national and religious components that had followed the establishing in 1719 of the free port as an emporium of international status thus began to wane. The uprisings of 1848 did not lead to particularly painful consequences with regard to the pluralistic identity of the city, but at that point in Trieste new national identities were definitely taking shape. Furthermore, a financial crisis of far-reaching proportions hit the city and seemed to call into question the very basis of its economy. Thus began the end of the developing phase based on the emporium and the commercial and financial brokerings linked to it. Above all as far as the Italian component was concerned, the proclamation in 1861 of the Kingdom of Italy, with its serious economic repercussions on the traffic of Trieste as a port, marked a split with respect to the past. Within the ruling elite – heterogeneous as regards its components but united up until then as regards the objectives of civic development – a rupture took place between the Habsburg Loyalists and those who supported, although not yet in a disruptive form, pro-Italian separatism,\(^5\) who were still firmly concerned with the municipal traditions of Trieste.\(^6\)

What then was the impact of the Vienna Exhibition on a city that was going through a period of profound change? To what extent did the incipient political-nationalistic elements affect the considerable participation of Trieste in the Exhibition? What characteristics of the city principally came to the fore and what aspects of its physiognomy were most evident? What aspects of the city’s economic and social life did the exhibition act as a catalyst with an outlook on the future?

In an effort to answer these questions, an invaluable source to draw on is the *Triester Zeitung*, the most influential German language daily newspaper in Trieste, and indeed of the whole Habsburg area. Throughout 1873, in connection with the Vienna Exhibition, the paper published a wide selection of feuillets, articles, correspondence and notifications, providing information on the great event and on the local initiatives related to it. Hence, the prominent place assigned to the first Central European *Weltausstellung* in the Trieste paper cast a new light on a reality that, though ‘peripheral’, was of strategic importance to

---


the Empire – a light which should not be neglected as it has been up until now. Indeed, by now a consistent line of international research exists on the corpus of numerous German language periodicals published outside the German language area as such. This corpus became accessible only after the fall of the Berlin wall in those countries that were part of the Eastern Bloc and that had for several centuries been subject to the Habsburg domination. It is precisely in relation to the *Wiener Weltausstellung*, for example, that the publicity correspondence of the Budapest *Pester Lloyd*, the most important Hungarian financial paper in German, has been recently studied, thus providing a different viewpoint from that of the central government of Vienna. Yet, another reason, therefore, to investigate the analogous case represented by the *Triester Zeitung*.

II. The City and the Exhibition: The Vienna Case

What were the most salient features of the Vienna Exhibition to which the city of Trieste paid so much attention in its German language newspaper? A brief summary of an event still relatively ignored in the German speaking area in comparison to the Berlin Exhibition, is called for. Inaugurated on May 1, 1873 by the Emperor Franz Joseph and

---

7 *Deutschsprachige Öffentlichkeit und Presse in Mittelost- und Südosteuropa (1848-1948)*, hrsg. von A. Corbea-Hoisie, I. Lihaci, A. Rubel (Kostanz: Hartung-Gorre, 2008); *Grenzdiskurse. Zeitungen deutschsprachiger Minderheiten und ihr Feuilleton in Mitteleuropa bis 1939*, hrsg. von S. Schönborn (Essen: Klartext, 2009). In all its scope and spatial-temporal articulation, the corpus of the German language periodicals circulating outside the German speaking area has only recently emerged. German and Austrian scholar tendencies have given precedence to the phenomenon in the countries of the ex-Soviet area which accounts for the numerous studies on the Czech-German, Croatian-German, Rumanian-German, etc. cultural transference.

For a systematic sorting of this impressive corpus: cf. C. Müller, “ANNO Austrian Newspapers Online-Eine Zeitungs-Massendigitalisierungs-Initiative der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek”, *Deutschsprachige Öffentlichkeit und Presse*, hrsg. von Corbea-Hoisie, Lihaci and Rubel, 529-541; see also: ANNO, Austrian Newspaper Online, last accessed 1 June 2014, http://anno.onb.ac.at/. The Zeitungsabteilung of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, the largest journalistic archives in German, has started a program of digitalization: last accessed 1 June 2014, http://zevfs.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de. In this field of international research, studies on the periodicals of Habsburg Trieste are significant for their absence. This neglect may perhaps be attributed to their apparently less exotic appeal as compared to the many recently rediscovered East European centers.


closed on November 2 of the same year, the Vienna Exhibition took place at a time when the Imperial capital and residential city (according to its official title) was living to the utmost the splendor of the liberal era of the so-called Gründerzeit (Foundation Years). It occurred paradoxically in coincidence with the dramatic Vienna stock exchange crash of May 1873 soon to be followed in October by the New York crack and the following global economic crisis that put an end to the Gründerzeit itself. After the Ausgleich (Compromise) reached with Hungary in 1867, a more relaxed and positive atmosphere had taken hold in the city, in part encouraged, on the economic level, by the contemporary so-called Wundernte (a year of extraordinary harvests). The Exhibition, therefore, provided a great opportunity for the German speaking Trieste bourgeoisie to show that it was keeping up with the times before international public opinion and for the city to transform itself to all effects into a world metropolis. The Wiener Weltausstellung, together with the previous English and French exhibitions and the universal expositions in general, shared certain basic motifs – from the cult of the progress of civilization to the principle of competition among the great powers, to the logic of outdoing rivals overtaking them in quantity and quality standards. More interesting, however, are other particular elements. From the outset, the conditions Vienna offered to foreign visitors were much less favorable, as compared what London and Paris had been able to set up. The city lacked a hotel system that was adequate for the occasion of the Exhibition and the road and transport systems were obsolete. From this emerges what is, perhaps, the most salient feature of the Vienna event: the occurrence of the Exhibition and the urban re-shaping interacted on carrying out a grandiose rethinking of the raison d’être of the old multinational State structure.

As stages for global settings in limited territorial units, the universal exhibitions inevitably ended up attributing a specific, dramatic role to the host city. The Weltausstellung of 1873 marked a radical change in the urban image of Vienna. Announced in 1857, the project for the demolition of the medieval bastions and the opening of the Ringstrasse was moved up for the occasion of the Exhibition and, at the same time, the impressive infrastructural transformation that the project entailed made the layout of the Weltausstellung possible. Throughout its duration the Exhibition was shrewdly exploited to display the works in progress and the plans for urban development to the citizens of the Empire and to foreign visitors. It was no accident that the many public events scheduled alongside the Vienna Exhibition included many ceremonies connected with the laying of the first stone of important public buildings.

In this restyling operation, which redefined the historic city structure in favor of the Hausmann-style avenues of the *Ring*, some decisive factors emerged aiding in the construction of a new national consciousness or, in other words, of a redefinition of the Habsburg centrality. The non verbal discourse of architecture plays an important role in the standardizing process coherent with the intentions of the Central Powers. The push toward homogenization and the desire to establish an inherently colonial relationship between the city center and the periphery finds expression in the creation of a ‘universal Habsburg style’. Following the solutions put into place on a vast scale for Vienna’s numerous public buildings – both in the ‘Crown countries’ and in the recently acquired ones –, were erected in this ‘universalistic’ style based on the great architectural examples of the past and which only afterwards were charged with nationalistic meanings.12 The

---

display of historical styles in the monuments of the Ringstrasse (Gothic for the City Hall, Neoclassic for the parliament buildings, Neo-Renaissance for the Opera House) acted in turn as a universal exhibition which made the past usable, reducing it to a material citation. Kultur became the password launched by the organizers.\textsuperscript{13} The Vienna Exhibition was the first ever to envision a space for historical-cultural themes. A re-proposal of the Habsburg tradition was also confirmed by the choice for the exhibition site: a section of the Prater, the Crown hunting reserve transformed by Joseph II into a public park that soon became the traditional place of relaxation for the Viennese. There, in homage to the logic of grandeur and of technological progress, the Rotunda was erected to house the exhibition that was soon to be proudly proclaimed as the largest dome in the world.\textsuperscript{14} The crown of the Austrian Emperor stood out at the

\textsuperscript{13} Pemsel, \textit{Die Wiener Weltpolettung}, 14, 60-74.
\textsuperscript{14} See illustration on the previous page: the Rotunda in its advanced construction, and on this page: the inside of the Rotunda.
summit, and an analogy is suggested between the protection provided by the enormous roof and the protective mantle that the Emperor extended over all the peoples in his Empire. At the same time, by marking the centrality of the Habsburg capital, the Rotunda signaled the spatial distribution of the national sections present in the Exhibition: Austria and Germany at the center, and the other nations situated at the Eastern and Western sides according to the place they occupied on the geographical map in relation to Vienna.

According to the foreign policy intentions of the Viennese government, the decision to hold the Exhibition corresponded with the Habsburg Empire’s strategic urgency to redefine and reinforce its State structure on the European and Central European stage, following the heavy defeats it had suffered in 1859 at the hands of the Franco-Piedmont troops, and in 1866 at the hands of Prussia. With the proclamation of the German Reich in 1871, the traditional Austrian hostility toward Prussia seemed substantially diminished. If the Paris Exposition of 1867 had already come across as a sort of political summit, the same feature was further stressed at the Vienna Exhibition, marked as it was by numerous State visits, such as the one by Victor Emanuel II, the first Italian sovereign to set foot in Austria. Disappointments, however, occurred all the same. The speculative ambitions bound up with the Exhibition and the highly inflated expectations of an economic return of the enormous real estate and infrastructural investments heralded in an extremely grave financial crisis. The stock exchange crack of May 9, 1873 – just a few days after the inauguration of the Exhibition – marked the advent of a long depression. In August a cholera epidemic broke out, and from a purely economic point of view the final balance of the Vienna Exhibition was far from rosy: it recorded a deficit of 17 million gulden.

III. The Triester Zeitung

It comes as no surprise that the Triester Zeitung threw itself wholeheartedly into covering the Exhibition. Indeed, the press paid the utmost attention to the event throughout the Empire. In Vienna, in particular, great care was taken in providing channels of communication. The organizing committee saw to the publication of an

---

15 Plener, Sehnsüchte einer Weltausstellung – Wien 1873, 2.
16 The Hungarian nationalists were favourable to the improvement of the Austro-Prussian relationships, since they saw in the Wilhelmine Reich a possible ally against Czarist Russia; in Vienna, among the milieus of the army, the clergy and the state bureaucracy, the hostility against the Prussians abode; Pemsel, Die Wiener Weltausstellung, 83.
official body of information, the *Weltausstellungscorrespondenz.* The editorial staff of the most influential newspapers of Vienna and the provinces were put on the alert, as was the press in Trieste.

Since March 1851, the *Triester Zeitung* had been commenting for a good sixty-seven years (the paper closed down in November 1918) on the development of the port of Trieste. The newspaper, in fact, had been closely tied up with the fortunes of the port from the very start. Founded according to the wishes of Karl Ludwig von Bruck, the paper definitively took the place of the *Journal des Österreichischen Lloyd*, the information sheet of the great Lloyd’s navigation society of the Empire and the Mediterranean, founded in 1835 in Trieste. All this accounts for the amount of space dedicated to news relating to the world of economics and to political themes, insofar as these impinged on commercial and financial activities. Later on coverage followed local events in Trieste also including references to the arts and literature, with particular attention the cultural life of the German-speaking community. Subsidized by the state, the *Triester Zeitung*,

17 Two subsequent editions were directed at those who were unable to visit the Exhibition: the *Wiener Weltausstellungs-Zeitung* and the *Allgemeine Illustrierte Weltausstellungs-Zeitung*; cf. Pemsel, *Die Wiener Weltausstellung*, 93.

18 The *Triester Zeitung* is held in the “Archivio diplomatico” (Diplomatic Archive), “Direzione di Polizia” (Police Administration) of the Trieste City Public Library “A. Hortis” and in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna. All the excerpts from this newspaper are hereafter quoted with the title, when available, followed by the abbreviation TZ, with the specification of year, number, date and page number. The publication officially ceased in November 1918, but since Italy’s entry in the World War I in May 1915, the *Triester Zeitung* was replaced by the *Triester Tagblatt*, already recorded as a morning daily publication.

19 The German language press, particularly flourishing in Trieste, one of the most important multicultural Habsburg centers, has, to date, been systematically ignored. On Trieste and the Classic see A. Ara e C. Magris, *Trieste. Un’identità di frontiera* (Turin: Einaudi, 1982). A specific study on the history of German culture in Trieste, rich in information and that aims at popularizing the subject is S. de Lugnani, *La cultura tedesca a Trieste dalla fine del 1700 al tramonto dell’Impero Asburgico* (Trieste: Edizioni Italo Svevo, 1986), 50-51; only a few pages about Trieste in the context of very wide analysis on the Habsburg cities can be found in M. Csáky, *Das Gedächtnis der Städte. Kulturelle Verflechtungen – Wien und die urbanen Milieus in Zentraleuropa* (Wien-Weimar: Böhlau, 2010), 314-319; see also the entry: M. C. Foi, “Trieste”, *Atlante della letteratura tedesca*, a c. di F. Fiorentino e G. Sampaolo (Macerata: Quodlibet 2009), 360-366.


notwithstanding its pro-government stance, was inclined to follow its own autonomous line,\textsuperscript{22} which tended to a well-balanced liberalism attentive to national issues and, above all, to the multinational context of its Trieste readers, who were certainly not limited to the German-speaking community. One cannot help being struck, as a proof of the truly noteworthy international slant of the newspaper and of the city, by the vast network of foreign correspondents from London, Paris, Constantinople and Saint Petersburg to as far afield as Sofia and the Levant.

In terms of their quantity and type, the articles dedicated to the \textit{Wiener Weltausstellung} are impressively numerous and varied: leafing through the editions of the paper relating to the year 1873, we come across brief announcements, contributions from local journalists, direct correspondences from Vienna, two types of \textit{feuilletons} that cover the period in which the Exhibition was open and a series of special reports in serial form, dedicated respectively to the army, navy, real estate and transport.

\textbf{IV. How was Trieste represented in Vienna?}

What did the \textit{Wiener Weltausstellung} mean for Trieste? Two articles dated January 15 and February 11 allow us to grasp the main issues. In the first, an original piece from Vienna – unsigned as was almost always the case – is an announcement stating that the Prater probably will not make space available for the Navy.\textsuperscript{23} According to the anonymous correspondent, that refusal would mean missing the chance to exhibit the progress of maritime and nautical sciences, especially as far as military applications were concerned. He expresses the hope that the Italian shipbuilders would do their best in order that their interests would not be damaged by the decision to exclude the military section of the marine. The second is a short article written by the editorial team and sent – like the first – to the \textit{Deutsche Zeitung}.\textsuperscript{24} It makes the following points: if the participation of Trieste in the Exhibition should not be as considerable as one might justifiably expect for the leading commercial emporium of the Empire, it would be well to remember that Trieste was not an industrial but a commercial city whose industrial production was limited to relatively few articles. Nonetheless the Trieste exhibitors would be favored in their undertaking if the organizing committee would provide more definite information about the timetable and methods of the Exhibition. These were

\textsuperscript{22} It is not a chance that in the “Direzione di Polizia” (Police Administration) classified acts in the Trieste State Archive there are copies of cases brought against the editorial staff of the newspaper which was, evidently under close surveillance.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Die österreichische Marine auf der Wiener Weltausstellung}, TZ, XXIII, 11 (15. Januar 1873), 3.

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Triest auf der Weltausstellung}, TZ, XXIII, 34 (11. Februar 1873), 3.
the valid arguments to be put forward against possible criticisms about the negligible presence of the Trieste industrialists in Vienna.

Reading these articles between the lines, it is not difficult to pinpoint references to some burning issues in the Trieste contemporary public debate. Indeed, the well known crisis of the free ports in Europe, which by then were inadequate to deal with the volume of traffic between producing and consuming countries, had induced the Viennese government in 1867 to finance the construction of a new extended railway and port complex. This action – which was resisted by those who in the loss of duty-free privileges saw an attack on the deep-seated *raisons d’être* of the community – was the first step in a strategic transformation of Trieste from an emporium city to a great, modern, international port of call.\(^\text{25}\) The economic consequences of this substantial public intervention for such a project evidently reinforced the reasons of the pro-Habsburg party. Conversely, within the town council the project was cause for alarm for the separatist party in that it came across as a maneuver by the imperial power aimed at depriving Trieste of its economic prerogatives.\(^\text{26}\) This, in short, was the backdrop against which the articles of the *Triester Zeitung* must be situated. The newspaper hailed the *Wiener Weltausstellung* as an opportunity, challenge Trieste had to accept in order to affirm its new political-economic strategy, to stimulate local productive forces and to increase the political significance of the State intervention in the dialectic between the Austrian capital and the Italian periphery.

V. The Local Actors

How did the local actors respond to this challenge? What was the attitude of that most important Trieste institution, the Chamber of Commerce, representative of the city’s economic-financial elite? Reformed in 1868 with the absorption of the Borsa di Commercio (Commercial Stock Exchange), the task of the Chamber of Commerce was to coordinate the local economic actors providing them with consultation, information and assistance.

Mirroring the political contrast between the Loyalist and the Separatist parties in the Town Council, in 1872 the Chamber of Commerce saw an important change in its management. The *Triester Zeitung* of 18 January 1872 did not hesitate in reporting


\(^{26}\) Millo, “Un porto fra centro e periferia”, 195.
the minutes of the meeting called to elect the new president for the year 1873. The pro-Italian party candidate Solomon de Parente took over from the Baron Giuseppe Morpurgo. This seemed to mark the exit from the scene of the great entrepreneurs with their international aspirations, their dealings with the great European counterparts and excellent relations with the Central Powers.

Considering the tireless activity of the Chamber of Commerce under the presidency of de Parente to guarantee the presence of Trieste at the *Wiener Weltausstellung*, the impression of a possible disengagement of the city from the imperial policies should perhaps be put into perspective. Together with other members of his influential family, Giuseppe Morpurgo himself engaged in an indefatigable effort to promote the Trieste exhibitors in Vienna. Leaving aside political differences, the various members of the Trieste ruling class found themselves united in a noteworthy organizational effort. It is enough to leaf through the numerous short articles in the *Triester Zeitung*, which diligently reported the names of private citizens and of larger and smaller firms offering financial support for the Vienna Exhibition, in order to see firsthand to the unanimity of effort on the part of the various factions.

From the months preceding the opening of the Vienna Exhibition, the Trieste newspaper witnessed the wide spectrum of activities carried out by the Chamber of Commerce. These ranged from the agendas of its meetings and the decisions reached by the Executive Committee – which included representatives from Gorizia and Istria nominated by the Chamber of Commerce – to the organizational coordination of the requests of the exhibitors, as well as the selection of the jurors who would confer prizes on the best exhibitors, the setting up in Vienna of an agency of the local executive committee, the decision to produce a bilingual final report and the admission of

---


29 The Participation of Tunis with a pavilion to the the Exhibition was made possible by Marcus Morpurgo de Nilma. See Pemsel, *Die Wiener Weltausstellung*, 49; *Weltausstellung 1873*, TZ, XXIII, 32 (8. Februar 1873), 3.


32 Beschlüsse des Executivcomités für die Wiener Weltausstellung in der am. 31 März d. J. abgehaltenen Sitzung, TZ, XXIII, 74 (1. April 1873), 2.
Various local experts and consultants for writing articles on the Exhibition. Such an effort earned for the Trieste firms widespread recognition and honors, which the *Triester Zeitung* did not fail to report, also by publishing the Vienna regulations for prize conferring. Among the several recognitions, the one which stood out was that of the Emperor on 3rd November 1873, the day the Exhibition closed attributed to some of the most important organizations in the city: the *Seebehörde* (Maritime Government), the Chamber of Commerce, the Austro-Hungarian Lloyd’s Navigation Company and the *Südbahn* (Southern Railway).

**VI. Favoring Participation**

The Chamber of Commerce’s executive committee devoted itself to increase the stream of visitors to Vienna by measures that were duly published in the *Triester Zeitung*. Such measures ranged from railway ticket discounts to financial support for the craftsmen willing to take part, and grants for school teachers. As many as seventy teachers from the Italian schools of Trieste applied for the apartments that the *Rudolphinum* Institute – still today of a student hall of residence in Vienna – made available free of charge. The newspaper also published an article – listing the “marine clubs” as its source—that requested facilities to encourage visits and to update the Navy officers.

---


34 *Tagesneuigkeiten*, TZ, XXIII, 189 (19. August 1873), 3; *Tagesneuigkeiten*, TZ, XXIII, 190 (20. August 1873), 3; *Tagesneuigkeiten*, TZ, XXIII, 196 (26. August 1873), 3; *Auszeichnungen von der Weltausstellung*, TZ, XXIII, 197 (28. August 1873), 7.


39 *Beschlüsse des Executivoscomités*.


41 *Zur Weltausstellung*, TZ, XXIII, 87 (17. April 1873), 6.
As a whole, these initiatives witness to the reception in the Imperial periphery of the special emphasis on culture and formation put by the Central Commission of the Vienna Exhibition – an emphasis that was totally new, as we have said, with respect to previous expositions. In the widely advertised conferences organized during the exhibition, the *Wiener Weltausstellung* itself would be defined as “a teaching institution” so large in scope and ambition as to be without precedents in world history. Didactics played a prominent role in the acculturation and formation processes activated by the exhibition. In the pavilion specifically dedicated to education the model of the German school system was singled out, inspired as it was by the neo-Humanistic values of the *Bildung* (Goethe, Schiller) and the cult of the *Wissenschaft* (Humboldt). This pavilion was extremely articulate in its approach, from primary schools to technical institutions to academies.

However, in the attention paid to updated instruction in several fields, to which the already mentioned Trieste initiatives bear witness, other interesting factors emerge that the *Triester Zeitung* correspondence from Vienna emphasized reasonably well. Through the newspaper coverage we can perceive the long-term effects and the spirit of the reform program outlined by the Emperor Francis I in 1821 when speaking to Ljubljana professors: “Stick to what is positive – he said to his audience – because I have no need for learned scholars, but for honest, competent citizens.” As we know, this Restoration approach aimed at banning the influence of German classical philosophy (the potentially subversive Kant and the dangerously speculative Hegel) in Austria in favor of the development of natural sciences and technical-positive knowledge. Secondly, an approach stressing, in contemporary terminology, the ‘*populärwissenschaftliche Literatur*’ (popular scientific literature), or, in other words, the *Weltausstellung* organizers’ task to spread scientific and technological knowledge was, in turn, in line with the Central Government’s political objectives of homogenization. The grants offered by the Chamber of Commerce for attending courses and lectures in Vienna reveal, a significant program to stir up allegiance toward the Monarchy addressing the class of the teachers in the multilingual peripheries.

After the exposition’s opening, the *Triester Zeitung* intensified its service providing useful information for the benefit of its readers in order to entice them into visiting Vienna. It even took the trouble to dispel the doubts of invitation tickets-holders, emphasizing that seasonal tickets were also good for accompanying ladies. In order to dismiss pumped-up rumors concerning the price of hotels the paper published a reassuring

42 *Original-Correspondenz*, TZ, XXIII, 236 (16. Oktober 1873), 3.
43 *Feuilleton. Weltausstellungsbriege XVI*, TZ, XXIII, 211 (15. September 1873), 5.
45 Short article, TZ, XXIII, 100 (2. Mai 1873), 3.
report from Vienna by a citizen of Trieste. Hotels, however, were not the only solution for lodging, as evidenced by a report sent from Ulm. Here, a firm producing river navigation transports got involved with providing inexpensive, salubrious and comfortable lodgings in the form of floating accommodations to be placed on the Danube canal running alongside the site of the exposition, each house-boat equipped with eighteen cabins and moored in an optimal position with respect to restaurants, as well as horse transports to the city center. The lucky guests of the floating houses – as the author of an article points out – could consider themselves to be a living part of the Exhibition.

VII. Preparing for the Exhibition

How did the Triester Zeitung highlight the strong points that the Trieste Committee had concentrated on? What kind of Trieste was going to be presented at the Wiener Weltausstellung? In the months immediately preceding the event, the newspaper coverage came thick and fast. An article on 1st March entitled “Das Küstenland auf der Wiener Weltausstellung” (The “Litorale” [the North-Adriatic Austrian coastal regions] at the universal exhibition), takes stock of the situation. The Trieste, Gorizia and Istrian industrial production was represented in the fourth out of the more than twenty sections that made up the Exhibition. It was the section dedicated to alimentary products (flours, macaroni!), which, up until then had drawn the largest number of exhibitors. According to the political line the newspaper took, however, this was certainly not the most desirable or appropriate choice to exemplify the reality of Trieste and indeed, as went the complaint of an article on January 15, it risked putting in the shade the crucial activities revolving around the science of navigation and the sea. There was a real risk that a distorted perspective on the city was being projected as a result of the War Ministry’s decision not to participate in the Exhibition with a section on the Navy. The reservations expressed by the newspaper are understandable if we only think of the Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino (Trieste Technical Works), founded in 1857 and destined to become the most important docks in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where the majority of the imperial Navy’s war ships (battleships, cruisers, frigates and corvettes) were built, as were numerous vessels destined for mercantile use. In short, in the view of the writer of the article, the only practicable solution was to be present at least in the section of the Wiener Weltausstellung dedicated to the Navy in general.

46 Vermischte Nachrichten, TZ, XXIII, 114 (19. Mai 1873), 7.
48 Das Küstenland auf der Wiener Weltausstellung, TZ, XXIII, 50 (1. März 1873), 3.
In this preparatory phase of the Exhibition, therefore, many articles of the *Triester Zeitung* pointed out the technical-scientific improvements in the maritime field; for example, two full-length articles on the *Special Programm für Marine-Wesen auf der Wiener Weltausstellung* (Special Program for the Marine section of the *Wiener Weltausstellung*) stated that:

in no field of human activity in the last decade has progress been so remarkable as
the progress made in the Navy and the techniques of navigation […] and, indeed,
there is no technical invention in our century that has not found an application
and development in the Navy. […] An exhibition of the conquests made in this
sector can provide an instructive picture of the state of progress that has actually
been achieved.49

Naturally, what Trieste could offer in this specific field was emphasized. Therefore
an advertisement said that in the section devoted to military-geographic Imperial-Royal
Institute, not only important cartographic surveys, but the city itself would have been
on display. In fact, six plastic models of the whole Adriatic coast from Trieste to the
Bocche di Cattaro (Bay of Kotor) with a surface area of no less than 54 sq. meters,
manufactured with considerable technical expertise in the workshops of Trieste, were
to be put on show.50 The city center with the new port, the railway station and even the
buildings with their windows were clearly discernible as the admiring journalist pointed
out in his extended article.51 It goes without saying that there had to be an article on the
museum of Natural History and the Station of Zoological Biology by its director Simon
von Syrski. 52 Author of an important study on eels that successfully lured the young
Sigmund Freud to visit Trieste to investigate his results, Syrski undertook the public
presentation of a systematically ordered series on all the fish of the Adriatic – edible
crustaceans, shell fish, cephalopods and echinoderms, including examples of sharks that
had found their way into the gulf – and he oversaw the construction in the Prater
of an aquarium celebrated as “the largest on the continent”.53 To be sure, there was
also talk about the Selva di Tarnova and the problem of the reforestation of the Karst
region, for example in the March 11 article titled “Betheiligung der k.u.k. Straatsforste
im Kuestenlande an der Wiener Weltausstellung 1873” (Participation of the Imperial
Royal Coastal Forestry Division at the Vienna Exhibition of 1873). Yet one could not

---

50 *Zur Wiener Weltausstellung*, TZ, XXIII, 50 (1. März 1873), 4.
52 Short article, TZ, XXIII, 50 (1. März 1873), 3.
help going back to the sea, or rather, to the winds conditioning navigation: the crooked trunk of a tree from the Karst region was sent to the exposition as a demonstration of how the ‘bora’ (the typical strong and cold North-Eastern wind of the Trieste region) had affected its growth.\(^\text{54}\)

**VIII. Reporting the Exhibition in Trieste**

Signed by a “Dr L. J.” (or by a more disquieting “Luzifer”) but probably attributable to the same author, two kinds of feuilleton – the *Weltausstellungsbriehe* were added to the customary *Deutsche Briefe aus Wien* – reported on the events of the exposition from Vienna. They were very far from the aesthetic and literary quality this genre had reached in the German language area, and which it was to reach especially in early twentieth-century Vienna. The articles, in informal and impressionistic style, told of the organizational delays of the opening (only the German pavilion was actually ready), the fluctuations of the restaurants prices, the up and down of the weather, the quality of the beer (the Bohemian Pilsen, obviously, was the best), the irregular waves of the foreign visitors arrival, the attention that the latter attracted from the beautiful Viennese ladies and even, in August, the specter of a cholera epidemic to which, however, not much credit was to be given. Mundane gossip was not lacking, especially in regard to the visits of famous personages. Franz Liszt wanted to attend a performance with the most recent model of the Quator piano, but upon being immediately recognized he had to flee the scene to escape the attentions of his admirers.\(^\text{55}\) There was wide coverage of the Italian king Victor Emanuel II’s visit. To everyone’s surprise, the by then ex-“sworn enemy” of Austria was welcomed with open arms in Vienna. The female public was absolutely charmed by his friendliness and simplicity. “It’s true” – remarked one woman interviewed by the journalist – “he’s a little overweight and his face is as dark as a gypsy’s, but just look at his eyes! They flash and what’s more [...] what a fine mustache!”.\(^\text{56}\) In short, this was a report destined to the Italians of Trieste with a due hint of humor and subtle political overtones. Next in line after the ladies, as it was suggested, the people most interested in the Italian King’s visit were the Catholic priests. The memory of Porta Pia was still too close for comfort, and when Emperor Franz Joseph would reciprocate the King of Italy’s visit with his own trip to Rome, out of respect for the Pope he avoided meeting him.

\(^\text{54}\) *Betheiligung der k.u.k. Staatsforste im Küstenlande an der Wiener Weltausstellung 1873*, TZ, XXIII, 58 (11. März 1873), 2.

\(^\text{55}\) *Der Klavierkönig in der Ausstellung*, TZ, XXIII, 249 (29. Oktober 1873), 6.

The articles from Vienna published by the *Triester Zeitung* also refer to what the reader in Trieste, and likewise the Executive Committee of the Chamber of Commerce are most interested in listening to – the success of Trieste itself. On May 30 we read:

In the World Trade pavilion, Trieste finds itself at home. Indeed, with the exception of the little coming from England, Trieste occupies it almost exclusively; it would perhaps have been better to call it the Trieste Pavilion.\(^{57}\)

All the wares on sale in the city were exhibited and also those in transit in the port – coffee, rice, spices, exotic fruit, coarse and refined sugar, even the famous natural sponges of the Escher brothers. In short, as another article reported, the Trieste exhibitors had put on a “masterly display”, “a veritable academic lecture room of commodity economics and commercial policy”.\(^{58}\)

Above all the *Triester Zeitung* was able finally to dispel the fears – which it had itself previously fed – about the possibility that the most advanced technical and industrial production of Trieste, tightly bound up as it was with the port and related programs of advanced research, would be put into the shade. Thanks to the intense involvement of the Imperial-Royal *Seebehörde* (Maritime Government) in the central committee of the Exposition,\(^{59}\) in the Pavilion of the Austrian Navy and lighthouses\(^{60}\) it was possible to admire, among other things, the military navy’s new nautical maps, small models of both civil and military ships built by the *Navale Adriatico* (Marine Adriatic Shipyards) and the *Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino* (Trieste Technical Works). Outside the pavilion, beside the lighting devices and the optical telegraph, a special foghorn, an original design carried out in Trieste, became an authentic attraction of the *Wiener Weltausstellung*, announcing as it daily did the hour of closing.\(^{61}\) Inside the much admired pavilion, which the Austro-Hungarian Lloyd’s Company of Navigation had erected at its own expense, the roof imitated the deck of a great ship on which the mainmast was erected. The scenery made it possible to put on a real-life performance: sailors climbed up the yard-arms and from on high they raised a triple hurrah to welcome the arrival of the Kaiser, accompanied by the Baron Elio Morpurgo and the technical director of the Lloyd Arsenal, the naval architect Friederich Petke.\(^{62}\)

\(^{57}\) *Feuilleton. Weltausstellungbriefe* V, TZ, XXIII, 123 (30. Mai 1873), 5.

\(^{58}\) Short article, TZ, XXIII, 124 (31. Mai 1873), 3.

\(^{59}\) *Die marinenetzen Erzeugnisse Triest’s auf der Wiener Weltausstellung*, TZ, XXIII, 87 (17. April 1873), 2.

\(^{60}\) *Der Pavillon der österreichische Marine und der Leuchtturm*, TZ, XXIII, 119 (24. Mai 1873), 7.


The articles published the *Triester Zeitung* in this period of time did not limited themselves to satisfying the pride of local readers. In many ways, for popularization purpose, they took on the task of spreading detailed information on the items on display and the techniques employed in producing them, attempting also a balanced comparison between the respective performances of the exhibiting countries. Along the same lines, extensive reports were also assigned by the newspaper to qualified external collaborators: the sub-lieutenant Josef Lehnert for the merchant and military navy; Alphons Danzer for the army; and Franz Bömches, a chief engineer of the *Südbahn* for road and railway infrastructures.

By systematically leafing through the articles of the *Triester Zeitung* in 1873 on the *Wiener Weltausstellung* and its impact on Trieste, quite a detailed picture comes into light, rich in thematic suggestions that would, undoubtedly, merit further in-depth investigation. Within the limits of this first survey, however, it is possible to discern at least the main lines followed by the Trieste paper. By means of the meticulous information provided by short notices and advertisements, full length articles and specialized contributions, the paper sought, above all, to bring out all aspects of the naval and marine world. This strenuous work of public opinion awakening aimed at pinpointing the strategic direction which the city and its port should move toward. It is a matter of fact, however, that the modernization of the Trieste port infrastructures – justified though they were by the excellence of the docks and their heritage of scientific and technical knowledge duly extolled by the paper – could not be carried out without massive public investments.

IX. Conclusion

It would be a restrictive conclusion, however, that in this circumstance the *Triester Zeitung* represented nothing more than a mouthpiece of a project conceived by the Viennese government for Trieste. In its reportages on the Exhibition, it is possible to single out clues that refer to more complex dynamics then at work in the Austrian monarchy. It is worth paying attention to certain passages whose meaning may have appeared obvious to Trieste readers in 1873, but which can be better understood today if placed within a wider context; and more precisely, the observations disseminated here and there on Hungary which, after the *Ausgleich*, presented itself at the *Wiener Weltausstellung* 1873 Wien *(Wien: Aus der kais. königl. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1874)*, 40.

Weltausstellung as a sovereign State. They praised – sometimes by a bitterly sarcastic tone – the Hungarian genius for self-aggrandizement, in contrast with other nations that preferred to keep a low profile. Looking at the results of the Wiener Weltausstellung, they compared Budapest to Vienna, pointing out that the former had actually managed to present itself as the capital of a nation, whereas the latter had become in the meantime a metropolis of world importance. Another clue should not be overlooked: more often than not the newspaper just mentioned the ‘Austrian Lloyd’, thus avoiding the denomination of ‘Austro-Hungarian Lloyd’ which became obligatory after the Ausgleich: a sort of psychological resistance to mar the glorious undertakings of Trieste putting them side by side with the Hungarian component.

These observations are to be understood by looking at the complex internal situation of the multinational Habsburg State and the phenomena of homogenization running through it. Even after 1867, at the epoch of the Dual Monarchy, the homogenization process remained a priority to be pursued, for example, through such supra-national ties as those represented by the figure of the Emperor and the Army, the Administration and the Aristocracy. When the centralizing push diminished after the military debacles of 1859 and 1866 and because of the internal weaknesses, new alliances rose to support the policies of homogenization: the ascending liberal-German bourgeoisie in Austria and, in Hungary, the ethnic element of the Magyars. These social strata with a marked national bent, through uniformization process aimed not only to protect their economic interests within the Dual Monarchy but also to earn supremacy for their respective national ideas. No matter how strongly the constitution formally guaranteed the linguistic-national equality of its peoples: there can be no denying that the German liberals and the Magyars had hegemonic aspirations. It is a question of tendencies that, with the development of the national-political claims of the Slavs, reinforced.

The competition that was taking shape between the German liberals and the Magyars within the multinational Habsburg Monarchy was also being echoed in Trieste. The repercussions of these processes as far as Trieste is concerned may help explain why, in proximity to the Weltausstellung, the divergences between Loyalists and pro-Italian Separatists within the economic elite of Trieste and within the Chamber of Commerce could be provisionally silenced. As a matter of fact what most of all, if vaguely feared in Trieste for several aspects is the ascendance of Fiume (Rijeka) – a city rarely mentioned in the pages of the Triester Zeitung dedicated to the Exhibition but, for all that, a no less threatening background presence. At the time of the Ausgleich in 1867, the Austrian

---

64 Feuilleton. Deutsche Briefe aus Wien, TZ, XXIII, 121 (28. Mai 1873), 4-5.
65 Feuilleton. Weltausstellungsbriehe XIII, TZ, XXIII, 177 (4. August 1873), 4-5.
government had undertaken to abolish the free port of Trieste in favor of the rival port of Fiume.\textsuperscript{67} And Fiume, after the various ups and downs in the first half of the nineteenth century as regards its status and territorial belonging, now was included in the the region of the Habsburg State corresponding to the Kingdom of Hungary after 1867 called Transleithania.

Hungary then took sides with Fiume, which was once again in its sphere of influence, thus fomenting competition of Inner Austria against Trieste. Every renewal of the Compromise forced the central government to economic concessions that affected Trieste overseas trade causing losses to the Trieste port traffic.\textsuperscript{68} The free port was definitively abolished in 1895. Nonetheless, thanks to the top-down modernization project first proposed in the 1860s and hinted at in the pages of the \textit{Triester Zeitung} on the occasion of the \textit{Wiener Weltenausstellung}, Trieste was able to enjoy, at the turn of the nineteenth century, its last period of growth, made possible by its transformation in an international industrial port of call.

X. An Epilogue? The 1913 \textit{Adria-Ausstellung}

The experience acquired and the results obtained in the \textit{Wiener Weltenausstellung} of 1873 were brought into play again for the realization of an exhibition hinging on the Imperial-Royal motive, which was held once again at the Prater, transformed for that occasion into a theme-park proper, between 3 May and 5 October 1913. This was the \textit{Österreichische Adria-Ausstellung} (Austrian Adria Exposition),\textsuperscript{69} organized by the \textit{Österreichischer Flottenverein} (Austrian Navy League). It was the last great exposition of the Austrian monarchy and it aimed to present the beauties, culture, history and economic resources of the Habsburg territories on the Adriatic Sea. Outside the exhibiting pavilions, along an artificial canal directly leading to the Rotunda, the most representative monuments of the various cultures that had succeeded one other over the centuries on the East Adriatic coast were reconstructed in scale. It was an impressive attempt at regaining the Habsburg symbolic control of the Dalmatian and Southern provinces: the non-German backward and under-developed peripheries which had been

\begin{footnotes}
\item[67] Millo, “Un porto fra centro e periferia”, 192.
\item[69] The Wien Museum Karlsplatz recently devoted an exhibition to the \textit{Adria-Ausstellung} of 1913 and published the catalog: \textit{Österreichische Riviera. Wien entdeckt das Meer}, hrsg. von C. Rapp, N. Rapp-Wimberger (Wien: Czernin, 2013). See illustration on the following page: the \textit{Adria-Ausstellung}, the Capodistria (Koper) town hall is visible on the right hand side of the man-made canal.
\end{footnotes}
recently annexed, at a time when the question of the Slavic Southern populations had become a crucial issue of domestic and foreign Austro-Hungarian politics.\footnote{On these topics see also the \textit{Dalmatinische Reise} of 1909, the famous reportage by Hermann Bahr, among the most active literary journalists of the \textit{Wiener Moderne}: see M. C. Foi, “Hermann Bahrs ‘Dalmatinische Reise’. Die Konstruktion des österreichischen”, \textit{Phänomenologie, Geschichte und Anthropologie des Reisens}, hrsg. von L. Polubojarinova, M. Kobelt-Groch, O. Kulischkina (Kiel-Skt. Petersburg: Universitätsverlag, 2014, forthcoming).}

What is more, in the wake of the First World War, and following the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908, which sanctioned the Habsburg expansionistic push in the Balkans, the \textit{Österreichische Adria-Ausstellung} featured the Imperial-Royal Austrian Navy, which, thanks to the investments largely made in Trieste and Pula, had become the sixth most important fleet in the world. On entering the southern portal of the Rotunda, the visitor found himself thrown, so to speak, onto the deck of an ultra-modern warship. For the crowds of visitors who thronged the bridge of the warship ravished between surprise and delight, it would have been hard to imagine that they were actually witnessing the final scene in a long succession of vicissitudes: not only those of the Austro-Hungarian Empire’s expositions, but also those concerning Habsburg Trieste and its calling as a Central European port.
Obscurantism defeated by Light and succumbing to the triumph of Civilization; a
gallery of heroes of progress and modernity, from Alessandro Volta to Papin - inventor
of the steamboat; the celebration of the glories of Italian work embodied in the Mont
Cenis Tunnel and in the Isthmus of Suez; and yet again another triumph of Western
civilization weaving a dance with a slave freed from the shackles of backward Orient;
just to end with a big “dance of nations”, with dancers evoking little soldiers lined up
in a march toward universal peace, a “pax romana” made of uniforms, flags, national
anthems and conciliatory rhetoric dripping from every step and each note. All this was
the Ballo Excelsior, originally choreographed by Luigi Manzotti to music by Romualdo
Marenco, a grandiose phantasmagoric *mise en scène*, one of the most popular Italian
nineteenth-century cultural artifacts, which premiered at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan
on January, 11th 1881.

In that same 1881, just a few months later, Milan audiences would witness the
opening of the National Exhibition, the first big national exposition, celebrating the 20th
anniversary of the political unification of the Italian state. In a sense, the Ballo Excelsior
envisaged the mode of perception and reception the exhibition would require from its
visitors, instructing them on the very key-concepts that lie at its core.¹ In other words,

¹ For a general overview of these concepts, I am referring here, among others, to the perspective pro-
posed by Alexander C. T. Geppert in his *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Hound-
mills, Basingstoke, Hampshire-New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) that conceptualizes “exhibitions as
‘meta-media’, as specific means of communication that encompass and incorporate other communicative
technologies” with a particular attention “to questions of medialization, visualization and virtualization”
(3). On the 1881 Milan Exhibition see I. M. Barzaghi, *Milano 1881: tanto lusso e tanta folla. Rappresenta-
tazione della modernità e modernizzazione popolare* (Milan: Silvana Editore, 2009). For a general orientation
among the bourgeoning number of studies on exhibitions, see *Expositions universelles, internationales et
nationales (1844-1921). Répertoire méthodique provisoire*, établi par C. Demeulenaere-Douyère (Paris: Ar-
it was not only, as Cristina Della Coletta writes, “a spectacular synthesis of the fairs’ mentality, capturing what was popularly defined the age of ‘exhibition mania’”; it was first and foremost a construction and reproduction of a particular kind of discursivity that lies at the core of the whole world exhibitions “phantasmagoria” of capitalist culture, to use once again Walter Benjamin’s often quoted definition.

Indeed, the Ballo Excelsior, taking up and developing the Italian nineteenth-century tradition of the “ballo grande”, depicts the celebration of progress and technological domination of the world through a structure made of different frames that faithfully reproduce the itineraries of the great exhibitions. It juxtaposes, one frame after the other, spectacular elements and grandiose *mises en scène* of ephemeral display of human diversity. It can really be seen as a reproduction, in the microcosm of a mass cultural artifact, of the many tensions and drives that characterized world exhibitions in general: the construction of a national identity founded on a showing off of the dictates of progress, the unavoidable confrontation with otherness (interesting to this regard the insertion of “exotic dances” and orientalist scenes), the configuration of a ‘world’ or ‘global’ dimension seen as an articulation of single national spaces, the definition of gender identities, the intertwining of different cultural discourses in a space of spectacularization, and, last but not least, the blurring of boundaries between living bodies of human beings and fetishized objects to be put on show.

I would like to look at the Ballo Excelsior as part of a wider apparatus (what Michel Foucault would call a “dispositif”)


4 For the idea of the exhibitions as a *mise en scène* of progress, see L. Aimone e C. Olmo, Le esposizioni universali, 1851-1900. Il progresso in scena (Turin: Umberto Allemandi, 1990).

5 I am referring here to Giorgio Agamben’s reading of the notion of “dispositif” in Foucault; see G. Agamben, *Che cos’è un dispositivo* (Rome: nottetempo, 2006).
citizenry”. Yet it tries to amend and partially modify it, by referring to the above mentioned Foucauldian notion of “dispositif”, understood as a heterogeneous set of discourses, institutions, buildings, laws, security measures, philosophical statements, so on so forth, with a specific strategic function and always inscribed inside relations of power and knowledge.7 Talking about a “paradigm”, instead than a “complex”, can help to highlight the heterogeneous nature of the different discourses variously linked to the exhibitions, avoiding a totalizing, non dynamic, view of exhibitions as regulatory institutions strictly aimed at constructing passive and monolithic audiences.

It might seem banal and superfluous to point out this, but I find it important to bring back the exhibitionary discourse to a general proliferation of meanings that is pervasive in late nineteenth-century culture. Actually, the case of the Ballo Excelsior allows us to see how the textuality, the narratives and the representations that revolve around the great exhibitions do not stem only directly from them. It is rather necessary, in my opinion, to reconsider a widespread discursive production disseminated through different medias and representations that is not only a direct derivation from the visit of the exhibitions. We have, of course, reports, diaries, descriptions, all the different kinds of writings that more or less faithfully report data and information on the exhibitions. Yet, at the same time, there are forms of narration and representation that precede and accompany the exhibitions themselves and are part of a bigger cultural imagery of the time, that produce and reproduce it.8

Indeed, the Ballo Excelsior both anticipated and was part of a variety of novel forms of spectacularization that, almost paradoxically in a society that was becoming, according to Foucault, a collection of separated individualities,9 aimed at constructing a sense of shared experiences. This led to a sense of subjectivization as modern individuals, who had to feel

---

7 Agamben, Che cos’è un dispositivo, 6-7.
8 Indeed, the 1881 Milan Exhibition gave rise to an incredible proliferation of textuality, describing the city of Milan, mainly, and preparing the ideological setting for possible visitors. Among the vast array of guidebooks, anthologies, collections that were published in that same 1881, I can only mention here Milano 1881 (Milan: Mediolanum editore, 1881) and Mediolanum (Milan: Vallardi, 1881) both in the form of a journalistic report; Milano e i suoi dintorni (Milan, Civelli: 1881); Milano e l’Esposizione italiana del 1881. Cronaca illustrata della Esposizione nazionale-industriale ed artistica del 1881 (Milan, Treves, 1881); Milano 1881, a c. di C. Riccardi (Palermo: Sellerio, 1991; with texts by Capuana, Neera, Sacchetti, Torelli Viollier, Verga, among others; originally: Milan: Ottino, 1881); L’esposizione italiana del 1881 in Milano illustrata (Milan: Sonzogno, 1881, also known as “Giornale dell’esposizione”); Ricordo dell’esposizione di Milano 1881 (Milan: Garbini, 1881).
part of a nation, but also part of a much wider dimension made of international spaces, mass production and mass consumption, global leisure, widespread spectacularization. According to Martin Jay’s reading of Guy Debord’s *La Société du spectacle*, starting from the second half of the nineteenth century, shows and exhibitions, and the whole dimension of spectacle, became a social relation. Spectacular images and representations constituted the world of modernity rather than merely characterized it.

This complex process has been widely investigated with regard to single cultural contexts. As Vanessa Schwartz highlighted, drawing on Benedict Anderson’s notion of “imagined communities”, it was certainly in late nineteenth-century Paris that for the first time “the visual representation of reality as a spectacle […] created a common culture and a sense of shared experiences through which people might imagine themselves as participating in a metropolitan culture because they had visual evidence that such a shared world, of which they were part, existed”.

However, the specific case of the *Ballo Excelsior* can shed light on how this process must be seen also through a particular articulation between a local and national dimension and a world or global one. Indeed, the ballet was first and foremost a great global success aimed at spreading the world’s fairs’ ideology of “progress and civilization” first to the Italian newly born nation, but then all over the world. In this sense, an investigation of this global process is very much needed and will certainly not be exhausted within the limits of this article.

But there is more: the *Ballo Excelsior* managed to do that, significantly, by staging, through a phantasmagoric kitsch imagination, “moving bodies”. In the multifarious complexity of discourses opened up by nineteenth-century world exhibitions in the context of this more general process of spectacularization, the role of the moving body has a relevance that still deserves to be investigated. In this realm, dance performances of different types stand out as significant moments that not only often accompanied the success and marked the memory of specific exhibitions (such as, for instance “belly dances” in Paris 1878 and then 1889 or Chigaco 1893 or the fact that forty years later, in the same city, the famous dancer and choreographer Ruth St. Denis was directly involved in the organization of a “Ballet of the States”); they also constructed and

---


reproduced a particular kind of discursivity that lies at the core of the whole world’s exhibitions phantasmagoria and represent a constitutive part of the primordial form of global spectacularization they imposed.

Not by chance, the Ballo Excelsior has been widely investigated in the last few years. There is a whole documentation that forms the basis for the study of the ballet and its many – Italian and international – variants;¹⁴ there are studies which fall within the history of dance, thought of as an autonomous discipline, and others that look at the ballet in relation to the history of Italian exhibitions from the point of view of cultural history.¹⁵ What seems to be still missing, however, in my opinion, is an attempt to intertwine these different approaches in order to take into account the role of dance as a cultural discourse both in specific cultural contexts and in an increasingly global dimension. The Ballo Excelsior was actually a complex cultural artifact, only apparently trivial. It managed to exploit and develop the specificity of the language of dance in all its different forms of ‘recycling’ of diverse cultural discourses.

Moreover, as the Ballo Excelsior carved its success beyond the boundaries of the city of Milan (and this happened very soon), the artifact was modified, it fit other contexts, it became a pliable tool for the dissemination of an ideology that was no longer only that of the 1881 Milan Exhibition and not solely Italian, but came to be identified as an emblem of late nineteenth-century internationalism and technical progress. Therefore, it is worth investigating the long-term global success of Excelsior, that is always linked to world’s fairs paradigms, in order to trace the dynamics of adaptation to different contexts in a global dimension as a kind of model or prefiguration of today’s global spectacles.

Underlying all this, we can find an ideological substratum, which accompanies and reinforces this spread: the acritical celebration of progress supports a complex layering and an ideological stratification made of delimitation and questioning of non-Western otherness. It creates hierarchies of identity and stereotypes that construct a hierarchy of values under which it becomes possible to exert different types of epistemic violence. And I am referring here in particular to the so-called exotic “quadri”, the ones of Simoon and the Suez Canal, seemingly marginal, but in fact crucial in establishing this relationship so constitutive for Excelsior and for the wider exhibitionary paradigm itself.


¹⁵ See for instance the already mentioned Della Coletta, World’s Fairs Italian Style.
It is from this perspective that it becomes possible to ask some questions about the mode of representation of otherness in the articulation between national and global in relation to the exhibitionary discursive paradigm of spectacularization.

In all this, finally, the focus remains on the role of the body in motion, of the “moving bodies” the ballet puts on display. The *Excelsior* depicts trajectories, dynamics and movements of bodies. Not only and not simply because dance is a discourse in which the moving body is precisely what constitutes the position of utterance. But also for the way in which the spectacle is grounded on a scale of grandeur of body movement and alludes to and anticipates what will happen in a few months on the stage of the city of Milan with the “Esposizione nazionale”: crowds of bodies, transported, handled, addressed, directed into fixed itineraries. If, then, the universal expositions, as Walter Benjamin notes in the incipit of his *Passegenwerk*, are places of pilgrimage to the fetish of commodity, they also create a kind of transfer through which the human being enters into a phantasmagoria to be distracted and to become a sort of reified object. Bodies are also and above all put on display in the exhibition, they acquire an identity imposed by the framework of the exhibition itself, they are subjected to a movement that marks their continuous flow of life into the proverbial “sex appeal of the inorganic”.

It is a suggestion that Benjamin often repeats, when for example he quotes Julius Lessing’s *Das halbe Jahrhundert der Weltausstellungen Berlin*, pointing out that the participation in the exhibition becomes a kind of representation. The moving bodies are involved in the representation, they are human beings and commodities at the same time, they are subjects and objects, living bodies and inorganic fetishes.

This link is never so evident as in the spectacles and performances that are present in all the exhibitions, from the universal ones, to national or local ones. But this becomes particularly evident in the *Ballo Excelsior* that establishes a sort of paradigm, a kind of model, which will be continually repeated.

In analyzing the *Ballo Excelsior*, the following pages will try to take into account all this complex nexus of issues. They will trace, first of all, the link with the 1881 Milan exhibition, reconstructing the circumstances of the first staging of the ballet and its national reception. After that, the article looks at the global success the ballet had in the years to follow, highlighting the changes it underwent, both at an ideological and formal level, in order to meet the expectations of this new dimension through an articulation of the national and the global. Then, the nexus between the ballet’s aesthetic and ideological features will be analyzed, both from the specific point of view

---


of dance history and from the broader perspective of cultural studies, also discussing the definition of “kitsch” aesthetics, often mentioned in relation to this work. Finally, it will propose some reflections on how these articulations are also an imagination of a framed diversity, an artifact whose structure frames otherness into a phantasmagoric construction, something which deeply characterizes the kind of nineteenth-century Western discursivity world exhibitions are a part of.

I. The Ballo Excelsior and the 1881 Exhibition in Milan

The Ballo Excelsior was undoubtedly a product of what I have defined as an exhibitionary paradigm of spectacularization and as such it goes hand in hand, or rather anticipates the Milan Exhibition of 1881. It seems to foreshadow the way the exhibition would be organized and its modes of perception, together with the ideology that emanates from it. All this will become particularly evident when the ballet will be performed on the occasion of other exhibitions at a national and international level (especially in Paris in 1895, although the first real international success of the Ballo Excelsior was in Paris in 1883), but, indeed, it is already eloquently evoked in the first reactions to the premiere.

In Milan, the success of the Excelsior was immediately, from the very first performance, striking. The theater journal L'Asmodeo on January 15th, 1881 wrote that “the present generation does not remember a success equal to that achieved by the new ballet by Manzotti, Ballo Excelsior, performed on the evening of Tuesday 11th, in front of a packed theater”.¹⁸

It has become customary, especially after Gramsci, to think of melodrama as the national-popular narrative, the true collective narrative of nineteenth-century Italian national identity.¹⁹ It is nevertheless much less frequent to acknowledge how, in the last decades of the century, the so called “ballo grande” represented a new extremely popular spectacle, more varied and certainly more open toward a certain kind of modern

---

¹⁸ Review of Ballo Excelsior, L'Asmodeo, 15 January 1881. All translations are mine unless otherwise specified.

performance that will develop in the years to follow. The popularity of Manzotti’s ballet at the time was openly perceived as equal to that of Verdi, for example; not surprisingly, the review established an explicit comparison:

The theater had the appearance of a great artistic solemnity as if it was the premiere of an opera by Verdi. Yet it was not the prince of music who presented his new work, it was the prince of choreography, the great innovator who submitted for evaluation by the Milanese public the latest creation of his powerful talent whose triumph was truly complete, so that it proclaims him, without exception, the first among living choreographers.20

The review explains the reasons for such a success, finding them in a rhetoric of rapid narrative presentation that points toward a paratactical structure of juxtaposition, together with grandeur, wonder, surprise.21 All this could fall under the category of the phantasmagoric,22 a word which recurs with significant insistence in the first reviews and descriptions. It is interesting to notice how this success, which grew with the performances to follow,23 remains linked in the perception of contemporary reviewers, to these characteristics.

Not by chance, after the first series of performances, Excelsior was staged again in the following season, the Primavera (Spring) season, which was explicitly defined as the “Exhibition season” (the grand “esposizione nazionale” opened on May, 5th 1881).

The attitude that characterized this exhibition was well outlined in the introductory pages of the first issue of the periodical paper L’esposizione italiana del 1881 in Milano illustrata (also known as Il giornale dell’esposizione “Journal of the exhibition”), published in installments to accompany the Exhibition itself and launched before the opening. It was clearly stated there that, after the stage in which different regions and peoples felt the need to meet and come to know each other, giving rise to a large number of small exhibitions in the twenty years following political unification, it was high time there was a truly unified and significant manifestation that the Italians could go beyond “a certain softness of fiber and character that leads them to prefer theatrical

21 “There are twelve ‘quadri’ that in one hour and fifteen minutes will pass quickly before your eyes without ever tiring and always dazzling for the novelty of the groups of lines, figures, surprising for the importance of the concept always staged with the most rational criterion”, and: “With a quick run through the centuries he [Manzotti] depicts the triumph of progress over obscurantism which results in the greatest discoveries and creations of human genius. The second ‘quadro’ is even marvellous, fascinating and the ‘ballabile del Risorgimento’ is new, dazzling, gorgeous”.
22 On January 15th 1881 L’Asmodeo wrote explicitly about the Excelsior as a “magic phantasmagory of colours and scenes” with always “new effects” and “surprising figurations”.
23 On January 29th 1881 L’Asmodeo announced that “Excelsior’s triumph is marching on”.

150
performances and outward forms of Catholicism to the austere and dark processes of labor and solitary meditation”. ²⁴ An idea that was repeated in the editorial that provided the report of the inauguration, which was to represent “the solemn rehabilitation of the country that rejects the accusations, coming from Britain, of being a Carnival nation and the traditional reputation of ‘dolce far niente’ [idling]”). ²⁵ Hence all this was first and foremost an attempt to escape a certain tendency to represent Italy as a fárical and burlesque country in order to build an image of national identity on completely different grounds: hard work, practicality, utilitarianism. After the exhibition held in Florence in 1861 and after Italy’s presence in Paris in 1867, in Vienna in 1873 and again Paris in 1878, the “glorious” task of the Milan Exhibition was that of “preparing new advances and opportunities for new victories to the nation’s industries” and “show to the Government and to legislators the new path, even among many difficulties […]”. ²⁶

Hence, on the one hand a sober attitude of devotion to labor and productivity, on the other the proverbial, spectacular and lazy “Carnival nation”. But of course, beyond well-intentioned declarations, things were not so simple, as the organizers and promoters of the event knew very well: pedagogical intentions, spectacles and amusements would have to skillfully blend to give rise to a complex machine for shaping and molding a new world view. In the second issue of the Giornale dell’esposizione after a general history of world’s fairs, Michele Lessona explicitly reaffirmed the link between exhibitions and various forms of spectacles that were their antecedents, having to admit that “looking back in history […] large gatherings of people for public shows are a kind of necessity, and the rulers, understanding this necessity, have tried to exploit it.” ²⁷ Consequently, it was necessary, according to Lessona, to carefully identify the Milan exhibition with the glorification of the work that could lead Italy to gain a place among civilized nations. Therefore, it was essential to instill and infuse in the Italian public this awareness of a shared national identity, by displaying, exhibiting, teaching by all available means, carefully avoiding social contrasts and conflicts. Shows, spectacles and amusements seemed to be the right means to reach this aim. The final words of Lessona’s article are eloquent to this regard:

The industrial exhibitions are thus preaching to us, even unbeknownst to us, around the need for social reforms to improve the conditions of workers, reforms

²⁴ L. Luzzatti, “Che cosa dovrebbe essere la II Esposizione Italiana a Milano?”, L’esposizione italiana del 1881 in Milano illustrata, 1881: 1-3, see 1.
²⁵ “Il 5 maggio. Editoriale”, L’esposizione italiana del 1881 in Milano illustrata, 1881: 82-86, see 82.
²⁶ Luzzatti, “Che cosa dovrebbe essere la II Esposizione Italiana a Milano?”, 2.
that should be desired and as far as we can, effectively promoted, not just with empty words and false promises; everyone must desire and work that this will become true possibly without violent shocks and disastrous disturbances.\textsuperscript{28}

Here, therefore, Lessona traced the conceptual framework of a “dispositif” aimed at social control, almost obsessively invoking harmony and peace, as the only possibility of avoiding social contrasts. Not surprisingly, the Milan Exhibition ended with choruses of children from local schools singing a hymn entitled “Alla pace” (To Peace)\textsuperscript{29} just as the \textit{Ballo Excelsior} ends with children sitting and holding flags composing the word “PAX”.

During the 1881 Exhibition in Milan there were actually many shows, spectacles and amusements. As Ilaria Barzaghi has highlighted, they were meant to be breaks, pauses in the exhibitionary narrative.\textsuperscript{30} Apart from a special season at the Teatro alla Scala with the \textit{Ballo Excelsior} as the central event, inside the exhibitionary space there was a circus, a theater, musical performances, target shooting, hot-air balloons, special illuminations, not to mention the events of the opening and closing ceremonies. The main attraction was the circus, “il circo Renz”, a wooden construction where the equestrian spectacles were held that could host 5,000 people and was to be destroyed at the end of the exhibition.\textsuperscript{31} Furthermore, an amphitheater called Arena was built, whose tiered rows were meant to be transformed into a so called “fiera fantastica” (a fair “phantastique”) representing the four parts of the world (namely Africa, Asia, Europe and America) each with its “local flavor” (“colore locale”).\textsuperscript{32} On its grand stage (“grandioso palcoscenico”) different spectacles, described as “phantastic and choreographic” were meant to be performed by dancers, acrobats, jugglers, extras, men riding horses and so on so forth. Again: the project closely resembled what actually went on on stage for the \textit{Ballo Excelsior}, confirming, once more, that \textit{Excelsior} was actually the model for all this variety of spectacular entertainment.

However the didactic, assertive and ideological component of the \textit{Ballo Excelsior} probably played a key role in its enduring success, which distinguished it from other forms of spectacles. The Renz circus (which proposed mainly equestrian spectacles), for example, was not very well received,\textsuperscript{33} and the theater Arena, inaugurated on June the 8\textsuperscript{th} with an illumination show by Giuseppe Ottino and a mimed performance (“azione
mimica”) by Manzotti himself, on June 18th was already defined as a failure. Even the target shooting did not meet the favor of the visitors.34

Indeed, in general, spectacles and entertainments inside the Exhibition were not successful, whereas the Ballo Exclesior at the theater Alla Scala continued to be highly appreciated by large audiences, as if it constituted the necessary complement and somehow the instructions for use of the exhibition itself. The theatrical journal L’Asmodeo ironically wrote that this lack of success was due to the fact that visitors, after having been overawed (“strabiliati”) by the different pavilions of the Exhibition were not keen on spending more money for theatrical entertainments, which were definitely not very well planned and financed.35 For instance, at the Arena there was also a ballet by Manzotti, Pietro Micca, here called Vittorio Amedeo II, a huge and grandiose mise en scène with more than a thousand people on stage, a third of which, though, were not professionals,36 while the whole production gave the idea of not being properly sustained economically. And the same happened with the closing ceremony, considered not very well planned.37 At the same time Exclesior went on increasingly more successfully: on the very day of the closing of the Exhibition it will count its 103rd performance.

Although a specific commission was created in order to supervise their organization (“Commissione per i divertimenti”), spectacles and amusements do not seem to have been a core part of the project. There were many projects in this domain, but very few were actually realized, apart from horse races, a lottery and, on a quite different note, the external season at the Teatro alla Scala, were the Ballo Exclesior was alternating with the opera Mefistofele by Arrigo Boito (a different genre, indeed, but still a work by the most significant Italian composer of the time). However, as a booklet commented,

> a mere exhibition alone [un’esposizione nuda e cruda] is not possible. Industry is worth every attention, every sympathy, every admiration, but we need to put around it those enticements that its strict character does not offer, on the contrary, it disdains them. And nothing can offer these enticements better than spectacles and shows.38

A few years later, writing about another exhibition (Turin 1911), Edmondo De Amicis would even wonder how many people actually visited the exhibition only in order to enjoy “carnivalesque amusements” “that nowadays stick to all exhibitions like

34 “Cronaca dell’esposizione nazionale”, L’Asmodeo, 18 June 1881.
35 “Cronaca dell’esposizione nazionale”, L’Asmodeo, 28 June 1881.
36 Review of Vittorio Amedeo II, L’Asmodeo, 30 July 1881, 1
37 “Cronaca dell’esposizione nazionale”, L’Asmodeo, 10 November 1881, 2.
38 “Storia dell’esposizione. VIII Corse, divertimenti, lotteria”, Milano e l’Esposizione italiana del 1881, 15.
stands of sweets and toys do to churches in country fairs”. De Amicis painted an ironic picture of the visitors: mature men impatiently visiting the serious pavilions of industry and art and thinking about the moment when they could go on the helter-skelter, find their way through mazes, look on at tobacco stands or admire the machine that takes coins and puts the net inside goldfish bowl. According to De Amicis, thus, the majority of visitors were attracted to the exhibitions by illumination spectacles, fireworks and concerts. And this contributed to making them not only observers but also objects to be observed: most visitors could therefore be described as those who go to see the exhibition with the only aim of exhibiting themselves.

It is in this intertwining of didacticism and paradigms of spectacularization that the human “moving” body acquired its double status of subject and object of the exhibition. De Amicis wrote from the viewpoint of someone who already had a certain familiarity with exhibitionary habits and acquired practices. In Milan, all this was still under negotiation and was experienced not without tensions and contradictions between the main didactic and ideological purposes on the one hand and, on the other, the carnivalesque aspect inherent in all that, notwithstanding the well-intentioned declarations of the organizers.

The already mentioned installments by Sonzogno, for instance, did not pay too much attention to these aspects. Apart from a report about show-like ethnographic parades and displays of traditional costumes from every Italian region, the only event the booklet took notice of was the illumination spectacle that took place on the night of May the 7th. Yet this is interesting to notice and to put in relation to the Ballo Excelsior: the only show considered worthy of mention had, again, significantly much to do with the ballet. The descriptions speak explicitly of “spokes” which spread to every corner of the city, transformed for the occasion into a sort of exotic and amazing, overawed and marvelous place. Again, a kind of concretization, a sort of an appendix, of the whole idea of the Excelsior: technical progress, and one of his most celebrated achievements, such as electricity, transformed into an instrument of spectacle. Indeed in graphic reproductions that were distributed throughout the city on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition, all Milan itself seems transformed into a grand stage for the Ballo Excelsior, whose scenography and costumes, designed by Edel, had already made a permanent breach into the collective imagination.

42 Technical problems prevented the event to take place on the very day of the opening. It was anyway repeated one week later.
43 “Il 5 maggio. Editoriale”, 83, 86.
The idea that the Ballo Excelsior was the spectacle of the exhibition *par excellence* was even stated more openly by the booklet published by Treves *Milano e l’Esposizione italiana del 1881*. In an article entitled *Il ballo Excelsior alla Scala (Feste e spettacoli)*, Manzotti’s work was defined as “the best amusement that foreigners can enjoy in Milan on the occasion of the National Exhibition”, remarking that everyday a crowd “taps on the door of the theater, eager to find the best places to enjoy the great creation of the genial choreographer”. And this, according to the anonymous reviewer, because “the idea of showing the progress of humanity through dance is extremely daring and novel. A great genius was needed in order to realize it with grandiosity and splendor, avoiding the baroque and the ridiculous”. So that, from the darkness of the Spanish inquisition up to the Mont Cenis Tunnel and the Suez Canal, audiences could see “all the triumphs of modern invention”. And then, again, all inside a frame of marvelous and powerful phantasy (a recurring word), grandiosity and enthusiasm, in a picture that “dazzles” and “fascinates” for the wonders of the scene. Manzotti, considered, as a choreographer, a better artist than a writer or a painter in order to show the triumph of progress, is here defined as a “leader of the masses” (“un condottiero delle masse”), someone who could spread his message not only to the Italian nation but also to the masses all over the world.

The Ballo Excelsior was thus seen as a token of the exhibitionary paradigm also for its aspiration to an articulation of the national and the global. The very internationalist idea of universality, interdependence and peace, instrumental in this vision of world conquest, is definitely inherent in Manzotti’s ballet and was often underlined by contemporary reviewers. And this was yet another element that characterized the whole project of the Milan Exhibition. These are the emblematic words with which Carlo Romussi ended the last installment of *L’esposizione italiana del 1881 in Milano illustrata*:

> Among all nations a phenomenon of exosmoses and endosmoses occurs: each nation gives to the others the products of its soil and its industry and receives a share swap, and this need is the demonstration and proof of universal brotherhood, whose duties nature has imposed, and that the people, driven by self-interest masked by patriotism, sometimes insanely forget.\(^45\)

Paradoxical assertion that combines nationalist identitarianism with the need, increasingly more urgent, for a broader perspective: the newly born nation that already confronts his negation and tries to subsume it dialectically. All this finds in the Ballo Excelsior a very effective dramatic presentation, with the same paradox embedded in an

\(^{44}\) “Il ballo Excelsior alla Scala (Feste e spettacoli)”, *Milano e l’Esposizione italiana del 1881*, 271.

insistent evocation of universal peace and brotherhood, on the one hand, and strong nationalist and openly militaristic celebrations on the other. The already mentioned article is very eloquent to this regard when the author writes:

If only Rome could fulfill the wish of its citizens: to affirm a brotherhood that does not know divisions of races among humans, with a World’s Fair held on the venerable hills where once reigned force, afterwards superstition, and where today we invoke love and the light of truthfulness.\(^{46}\)

The 1881 Exhibition in Milan explicitly affirmed this link: it was considered as a first step toward an opening of the Italian nation to the world. The Ballo Excelsior anticipated this ideological stance and became perhaps an unexpected instrument of it. I will now try to briefly outline some steps of this process.

II. Articulating the National and the Global

Thus, the Ballo Excelsior can be really considered a token or a successful emblem of the whole 1881 National Exhibition project. The Exhibition had a national dimension, yet, at the same time, could not avoid the stance that lay behind the more general exhibitionary paradigm, that of a world and global dimension to be constructed as a powerful representation.\(^{47}\) Alexander Geppert has recently underlined the transnational and transcultural character of imperial exhibitions, considered as a specific “medium” whose “self implemented rhetoric”\(^{48}\) (to use Geppert’s words) implies perceptual interdependencies and transnational interrelations despite local specificities. However, this openness toward a world dimension is “gained through historical displaying and staging of cultural differences”.\(^{49}\) And indeed the Ballo Excelsior represents this problematic articulation in a variety of ways.

There is of course the glorification of Italian achievements (Volta, the Mont Cenis Tunnel, the Suez Canal). Yet at the same time the space represented goes from Italy to Spain, from North Africa, to New York, with echoes of characters coming from other parts of the world (China, India, Turkey, Britain, France etc.) and, most of all, the finale, with a proverbial “ballabile delle nazioni” (“dance of nations”) that clearly states this articulation. Indeed, the world is here represented from a perspective of internationalism:

\(^{46}\) Romussi, “Conclusione”.
an intertwining of nations, each with its flag, clearly identified as elements that compose a picture of universal peace, maintained by an underlying militaristic configuration of power. This might seem quite puzzling if read only in relation to a national exposition. Yet it offers an insight into the reason why *Excelsior* became so emblematic and had an afterlife beyond the 1881 event.

The enormous success the ballet encountered in its staging at the Teatro alla Scala urged Manzotti to export his creation outside Milan, and very soon also outside Italy. In 1882 the ballet was staged in Naples (Teatro San Carlo), in Turin (Teatro Regio), in Florence (Politeama Vittorio Emanuele II) and in Trieste (Politeama Rossetti). In 1883 it reached Rome, Palermo and Bologna, in 1884 Padua and Genoa, always with dozens of performances. In the successive year it was again on stage in Milan and in Trieste, but in different theaters (respectively Dal Verme and Comunale). Its success spread through Italy. Between 1881 and 1905 (when Manzotti died) it was proposed over fifty times in different cities and theaters, to great acclaim. At the same time, and just two years after the Milan premiere, in 1883 the ballet inaugurated the Eden theater in Paris, and was staged also in Madrid, Valencia, New York, Warsaw, Berlin, Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro. The impressive list of cities where the *Ballo Excelsior* was performed in the five following years only includes San Francisco, London, Vienna, Antwerp, Prague, Montevideo, Budapest, St. Petersburg, Brussels, Barcelona, Moscow, among other places.

The figures tell the tale: Flavia Pappacena observes that in every theater, both in Italy and elsewhere, where it was staged, the ballet outnumbered replicas of any play performed up to that time. To this regard Pappacena recalls its 100 replicas at the Niblo Garden in New York, 300 at the Victoria Theater in Berlin and at the Eden Theater in Paris (here with box office takings of more than 2 million 100,000 francs) and the fact that it was on the bill for two whole years in Vienna (1885-1887). In his autobiography the show business entrepreneur Kiralfy describes his 1883 New York production of *Excelsior* as being “too great a success, […] tremendously expensive to produce” and with box office receipts that “while excellent did not reflect that success”.

---

50 See C. Celi, “Manzotti e il teatro della memoria del XIX secolo”, *Excelsior*, a. c. di Pappacena, 15-40, see 36-40.


52 Pappacena, “La trascrizione del ballo *Excelsior*”, 56.

53 B. Kiralfy, *Bolossy Kiralfy, Creator of Great Musical Spectacles: An Autobiography*, ed. by B. M. Barker (Ann Arbor, MI-London: U.M.I. Research Press, 1988), 116-119, see 117-118. I am grateful to Guido Ab-battista for pointing out to me this autobiography, not to mention the many other suggestions and hints I received from him that inspired my whole work on the *Ballo Excelsior*. 
to find a bigger theater in order to meet all the requests they had, first in Buffalo, then in all major cities of the East Coast and finally in San Francisco Grand Opera, followed by Denver and Chicago. This great acclaim prompted Kiralfy to consider *Excelsior* as the very show that assured the reputation of his company as, according to his words, “the kings of ballet spectacle and of musicals strong in dance.”

There is no doubt that in the author’s intentions the *Ballo Excelsior* was considered a model to be reproduced. And this becomes quite evident if one looks at the ways that were chosen for its world diffusion. Manzotti could not, of course, supervise personally each and every staging. So he nominated some “ripetitori autorizzati” (authorized rehearsalers), choreographers, dancers, mimic performers (such as Carlo Coppi or the Coppini brothers) who had already collaborated with him, knew the ballet and could guarantee that there would be an acceptable re-staging of the ballet. As its success spread worldwide, Manzotti also ceded the rights to reproduce the ballet to specialized companies, such as Kiralfy for North America or Angelo Ferrari for South America, for example. Given the scale of worldwide success, Manzotti at a certain point decided to trust local choreographers has it happened in Kiev and Odessa in 1887 and 1888 and in North America with Imre Kiralfy, who nevertheless had the collaboration of the already mentioned Ettore Coppini in 1883 and 1884.

It was not only a matter of copyrights, although the issue came up quite often and was even publicly debated. There was also the need to share a particular conception of what the ballet was: a kind of ductile and pliable model that could be reproduced with the introduction of the necessary variants depending on local specificities and requirements. Thus, it becomes even more evident that in Manzotti’s view *Excelsior* was a mass cultural artifact designed to be reproduced and adapted to different contexts and very far from any desire to maintain an aura of aesthetic uniqueness.

Already in 1881 between the first series of performances of the Winter season (Carnevale-Quaresima) and the second series of the Spring season at the Teatro alla Scala

---

55 It must also be noticed that every work by Manzotti was “inspired” by the model of previous works by other choreographers, see J. Sasportes, “Virtuosismo e spettacolarità: le risposte italiane alla decadenza del balletto romantico”, *Tornando a Stiffelio. Popolarità, rifacimenti, messinscena. Effettismo e altre “cure” nella drammaturgia del Verdi romantico*, a c. di G. Morelli (Florence: Olschki, 1987), 305-315, see 310.
59 See, for instance, the whole dispute between Manzotti and Enrico Cecchetti (a great name in the history of Italian dance), for the staging of *Excelsior* in St. Petersburg in 1887, reconstructed in detail by Concetta Lo Iacono in “Manzotti & Marenco. Il diritto di due autori”, *Nuova rivista musicale italiana*, 3 (July-September 1987): 421-446.
Manzotti inserted minor changes. Then, when the ballet was staged in Naples, the appeal to the reader that in the first libretto was directed to “the intelligent audience of Milan” (“l’intelligente pubblico Milanese”) was transformed into an appeal to “this intelligent audience” (“questo intelligente pubblico”) and the reference to the “judgment of the educated public of Milan” (“giudizio del colto Pubblico Milanese”, with capital letters, unusual in Italian) became “the judgment of this educated public” (“giudizio di questo colto pubblico”). It might seem only an obvious detail, but when the ballet was staged again in Milan the reference to any Milanese feature had disappeared to never reappear.

The most significant changes, though, came later, in 1883, when *Excelsior* was chosen to inaugurate the Eden theater in Paris: any reference to Prussia (anthem, flag, dances) was replaced with Hungarian elements; the so called Square of the Telegraph (piazza del Telegrafo) became a courtyard and locomotives on the iron bridge in New York were doubled in number; sound effects were added in the “quadro del Simun”, and in the Suez Canal scene rugs, decorations and plants abounded. In general, as Pappacena observes, all this created effects of “heaviness” for the sake of novelty and high-impact, which were perfectly in line with the artistic policy of the Eden theater but were afterwards maintained in other editions in Italy and worldwide. There were other changes in 1888 and in 1894 Italian stagings, but the most interesting interventions were introduced for different international productions. Some of them had the purpose of adapting the ballet to different contexts: for example, the final “ballabile delle Nazioni” was set in front of a scenographic reproduction of the newly built Tour Eiffel in Paris in 1889 and on the river Thames with a view on the Houses of Parliament in London in 1905.

One very significant element was introduced in the North-American production in 1883 when Kiralfy, with the collaboration of Thomas Alva Edison, managed to develop new theater lights and special effects made possible by the use of electricity on stage. Kiralfy was struck by the fact that the *Ballo Excelsior* had “played to great crowds” in

---

64 See, for instance, the libretto of the Teatro Apollo di Roma for the Carnevale-Quaresima season 1882-1883.
65 See the libretto of the Teatro alla Scala for the Carnevale-Quaresima season 1882-1883 and then, for instance, that of the Teatro Dal Verme in Milano for the Carnevale-Quaresima season 1884-1885 (for the company Cesare Steffenoni).
66 On the costumes of the Eden version see …e guarnizioni spiccantissime.
Front cover of the notebook by Giovanni Cammarano with the transcriptions of the Ballo Excelsior. From Souvenir. Excelsior del Cav. Luigi Manzotti, musica di Romualdo Marengo, rappresentato per la prima volta al teatro alla Scala in Milano, l'11 gennaio 1881, trascrizione manoscritta di Giovanni Cammarano. Credit: “Archivio e Biblioteca Livia Simoni del Museo Teatrale alla Scala”.
Paris in 1883 and immediately sailed for Europe to purchase the ballet, because he saw in it an exceptional potential for developing his burgeoning show business enterprise. As he explained:

It was a most unusual pantomime, presenting the technical progress of mankind through the ages into modern times. The production was filled with firsts for the stage, for example the first steam engine, the first great tunnel (Mount Cenis), the first great canal (Suez).

Thus, to the list of these “firsts” he decided to add in his production in the scene devoted to the development of electricity “the most significant show business first of the entire presentation, […] real electric light”. According to Kiralfy himself, this way Excelsior “made theatrical history by bringing electric light to the stage”, so that “the American theater would never again be the same.”

Other interventions, though, had more openly political connotations. The Mont Cenis Tunnel was replaced with the Arlberg Tunnel in Vienna in 1885 and any reference to the Italian anthem or flag disappeared. In general, during the final “ballabile” the flag of the hosting country was always present on stage. This created some problems when, for instance the ballet was staged in Trieste in 1885: an Italian flag was expected to be unfurled but the three dancers holding the flag on scene were required by the Habsburgian authorities not to show it in order to avoid Italian nationalist demonstrations.

Trieste is an interesting case in point. It is no coincidence that the Ballo Excelsior was staged in Trieste already in 1882, although the city at the time was not Italian, to
great acclaim.\textsuperscript{74} And that only three years later it was staged again in a different theater, the Teatro Comunale, the most important in the city at that time, usually devoted to performances of melodrama. The Teatro Comunale was so interested in the ballet that it had invited Manzotti in person to supervise the staging (but the choreographer kindly answered that he was not available and sent one of his best “ripetitori autorizzati”, Achille Coppini).\textsuperscript{75} Even this time \textit{Excelsior} was, as always, a grand success (“un vero e grandioso successo”, an anonymous reviewer wrote)\textsuperscript{76} especially when compared with the average of the box office takings of any performance of an opera with a ballet (which was around 600-700 forints). The premiere in Trieste, on March 3\textsuperscript{rd} 1885, of \textit{Excelsior} alone grossed 1,227 forints, while the following performances never failed to take in less than 1,000 forints and takings increased daily.\textsuperscript{77}

The memory of this success remained for many years to come. Even when the city of Trieste was annexed to the Italian State, after World War I, in 1919, in a difficult moment when the Teatro Comunale could not get funding for their season, the management wrote to the city government to emphasize the importance of its theatrical activity for the enhancement of the Italian identity of Trieste. And in order to confirm this, they proposed to stage, once again, the \textit{Ballo Excelsior} in a version that included an “apotheosis of Italian victory and the redemption of Trento and Trieste”.\textsuperscript{78} Yet times had changed: \textit{Excelsior} did not meet the same acclaim it had before the war\textsuperscript{79} and was never again proposed. Anyway, there had been even stronger manipulations in the war years. A new version of \textit{Excelsior} was released in 1916 where the main characters were (instead of Light, Civilization and Obscurantism) Beauty, Justice, Violence and the League of

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{74} See M. Buono, “\textit{Excelsior} di Luigi Manzotti, musica di Leonardo Marenco al Politeama Rossetti”, \textit{L’Arte. Rassegna di teatri, belle arti e letteratura}, 16 September 1882, 1. Here the reason for this success is identified in “the very idea of the ballet, in the beautiful outward expressions, in the handling of colors, in their harmonious fusion, streams of light, design and originality and group dances, in the rapidity of the changes, that surprise you, fascinate you, dazzle you, ceaselessly without boredom, constantly alternating excitement and enthusiasm”.

\textsuperscript{75} Civico Museo teatrale “Carlo Schmidl”, Trieste, Archivio Teatro Verdi, Lettere 1885, letters n. 45, 55, 88, 91; Scritture teatrali 1884-1885, n. 155.

\textsuperscript{76} “Gazzettino di Trieste. Teatro Comunale”, 2.

\textsuperscript{77} Civico Museo teatrale “Carlo Schmidl”, Trieste, Archivio Teatro Verdi, Scritture teatrali 1884-1885, n. 156.

\textsuperscript{78} The new title was: \textit{Excelsior. Grandioso ballo in 11 quadri del cav. Luigi Manzotti, musica del maestro Romualdo Marenco con le ultime modifiche apportate da R. Simoni e con l’Apoteosi della Vittoria e della Redenzione di TRENTO E TRIESTE}. The letter, dd. August 18\textsuperscript{th} 1919, is kept by the Civico Museo teatrale “Carlo Schmidl”, Trieste.

\textsuperscript{79} At the end of the season, the local newspaper \textit{Il Piccolo} commented: “Deliberately up until now we did not mention \textit{Excelsior} – that had eighteen replicas – , because, although it absorbed a major expense, it nevertheless did not offer a corresponding artistic contribution to the season” (28 April 1920).

163
Nations ("La Lega dei Popoli") and where the confrontation was between Latin beauty and justice and Germanic barbaric violence, all surrounded by flames of war.\textsuperscript{80}

Apparently, this looks like an ironic reversal of Manzotti’s idealized “pax romana”. And yet, perhaps, it was nothing but the unavoidable result of what the ideology of the \textit{Ballo Excelsior} had helped spread during the years of its worldwide acclaim.

\section*{III. Dancing for the World: Framing Otherness}

The effects the \textit{Ballo Excelsior} had on forms of mainstream culture designed first of all for the broader audience of the exhibition visitors cannot be fully understood if not considered in relation to the specificity of the cultural discourse it refers to: dance.

Indeed, on the one hand the \textit{Ballo Excelsior} belongs to the Italian tradition of the so called “ballo grande” and has its specific place in the history of dance. On the other, it became so powerfully identified with the Milan Exhibition that it worked to highlight the link between dance, which is after all the art of the moving body, and the exhibitionary paradigm itself.

As regards the first point, Roberto Alonge, among others, highlighted the fact that the second half of the nineteenth century saw in Italy a development of a widespread theatricality, a variety of forms, genres, levels of theatrical performances that coexisted and sometimes intertwined.\textsuperscript{81} The “ballo grande” was a particular kind of spectacle which took over, in a sense, the popularity of melodrama after the political unification of Italy. It consisted of grandiose scenes, very simple narrative patterns, quite evident didactic intentions. From the point of view of dance techniques it mixed together academic dance (which had just undergone a process of strict codification thanks to the Italian tradition, with manuals such as Carlo Blasis's\textsuperscript{82} and schools such as the one of the Teatro alla Scala, first of all) with other forms of movement such as mimicry and so called “character dances” (popular and traditional patterns of movement), with acrobats, several extras and sometimes even animals on stage. Indeed, to the grandiosity of scenography the “ballo grande” added an increasingly high number of performers.

\textsuperscript{80} Caramba and R. Simoni, \textit{Excelsior. Azione coreografica di Luigi Manzotti. Nuova interpretazione e messa in scena del coreografo Romeo Francioli. Musica di Romualdo Marenco} (Milan: Sonzogno, 1916). On the 1908 new version by Caramba see F. Pappacena, “Il nuovo \textit{Excelsior} di Caramba”, \textit{Excelsior}, 119-132. This version was also filmed in 1913 (see M. A. Calò, “Il film \textit{Excelsior} di Luca Comerio”, \textit{Excelsior}, 133-144). Many versions of the ballet were also proposed by puppet theater, starting from the Milanese Colla company’s \textit{Civiltà e progresso}, 1895.

\textsuperscript{81} R. Alonge, \textit{Teatro e spettacolo nel secondo Ottocento} (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1988).

\textsuperscript{82} C. Blasis, \textit{Traité de l’art de la danse}, texte établi par F. Pappacena (Rome: Gremese, 2007).
For his contribution to the “ballo grande”, Manzotti definitely has his place in the history of European choreography: in the classic The Choreographic Art, Peggy van Praagh and Peter Brinson recognize in Manzotti the greatest representative of that school of choreography that brought this particular kind of spectacularity to all European stages.

With their striking costumes, sets of transformations, grandiose coups de théâtre, in one word phantasmagories that included even storms or earthquakes, this kind of spectacles started to be extremely popular in the 1860s, in particular at the Alhambra Theater in London, moving then to the Eden theater in Paris in the 1880s (thanks to the Ballo Excelsior) and then reaching its apex in Russia in the years to follow, also opening the ground for classical ballet as we know it today. The Eden theater in Paris, inaugurated by the Ballo Excelsior, was the place of choice of these spectacles, thanks to them it became what Stéfan Mallarmé defined as “significatif de l’état d’aujourd’hui, avec son apothéotique resurrection italienne des danses offertes a notre vulgaire plaisir”.

These spectacles should nevertheless be categorized under the label of academic dance: indeed Manzotti opens the pages regarding “classical choreography” in van Praagh and Brinson’s previously mentioned volume, although they note how academic technique and steps were only one of the many aspects of these ballets.

An analysis of the transcripts of the ballet (“disposizioni sceniche”), kept by the Museo del Teatro alla Scala, can confirm this impression. As van Praagh and Brinson already noticed, the transcriptions closely resemble mathematical formulas, displayed in a graphic form, where every main character is represented by a circle of a specific color, with a description of the lights and the mimic of conversations, and with significant textual inserts. Great care is taken in the drawings not only of scenographies, reproduced in detail, but also in drawings of scenic effects, groups of dancers or theatrical poses. The

85 S. Mallarmé, “Note sur le théâtre”, Revue indépendante, April-June 1887, 62.
86 The Museum of the Teatro alla Scala has three notebooks with transcriptions (disposizioni sceniche) of the Ballo Excelsior: Souvenir. Excelsior, del Cav. Luigi Manzotti, musica di Romualdo Mareno, rappresentato per la prima volta al teatro alla Scala in Milano, l’11 gennaio 1881 trascrizione manoscritta di Giovanni Cammarano (c. 1881-1888) (32 x 24 cm, 338 pp.); Excelsior. Azione coreografica in 6 parti e 11 quadri, Luigi G Manzotti, riproduzione di Eugenio Casati, musica di Romualdo Mareno (which mainly reproduces the manuscript by Cammarano, although often with less detail and with the use of French-like terms for dance technical movements and positions instead of Italian terminology, 34 x 22.25 cm, 274 pp.); Excelsior. Ballo del coreografo Luigi Cavalier Manzotti per uso della riproduzione di Enrico Giuseppe Cecchetti (a much smaller notebook with less illustrations and more detailed indications of dance movements). I wish to thank Matteo Sartorio, curator of the Museum of the Teatro alla Scala, for facilitating my access to the records and documents kept by the museum.
dancers seem really to be considered as points in space, elements of a graphic disposition, so that their patterns and positions en masse were more important than their steps. There are actually only a few indications of the actual steps they are required to make. So the “disposizioni sceniche” look more like directions for troop movements or the disposition of soldiers for a battle, confirming a military mindset that is very present in the whole of the ballet. Animated beings (dancers) seem to belong to the realm of the inanimate, their bodies are used as if their were abstract objects; whereas abstract things (Light, Obscurantism, Civilization; but also tunnels, canals, steamboats, electricity and so on) are inserted within a narrative pattern that animates them, makes them living,

---

87 van Praagh and Brinson, *The Choreographic Art*, 45. See also F. Pappacena, “I fondamenti della struttura del ballo” and “Dal quaderno di Giovanni Cammarano: la partitura coreografica del ballo”, in *Excelsior*, a c. di Pappacena, 75-90 and 91-118.
with the heterogeneous complexity of a Victorian glasswork, participating in a modern “triumph” of the sex appeal of the inorganic fetish, whose model can perhaps be found in the tradition of the “grande féerie”.

But still, a “ballo grande”, as Excelsior, was a ballet and not a circus or a pageant or a different form of popular spectacle. And ballets, in the second half of the nineteenth century in Italy developed a particular form of allegorical and non-narrative construction. In order to explain this development, José Sasportes emphasizes the need to re-read the history of ballet as closely linked with the history of opera. Ballet and melodrama alternated the one with the other on Italian stages as they prevailed in different periods. Yet since ballets were often staged as an interval between the acts of the opera or an appendix to the theme of the melodrama, so tightly closed in itself, they had to loose any narrative thread to make room for allegorical representations and a different structure. In this structure, the presence of a widespread textuality must also be noticed as something that guides, channels and verbally instructs the audience. The initial appeal of the libretto of Excelsior, for instance, was (and still is) usually read as a voiceover at the beginning of every performance as a kind of instructions for use. Here Manzotti appeals “to the reader” and explains that he first “saw” “the monument erected in Turin to the glory of the mighty Mont Cenis Tunnel” and then “imagined” his choreographic composition. And in this articulation of seeing and imagination, one can easily recognize the kind of perception imposed by the exhibitions, where visitors were supposed to see with their own eyes and then let the imagination fly; an imagination driven and controlled in some way, directed through a contemplation of reality or a staging of reality that hides its character of discursive construction.

However, at the same time ballet acquired a kind of autonomy, where the development of technique (often into virtuosismo) became a sort of a survival mode, a means of abstraction, proposing the dancing body as an aim in itself. This becomes particularly
evident and emblematic in Manzotti’s ballet, where human moving bodies are nothing but abstract allegories, elements of pure movement that, for Sasportes, are already prefiguring what dance will be like during the twentieth century: not classic narrative ballet, as developed in Russia as a timeless form of story telling, but dance for dance, as an aim in itself and as design of the trajectories of human bodies in space. On the one hand, this developed through the Ballets Russes in the highest form of artistic and aesthetic valorization of dance, during the twentieth century; on the other Manzotti put on stage what Sasportes called “Hollywood inventions ahead of its time”, grandiose en masse musical spectacles that the film industry, with its choreographer Bubsy Berkeley, would exploit at large in the first half of the twentieth century (and it is maybe still exploiting, not only in cinema). In this sense, Giovanni Morelli, in the 2000 Teatro alla Scala program of the Ballo Excelsior appropriately and hyperbolically defined the ballet as the “archetype of a monstre spectacularization and the most colossal factory of stage tests of every immani corporis magnitudine spectaculum for the incomparable future memory of Italian theater”; and then as an “admirable monster, the summa-masterpiece of special effects at the beginning of the end of the nineteenth century”, a kind of “super-opera”. A kitsch and trivial Gesamtkunstwerk, in other words, that in its phantasmagoric aspiration to put totality, synchrony and simultaneity on stage constitutively recalls the fusion of discourses, perceptions and temporalities of the great exhibitions. Furthermore, in its kitsch aesthetics, the Ballo Excelsior depicts – to use Tomas Kulka’s definition – “objects or themes that are highly charged with stock emotions”, avoiding any ambiguity, so that everything must be “instantly and effortlessly identifiable”. The audience must never have to strain to recognize what is depicted nor to appreciate formal and artistic features of the ballet, entering into what Jonathan Crary has defined as a “suspension of perception”. According to the implicit rules of kitsch and to the exhibitionary paradigm of spectacularization, the audience has to look only to the subject-matter in order to gain a sort of collective, universal sense of itself, a particular self-image, already inscribed in the ballet’s theme, enjoying a feeling of self-congratulation and universality.

94 Sasportes, “Virtuosismo e spettacularità”, 310.
96 Manzotti himself would use this word explicitly in the libretto of the much later Sport, Ballo in otto quadri di Luigi Manzotti, musica di Romualdo Marenco, figurini di Alfredo Edel (Milan: Ricordi, 1896).
98 Kulka, Kitsch and Art, 33.
100 As in Milan Kundera’s notorious definition of kitsch: “Kitsch causes two tears to flow in quick succession. The first tear says: How nice to see children running on the grass. The second tear says: How nice
Thus, on the other hand, in its link with this paradigm, the *Ballo Excelsior* in a sense made it strikingly evident that a close link would be formed between dance performances and world’s fairs. In the years to follow 1881 this link would become quite clear and striking, since dances, of different types, accompanied and often marked the success and the memory of individual exhibitions. *Excelsior* was staged again at the Eden theater in Paris during the 1889 World’s Fair to enormous acclaim: it had 300 replicas on that occasion. Furthermore, it was in the space of the great world exhibitions that the so called “exotic dances” were introduced and became popular in the West for the first time. Indeed, Anne Décoret-Ahiha, with regard to this popularity and impact, traces a sort of “tour du monde en dansant” between Paris 1889 (the first world’s exhibition to introduce non Western dance as an attraction and as a paradigm of representation of otherness) and 1931 (the exhibition that marked the apotheosis of colonial and imperialistic ideology). The case of belly dance, introduced in Paris 1889, and then again in Chicago in 1893, has been investigated as a key moment in the history of exoticism and orientalism. But there was much more: already in Paris in 1889, linked to what has been defined as “human zoos”, human beings put on show as living objects to be observed for entertainment, gipsy dances, and then Javanese, Martinican, South-Eastern Asian and other kind of
dances were put on show as living objects to be observed for entertainment, gipsy dances, and then Javanese, Martinican, South-Eastern Asian and other kind of
dances were performed. This became a model to be repeated in many other exhibitions to follow. The exhibition functioned as a frame for a multifarious otherness, inside which dance had an ambiguous and double status. On the one hand it was the most stereotypical mark of exotic otherness put on show through moving bodies that responded to Western canons and expectations; on the other, it represented the only way those bodies had to speak for themselves, in a paradoxical and highly problematic way. Anne Décoret-Ahiha highlights how the moving body dancing in this framework was a site of exacerbation of colonial hierarchies of power. Yet at the same time the paradoxical agency of the body of the non-Western other dancing carries the enigma of a difference that does not present itself as evidence but, as Sally Ann Ness writes, “document the limits of cross cultural comprehension and/or cultural translation”.

The confrontation becomes dramatic, in a sense. At the time when dance in Europe was undergoing a process of strict regulation and fixation of codes of movements and positions (that found in the previously mentioned Blasis’s manual its first reference), so called “exotic dances” were the token of an absence of rules, of a non decipherable code, of a radical otherness, which at the same time attracted and frightened Western audiences.

In this light, the Ballo Excelsior can be considered as something more than an ideological celebration of technological progress and fine de siècle internationalism. The explicit intentions of paternalistic indoctrination that the ballet obsessively and didactically repeats can also be seen as a frame for the representation of non-Western otherness, which is a constitutive part of the ballet. At the very center (part III and IV of the sixth “quadro”) of the Ballo Excelsior, just after the celebration of progress and just before the final apotheosis (Mont Cenis and the triumph of civilization, progress and harmony) we find the “quadri” entitled “Il Simun” (VII) and “Il canale di Suez” (VIII). The first one is set in an indefinite African desert where the natural force of the Simoon wind, together with the lack of law and order of the Oriental world, disseminates desperation and destruction among human beings (an Arab merchant and an Arab women, a “mora”, with her child, attacked by a horde of Arab horse bandits). At the end of the scene, Obscurantism triumphs over Light. But the following scene represents the reaction and the victory of Light and Civilization embodied in the Suez Canal, the site of celebration of cosmopolitanism, with travelers coming from all parts of the world (China, Turkey, Mexico, Britain, so on so forth) performing their ‘characteristic’ identitarian dances and games. All this culminates in the representation of the “Abolition of slavery”, followed by a complex choreography of seemingly ‘exotic’ dances.

The dichotomy is, as always, quite explicit and didactic: on the one hand a “horrible scene of desolation and death”, on the other “a lovely panorama”, the solemn triumph of progress and civilization in “a clear Oriental day in which we can see far-off at the horizon the mountainous chains of the Attaha on the Red Sea and the great waves of the desert, and the hills and mountains of Arabia”. A kind of “before and after” the arrival of Western civilization, in structure of juxtaposition whose link with the exhibition I have already tried to emphasize. The message is clearly stated: before Western intervention there is only the violence of nature reflected in human beings’ wild behavior, source of fear and extermination; after it, the horizon becomes visible, human beings have an enlightened future in front of them and at the Suez Isthmus, “which had earlier been entirely desert”, “all European civilization is gathered”.

If in the Ballo Excelsior all this is indirectly alluded, Manzotti’s ideology was made explicit in his later production, Amor (1886). In the preface “to the audience” (Al pubblico) of the libretto, after having defined Excelsior as a “ballo storico-scientifico” (“historical and scientific ‘ballo’”), Manzotti evokes the dimension of allegory and fantasy, explaining it as a sort of revelation and attributing it to primordial force that would be able to solve the question of the birth of the Universe (“risolvere il problema della Genesi universale”). Trying to put aside any temptation of irony, one must notice here how this “revelation” is grounded on a series of stereotypes that might be easily referred to the complex nexus Edward Said taught us to identify as late nineteenth-century orientalism. This primordial force identified by Manzotti with a Dantesque form of love (“Amor”, with a capital A) was born in the lands of vaguely identified ‘Orient’ (nelle “pianure sabbiose, infocate dell’Asia e dalle spaventevoli solitudini delle foreste africane”) to settle in Egypt, later in Greece and then in Rome, in an itinerary toward a civilized place where the struggle for life could start. Here Oriental people are described as “wild”, compared to monkeys; and not surprisingly all this description finds its precise reference in Figuier’s study of “human races” quoted in a footnote.

Therefore, it becomes quite clear here what in Excelsior remains implicit, i.e. that the triumph of Civilization and Light is part of a design of racialization and Westernization aimed at establishing cultural hierarchies between different parts of the world. Even those

---

107 “The Libretto”, Excelsior, 245.
109 Manzotti, Amor, 3.
111 Manzotti, Amor, 4.
112 Manzotti, Amor, 12.
113 L. Figuier, Les Races humaines (Paris: Hachette, 1872). The Italian translation, Le razze umane, was published only two years later (Milan: Treves, 1874).
that seem, therefore, harmless, good-natured and nicely kitsch forms of entertainment reveal powerful “dispositifs” of diffusion of racism and power hierarchies. Non-European otherness in the Ballo Excelsior seems nothing more than one of the many “quadri” of the ballet. Yet its crucial position shows that it must be circumscribed and limited, neutralized, thanks to an overall paratactical structure that perfectly fulfills this function. Never in the ballet does the triumph of obscurantism seem so close as in the Simoon scene, with the destabilization provoked by non-Western instincts and a complete lack of social ties and structures able to ensure the overcoming of a primitive violence. Thus, the confrontation with the Suez Canal, a typical instance of Western intervention over the wilderness of Eastern nature, is striking, even in its dimension of internationalism: it is not only the Suez Canal and the abolition of slavery that Excelsior will show us, but also the way in which the whole world admires Western achievements and its superiority (with Chinese, Turkish, Mexican travelers, among others, each one performing their typical “character dance” emphasizing its features, as Cammarano suggests in his notebooks).¹¹⁴

This dichotomic structure that serves the purpose of circumscribing and framing otherness in order to construct hierarchies of power is nothing but part of a more general exhibitionary paradigm of spectacularization. Through this complex and heterogeneous apparatus, the Ballo Excelsior managed to create a sense of shared experiences at a global level, providing the audience with a collective self-image able to accommodate also national identity in its kitsch, phantasmagoric imagination of a circumscribed and neutralized other.

It is here that, in a sense, all aspects hitherto investigated intertwine: the link with the exhibitionary paradigm of spectacularization, seen also as a means for framing otherness; the consideration of the scale of global success as a result of a continuous process of recycling and remodeling that leads to ideological distinctions; the specificity of the discourse of dance and the potentialities of its investigation for the history of world’s fairs and more generally for any attempt to grasp the problematic presence of moving bodies on the stage of cultural history.

From the time of Italy’s unification in 1861, the organization of exhibitions on the national territory, as well as the participation in exhibitions with a pavilion in foreign countries, became an instrument of nation-building for the liberally-oriented ruling classes that governed Italy from 1861 to 1922. Their ultimate goal was to finally achieve the complete unification of Italians – who had been politically and culturally divided for centuries – and persuade them to value the newly formed state. Additionally, they also sought to demonstrate the strength of the national economy and the industriousness of the Italian people. However, the goal of creating patriotic awareness in the Italian population was not generally an easy one to achieve, given the citizens’ reliance on strong local identities, and as such national expositions were seemingly unable to largely contribute to that scope.¹

The beginning of massive outflows of Italians toward foreign countries in the 1880’s further complicated Italy’s nation-building ambitions. Migrants primarily exported their own local identities, whereas any sense of national belonging was scantly felt. Indeed, the brand new state was often conceived as a distant entity or even an enemy because of its intention to impose harsh taxes and long years of military service on the citizens.² In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, emigration was a disputed topic in the political realm that divided those who believed the departures were a loss to the nation and those who thought the Italian communities that had settled in foreign countries would be instrumental to promoting the exportation of national goods and,

* I wish to thank Nando Fasce, for his extremely competent comments. Patrizia Audenino and Emilio Franzina read this essay beforehand and offered their useful insights.


generally speaking, could be a contributing factor in Italy’s foreign policy. Plans were drawn up to establish state-sponsored settlements of Italian migrants in rural areas of Argentina and Australia but were never carried out because of technical difficulties and high costs. Some, including the nationalist movement led by Enrico Corradini, thought Italy should have rather decisively undertaken a bigger push for colonial expansionism in Africa, where the surplus of Italian manpower could have eventually been allocated.³

What role did Italians outside of Italy play in Italian exhibitions? What kind of visibility did they have at these events? Did they have any part in the larger process of nation-building undertaken with these exhibitions? Historiography has mostly focused on the representation of Italian migrants in national exhibitions during the Liberal Age (1861-1922). Conversely, scant attention has been paid to subsequent phases in Italy’s history, specifically the Fascist Age (1922-1943) and the Republican Age (from 1945 onwards). This essay will consider some of the most important exhibitions held in Italy during Benito Mussolini’s regime, in particular the *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* (Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution, hereafter MRF) held in Rome in 1932 and the *Esposizione Universale di Roma* (Universal Exhibition of Rome, hereafter E42), which was to be held in 1942 but ultimately was canceled because of the outbreak of World War II. The work will seek to demonstrate how the Fascist regime recovered the myth of ‘Italian Geniality’ from the Liberal Age and applied it to Italian migrants from an imperial standpoint, following Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 and Mussolini’s subsequent proclamation of the Italian empire in Eastern Africa on May 9th, 1936. Finally, this imperial image will be evident in the *Mostra delle Terre italiane d’Oltremare* (Exhibition of Italian Overseas Lands, hereafter MTO) held in Naples in 1940, which will also be the subject of analysis. After the fall of Fascism and the end of WWII, a new democratic and republican institutional regime was established in the early post-war period. Although Fascist imperial ideology was abandoned, the myth of ‘Italian Geniality’ and labor outside of Italy persisted in the post-war period, at a time when Italy was seeking international rehabilitation after years under a dictatorship and the defeat in the war. A new edition of the Naples’ Exhibition was held in 1952 as *Mostra*

---

Italian Migrants in Italian Exhibitions

d’Oltremare e del Lavoro Italiano nel Mondo (Exhibition of Overseas and Italian Labor in the World). This event will be analyzed in comparison to the former Neapolitan edition, by highlighting divergences and continuities with the Fascist age.

I. The Liberal Age

The historian Emilio Franzina has drawn attention to the marginal role and limited visibility that emigration had within nineteenth-century Italian exhibitions. During the 1884 National Exhibition in Turin, Professor Brunialti lectured at the local Società Filotecnica on the topic of Italians Outside of Italy and emphasized that neither the national government nor the greater public opinion were expressing even minimal interest toward the Italians who had left the country. Attention was paid only to Italians in Argentina, where in the capital city of Buenos Aires two Italian exhibitions had been organized in 1881 and 1884. According to the periodical L’Italia all’Estero, roughly 6,000 visitors from the South-American country were about to attend the 1884 Turin Exhibition. Italian-Argentinean businessmen were among the most well received attendees and were invited to the 1898 Exhibition of Turin and subsequent international expositions in Milan (1906) and Turin (1911); the latter two events were specifically studied by the scholar Patrizia Audenino with regard to Italians abroad.

In Milan, a special section of the exhibition was dedicated to Italians outside of Italy. In order to bring this section to fruition, the government asked to its embassies and consulates to mobilize the Italian communities to document their commercial and productive capacity. This documentation also assumed nationalist goals, since the Italian emigrants’ participation in the exhibition was intended to reaffirm their sense of belonging within the greater national community, to the point that Audenino has talked about a “test of nationalism”. In Milan, Italian industriousness in foreign countries was depicted as the expression of geniality of a population which had become popular for having achieved great works and historically asserted its position in the Mediterranean through the Genoese, Venetian, and Leghorn Jewish settlements. Italian geniality abroad


therefore became a key theme that was constantly present in Italian exhibitions spanning
from the Liberal Age through the early post-war Republican period.\(^6\)

Only a limited number of communities in the Mediterranean and the Americas,
specifically those characterized by an entrepreneurial bourgeois eager to increase its
business, responded promptly to Rome’s appeals by sending illustrated monographs,
Italian newspapers and general documentation related to the communities and their
religious and civic associations to the homeland. One volume in particular described the
Italian-Argentinean community as a template for other communities, and was displayed
at the exhibitions of 1898 in Turin and 1906 in Milan. However, sections dedicated to
Italians abroad generally received little attention from attendees, who expressed much
more interest in the section dedicated to Eritrea, the first Italy-occupied colony in
Africa. According to Audenino, this demonstrated how “by then the fabrication of the
Greatest Italy was as dependent on the colonies as it was on the economic successes of
emigration”\(^7\)

In the year 1911, during the celebrations for the 50\(^{th}\) anniversary of Italy's unification,
Turin hosted an international exposition that in terms of the Italian emigrants’
display shared certain traits with the events organized in 1898 and 1906. A pavilion
on ‘colonization, emigration, colonies’ was created and themes such as Italian labor
in foreign countries and Italian ‘secular geniality’, which had supposedly enhanced
exchanges between populations and greatly contributed to the world’s civilization, were
reiterated. Once again the section dedicated to the colonies received much more interest
from the public, which would suggest that the emigrants’ world had not yet became an
integral component of the national identity.\(^8\)

II. Fascism and Its Tenth-Anniversary

It is currently a matter of historiographical debate whether during the Liberal Age
Italy had already developed an institutional project aimed to strongly bind the homeland
to the Italians settled outside of Italy, either by practical means (e.g. by establishing
Italian schools in foreign countries) or with a symbolic apparatus that would have helped


\(^7\) Audenino, “La Mostra degli italiani all’estero”, 21. On the representation of Africa and Africans
in the Italian exhibitions see the seminal work by G. Abbattista, *Umanità in mostra. Esposizioni etniche e

\(^8\) P. Audenino, “Il lavoro degli italiani all’estero nell’Esposizione Internazionale di Torino del 1911”,
the emigrant communities to keep their sense of belonging to the homeland alive. A discussion on this matter is beyond the scope of this essay, however it seems reasonable to consider that only the Mussolini regime had tried to organically establish a link with Italian communities. In 1927 the regime suppressed the General Commissariat for Emigration (established in 1901) and created a special bureau for Italians abroad (Direzione Generale degli Italiani all’Estero, hereafter DGIE). Based in Rome and under the control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by 1932 the DGIE took control of all migration-related matters and was charged with any relations between the homeland and the Italian communities in the world, whose consent the regime sought to obtain. With respect to the pre-Fascist period, the Mussolini regime developed an unprecedented interest in encouraging tours to the homeland among Italians residing abroad, a practice that since the late 1920’s had been widely promoted by the Roman authorities. These travels were part of a program to promote the Italian character (italianità) and push back against the loss of Italian citizenship by immigrants outside of Italy, so as to maintain transnational connections to the homeland. According to a report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, these tours were very effective, as they did not affect the national budget and served the purpose of promoting the tourism industry. Italy’s largest cities, as well as its industrial and commercial centers, were shown to the visitors, whose tours were often scheduled to end in Rome in a private meeting with the Pope or Il Duce, or at least with a public speech by the dictator. In Fascist rhetoric these travels were both ‘pilgrimages’ and ‘baths of Italian-ness’, which deserved a material benefit in the form of discounted fares on transportation. Outside of Italy the tours were managed by ethnic mutual-aid societies, associations for Italian WWI veterans, catholic priests, or Italian newspapers. A case in point is Buenos Aires’ Mattino d’Italia, which in 1932 organized a naval cruise to Italy for its readers. Similarly innovative were the summer camps (colonie estive) that the regime established in Italy for Italian youth, which the children of Italians living abroad were invited to attend annually with the intent of winning over their hearts and minds.  

---


177
The organization of exhibitions in Italy was instrumental to encouraging emigrant sojourns in the homeland. Particularly relevant to this goal was the MRF, held in Rome in October 1932 to celebrate the tenth-anniversary of the Fascist regime. This event was widely propagated both in Italy and abroad as it had the objective of showing the world the historical progression of the alleged Fascist “revolution”, which spanned from Italy’s participation in WWI to Mussolini’s takeover. Curiosity surrounding the Fascist social experiment contributed to the Exposition’s success, which registered roughly 4 million visitors from Italy and other countries and was consequently extended through October 1934. According to Fascist coeval sources, young people, intellectuals and teachers from the Italian communities visited the Mostra. Piero Parini, director of the DGIE, conceded significantly discounted transportation fares to these travelers, since high emigrant attendance at the exhibition was thought instrumental in Rome to their “better comprehension of today’s Italy”. This plan was apparently successful, because Mussolini, following a remarkable number of requests to travel to Italy, asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs to authorise prospective tours to the country in advance in order to enhance ‘opportunity and promptness’.

According to the historian Jeffrey T. Schnapp, the MRF sought to offer a public image of fascism and aimed to “symbolically renovate the revolution” and “call back to the homeland the children scattered in all continents”. In order to fully define the identification between Fascist Italy and the emigrants’ Italian character, a special room on the fasci (branches of the Fascist Party) abroad was set up on the first floor of the exposition. Inside, a world map summarized statistics on the number of Italians spread throughout the globe, while frescos and photographs portrayed the ‘outstanding’ Italian labor across continents through its master endeavours such as the construction of the Suez or Panama channels, as well as the suffering to which Italians abroad had been subject despite their remarkable traits of ‘geniality’. Mussolini wanted these values to become a cornerstone of the Fascist policy, so much so that he asked the Minister

---


13 Amministrative order n. 10 to the offices of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rome, 5 October 1933, Asmae, Fondo dei Consolati italiani negli Stati Uniti (hereafter Aci), Cleveland, box 13, folder “Turismo”.


of Foreign Affairs to utilize its diplomats abroad to collect information related to the ‘contribution’ of Italians throughout the world over the centuries. With the assistance of the Italian communities, during the following years a set of volumes named *Opera del genio italiano all’estero* (Work of Italian Genius Abroad) was published along with series named *Italiani nel mondo* (Italians in the World) by Bologna-publisher Cappelli and *Civiltà italiana nel mondo* (Italian Civilization in the World) published by the cultural organization Dante Alighieri Society. The apex of this pattern was the establishment in 1940 of the *Giornata degli italiani nel mondo* (Italians in the World Day) to be annually celebrated both in Italy and in Italian communities abroad to celebrate the contribution of Italians in the world.\(^{16}\)

The MRF room dedicated to Italians in the world also included the so-called *provvidenze*, policies undertaken by the regime on behalf of Italians abroad. These included facilitations for the return of Italian pregnant women to Italy to allow them to give birth in the homeland, or the above-mentioned summer camps for the children of immigrants. Those who resided abroad were even fully absorbed by Mussolini’s liturgy for their supposed role in the Fascist ‘revolution’ (takeover), specifically through their contribution in WWI as returnee soldiers and, above all, as militants outside of Italy fallen at the hands of Mussolini’s opponents in street riots. Among them, Nicola Bonservizi, the leader of Paris’ *fascio* (branch of the Italian Fascist Party), was the icon par excellence of the Fascist ‘martyr’ since he had been murdered in the French capital city by Italian anti-Fascist exiles. In the room, pictures of fallen Fascists abroad encouraged the viewer to see Italians outside of Italy as their compatriots at home, an expression of Mussolini’s *uomo nuovo* (new man): a prototype of the citizen, who was loyal to Fascist hierarchies and aware of Italian power and the country’s mission in the world, that Rome was seeking to shape.\(^{17}\)

In its totalitarian quest to build and pursue consent, the regime was obsessed with the foreign view of Fascism, to the extent that these opinions were diligently collected

---


in dedicated volumes. Following the same pattern, Rome published a special volume on Italian and foreign visitors to the MRF. The volume included the story of an Italian workman who purportedly visited the room of the Italians abroad and said it reminded him of his experience as an immigrant to Egypt, a country where – according to him – Italians worked hard but received low salaries; he thus appreciated the Fascist willingness to take care of its laborers abroad. Such testimonies (real or invented) were part of a wider project to create consent among Italians abroad by various means, including through the words of those who had visited the homeland. This was made possible by Rome’s ability to directly control – or indirectly influence – most of the Italian press in foreign countries, and to spread its political message in the Italian communities. A case in point is London’s L’Italia Nostra, a newspaper that during the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of Mussolini’s takeover published the testimonies of a set of immigrants who had visited Italy and recounted all the supposedly major changes realized in the country by the Fascist dictator.\footnote{18 L. Vicentini, Il governo fascista giudicato fuori d’Italia (Milan: Barion, 1924); Partito Nazionale Fascista – Ufficio di Propaganda, Il fascismo giudicato all’estero (Rome: Arti Grafiche Affini, [1923]); E. Coselschi, Universalità del fascismo. Raccolta di giudizi di personalità e della stampa di tutto il mondo, 1922-1932 (Florence: Vallecchi, 1933); Gargano, Italiani e stranieri, 447-450; C. Baldoli, Exporting Fascism: Italian Fascists and Britain’s Italians in the 1930s (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 20.}

III. Toward the ‘Olympics of the Civilization’

After the proclamation of the Italian Empire in 1936, another major event organized by the regime in 1937 in Rome was the Mostra Augustea della Romanità (Augustan Exhibition of ‘Roman-ness’, hereafter MAR), which celebrated the second millennium of the birth of the Roman emperor Augustus. The documentation analyzed does not disclose any particular interest on the regime’s behalf that Italians abroad visit the exhibition. A message from the Italian embassy in Washington D.C. to the consulates in the United States reveals Rome’s willingness to promote the event among Anglo-Saxon upper classes, whose presence in Italy was desired. Yet it is possible to hypothesise that the exposition was not properly designed for Italian residents abroad, who mostly had a working-class background. They therefore could be less attracted than others to an event which – despite Mussolini’s political ambitions to show an alleged continuity from ancient Rome to contemporary Fascist Italy – was mostly addressed to internationally educated intellectual elites. To this end, publicity materials were printed in 25 languages and distributed across the world, while lectures in Europe, North America, and the Middle East were held to commemorate Augustus. This massive effort was rewarded,
since many foreign universities and historical associations required support from Rome in order to organise tours to Italy to visit the MAR. According to the historian Aristotle Kallis, the *Mostra* would have been a natural link between the MRF and the E42. Designed every five years, the three exhibitions would have been the core of the regime’s evolution, which aspired to grow from a national “revolutionary” force to an internationally-oriented totalitarian political entity.19

The E42 presented itself as the “Olympics of Civilization”. Its goal was to illustrate the Fascist “achievements” and the “glorious traditions” of the Italian people on behalf of foreign populations. The precursor to Rome’s Exposition was the Italian Pavilion at the 1939 World’s Fair of New York. The American exhibition constituted a model for the E42 in terms of architecture and the organization of transportation. Indeed, Mussolini planned to extend the site of the exposition nearly to the coast so as to remind visitors of the Italian sailing tradition. In addition, he strongly pushed for the realization of an efficient and fast communication system within Italy and from the center of Rome toward the site of the exposition itself.20

A broad publicity campaign was promoted ahead of the event to encourage visits from Italians abroad. The organizers had to reach their communities all over the world (especially those in the United States) by inviting prospective travelers to plan their tours to Italy well in advance. The DGIE asked the diplomatic officers to draw up a complete list of *fasci*, schools, and ethnic organizations in order to maintain an updated address book and efficiently allocate its publicity. Galeazzo Ciano, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Mussolini’s son-in-law, wanted even the poorest emigrants to be able to buy themselves tickets to the E42 through instalment payments, a thus far untested idea. Finally, the E42 aimed to fully display the valuable role of Italians outside of Italy


Matteo Pretelli

Archivio Storico-Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, Fondo Consolati italiani negli Stati Uniti. Cleveland, box 6, folder “Esposizione Universale di Roma 1942 (documentazione)”.

182
Italian Migrants in Italian Exhibitions

through a special Exposition of Italians Abroad and the Opera del Genio Italiano all’Estero, which was to be a permanent display. The DGIE would oversee the sector dedicated to the provvidenze on behalf of migrants; in addition, the E42’s general commissioner Vittorio Cini recommended that special attention be paid to Italians in the United States due to their high numbers and their prominent role in the host society. Italians in California had even made plans to create a monument at their own expense depicting the bond of solidarity between Italian-Americans and the Fascist regime. Dedicated to the memory of the Unknown Soldier Abroad and the Fascist Fallen Abroad on Behalf of the Revolutionary Cause, it was to have sizeable dimensions and feature an equestrian statue of Mussolini. On the lower level of the monument, the walls of a shrine would have depicted each phase of Italian migration overseas; outside a cube shaped boulder would have portrayed a globe marked at each corner by an Italian legionnaire. In the designer’s plans the monument was to have depicted the Fascist ‘Ideal’ to be transmitted throughout the centuries.21

IV. Empire and War

With respect to the Liberal Age, Fascism developed a strong rhetoric and propaganda related to its own colonies, as Mussolini wished for the Italians to develop a full colonial consciousness in order to legitimise a future imperial expansionism. Beginning in 1926, a “Colonial Day” was celebrated annually in Italy; in addition, the regime published the specialist magazine Oltremare (overseas) and scholarly seminars on colonial matters were periodically held. Furthermore, cinema, press, and literature played a role in constantly reminding the Italians that the country held colonial territories. In particular, the Ministry of Colonies endorsed the establishment of colonial expositions on a variety of matters including agriculture, craftsmanship, art and literature. Following a Fascist militarist approach, in 1930 a colonial war was reproduced at the Lictor Airport in Rome, while in 1931 a significant amount of funds were designated to the country’s participation in the Paris Colonial International Exposition. Fascism also gave continuity to the previous attitude taken toward the public display of African bodies. From the 1884 Turin Exhibition onwards, in keeping with the pattern of many European exhibitions, reproductions of

colonial villages were regularly built in the Italian expositions to show how natives lived their daily lives. In others, austere figures of askari (native soldiers) and zaptié (native police officers) stood in the pavilions to reinforce the idea that native populations were subject to Italian power and to dispel former views of Africans as exotic and wild.22

What role did Italians outside of Italy play in the colonial and later Fascist imperial identity? Some money was collected in U.S. Little Italies to benefit the families of wounded or deceased soldiers after the dramatic defeat of Italian troops by the Ethiopians at Adowa in 1896. In addition, during the 1911-1912 war against the Ottoman Empire that ended with Italy’s occupation of Libya, Italians abroad (especially in Brazil, Argentina, and the United States) expressed solidarity with the Italian war effort through the collection of money or by sending volunteers. Propagandised by Italian publications – such as Buenos Aires’ La Patria degli Italiani and São Paulo Fanfulla – as a war that pitted civilization against barbarianism, the conflict was even ambiguously depicted as a gateway for Italian emigrated abroad to settle and colonize the Libyan territories against the backdrop of assimilation in the host countries.23

By the end of the 1920’s the office in charge of the fasci outside of Italy – which would be eventually included in the DGIE – managed two branches in Ethiopia, specifically in Addis Abeba and Harar-Dire Dawa, that assisted local Italian residents. However, the full involvement of Italians abroad with colonial matters was achieved during the Italian-Ethiopian War, when emigrants became the target of a massive political propaganda effort. A significant number of documentary reels, radio programs, newspaper articles, books, and pamphlets were sent to or produced in foreign countries to depict a ‘just war’ that aimed not only to avenge the defeat at Adowa and to achieve imperialist goals, but also to supposedly free an ‘uncivilised’ country subject to slavery’s regulations and oppression by the Ethiopian emperor Hailé Selassié. The conflict aroused the nationalist feelings of Italians settled abroad, who responded positively to this call to action by sending gold rings and money to the homeland. To fully endorse the tie between emigrants and their native country, the regime symbolically set up a legion of


Italians outside of Italy, who were sent to Africa under the leadership of Piero Parini and joined the Italian military force. Though militarily useless, the legion symbolically ‘avenged’ the dramatic migratory journey undertaken by the relatives of soldiers. In his book celebrating the Parini legion, Adriano Grande points out that these combatants had used their rifles to conquer a land that ultimately they would turn over with their shovels. He did not doubt the fact that many would decide to remain permanently in the conquered territories to work under the Italian domain.  

The empire was also a factor in the Italy pavilion of the 1939 New York World’s Fair. Geared to both Americans and Italian-Americans, the pavilion aimed to show a brand new Fascist ‘spirit’ generated by the proclamation of the empire a few years before. An

---

ancient Roman architectural style joined a statue of the Goddess Rome, which suggested a sort of resurrection of the Roman imperial times. At the same time, the modernity of the Fascist industry was depicted by a waterfall that ended in a tank facing a statue of the Italian scientist Guglielmo Marconi. According to Fascist propaganda, Marconi was the highest expression of Italian geniality and the technological qualities of the ‘new Italy’. For this reason, a special section was dedicated to the scientist within the pavilion that also displayed volumes of *Opera del Genio Italiano all’Estero*. Sailors such as Colombus, Caboto and Verrazzano were mentioned too, as they had a great popularity in North American Italian communities.\(^{25}\) Columbus, in particular, symbolised Italy’s presence at the very beginning of United States history, as the founder of the American continent. His figure was so central that the regime was keen on collecting archival documentation to scientifically demonstrate his Italian descent which was actually disputed. Additionally, in 1934 Rome expressed admiration for U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s decision to proclaim Columbus Day a national holiday.\(^{26}\) In a letter published in the *Legionario*, the voice of the *fasci* outside of Italy, a Bronx Italian parochial classroom visiting the New York World’s Fair described Italy’s Pavilion as proof of Italian imperial power and that the Italian population was a master of civilization. Within the pavilion, a special section was designed for the Italian colonies in Libya and in Eastern Africa, where the Italian contribution was portrayed as pacific and laborious, with graphics, diagrams, and photographs intended to depict the supposed civilization of the Ethiopian territories achieved under the Fascist occupation. Military operations were voluntarily omitted in order to disguise any imperialist ambitions, since the pavilion mostly sought to make an impression on American and Italian-American attendees and inspire them to travel to Rome in the future to attend the E42.\(^{27}\)


\(^{27}\) P. Gioia, “*L’Impero, la Libia e Rodi all’esposizione internazionale di New York*, *Rivista delle Colonie*, 12 (1939); “*Una Mostra dell’Italia d’Oltremare nel padiglione italiano dell’Esposizione Universale di New
Though in 1939 at the New York’s World’s Fair Italy maintained an international profile, in the same year the Tripoli International Fair (which since 1927 had been a showcase of Italian manufacturing in the colonies) was devoting greater attention to autarchic production and the alliance between Rome and Berlin. Germany was the only foreign country hosted, while others were present through single expositors (mostly Italians living abroad). A special exposition was dedicated to the Italians in Tunisia, a community which – according to Fascist rhetoric – had suffered much discrimination under French rulers; in addition, these Italians lived in country in which Italy could claim control of the territory because of the supposed influence of the Italian culture.\(^{28}\)

On the eve of WWII, a constructive role in shaping the imperial image of Italy was assumed by the MTO, an exhibition that was divided into three sections, historical, geographical, and one related to production and labor. It was opened May 9th, 1940 in the Naples’ district of Fuorigrotta, but closed a few months later following Italy’s entrance into WWII. Naples was chosen to serve as a bridge to the southern shore of the Mediterranean; furthermore, the exhibition would provide the city with the opportunity to improve and restyle certain areas of town. A memorandum to Mussolini explained how the exhibition sought to display ‘Italy’s reborn imperial power’ and to become ‘a recipient and permanent driving force behind energies, initiatives and imperial interests’.\(^{29}\)

The historical section portrayed Italy as a powerful country bound to the seas from the ancient Roman age through the so called Ancient Maritime Republics up to the stories of recent Italian pioneers and explorers. This was meant to be a sort of ‘visual summary’ of what Italians had contributed to civilization across continents, including...
Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Fondo Eur 42, box 1005, folder 6769, sub-folder 45, insert 2, “Mostra Terre Italiane d’Oltremare”.
the role of travelers, explorers, geographers, traders and missionaries on the African continent. Unsurprisingly, the conclusion was reached with a few sections dedicated to the colonial conquest and finally the proclamation of the empire.

The geographical section, which was dedicated to all the Italian colonies (Libya, Italian Eastern Africa, Rhodes and Italian Aegean Isles and Italy’s Chinese license of Tianjin), continued the glorification of Italian geniality and labor abroad. In the room of the empire a world map displayed the global distribution of Italians; additional rooms also depicted Italian labor and missionary activities in non-Italian African colonies. Finally, the alleged function of creating a cultural bridge between the Far Eastern and Mediterranean civilizations was highlighted.

In the same section, state racism was a component of imperial identity. The racial subjugation of natives in the Horn of Africa was shown by an African village that intended to reproduce the ethnic mosaic of the Italian empire. Some 56 natives (including 17 women and 7 children), mostly workers and artisans, were recruited to live their ‘ordinary’ life in an imagined village regimented by Fascist ordinances. These individuals were forced to remain in Italy for the duration of the war due to the impossibility of repatriating them.30

What role did Italians outside of Italy assume in the Neapolitan exposition? Archival documentation does not reveal an effort to facilitate an influx of Italian emigrants to Naples. It is more likely that Fascist hierarchies preferred to orientate prospective travelers toward the E42, which in the Fascist mind set was perceived as the most significant event of the regime’s nearly twenty-year long rule; indeed, some tension characterized the relations between the managers of the two events, Vittorio Cini (E42 General Commissioner) and Vincenzo Tecchio (MTO President). Tecchio had attempted to remove any colonial exposition from the E42 in order to organize an *ad hoc* exhibition in Naples that same year. On the other side, during the preparation of the MTO, the E42 organizers denounced the tendency in Naples to overstep the boundaries of MTO’s activities, which inevitably interfered with the program of the 1942 Rome Exhibition.31

In Naples limited visibility was granted to Italian migrants. This was probably intentional, and meant to emphasize that the ‘sad time’ of departures toward foreign countries had passed, and that in the Fascist age migration was only acceptable if it was to the Italian colonial settlements. Indeed, in the late 1930’s the regime strongly encouraged migrations to Africa. One of the walls of the exposition symbolically reproduced a blown

---


31 Acs, Eur42, box 1005, folder 6769, sub-folder 45, insert 2, “Mostra Terre Italiane d’Oltremare”. 

189
up image portraying the mournful face of an emigrant and was placed opposite to the image (in a different room) of an elder colonizer showing a young boy the way to Africa.  

In the production and labor section the principles of Fascist mobility were even clearer. This section sought to shed light on the immense possibilities offered by an empire in-progress that still seemed to be oriented toward full autarchy, following the League of Nations’ imposition of sanctions due to Italy’s attack on Ethiopia. According to the scholar Gianni Dore, inside the MTO an exhibit on tourism offered a snapshot of the journey to the African continent, once again through the traditional lens of exoticism, but with a greater emphasis on the spirit of comfortable tourists rather than adventurers and pioneers. Indeed, the exhibit clearly indicated how travels in the Fascist Age had become fast and safe, thanks to the Italian capacity to build efficient methods of communication that inevitably begged comparisons with roads realized by the ancient Romans. In addition, the importance of Italian naval companies and airlines was particularly stressed, and they were depicted as pivotal to ensuring rapid connections between the colonies and the homeland. All in all this was considered both functional to boosting the economy of the colonies and to guaranteeing their military safety.

According to a Fascist pamphlet, by the time the MTO opened the city of Naples was no longer the site of “sad traffic which crowded its wharfs with young Italians whose work benefited other nations”; rather it had finally seen restored “its traffic flows and the most complete Mediterranean function of Italian expansionism in the world”. Thereby, in contrast with older migrants who cursed their desperate situation, during the era of the empire the Italian colonizer was keen to undertake a proud journey to Africa full of joyous expectations.

According to the Fascist mentality, this happy migration had to be mostly characterized by families who were ready to settle in the colonies and work hard, despite the fact that they would have found all the comforts of life in Italy. In this view, they would have received all the benefits offered to the families by the regime and would have been subject to Italian laws, including the right to be separated from native populations.

---

32 Prima Mostra Triennale delle Terre Italiane d’Oltremare, 273-276; Arena, Napoli, 41.
33 Prima Mostra Triennale delle Terre Italiane d’Oltremare, 61-102, 209-212; Dore”, L’ideologia coloniale e il senso comune etnografico”, 61; see also Guida dell’Africa Orientale Italiana (Milan: Consociazione Turistica Italiana, 1938).
34 Prima Mostra Triennale delle Terre Italiane d’Oltremare, 102.
35 Prima Mostra Triennale delle Terre Italiane d’Oltremare, 273.
36 Prima Mostra Triennale delle Terre Italiane d’Oltremare, 283.
V. The Post-war Period

The closing of the MTO due to the fighting, aerial bombings of Naples, and city occupations, first by the Nazi troops and subsequently by the Allies, led to the damage of nearly 60 percent of the Fuorigrotta’s compound. Yet, in the early post-war years the desire to see the exposition reopened spread quickly. To this end, a special authority was established in 1948, and on June 8th, 1952, the President of the Italian Republic, Luigi Einaudi, officially inaugurated the Neapolitan exposition as the *Mostra d’Oltremare e del Lavoro Italiano nel Mondo* (Exhibition of Overseas and Italian Labor in the World). The exhibit opened in a very harsh economic period during which the country was affected by high rates of unemployment. Post-war centrist governments led by the Christian-Democrat Alcide De Gasperi fully abandoned the Fascist imperial ambitions and worked for the proper reintegration and legitimization of Italy into international politics. As a safety valve against social tensions, he strongly encouraged Italians to depart for foreign countries, nevertheless Italy worked to manage citizen labor mobility by signing bilateral agreements with many European and extra-European countries. Some attention was given to this policy in the exposition, and emigration was newly depicted as a sad but inevitable necessity to be encouraged. Indeed, none denied that Italy would not have been able to feed its whole population and that departures would have had an economic utility in relation to the measurable incoming remittances. Therefore, it was not considered shameful to dedicate a few rooms to the economically depressed areas in Southern Italy, for whose future prosperity the traditional quality of Italian labor would have been functional. In addition, Italy was now firmly on the path to becoming part of an international integrated system that included a European economic market. For this purpose the Naples exhibition hosted the stands of international authorities such as UNESCO, FAO, the International Labour Organization, and the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation. Moreover, since Italy was part of the pro-American Western bloc, the *Mostra* dedicated sections to the Marshall Plan and its productivity drive, the techniques of which had been exported to Italy. All of these efforts aimed to highlight the reinvigorated and solidified tie between Italy and the United States after Mussolini’s conflict.

---


In the exposition a willingness to break with the recently fallen regime was clear, yet continuities with the former age appear evident as well. Recalling a theme that had been shaped during the Liberal age, the 1952 Exhibition again represented the prestige and utility of Italian labor as being beneficial to the wellbeing of foreign countries. This sentiment was visually presented at the entrance to the pavilion for Italian industrial activities in the world, where two colossal plaster hands holding tools were on display. Hence – with an eye also to the goal of increasing of tourism to Naples – in *Oltremare*, which was the voice of the *Mostra*, Luigi Tocchetti addressed the Italians in the world. He asked them to cultivate cultural and economic ties to the homeland and to use Italian labor as a tool for favoring mutual understanding in their host societies. According to Giuseppe Brusasca, Undersecretary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the exposition had the objective of outlining all the achievements of Italians settled in the world who, after a visit to Naples, would have become ‘ambassadors’ for the homeland.40

In keeping with the past, a room was dedicated to the theme of Italian geniality abroad, with comments on the current contribution of Italian miners in Belgium or immigrants in South America or Australia. Interest for the volume of the *Opera* was reinvigorated in the post-war period, to the extent that archival documentation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (dated March 1947) reveals the imminent journey planned by Professor Roberto Vighi, the head of the *Opera*’s committee, to South America to carry out studies on Italian artists in the continent and publish a volume on to the subject.41 Ambiguities were also evident in the tourism and communications sections, where Italy was depicted as the ‘garden’ of Europe, a metaphor that had been previously used for the cover of a Fascist textbook destined for use in Italian schools abroad.42 Nevertheless, the most paradoxical continuities with the Fascist regime were in the pavilions dedicated to North America and Italian labor in Africa, respectively.

The former was particularly important in consideration of the rediscovered friendship between Italy and America in the post-war period. The pavilion included an iron-made tubular structure displaying a neon-lit American flag that was highly visible even at a great distance. In addition to reaffirming the traditional role of Italian sailors, the U.S. pavilion paid tribute to the labor and sacrifice of Italian immigrants in the country, who had achieved a prominent role in many sectors of the American economy. The pavilion had been managed by count Ignazio Thaon di Revel, a former Fascist. The

descendant of a noble family of Turin, Revel had first been a nationalist militant before taking part in the 1919 occupation of the city of Fiume along with other prominent figures led by the poet Gabriele D’Annunzio. Subsequently he moved to New York, where in the 1920’s he became president of the Fascist League of North America. For his loyalty as a militant, in 1935 he was appointed by Parini as inspector of the Italian fasci outside of Italy. The embarrassing presence of Revel at the exposition was coupled with its commemoration of Generoso Pope, a New York construction industry tycoon and owner of several Italian newspapers in the United States, including the most widely diffused daily newspaper in Italian Il Progresso Italo-Americano. Pope had also been one of the principal contacts between the Fascist regime in Rome and the Italian-American community, before ultimately conceding his pro-fascist position when war between Mussolini and the United States was close at hand. Pope was introduced as a sort of exemplary migrant who had been plunged into the American dream:

He had an interesting life, almost legendary: expatriated as a child from a small village in Irpinia, in America he became a nationally-recognised figure. He was president of the Democratic Party in New York, editor-in-chief and owner of the newspaper Il Progresso Italo-Americano. These ambiguous relations with the Fascist age continued in the section dedicated to Italian labor in Africa. In keeping with the pre-war period, a missionary exposition was organized (the Pope granted a plenary indulgence to all Italians residing in foreign countries who would have visited the exhibition) that specifically highlighted Italian labor’s never-ending contribution to the civilization of African territories, including the non-Italian controlled colonies. Thus, the post-war Italian Republic revived a rhetoric that presumed an Italian presence anywhere that there were lands to be colonized, roads and railways to be constructed, “blood to be spilled”, or a vivid memory of “laboriousness, will, and sacrifice” to be marked. Furthermore, in the early post-war period the theme of Italian labor in Africa was strategically utilized by De Gasperi’s governments in an effort to grant Italy trustee administration over pre-
fascist Italian colonies in Africa; this effort proved to be unsuccessful in every case but that of Somalia.\(^{46}\)

Despite these examples, Italy’s attitude had changed with respect to the Fascist period. A year before the opening of the *Mostra*, Brusasca had remarked that the exposition would have been the “expression of our capacity to collaborate with the new African and Asian worlds and an overview of Italian labor outside of Italy”.\(^{47}\) According to his words, in an intensive phase of decolonization in Africa and Asia it looked ahistorical not to respect the rightful nationalist aspirations of the formerly colonised countries. Thus the exhibition in Naples should have offered tools for studying these new realities and to train figures capable of establishing collaborative relations with decolonised peoples by avoiding any assumed superiority with respect to the Africans.\(^{48}\) Despite these considerations, Brusasca’s words still demonstrate an open paternalism toward the formerly colonized populations, which reflects the myth of the Italians as *brava gente* (‘good people’), a conviction that to this day is widely held and according to which Italy would have undertaken ‘benevolent’ colonialism in Africa. This form of colonization would have been highly “respectful” of the native populations, and therefore very different from the ‘bad’ and ‘brutal’ French and English approaches to colonialism. This idea has been widely diffused in Italian public opinion, despite the fact that many scholars have demonstrated how Italians in Africa had set up a segregated system affecting the colonized peoples. The Italians in Africa also violently repressed (both in the pre-Fascist and Fascist ages) any attempt to destabilise or contrast their power in colonies, going so far as to establish concentration camps in Libya and use chemical weapons forbidden by international treaties in Ethiopia.\(^{49}\) Already in 1947 the periodical *Africa*, though it denigrated Fascism and its violent nature, continued to elevate Italy’s greatest achievements on the African continent, where the Italian presence had been a

synthesis of sacrifice, perseverance, heroism, courage, and cleverness across many generations.


\(^{47}\) “Brusasca fissa le direttive per lo sviluppo della Mostra”, 8.

\(^{48}\) “Brusasca fissa le direttive per lo sviluppo della Mostra”, 8-9.

It is a holy thing because it brings the contribution of built cities and ploughed fields offered to the civilization of the world and human progress, from which native populations benefit as well.\textsuperscript{50}

Brusasca confirmed these self-acquitting statements by highlighting how important it was that the United Nations had granted Italy a trusteeship over Somalia to support its switch to independence (in the Naples’ \textit{Mostra} a section was specifically dedicated to this ex-colony). According to the Undersecretary, “destiny […] provided a chance to demonstrate our great colonising capacities”, therefore the U.N. mandate would have granted to Italy a test to reinsert itself on the international scene and offer its “contribution” to the valorization of depressed areas in the world.\textsuperscript{51} This was therefore perceived as a reward and the result of the “great capital of human labor” offered in ex-colonies by Italian farmers, workmen and employees who

were able to earn feelings of fondness and trust between the native population, therefore while others are obliged to leave their colonies due to the upheavals of the native populations, in a period of widespread anti-colonialism we Italians have been warmly welcomed in an area of Africa that was ours and recently lost not because of our former colonised subjects, but only as a consequence of an unfair treaty.\textsuperscript{52}

\section*{VI. Conclusions}

The essay had the objective of analyzing the role of Italians abroad in the exhibitions organized in Italy from unification onwards, with a particular focus on the Fascist and early post-war Republican ages. Continuities and breaks with the past have been highlighted, while it has been shown how the representation of Italian migrants was instrumental to Fascist imperial ambitions, as well as to the pursuit of newfound international legitimation by post-war centrist governments. In particular, the themes of the alleged Italian geniality and the Italian contribution to world civilization through their work were functional to the political contingencies, and served to establish a sort of fraternal tie between those who had departed and resided abroad and their relatives in Italy. The former should therefore have undertaken a role in the process of Italy’s nation-building.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{50} “Lavoro italiano in Africa”, \textit{Africa}, 2 (1947).
\textsuperscript{51} “Brusasca fissa le direttive per lo sviluppo della Mostra”, 10.
\textsuperscript{52} “Brusasca fissa le direttive per lo sviluppo della Mostra”, 9.
\end{flushleft}
In the decades following the 1952 Neapolitan Exposition, many regional administrations and local municipalities have contributed to the re-elaboration of the memory of Italian emigration, in particular by building numerous museums dedicated to local migration flows. In addition, a National Museum of Italian Migrations has recently been established in Rome. Furthermore, scholarship has scrutinised the migration phenomenon from multiple perspectives. However, the tendency to relate to Italians in the world in terms of geniality has been confirmed even in the most recent times. For instance in 2011, on the occasion of the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of Italy’s unification, the Italian Institute of Culture in New York organized the exposition *150 anni di genio italiano* (150 years of Italian genius), which was held in New York, Boston and Turin, with the objective of explaining:

the contributions of Italian inventors and scientists, from Meucci to the most recent times, to the industrial development, particularly in America, without forgetting the missed opportunities of technological leadership; [therefore] the story will start from Leonardo Da Vinci and will look at sectors such as telecommunications, physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, neurosciences, as well as at the experiences of big Italian corporations and companies such as Fiat, Buitoni, and Olivetti.

Finally, the idea of Italian geniality was seen, albeit in different ways, in all Italian expositions from the unification onward, thus perpetuating a myth that even today is widely diffused in the Italian public opinion.

---


Born in Puteaux, France, in 1840, artist and writer Gustave Guillaumet participated in various Parisian expositions and salons\(^1\) prior to his death in Paris in 1887. Between 1861, when he visited Algeria almost by chance, and 1867, he traveled to North Africa ten times. These trips left Guillaumet with vivid impressions that would converge in a series of sketches, works of art, and journalistic-literary texts that are of unquestionable interest both for their expressive force and for the insights they provide into colonial life as it was being established during the second half of the Second Empire. The articles he wrote about his experience in North Africa were initially published in the *Nouvelle Revue* and were collected one year after his death in *Tableaux algériens*, presented in the original 1888 edition as “illustrated by 12 etchings by Guillaumet, Courtry, Le Rat, Géry-Bichard, Muller and Toussaint; six photogravures by Dujardin; and 128 relief engravings after paintings, drawings and sketches by the artist”.\(^2\)

Unlike Guillaumet’s pictorial works and the exhibition context of the Expositions and the Salons, his published texts are part of a process to narrate the French appropriation of North African territory. Indeed, they are directly tied not only to the colonial enterprise but also to an effort to understand the local populations that was just beginning to take shape. French critics responded to Guillaumet’s pictorial works in an ambivalent and often contradictory way. Alongside positive appraisals from people like Théophile Gautier and Paul de Saint-Victor were the perplexed comments from 1868 of Paul Pierre, who considered *Désert* a painting with an impossible subject,

---

1. Amongst the others: Exposition universelle of 1867, Exposition triennale 1883, Salons 1863, 1866, 1868, 1869, 1872, 1883 and, posthumously, Exposition of 1900. I would like to thank Céline Tan for the English translation and Michelle Raissa Tarnopolsky for the editing of this essay.

2. “Illustré de douze eaux-fortes par Guillaumet, Courtry, Le Rat, Géry-Bichard, Muller et Toussaint, de six héliogravures par Dujardin, et de cent vingt-huit gravures en relief d’après les tableaux, les dessins et les croquis de l’artiste”.

Anna Zoppellari

**The Painting and Writing of Gustave Guillaumet**
The Realist Orientalism of Guillaumet’s pictorial pursuits is echoed in his texts, which describe life in North Africa by combining unusual images (abandoned dogs, work in the fields, the poor) with scenes straight out of the European imagination about the region (caravans, Arabs praying, descriptions of raids). Dedicated to the visit of a caïd to Paris for the International Exposition in 1867, Chapter 22 of *Tableaux algériens* is particularly interesting for our purposes. While the other chapters mirror Guillaumet’s pictorial concerns (with their study of light and shadow, or at least a suffused, non-blinding brightness, and settings in which the everyday and the picturesque intersect), the Parisian chapter assumes ironic and paternalistic connotations. However, upon closer inspection we can see that the entire book comprehensively showcases a still-evolving, collective idea about the colonial world.

I. BACKGROUND ON LIFE AND WORKS

Little is known about the life of Gustave Guillaumet and his death is shrouded in mystery. However, we do know that in 1857, after studying under François-Edouard Picot and Félix-Joseph Barrias, Guillaumet entered the *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts* in Paris where he became the pupil of Alexandre Abel de Pujol. In 1861, he applied for the *Prix de Rome* under the category “Historical Landscape” to obtain a scholarship at the French Academy in Rome. Although his name was mentioned by the Academy’s Painting section, the other sections favored and therefore awarded another candidate. This turned out to be a fateful turning point. Guillaumet decided to leave Paris, but rather than going to Rome as initially planned he crossed the Mediterranean to Algeria. There he contracted malaria, for which he spent three months at the military hospital in Biskra. However inauspiciously, this was the start of an intense and unusual relationship with the colony, where he returned nine more times and to whose life and landscape he devoted much of his work. He achieved considerable success, as demonstrated by the honors he received (in 1878 he was named Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, the highest decoration in France) and by his regular attendance to the institutional *Salons*. As mentioned above, his death is cloaked in mystery. According to some sources, he died of

---

5 Pierre, *Un Chercheur au salon*, 26; “résultat d’une habilité rare autant que stérile”.
peritonitis. On April 6, 1887 the New York Times reported that “a strange story is current anent the death of painter Guillaumet”. According to the article, the peritonitis leading to the painter’s death was caused by a bullet that perforated his intestines. The painter had fired the gunshot following an argument with a young woman he lived with in Paris and for whom he had abandoned his wife and son. It seems the artist spent his last moments in agony in his study, whither he was brought upon his request so he could look at his Orientalist works one last time, while his wife, called to his side, looked after him. It is worth noting that his son, also Gustave, assumed the patronymic of Guillaume and became a famous linguist. Beyond the tragicomic fait divers in which Guillaumet’s life ended, we may infer from this story that the artist had a visceral attachment not only to his own work but also to the context within which it developed.

While the artist never attained the kind of fame achieved by fellow Orientalist painters and writers like Delacroix or Fromentin, his work still marks a turning point in Orientalist painting when a romanticized or anecdotal idea of North Africa was abandoned in order to portray the harshness of life in that desert region. In this respect, Guillaumet’s oil painting on canvas Le Sahara (1867), also known as Le désert, which was presented at the Salon of 1868 and was admired by Théophile Gautier, is particularly telling. The critic, who had repeatedly shown himself to be in favor of Orientalism and

et P. Vaisse, Ce Salon à quoi tout se ramène. Le Salon de peinture et de sculpture, 1791-1890 (Berne: Peter Lang, 2010).
Anna Zoppellari had travelled himself to Algeria and the Middle East, recognized in the painting an exceptional representational force – an infinite space uniting simplicity, grandeur, and emotion. The painting is quite large (110 x 200 cm) and shows a camel carcass in the foreground, a caravan on the horizon, and an empty desert in between. The emptiness is absolute. Even the image of the caravan looks more like a mirage than a real convoy. Paul de Saint-Victor made similarly positive remarks about the painting in *Moniteur universel*. Today, Gustave Guillaumet’s works are exhibited in some of the world’s most important museums, including the Musée d’Orsay, the Chrysler Museum of Art, and the National Gallery, London. One hundred and fourteen of his drawings are kept in the Cabinet des Arts graphiques du Louvre, and the Département des Estampes et de la photographie in the Bibliothèque nationale française preserves some of his prints, reproductions, and photographs. The lack of handwritten documents, letters or notes makes it difficult to study the genesis of the French painter’s pictorial work and forces researchers to limit their analysis to the texts he published in journals and books.

II. Guillaumet and the International Exposition of 1867

The International Exposition of 1867, whose full name was *Exposition universelle d’art et d’industrie*, was the seventh edition overall and the second world’s fair to be organized in Paris, after the one held in 1855. Forty-one countries participated in the event, which took place from April 1 to November 3. Philippe Hamon has called it a “total” exposition, since the entire city was mobilized and put on display. As highlighted by contemporary critics, the widespread sentiment was a mixture of fascination and disquiet, something Guillaumet himself made clear: “the Champ de Mars exhibition puts the whole world in turmoil”. Designed by architect-engineer Krantz and engineer Frédéric Le Play, the spatial logic behind the exposition was circular. A single building housed “several large circular iron and glass galleries, arranged concentrically and set one inside the other”. As a whole, the exposition presented itself not only “as a painting summarizing the achievements of the time” but also as a circular and rectilinear “double-entry painting”. Visitors were meant to cross the space in both directions and with two objectives: to search for the same kind of product from different countries or

10 Hamon, *Expositions*, 102; “tableau à double entrée”.

200
to browse through the different products of each country. Overall, the effect was that of a labyrinthine space that was all-inclusive and in which everything had its place.\textsuperscript{11}

The 1867 International Exposition was also the first world’s fair that gave prominence to the French colonies. While Algeria was assigned a predominant role,\textsuperscript{12} the other colonies were represented as well, albeit gathered in a single section. As the editor of the catalog, the \textit{Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée}, pointed out regretfully, “to comply with the program they had to merge their richness into a single exposition, despite the great differences that distinguish them”.\textsuperscript{13} As mentioned above, unlike those of the other colonies, the Algerian section was quite vast and extended along the entire left-hand side of the Dutch aisle. It represented an important gallery, which served to assess the consolidation of the French Empire as a colonial power in full expansion. One need only flip through the catalog to recognize this. The Algerian exposition was placed immediately after the French one to emphasize the desire for an ideological and territorial continuity between the two sides of the sea: “the exhibition dedicated to France ends on one side, on this shore of the Mediterranean, and […] a new France begins on the other side, on the other shore of the Mediterranean”.\textsuperscript{14}

In this respect, it is worth remembering that the International Exposition took place at a crucial moment in France’s policy toward Algeria, characterized by the shift from conquest to colonization. Napoleon III, who had risen to power in 1852, had not immediately implemented a proper colonial policy because Algeria’s conquest had not yet been concluded, not to mention the fact that the prince-president wanted to move from the military phase to the creation of an “Arab kingdom”. Both the actions of Napoleon III toward the old leaders of the Arab resistance and the official statements he made during trips to Algeria in 1860 and 1865 were intended to recognize the value and importance of the country’s Arab component, albeit within an ideology that blended military honor with forms of paternalism. As he stated in Algiers on May 3, 1865, before a small group of colonists, “treat the Arabs, among whom you must live, as compatriots”.\textsuperscript{15} Even the press covering the Exposition showed traces of this historical ambivalence. On

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{11} Hamon, \textit{Expositions}, 102.
\item\textsuperscript{12} The importance given to Algeria and to the territories of the Arab world in the 1867 Exposition prepares, in some way, the first \textit{Exposition d’art musulman}, that took places in Paris, at the \textit{Palais de l’industrie} in 1893, in which several recently lost works (of the artist) were exhibited.
\item\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée}, \textit{Publication internationale autorisée par la Commission impériale}, vol. 2 (Paris: Bureaux d’Abonnements, 1867), 386; “[elles] ont dû, pour se conformer au programme, confondre leurs richesses en une seule exposition, malgré les grandes différences qui les distinguent”.
\item\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée}, 182; “d’un côté finit l’exposition de la France, en deçà de la Méditerranée, et […] de l’autre côté commence une France nouvelle, celle au-delà de la Méditerranée”.
\item\textsuperscript{15} Quoted in B. Stora, \textit{Histoire de l’Algérie coloniale (1830-1954)} (Paris: La Découverte, 2004), 18; “Traitez les Arabes, au milieu desquels vous devez vivre, comme des compatriotes”.
\end{itemize}
the one hand, it stressed the “libéralité” and “générosité” that assigned “a prominent place to the Arab war arsenal”. On the other hand, it presented a substantially negative image of the idle Arab as compared to the hard-working Berber. The Exposition catalog – an international publication authorized by the imperial commission and directed by François Ducuing – presented Algeria as a land that was “partly Muslim, partly Christian, and still sparsely populated by Europeans colonists (around 250,000, not including the occupying army”). Conquest of the territory was called “both legitimate and glorious” but above all “recommendable for its many benefits”. The catalog summarized these benefits and examined the products, the natural and secondary resources, and the ethnographic peculiarities of the colony, all on display for Exposition visitors. Of particular interest is the distinction made between Arabs and Berbers, which, though present, played a very different role in Guillaumet’s writings. As we know, the nineteenth century witnessed a real “growth of knowledge about colonized peoples: regular censuses, the collection of customs, systematic intelligence, ethnic classification, cartography, land-based ethnography, and the development of the colonial sciences”. All this work foreshadowed a deliberate policy of differentiation intended to control the population by supporting certain “socio-cultural groups considered more deserving” and alluring prominent individuals. By endorsing the idea that “promotion, […] association or […] assimilation” was possible for the “good pupils of colonization”, the notion of a desirable, if problematic, assimilation spread. Along the same lines, the Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée allowed the “indigenous population of Algeria” to be ethnographically distinguished as “Berber and not Arab”. While “the pure Berber race is represented at the exposition by two young Kabils carving corks”, the

16 Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée, 238; “une place importante à l’arsenal de guerre des Arabes”.
17 Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée, 182; “en partie musulmane, en partie chrétienne, encore peu peuplée de colons européens (250,000 environ, non compris l’armée d’occupation)”.
18 Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée, 182; “aussi légitime que glorieuse”.
19 Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée, 182; “recommandable par de nombreux services”.
21 Les mots de la colonisation, dirigé par Dulucq, Klein, Stora, 93; “groupes socio-culturels jugés plus méritants”.
22 Les mots de la colonisation, dirigé par Dulucq, Klein, Stora, 93; “promotion, […] association ou […] assimilation”.
23 Les mots de la colonisation, dirigé par Dulucq, Klein, Stora, 93.
24 Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée, 182; “population indigène de l’Algérie”.
25 Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée, 182; “est berbère et non arabe”.
26 Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée, 182; “la race berbère pure est représentée à l’Exposition par deux jeunes Kabiles qui taillent des bouchons dans des lièges de leur pays”.

202
representatives of the Arab ethnic group were displayed in a different part of the Algerian section, so that, “in order to get acquainted with the Arab and his culture, the visitor [would] have to […] leave the area of the Palais and move among the tents erected in the south-western part of the Park, near the Port de Grenelle”.  

It was in this open space that he “[would] find a camp with six tents arranged in a circle, in the shape of a douar, around a group of kneeling camels and, in the largest tent, some sleeping camel drivers”. The few colonists living in Algeria, some of whom had accompanied the exhibited goods to Paris, are also mentioned. These two descriptions, which could almost have been taken from any Orientalist catalog, offer an image of the French colony that is both realistic and picturesque. In fact, the visitor could only plunge into the Exposition through the intermediation of a pre-established and openly asserted image (“the Arab as portrayed by novelists and as he really is”). The distinction between Berbers and Arabs centered on a double opposition between town-dweller/nomad and worker/“ennémi-né du travail” (“work foe from birth”). Here the distinction reveals a political tension. On the one hand, Louis Napoleon aimed to be “the Emperor of both the Arabs and the French”. On the other hand, the ultra-colonialists and great landowners supported what would become “complete and utter submission of the work ties and workforce of its people to the needs and interests of colonization” after 1871.

The fact that the emir Abd-el-Kader and the Ottoman sultan Abdul Aziz were among the illustrious visitors to the 1867 Exposition certainly contributed to the ambivalent and ambiguous image of the Arab world therein. Their visits received a lot of press, with images and references included in various articles about the Exposition and specific publications. In the French imagination, the emir Abd-el-Kader was not just the proud commander who had opposed the French army for fifteen years. He had also become an “ami des Français” (friend of the French), in addition to being a personal friend of

27 Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée, 183; “pour faire connaissance avec l’Arabe et sa civilisation, le visiteur de l’Exposition devra […] quitter l’enceinte du Palais et se rendre au milieu des tentes dressées dans la partie Sud-Ouest du Parc, près de la porte de Grenelle”.

28 Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée, 183; “trouvera un campement de six tentes rangées circulairement, en forme d’un douar, autour d’un groupe de chameaux agenouillés, et, dans la plus grande des tentes, quelques chameliers endormis”.

29 Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée, 183; “l’Arabe tel quel les romanciers les dépeignent, et tel qu’il est réellement”.

30 Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée, 183.

31 Quoted in B. Stora, Histoire de l’Algérie coloniale (1830-1954) (Paris: La Découverte, 2004), 19; “aussi bien l’empereur des Arabes que celui des Français”.

32 Stora, Histoire de l’Algérie coloniale, 20; “assujettissement absolu et complet des liens et de la force de travail de sa population aux besoins et intérêts de la colonisation”.

33 For example, the Notice pour accompagner la médaille commémorative published in the same year as the Exposition.
the Emperor, and was awarded the Legion of Honor in 1860 for having stopped the massacre of Christians in Damascus. The presence of the Arab visitors, famous or not, represented a veritable role reversal, since they had come to Paris as spectators and became themselves part of the spectacle as objects of public curiosity\textsuperscript{34} to be put on display, with respect or with suspicion. Particularly telling in this regard is the mention made in the \textit{Expositions illustrée} of the Ottoman sultan’s presence at the Exposition alongside the Emperor. The second volume of the catalog also refers to the sultan’s portrayal in “a fine portrait […] beautifully sketched in black pencil by Ahmed A’ali Effendi”.\textsuperscript{35} Elsewhere in the catalog military honors are also conferred, to a certain extent, upon the former enemy, hinting at the presence of some “weapons abandoned by former Abd-el-Kader soldiers, of whom the last survivors are in Damascus”.\textsuperscript{36} Elsewhere still the commander is blamed for “cutting off the source [of an oasis] during a day of vengeance”, after which “the palm trees, deprived of water, had dried-up; the sand, like leprosy, had corroded the gardens previously filled with pigeons who had swiftly escaped)”.\textsuperscript{37} At the 1867 Exposition, Gustave Guillaumet showed the painting \textit{Prière du soir dans le Sahara} (\textit{Evening Prayer in the Sahara}) (1863), previously exhibited at the Salon of 1863 and now property of the Musée d’Orsay. The large (1.37 x 3.005 m) oil painting on canvas presents a traditional image, a perfect expression of the Orientalist style: a nomad encampment at dusk with some white figures praying, one with arms stretched to the sky, another one bowing, all facing the same direction, presumably toward Mecca. The pink-purple light, with the blue hills along the horizon, produces a special effect. It is important to note that the painting serves as a primary reference for one of the 23 chapters in \textit{Tableaux algériens}. In fact, \textit{Prière du soir dans le Sahara} is described in “Prière du soir”, the tenth chapter of the posthumous volume. The narrator travels southwards, “in high summer”\textsuperscript{38} with “a spahi for a guide, followed by a mule-driver”.\textsuperscript{39} After a day of walking in the desert and joining “a group of biblical-looking Arabs”,\textsuperscript{40} they reach “a


\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée}, 2, “un beau portrait […] dessiné magistralement au crayon noir par Ahmed A’ali Effendi”.

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée}, 238; “épaves de l’armement des anciens réguliers d’Abd-el-Kader, dont les derniers survivants sont à Damas”.

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée}, 474; “coup[er] les sources [d’une oasis], dans un jour de vengeance. Les palmiers, privés d’eau, s’étaient séchés; les sables, comme une lèpre, avaient rongé les jardins, la veille pleins de colombes qui avaient fui à tire-d’aile”.

\textsuperscript{38} Guillaumet, \textit{Tableaux algériens}, 87; “en plein coeur d’été”.

\textsuperscript{39} Guillaumet, \textit{Tableaux algériens}, 87; “un spahi pour guide, et suivi d’un muletier”.

\textsuperscript{40} Guillaumet, \textit{Tableaux algériens}, 89; “un groupe d’arabes […] d’allures bibliques”.

204
"douar of nomads"41 whose “brown-striped tents arranged in circle”.42 At nightfall, while
the women and the shepherds gather the flock, “a vibrant male voice rises. It modulates
the appeal to prayer as in a chant, repeated four times in echoes and ending with long
and resonant notes”.43 At the same time, “behind them the halo of the setting sun still
reddens the white clothes and blue reflections fall from heights of the zenith in the sky
onto all the backs bowing to the ground”.44

The article that Guillaumet dedicated to the 1867 International Exposition was
published as the penultimate chapter of the Tableaux algériens, “Un Caïd à Paris”.
Originally printed between 1880 and 1884 as an article in the Revue française, the story
is set in Paris in 1867. Significantly, the original article was published about fifteen years
after the Exposition to which it is devoted, and just a few years after the 1878 Exposition,
as though to emphasize the enduring influence of the event, not to mention all the
related exhibits. The story recounts the visit to Paris of Si-Ladkar-ben-Saoui to request
the Legion of Honor. After arriving at the narrator’s home with a letter of introduction
signed De S…, Commandant supérieur (in which the sender strongly discourages the
recipient from granting the request), the young chief of the Algerian tribal territory
of Beni-Ouassine is accompanied on a visit to the Exposition universelle. After much
insistence, he manages to ensure that his French host serves “the need for a secretary [to
grant] the request”.45 Obviously the desire of this “chief full of illusory expectations”46
goes unfulfilled and the marabout returns to Algeria disappointed and vexed, without
the honors he yearns for. The story has a melodramatic epilogue whereby the French
narrator returns to the “province of Oran, the least frequented by tourists”,47 despite
being “interesting for its customs and traditions as yet unchanged by our proximity”,48
and learns that Si-Lakdar-ben-Saoui’s life had ended miserably, as a beggar who died
alone in his tent.

The entire story presents some useful elements for understanding the attitude of this
Frenchman in his search of a “true Algeria”. When he goes to stay in the oldest part of

---

41 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 89; “un douar de nomades”.
42 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 89; “tentes, zébrées de bandes brunes, forment le cercle”.
43 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 90; “une voix d’homme s’élève, vibrante. Elle module, ainsi qu’un chant,
l’appel à la prière, quatre fois répété aux échos, et dont les terminaisons meurent en notes longues et sonores”.
44 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 91; “derrière eux l’auréole du soleil disparu empourpre encore la
transparence des vêtements blancs, et que, des hauteurs du zénith, le ciel laisse tomber des reflets azur sur
tous les dos courbés vers la terre”.
45 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 239; “au besoin de krodja (secrétaire) pour la requête”.
46 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 239; “chef plein d’illusions”.
47 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 259; “province d’Oran, la moins fréquentée du touriste”.
48 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 259; “intéressante par ses moeurs, par ses traditions, que notre
voisinage n’a pas encore altéré”.

205
the white “Djézaïr des Arabes”, 49 he looks regretfully at the “loss of poetic traditions”, 50 which seems to be “everywhere the price of the progress of humanity”. 51 In the story we encounter expressions of anxiety and attraction regarding the exhibition, receptiveness and curiosity regarding the foreign guest, and sensitivity and complacency regarding the human drama. The beginning and the end convey a situation of superiority that is more symbolic than spatial. Indeed, the tale begins with the narrator’s gaze from above (“from my window I witnessed the slow awakening of a Sunday morning”), 52 presented as the gaze of an omniscient observer even though in first person. This gaze will lead us into the story and guide us through both the city and the panoptic device that will turn out to be the Exposition. In the end, it is always Guillaumet’s voice that reveals the moral: “Today these stones without epitaph remind themselves of the course of this human existence, which like a comet carried out of its axis had gone through Paris only to return and extinguish itself, at thirty years of age, on the land that the caïd should never have left”. 53

In fact, the narrative dynamic aims to keep the narrator’s voice in an apparently external position with regard to both the foreign guest and the Parisian context. Only through this estrangement, which takes its distance from the external world so to speak, can Guillaumet seize upon the profound significance of the narrated story. The narrator, who is used to traveling in territories precluded to tourists, differs not only from the “two Arabs whose clothes broke the gray harmony of the street”, 54 but also from the “onlookers who peered curiously at their get-ups”. 55 The opening of the story is built on the presentation of a duo that is both real and symbolic. The theoretically comic potential of this pair (the caïd and his assistant) will be suspended throughout the story to make room for some true comedy in one case, a contrast between the two actors in another case, and, when the lens closes in on the young caïd back in Algeria, a feeling of sympathetic commiseration. As is customary with theatrical couplings, while the two share ethnic origins the difference in their roles is emphasized by a physical and social

49 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 272.
50 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 272; “perte des traditions poétiques”.
51 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 272; “partout le prix des progrès de l’humanité”.
52 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 223; “J’assistais, de ma fenêtre, au lent réveil du dimanche”.
53 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 264; “Ces pierres sans épitaphe rappellent seul aujourd’hui le passage de cette existence humaine qui, ainsi qu’une comète entraînée hors de son axe, avait traversé Paris, pour revenir s’étendre tristement, à trente ans, sur la terre que le caïd n’aurait jamais dû quitter”.
54 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 223; “deux Arabes dont le costume tranchait dans l’harmonie grise de la rue”.
55 Guillaumet, Tableaux algériens, 223; “badauds qui considéraient d’un regard curieux leur accoutrement”.

206
asymmetry. One of the characters is “six feet tall, dressed in the red uniform of a spahi”\(^{56}\) and he accompanies a “stocky but sturdy” caïd.\(^{57}\) The caïd seems to socially dominate the spahi, who carries his luggage and acts as his interpreter. As the story progresses, the roles reverse and the caïd demonstrates his own inadequacy, while his companion proves shrewder and, more importantly, better attuned to the colonial mechanism. The spahi even openly criticizes his superior. At a certain point, he says to the narrator, “Don't worry about this savage. He knows nothing. He’s an idiot”.\(^{58}\) Even the visit to the Exposition will transform the chief of the Beni-Ouassine – there to attend an exhibit of products from around the world – into a spectacle to be witnessed with amusement and curiosity. The International Exposition appears as a “whirlwind”\(^{59}\) of men, objects, and buildings in which a truly cosmopolitan city has been reconstructed “of palaces, improvised gardens, café-concerts, restaurants, beerhouses, [and] works of art and industry are installed here and there around the buildings alongside the inventions of men”.\(^{60}\) Confronted by the world’s diversity, the Arab becomes distressed. At first he is frightened by the “collection of machines whose rotating mechanisms deafen the ears”\(^{61}\) and only “the atmosphere of the gardens can happily bring him back to his senses”.\(^{62}\) Then the “childish forms, supple as she-cats” of some Japanese restore his vigor. Meanwhile, he seems almost indifferent to “the many things brought together to please the eyes”.\(^{63}\) He finally finds something that truly interests him in the Arab section (“he walks by without remarking on a thing, except for the Caire artisans in the Egyptian bazaar or the palace of the Bey of Tunis, whose Oriental luxury momentarily delights his eyes”).\(^{64}\) At the Moorish café, he is treated as a “grand seigneur”\(^{65}\) by those present, who reassure him “with a shower of salutations”.\(^{66}\) “Among this group of people

---

56 Guillaumet, *Tableaux algériens*, 224; “haut de six pieds, vêtu de l’uniforme rouge des spahis”.

57 Guillaumet, *Tableaux algériens*, 224; “trapu, mais bien pris sur sa taille”.

58 Guillaumet, *Tableaux algériens*, 244; “Ne te tourmente pas pour ce sauvage. Il ne connaît rien. C’est un imbécile”.


60 Guillaumet, *Tableaux algériens*, 242-243; “de palais, de jardins improvisés, de cafés-concerts, de restaurants, de brasseries, installés çà et là autour des bâtiments sont exposées, avec les inventions des hommes, les œuvres de l’art et de l’industrie”.

61 Guillaumet, *Tableaux algériens*, 243; “assemblage de machines dont le mécanisme en rotation assourdît l’oreille”.

62 Guillaumet, *Tableaux algériens*, 243; “l’air des jardins lui fait heureusement retrouver le sens”.

63 Guillaumet, *Tableaux algériens*, 244; “tant de choses réunies pour l’agrément des yeux”.

64 Guillaumet, *Tableaux algériens*, 245; “[il] passe sans rien remarquer, hors les artisans du Caire au bazar égyptien, ou le palais du bey de Tunis, dont le luxe oriental charme un moment ses yeux”.

65 Guillaumet, *Tableaux algériens*, 245.

66 Guillaumet, *Tableaux algériens*, 245; “sous une pluie de salamalecs”.
of his own race”\textsuperscript{67} the young man feels more confident and “speaks with mastery”,\textsuperscript{68} while onlookers “kiss the tail of his burnoose whenever he offers a round of coffee”.\textsuperscript{69} Let us leave aside the irony in Guillaumet’s descriptions and focus on the mechanism that transforms the young Si-Lakdar-ben-Saoui from character-as-spectator to character-as-spectacle (indeed spectacular). The young caïd becomes a sort of person-object put on display within the Exposition. The narrator resorts to a narrative strategy whereby initial disorder is followed by the construction of a final order. While it is true that these same feelings characterized the gaze and sensations of European visitors, all the publications dedicated to the Expositions were in fact meant to lead visitors from disorder to order. Yet, it is striking that there is no redemption for the Oriental visitor. The Oriental traveler will never come to represent the gaze through which the spectacle is seen and reconstructed. Only through an Orient that has no value will he be able to recover his peace of mind and make sense of the world again. Furthermore, and this is key, he will only do this at the cost of becoming an actor himself. To underscore the falsity of it all, the narrative voice will underscore the caïd’s choice to present his least favorite wives with fake gold jewelry, thus resorting to an irony that surreptitiously involves the reader in an aesthetic and moral judgment. Ultimately, his trip to Paris – the very heart of the colonial empire – will prove to be just the beginning of a drama that inevitably ends with the protagonist’s death.

III. The \textit{Tableaux algériens: The Paintings of an Exposition}

Gustave Guillaumet never took an anti-colonial stance in his writing. Even the epilogue of the story “Un caïd à Paris” seems to demonstrate a condition of subalternity, which can only be escaped through condemnation. All honors, medals and jewelry are, or at least seem, fake. Everything serves to construct the representation of an inescapable world.\textsuperscript{70} The colonized subject cannot change his condition, and the role of the conniving colonized subject in the artist-writer’s story, played by the indigenous auxiliary figure accompanying the caïd, is obscure rather than cynical. Acting as an intermediary between two worlds and therefore equipped with a know-how unusual

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{67} Guillaumet, \textit{Tableaux algériens}, 245; “Au milieu de cette petite cour d’hommes de sa race”.
  \item \textsuperscript{68} Guillaumet, \textit{Tableaux algériens}, 245; “parle en maître”.
  \item \textsuperscript{69} Guillaumet, \textit{Tableaux algériens}, 245; “[ils] baisent le pan de son burnous chaque fois qu’il les régale de quelque tournée de café”.
  \item \textsuperscript{70} On the other hand, a century had to pass before Albert Memmi, in his \textit{Portrait du colonisé, précédé du portrait du colonisateur} (Paris: Buchet-Chastel, 1957), would reveal the paradox of a colonial society that claims redemption for the colonised subject, but who in fact cannot allow herself to make this come true.
\end{itemize}
among Guillaumet’s compatriots, he must simultaneously remain aloof and be a shadow, an alter ego of the *caïd* and of the French. The ‘evil colonized one’ is set up against the ‘good one’. The former is evil because he is inadequate; the latter is good because he refrains from undermining, through unseemly behavior, the good organization of the colonial and exhibition-related mechanism.

It would nonetheless be easy to dismiss Guillaumet and his work as products of an inexorable, intolerable (and intolerant) colonial mechanism. Guillaumet did not know, and could not give voice to, the colonized. We will have to await decolonization to find a colonist of goodwill who wishes to try this (e.g. Albert Camus, Jean Pélégrí, etc). It was impossible for Guillaumet to go that far. He lived during the wrong time. History had not yet developed the cultural codes required for such an achievement, however problematic. For Guillaumet, the world was simple. Colonization was useful and necessary and Algeria was an Arab and military territory, still devoid of colonists. He rarely mentioned colonists in his writing, and only indirectly represented them in his art. Guillaumet lacked Flaubert’s disdainful gaze, which viewed colonists as disturbing the old, picturesque image of the Orient (which led Flaubert to write what would become a famous expression in the *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*: “COLONIES (nos): S’attrister quand on en parle” [“Our colonies: we grow sad when we talk about them”]).

For Guillaumet, not only was the colony necessary but colonists also had a very difficult and important task, which could only be carried out “if they do not fold their arms at the first obstacle”.\(^7\)

Simply put, if it is true that he went to the Orient to find what he had left at home,\(^2\) then his purpose was not to represent an old-fashioned world or a mysterious Orient but rather, to paraphrase Courbet, “to represent the customs, ideas, and appearance” of the new France lying south of the Mediterranean. In fact, the Orient as a symbolic place for Antiquity is a persisting feature in Guillaumet’s art and writing. As he writes, the “Moroccan mountaineers from Béni-Snassen are recognizable for their very robust limbs, the black pigtails hanging on their napes, and especially for the noble way they toss the end of their haïks over their shoulders, looking like Romans dressed in togas”.\(^3\) However, they are not alone, so to speak. On the contrary, they gradually make way for another image, one in which a Realist aesthetic accompanies a sharing of the drama. This sharing involves human emotions rather than political or ideological bias. Guillaumet exhibited paintings like *Le Labourage* and *La Famine en Algérie* at the

\(^7\) Guillaumet, *Tableaux algériens*, 40; “[s’ils] ne se croisent pas les bras devant les premiers obstacles”.
\(^2\) “On retrouve encore bien plus qu’on ne trouve”; Flaubert, *Correspondence*, au docteur J. Cloquet, le 15 janvier 1850.
\(^3\) Guillaumet, *Tableaux algériens*, 112; “[les] montagnards marocains des Béni-Snassen, se reconnaissent à leurs membres robustes, à la tresse de cheveux noirs qui leur tombe sur la nuque, et surtout à cette façon noble de jeter par-dessus l’épaule l’extrémité du haïk, ressemblant ainsi à des Romains drapés dans leur toge”.
1869 Salon. That same year, in an article for *Illustration*, Théophile Gautier analyzed and expressed his appreciation for these paintings, which would later form the basis for the stories “Les labours” and “La famine”. Once again, the written text echoes the figurative work, constituting both an explanation and an amplification.

According to Timothy Mitchell, the mechanism of the world’s fairs, deployed alongside the great nineteenth-century expositions, is based on the construction of a labyrinthine space from which it is impossible to free oneself. Representations assert themselves as plausible, and the exhibition apparatus tends to incorporate any potentially external element. Indeed, the great expositions grow ever larger, they include an ever-growing number of objects, and they divide into increasingly specialized sections. Images of the world beyond Europe multiply inside and outside the exhibition spaces and are thereby incorporated into the same device that objectifies the world as an item on display. The development of Orientalism belongs to this same pattern of appropriating the unknown, which tends to incorporate anything that was originally external. A visitor to the actual Orient carries out various strategies that allow him to find order in a collection of data and a territory whose laws he does not know; he dives into an unknown reality in search of contact, but ultimately remains an outsider. Once again, what follows are the same ambivalent feelings of fascination and repulsion, exaltation and criticism referred to above. The narrative that leads to the Orient must be plausible. The traveler must therefore erase his own presence. Yet, paradoxically, the same traveler finds himself forced to put his own gaze (his own perspective, his own ideology) at the center of the representation. While erasing himself may guarantee authenticity, mythologizing contact with and immersion in the Orient only exacerbates the individualistic aspects of the image: exotic for some, bizarre for others, tragic and moving for Guillaumet. Orientalism is built on this contradiction. Traveling to the Orient becomes traveling to an International Exposition *en plein air*, and the visitor who crosses that space in order to learn about an unknown world will never truly understand. Driven by the urge to expand the world on display, the Oriental traveler enhances, so to speak, the effect of the filter through which he sees the world. His attitude is at once romantic, archaizing, exoticizing, realist, and dreamlike. All artists and writers have their own unique features, their own way of fitting into this pattern. Without ever freeing himself from an underlying exoticism, Guillaumet sought scenes in which contact with reality is mediated by empathy and the sharing of a social and individual drama. It is an entirely emotional sharing that leaves no room for ideological critiques of colonization; on the contrary, it provides grounds to justify it. Guillaumet’s gaze legitimizes a world on display over which he, as a European, can exert some control; but it is also a world that, as a painter and an exhibitor of pictorial works, he penetrates and gets lost in.
Legend has it that Guillaumet died gazing at his Orientalist paintings – a final, definitive plunge into a world he had not only helped showcase but in which he himself had been an actor rather than a director.
Our object is to visit this Fair or ‘Ukāz’ of provinces and nations, this market of fortunes and ambitions, spectacle of precious objects and prestigious projects, of strengths and energies, arena of inventions and innovations, exhibition of perspicacity and guide in the art of imitation and inspiration of the tradition.¹

It is thus that the Egyptian writer Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī (1858-1930)² defines the Paris Exposition of 1900 which he chose as the place wherein to set the second part³ of his work Ḥadīṯ ‘Īsā ibn Hišām,⁴ one of the first modern Arab novels which follows in

---


² His date of birth is uncertain, 1858 or 1868, especially considering that of his father, Ibrāhīm, which is also uncertain 1844. The author, in the company of his father, traveled in Italy, England and France, where he came in contact with many writers and intellectuals. In 1900 he accompanied the Egyptian Khedivé on an official visit first to London then to Paris for the Universal Exposition. Cf. R. Allen, A Period of Time. Part One: A Study of Muhammad al-Muwaylihi’s Ḥadīṯ ‘Īsā ibn Hišām (London: Ithaca Press, 1992), 1-14; A. Sābāyārd, Rāḥḥālīna al-'Arab wa ḥaḍārat al-ġarb fī al-naḥḍa al-'arabiyya al-ḥadīṭa (Beirut: Nawfal, 1992), 146-147.

³ In this section, made up of nine chapters, the bizarre protagonists – ‘Īsā ibn Hišām, a Pasha risen from the tomb and a friend of his – find themselves in Paris and on the advice of a French Oriental scholar, who offers to be their guide, they visit the Universal Exposition of 1900.

⁴ The first publication goes back to 1898 when, under the title of Fatra min al-zaman (A Period of Time), appeared weekly in the periodical started by his father, Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī, Mīṣbāḥ al-Šarq (The Lantern of the Orient) until 1902. In 1907, the author published the work in a volume entitled Ḥadīṯ ‘Īsā ibn Hišām. Fatra min al-zaman (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif), in a rewritten form and without the last section. The last section had appeared in episodes entitled “Paris” (between 1900 and 1902) and was the section dedicated to the Exposition; it was later added to the fourth edition in 1927 entitled al-Rūḥla al-ṭānīya (The Second Journey). 1927 was the year in which the work was included among Egyptian school texts. Cf. Allen, A Period of Time, 32-48. The work is translated into English in 1923, cf. R. Allen, Part Two: ‘Īsā ibn Hišām’s Tale (London: Ithaca Press, 1992); and into French, cf. R. Sabry, Ce que nous conta ‘Isa Ibn Hicham. Chronique satirique d’une Egypte fin de siècle (Clichy, Hauts-de-Seine: Éditions du Jasmin, 2005); Trois Egyptiens à Paris (Clichy, Hauts-de-Seine: Éditions du Jasmin, 2008).
the footsteps of the classical tradition of the *maqāmāt*. But Muwayliḥī is not the only Arab writer to concern himself with the Exposition which emerges as such a far-reaching event that it involves the Orient itself, exactly as its organizers had hoped. There were numerous illustrious Arabs, among whom the Islamic reformist Ġamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, and political personages who were for the most part guests of honor in France, such as the Emir ‘Abd al-Qādir, who had been exiled by Napoleon III from Algeria and who, when he took his leave from the General Commissariat, affirmed: “Ce lieu est le palais de l’intelligence animée par le souffle de Dieu.” This took place on the occasion of the 1855 Paris Exhibition with its Palace of Industry which was certainly less dazzling and imposing than the Exhibition of 1867 which was held at Champs de Mars and, as the decree declared, was the

plus complètement universelle que les précédentes […], elle comprenne autant que possible, les œuvres d’art, les produits industriels de toutes les contrées et en général, les manifestations de toutes les branches de l’activité humaine.

The event was organized with a view to attracting as many visitors as possible and the presence of important persons and heads of State constituted an added attraction for the public. Prominent among the ‘Oriental’ guests were the Ottoman sultan Abdūlazīz (1830-1876), who would then continue his journey, the first in Europe for more than a month; the Shah of Persia Nāṣir al-Dīn and the Egyptian Khedivé Ismāʿīl to whom

5 The *maqāma* is a literary genre in rhymed prose (*ṣaḡ*), which was popular around the end of the tenth century with al-Hamaḏānī (968-1008), and reached its apex with al-Ḥarīrī (1054-1122). They are short stories and, in the case of *maqāmāt* of al-Hamaḏānī, they follow a fixed scheme: a narrator, ʾĪsā ibn Hiʿām recounts in a réunion (*maqāma*) an episode that arose from an encounter, when traveling around the world, with an ambiguous charleton, Abū ʾl-Fath āl-Iskandarī.


were reserved, within the celebrations and expositions, official ceremonies worthy of their lineage. The celebrations were covered not only by the French press but also by the Arab intellectuals who had taken part in them and who left firsthand accounts of their experiences. The Exposition, in fact, figures as one of the reasons for their journey alongside commerce, study projects, attendance at congresses and questions of health. The possibility of being present at one of the greatest phantasmagorias of the West was a unique opportunity that many Arab intellectuals did not want to miss: such was the case with Muḥammad Āmin Fikrī (1856-1900) and ‘Umar al-Bāġūrī (n. 1855), and both the Egyptian delegates at the VIII International Congress of Oriental scholars held in Stockholm who, taking advantage of the fact that they were in Europe, visited the 1889 Paris Exposition; such was the case too, with Aḥmad Zakī (1867-1934) who was also an Egyptian delegate at the IX Congress of Oriental scholars in London in 1892 and who came back to Europe in 1900 specifically to visit the great Paris Exposition; we can also mention the Tunisians Sulaymān al-Ḥarāʾīrī (1824-1877), Muḥammad Bayram al-Ḥāmis (1840-1889), Muḥammad al-Sanūsī (1851-1900), and Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥūḡa (also Ibn al-Ḥawḡa, 1869-1942) and the Syrian Dīmitrī Niʿmat Allāh al-Ḥallāt (d. 1932), all of whom for various reasons, visited Paris for the Expositions. Although the accounts of the Arabs do not constitute a uniform body of work, their texts have certain characteristics in common. The leitmotiv is, in fact, the journey, a universal force that transforms outlooks and social relations, an experience that inevitably contributes to a redefinition of the image of oneself and of the ‘other’. These nineteenth century works which we could insert into the category of the travel literature, revisit and re enact the tradition of the riḥla (journey) according to the new needs of Arab society. Modulated according to the universal structure of the journey – departure, transit, arrival –, the texts highlight the various modes by which an encounter with the ‘other’ came about and contributed to forming the consciousness of a collective identity. The Exposition,


11 In the same congress there was also present the Ottoman delegate, Ahmed Midhat, author of *A Tour in Europe (Avrupada bir Cevalan*, 1889), in which he describes the various stages of his journey from Istanbul to Stockholm, during one of which he visited the Universal Exposition of Paris, cf. C. Vaughn Findley, “An Ottoman Occidentalist in Europe: Ahmed Midhat meets Madam Gulnar, 1889”, *The American Historical Review*, 103 (1998): 15-49.

therefore, as a destination for the Arab traveler – a traveler who, in this abstract and fleeting ‘place’, lives a dual experience, fascinated and enraptured by the phantasmagoric atmosphere of the event – captures at one and the same time the ephemeral aspect of the representation that it gives of his country with a kind of ‘effect of estrangement’ which, however, soon dissolves like the pavilions of the Exposition, to leave room for the dominant view which is the image that the West was constructing of the East. In this ‘play’ of mirrors there is reflected an attitude that is not only literary but has a much more ample validity: in the convulsive attempt to find answers and solutions – political, technological and cultural – to a sudden and total Western penetration, the Muslim elites abandoned the autogenic categories of reference, by now devoid of sense, to take possession of the points of reference of the ‘other’. The Universal Exposition represents a moment in this development that is more than ever paradigmatic because it transmits a prospective view of reality and, therefore, of the strong points between civilizations in which are contained all the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in the difficult confrontation with the ‘other’. This is a view that, paradoxically, was to be profoundly incisive on the process of auto-identification in the Arab world which is still today largely influenced by the image that the West has created of Islam.

I. PARIS, THE VILLE LUMIERE

The nineteenth century is a period of profound transformation in the Arab world. The Ottoman Empire, by then notably weakened both on a military and on an economic level gambled with the idea of modernization and set in motion the reforms (tanzimât) the model for which was, inevitably the West. Many of the young men of the Turkish and Arab elite who had, formerly, gone to study in the Ottoman capital to ensure for themselves an elevated position in the imperial political structure, now set their sights on studying in Europe. The governor of Egypt, Muḥammad ‘Alī, who was inaugurating a policy of reforms and centralization like that of the Ottoman Empire, was the first to send groups of students to complete their studies in French, English and Italian schools and institutes: between 1813 and 1849 more than three hundred young men went to Europe. Among the Khedivé counselors figured Bernardino Drovetti from Turin, the French general consul to Cairo, and the Frenchman Edme-François Jomard. Thus

13 J. Heyworth-Dunne, An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt (London: Luzac, 1938), 104-114; 157-170; 221-223; 243-253.
Paris, with its École militaire égyptienne and École impériale ottomane, became one of the most privileged and sought after destinations in Europe, although in the initial stages Drovetti sent promising Egyptian students to Turin. A participant in one of the first delegations of Egyptian students sent to Paris was Râfı` Rıfā`a al-Ṭahṭāwī who, on his return from his study stay in Paris, published in 1834 Taḥlīṣ al-Ibrīz fī talḥīṣ Bāriz, translated as L’Or de Paris, in which he recounts his experiences in France. According to what he says in the preface, Ṭahṭāwī affirms that his text – which he was encouraged to write by friends and family members and, above all, by the Sheik Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār, an enthusiast of wonderful tales and extraordinary works – illustrates

avec attention tout ce qui se produirait au cours de ce voyage, tout ce que je verrais et rencontrerais de curieux et d’étonnant, et à le consigner, afin qu’il servît à dévoiler le visage de cette contrée, dont on dit qu’elle est aussi belle qu’une fiancée; et afin qu’il demeurait un guide pour les voyageurs qui désireraient s’y rendre.

Ṭahṭāwī’s work is an impassioned and original account which says a lot about France but even more about Egypt and, of its type, it became a veritable literary model. Numbered among the first modern texts, halfway between a literary travelog and an autobiography, L’Or de Paris is, in fact, a work of Adab (literature) which acts as a link between the classical and the modern ages.

The “belle fiancée” to whom Ṭahṭāwī refers, France, fascinates not only young Europeans but also many Arab personages who, attracted by European modernity, depart in search of the first hand ocular testimony that is essential for knowledge. There are more than forty nineteenth-century works (twenty-five in published form and seventeen manuscripts) that deal with European experiences. These works are, for the most part, monumental and set themselves up as sources of knowledge and, remodeling


17 On the advice of Muḥammad ‘Alī, Ṭahṭāwī’s work was translated into Turkish in 1839 and distributed free to Egyptian officials and school children. Cf. G. Delanoue, Moralistes et Politiques Musulmans dans l’Egypte du XIXe siècle (1798-1882) (Caire: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale di Caire, 1982), 387-388.
18 Taḥṭāwī, L’or de Paris, 43.
stylistic features typical of medieval literature, they amass data, measure distances, the dimensions of buildings, and provide various kinds of information with the aim of analyzing not only the reasons for European progress but also the causes of the ‘Oriental’ impasse and, sometimes, they point to possible solutions. But who are the authors of these nineteenth-century riḥla that A. Louca refers to as Touristes lettrés?21

II. The Authors of riḥla (Travelogs)

Amīn Fikrī belonged to the Egyptian elite: his father, ‘Abd Allāh (1834-1890), ex minister for Education and someone who was very close to the Khedivé, headed the Egyptian delegation to the Oriental Congress in Stockholm-Christiania.22 Having taken a law degree in Paris, Fikrī, on his return from his sojourn in Europe, was obliged by the death of his father to undertake singlehanded the preparation of a weighty volume23 – more than 800 pages – in which he recounts observations and curious facts about his European experiences including several chapters dedicated to his visit to the Exposition in Paris which lasted for nine days. Fikrī, in other words, studied abroad according to a model that was diffuse among the elite and which assumed, in many respects, a new, paradigmatic value within that elite. On the basis of new needs that arose within that society, in fact, new professions came to the fore, such as journalism, with the spread of the press, and law, inasmuch as the Ottoman Empire and Egypt entrusted the resolution of certain matters to legal codes different from the šarī‘a (law of God), to which the Islamic office of the qādī was predisposed. More conservative, on the other hand, was ‘Umar al-Bāḡūrī, a descendant of an ‘ulama‘ (scholarly) family, whose formation was wholly Egyptian: he first studied at the Koran school of his native village, al-Bāḡūr, in Upper Egypt, he then moved to Cairo where he attended the university of al-Azhar and finally he moved to Dār al-‘ulūm, where, subsequently, he worked as a teacher until 1889, the year in which he was nominated as Egyptian representative in the Congress of Oriental Scholars. As we can see, therefore, al-Bāḡūrī left Egypt and headed for Sweden and Norway – the Congress was taking place in Stockholm and Christiania – traveling through Italy and Switzerland. In 1891 he published his travel

21 This is the title of the third part of Louca’s work, cf. Louca, Voyageurs et Ecrivains Egyptiens, 179.
23 Muḥammad Amīn Fikrī, Irshād al-Alībbā’ ilā māḥāsin Īrābbā (Guide of Intelligent Men toward the Beauties of Europe) (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Muqtaṭaf, 1892).
Title page of Ḥāshiyāt fī Maḥāsin Urūbā (Guide of Intelligent Men toward the Beauties of Europe) (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Muqtaṭaf, 1892) by Muḥammad Amīn Fikrī.
First page of *al-Durar al-bahiyya fi al-riḥla al-urūbāwiyya* (Rare Pearls of a Journey in Europe) (Cairo: Maṭbaʻat Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, 1891) by Mahmūd ʻUmar al-Bāghūrī.
Title page of *al-Dunyā fi Bāris aw Ayyāmi al-ṭāliṭa fi Ūrūbbā* (The Universe in Paris or My Age in Europe) (Cairo: n.p., 1900) by Aḥmad Zakī.
accounts,\textsuperscript{24} in a considerably reduced form – some hundred pages – compared to Fikrī’s text which came out shortly afterwards and the later text of Ahmad Zakī. The latter, a thorough-going cosmopolitan, dedicated an entire work\textsuperscript{25} to the Universal Exposition of Paris in 1900. Zakī was a latter day man of letters and journalist who wrote and sent from abroad to his compatriots articles rich not only in information but impressions, comments, and anecdotes. He had studied Arabic and French since his primary school days and in 1887 he took a degree in law at the madrasat al-Idāra (Administrative School) of Cairo. He was Director of the School of Translation of the Khedivé and teacher of Arabic in the French archeological Mission and he collaborated with and wrote articles for numerous newspapers (al-Abūrām, al-Muqtaṭtam, al-Hilāl, etc.). In other words, he was a modern intellectual, an habitué of the European world – he called himself a “sincere tourist” – who “provided not only information but personal impressions, comments and anecdotes on events of the time, without going into matters of religion or politics”\textsuperscript{26}. Zakī, younger than his compatriots, therefore, seems very close to the figure of the modern day tourist-traveler, in search not only of factual information but eager to capture the unusual aspects of the reality of the country visited. Zakī organized his trip to France autonomously; his was a free choice as was the case with the journey of the illustrious Tunisian Muḥammad Bayram al-Ḥāmis (the fifth),\textsuperscript{27} which predated Zakī’s by several decades. Bayram V belonged to one of the most important Tunisian families and was an eminent politician of the reformist current who had a profound knowledge of Europe which he appreciated for its scientific and technological progress.\textsuperscript{28} During his journey which, due to the political situation in Tunisia, became a definitive exile, Bayram V visited the Paris Exposition of 1878 and dedicated several pages to it in the third of the five volumes which make up his monumental \\textit{riḥla}.\textsuperscript{29} Another illustrious Tunisian and a pupil of Bayram V was Muḥammad al-Sanūsī. Of less noble origins than his master, he was a poet, man of letters and reformist who, after spending a period of time in Italy,\textsuperscript{30} was

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{24} Maḥmūd ‘Umar al-Bāġūrī, \textit{al-Durar al-bahiyya fī al-riḥla al-urūbāwiyyya} (Rare Pearls of a Journey in Europe) (Cairo: Maṭba‘at Muhammad Muṣṭafā, 1891).

\textsuperscript{25} A. Zakī, \textit{al-Dunyā fī Bāris aw Ayyāmī al-ta, liṭa fī Ūrūbā} (The Universe in Paris or My Age in Europe) (Cairo: n.p., 1900).

\textsuperscript{26} The edition I consulted is the one edited by A. Ibrāhīm al-Hawārī, whom I mention in the course of the work: A. Zakī, \textit{al-Dunyā fī Bāris} (Cairo, Giza: Ein for Human and Social Studies, 2007), 49.

\textsuperscript{27} From now on Bayram V.

\textsuperscript{28} See M. Chebbi, \textit{L’image de l’Occident chez les intellectuels tunisiens au XIX\textsuperscript{e} siècle} (Tunis: Arabesques éditions, 2010), 76-79; A. Abdesselem, \textit{Les Historiens Tunisiens des XVII\textsuperscript{e}, XVIII\textsuperscript{e} et XIX\textsuperscript{e} siècles. Essai d’histoire culturelle} (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1973), 387-396.


\textsuperscript{30} A. Chenoufi, \textit{Un savant Tunisien du XIX\textsuperscript{e} siècle: Muḥammad as-Sanūsī, sa vie et son oeuvre} (Tunis: Université de Tunis, 1977); Abdesselem, \textit{Les Historiens Tunisiens}, 407-415; A. M. Medici, \textit{Città italiane sulla...}
an official guest of the French government in 1889;\(^{31}\) he was fascinated by the new means of transport and communication and certainly did not pass up the opportunity of visiting the Exposition which had also become a social event and rendezvous for intellectuals. Funded by the Tunisian government in 1891 (Tunisia had been a French Protectorate since 1881), al-Sunusi published – probably ‘sur commande’ – *Information on Paris Exposition of 1889*\(^{32}\) in which he dedicated the fourth chapter to the Exposition without, however, reaching, as Chebbi points out, the level of spontaneity of his *Rihla biғaғiyya*. The political position of al-Sunusi was less independent than that of Bayram and implied that he could not dissent very much from French colonial policy toward which he shows himself to be indulgent and collaborative to the extent that he became a functionary of the Protectorate.\(^{33}\) Another Tunisian who was closely involved with France was Sulayman al-Ḥarā‘irī who, like his compatriots Bayram V and al-Sunusi, studied at the university of *Zaytūna* and then specialized in the exact sciences without neglecting the study of Islamic law. In 1844 he was a teacher of Arabic for the French delegations and then he began working for the French Consulate, probably thanks to his friendship with a French missionary priest François Bourgade\(^{34}\) who was an expatriate in Tunisia. In 1856, for reasons that are not very clear, he left Tunisia for Paris where he worked as a teacher of Arabic at the ‘École des Langues Orientales’. In 1867 Jules Lesseps (brother of Fernand) commissioned him to write a kind of publicity pamphlet in Arabic on the Exposition,\(^{35}\) with the object of attracting visitors. In the pamphlet Ḥarā‘irī, among other things, stresses the economic advantages that Muslims could expect to obtain from the Exposition. Another official guest of the French government at the Paris Exposition of 1900 was Ibn al-Ḥūغا,\(^{36}\) a Tunisian of Turkish origin who had studied Arabic and French since his schooldays and began in 1887, at a very young age, to work for the Tunisian government in the Translation sector. This journalist and historian was director for many years of the official Tunisian publishing house and was responsible for the publication of numerous classical texts and translations. He participated actively in the

\(^{31}\) According to Chebbi, al-Sunusi went to Paris because he was invited by the French authorities, cf. Chebbi, *L’image de l’Occident*, 82-83.


Cristiana Baldazzi

Cultural life of the country and was among the founders of the Khaldunian Association. Less well known, on the other hand, is Dimitrī Ni‘mat Allāh al-Ḥallāt al-Ṭarābulisi, a Syrian from Alexandria as he writes in the title of his work:37 originally from Tripoli, he set sail together with his brother and the wife of the latter for Europe, first stopping in Italy and then going on to the Paris Exposition. During this long journey, they stopped off in many small centers such as Pompey and Caserta. It transpires from Ḥallāt’s text that it was he himself who had organized the trip without having recourse to the by then famous Cook’s Agency which, on the other hand, the Egyptians Fikrī and al-Bāğūrī had used. The people we are dealing with, in other words, are journalists, teachers, lawyers and politicians of more or less illustrious origins who represent the new elite that was developing within the different sectors of the Islamic Arab world.

III. The Texts of the Travelogs

As mentioned above, despite the fact that the authors taken into consideration here are not travelers as such, their work is to be inserted within travel literature (adab al-Riḥla), which is a consolidated genre in Arabic literature38 and the first text of which goes back to the ninth century and is attributed to an elusive merchant Sulaymān.39 The theme of the journey (in the form of pilgrimage, ḥaǧǧ, and migration, biǧra) has, in fact, constituted an important aspect of Muslim civilization and, albeit with diverse variations on the basis of contexts and historical periods, it continues to be associated with the search for knowledge:40 the ‘ulamā’, the Muslim scholars, jurists and grammarians, journeyed to the dār al-islām not only on pilgrimage, but also to visit a guru or to study a manuscript (between the tenth and the twelfth centuries a scholar could study in more

---

than twenty cities). In the period under discussion, Europe had become the focus of interest for travelers and attracted Arab visitors largely on account of its scientific progress and new technologies. Although the riḥla was now directed toward the West, the urge to travel remained basically unchanged in that it still adhered to the concept of ẓalab al-ʿilm, the ‘quest for knowledge’. These European riḥla do not constitute a compact corpus as such – so much so that according to Newman they represent more properly an Alteriste Literature but are, rather, the expression of a cultural movement – as Medici has affirmed – the value of which is not only literary, but first and foremost historical and political. The works under consideration here have, with a few exceptions (Harawi, al-Sanusi), characteristics in common both as regards content and formal structure. Following the pattern of the stylistic features typical of the medieval riḥla, the texts follow the spatial-temporal course of the journey and are presented in the form of chronicles, summaries or travel diaries. As had been the case in the classical period, when the riḥla was based on the pilgrimage to Mecca with its established stops, so too did the travels in these nineteenth-century works follow a well-defined itinerary, in some cases (such as in that of al-Bāġūrī and Fikri) organized by others (by the Thomas Cook agency) and in others organized independently. Typical, and in many ways traditional, is also the minute attention paid to numbers, the calculation of distances, the dimensions of cities, number of inhabitants, heights of buildings and cost of public transport (taxis, trains, ferries with relative timetables, distances and travel time) as well as the cost of entrance tickets to libraries, museums and the Exposition. The subjects dealt with are also analogous; many are taken from the classical texts and from Or de Paris by Ṭaḥṭāwī and they become literary topoi: women and their behavior, dress, food, entertainment including the theater but also commerce and new means of transport and, of course, the Universal Exposition which becomes a step in itself of the journey and assumes very precise characteristics as we shall see. Describing the places and things that are peculiar to the ‘other’ and the ‘elsewhere’ and, because of their very difference, worthy of admiring attention is the goal that the nineteenth-century Arab travelers set themselves. Nonetheless, they filter information about the reality of technological progress through details that have a richly imaginative flavor that recalls the medieval imagery of the Āḡāʾīb

42 In the preceding centuries there was no lack of journeys to Europe mostly on the part of Arab delegates, and ambassadors, but also single personages. Cf. N. Matar, In the Land of the Christians: Arabic Travel Writing in the Seventeenth Century (London: Routledge, 2003).
43 D. Newman, “Myths and Realities”, 34.
44 Medici, Città italiane, 23.
(Marvels). By referring to recurrent themes these authors seem to wish to emphasize their belonging to the tradition and to underline their continuity with the past not only in the spirit of the text (knowledge) but also in the form. In some cases, indeed, the extent of the details that fill out the text to the point, at times, of almost submerging it under the weight of information, confers on them the character of tourist guides, albeit ante litteram. Divided into chapters and sometimes even paragraphs with asterisks in the margin to indicate that a new subject is being addressed, these works unfold according to the universal structure of the journey: departure, transit, arrival.45

IV. Riḥla: Departure, Transit, Arrival

When a journey was sponsored, the incipit contained a note of thanks to those who had financed it – as in the case of Ṭahṭāwī who adopts the classical mode. There then followed several introductory paragraphs in which the author outlined the reasons for his journey (attendance at Congresses in the case of Fikrī, al-Bāḡūrī and Zakī, a visit to the Exposition in the case of Ibn al-Ḥūḡa, or the quest for new medical knowledge and specialized cures as for Bayram V and al-Sanūsī) and justified from a religious point of view his sojourn outside the dār al-islam with quotations from the Koran. In the same way Ḥarāʾirī, who was trying to attract Muslims to the Paris Exposition for the benefit of the French, begins his text by emphasizing the fact that Muslims and Christians are brothers and supports his affirmation by quoting a verse from the Koran (LX:8). Bayram V and al-Sanūsī, on the other hand, stress the fact that the quest for knowledge which is the object of their journey, is necessary for the rebirth of Muslim societies and hence for Islam itself. Al-Bāḡūrī adds a detailed tarḡama, a kind of curriculum vitae generally present in classical texts in which the author informs the reader about his origins, his activities and his works. Other authors dwell on descriptions of the preparations for the journey. Fikrī, for example, tells how he brought woolen clothes with him in consideration of the different climatic conditions in Europe (although the journey was taking place in Summer) but no utensils, crockery, sheets or blankets since these were provided by the hotels. The Egyptian writer, what’s more, refers also to a series of problems concerning diet, the slaughter of meat, the purity (tahāra) of water for ablutions and the necessity of knowing the ritual direction for prayer (qibla) and suggests the solution to these problems by quoting illustrious examples such as that of

the Prophet who ate cheese brought to him from the land of the Rum. He then adds, by way of reassurance, that the journey to Europe is undertaken by the People of the Book and that the hotels will provide everything a Muslim needs: as regards the qibla, all that was needed was to carry a compass. Unlike Fikrī, Bayram V, whose journey took place earlier (1875), while recognizing that a hotel room was provided with many useful amenities, advises travelers to bring a jug with them “for ablutions, [...] since Europeans do not use jugs which are, however, necessary for Muslims in order to bathe according to the tradition and the Islamic laws of hygiene”. In addition, Fikrī’s journey, unlike Bayram’s, was organized by Cook’s which was by then famous for saving travelers from numerous inconveniences. The Agency, as Fikrī points out was linked up to a network of hotels in every country in the West and in the East able to satisfy all the traveler’s needs. In the first place the traveler did not have to worry about settling his account each time since it had already been settled with the Agency as was the buying of tickets and the hire of cars for moving about. The cost of the journey varied according to hotel and country, the number of meals consumed (breakfast, lunch, dinner) and if the service did not live up to expectations – for example if the hotel was too far from the center – the traveler could go to the Cook office present in every city and change hotels without any problem. In these offices, what’s more, travelers could consult books, travel guides, maps and keep in touch with their own country thanks to the telegraph service. The Agency was created by Thomas Cook (1808-1892), whose biography is outlined by Fikrī who acknowledges Cook’s business acumen and initiative. Cook was a man of modest origins who thanks to his intelligence and hard work managed to expand his activity from 3 to 2,700 employees, thereby creating wealth not only for himself but for the entire country. The long reference to Cook’s activity is in line with the didactic intention of the whole book which sets out to highlight European dynamism and capacity but also to awaken the hearts and minds of the Arabs by presenting them with the models of figures who have succeeded thanks to their initiative.

47 Fikrī, Irād al-Alibbā, 14.
48 Medici, Città italiane, 162.
49 Fikrī, Irād al-Alibbā, 18.
50 Fikrī, Irād al-Alibbā, 19.
52 Fikrī, Irād al-Alibbā, 22.
53 Another similar example is that of the Bon Marché stores, mentioned both by al-Bāḍūrī (al-Durar al-bahiyya, 37), by Zakī (al-Dunyā fī Bāris, 170) and by Fikrī. The latter goes further and tells the story of the owner, Monsieur Boucicaut, who managed, with the help of his wife, to turn a small shop into one of the most famous and reasonably priced stores in Paris; one of the reasons for his success was that he provided his employees with an incentive by paying them a percentage on the bases of sales (Fikrī, Irād al-Alibbā, 293-299).
It was in 1800, in fact, that there appeared Ya’qūb al-Sarrūq’s Arabic translation of Samuel Smiles’s *Self Help*, entitled *Sīr al-Nāghā* (The Secret of Success, a collection of the biographies of people of modest origins who, thanks to their innate talents, managed to achieve their ambitions and to make a mark on society) and, in the meantime, there appeared in the newspapers a plethora of articles dedicated to such illustrious figures of the past both in the West and in the East.55

Once preparations had been carried out, the journey itself began. The departure was usually from Alexandria (which some of the authors such as al-Bāǧūrī and Fikrī, reached by train) or from Tunis (from the port of La Goletta, in the case of Bayram):56 it was from the ship that the travelers contemplated the crossing of the Mediterranean and their point of arrival (Italy or France). A sense of detachment is clearly expressed and the emotions of the travelers emerge as the ship, often described in detail (cabins, areas for common use, etc.) leaves the port. From being an imposing and safe haven even in storms, the ship, when on the open sea, seems defenseless like “a bird held in the hand of someone who directs it as he wishes”.57 In Zakī too, there is a reference to birds – three seagulls that follow the ship as soon as it leaves the port, “swooping in the air while we are on the sea”. The force of nature prevails over the men who have left their homeland, symbolized by the haven of the port. On the high seas, where there is no land in sight, the sea whips up its waves ever more majestically and al-Bāǧūrī remains at their mercy for two days and not even medicines can alleviate his sense of ill-being. The ship lunges back and forth and sideways, heaving and groaning and leaving the passengers overwhelmed; the sense of terror continued the following day and the restaurant is almost deserted – as Fikrī observes – there were only 8 people out of 32.58 Bayram V too, who got on board the Italian mail ship Doria at La Goletta suffered seasickness on the high seas: “Seasickness is one of the hardest afflictions to bear by those who are affected

---


55 In the Arab world in the nineteenth century there became popular the cult of personality, under the influence not only of Carlyle and Smiles, but also of G. Le Bon, who in his *Civilisation des Arabes* (translated into arabic and turkish in several editions) maintains that the reason for the existing arabic-islamic decadence lies in the lack of “grands hommes”, on like the past, which had Muḥammad, etc. Cf. G. Le Bon, *La Civilisation des Arabes* (Paris: Éditions La Fontaine, 1996), 468.

56 al-Sanūsī too left from La Goletta and arrived in Naples, but the text examined here, *Information on Paris Exposition of 1889*, does not deal with the stages of the journey that are the subject of his *Rihla biǧāзиyya*.


by it [...] it causes a feeling of great tiredness which, however, passes unexpectedly with few exceptions”. The calm after the storm: the ship in which Fikrī and al-Bāḡūrī were traveling touched on the Greek islands in the Mediterranean sea – about which they furnish historical and geographical facts, naming the rivers that flow there, etc. – and then enters the Adriatic where, after three days of navigation the first stage of their journey comes to an end in Brindisi. “The first European port a traveler arrives in” writes Fikrī, is less than three days journey by sea from Alexandria in Egypt and the city has a railroad that leads to every city in Europe. The writer seems to wish to underline the fact that Egypt is not so far from Europe. In fact travel by steam ship was already widespread from the first half of the nineteenth century and in the 1860s and 1870s of the century it was the means of connecting the main ports of the Mediterranean.

Once they had disembarked, the travelers visited the old part of the city with its labyrinth of backstreets where the poverty of the inhabitants was evident, as both al-Bāḡūrī and Fikrī noted. The latter recounts having seen people squabbling over the cigarette butts that they themselves had thrown into the street. The second stage of the journey in Italy was Trieste: the two literary-travelers arrived there after a day’s navigation and after a few hours, proceeded to Venice. They both mention the history of the city, its geographical position, its distance from other cities and the number of its inhabitants which, according to al-Bāḡūrī, was no more than 130 thousand. The descriptions of the cities mentioned in the various works have characteristics in common: generally they begin with place names and topographical details and then describe the physical geography, plains, mountains and rivers of the cities, from which they go on to their history and the customs of their inhabitants (food, clothing, language, etc.). Fikrī and al-Bāḡūrī disembarked at Trieste, right in front of Piazza Unità which was then called Piazza Grande and, after visiting the old part of the city, including Piazza della Borsa, they arrived at the Castle of Miramare. The subsequent stages of the journey of the two Egyptians, some of which were still in Italy, are described according to the same method, with an additional paragraph dedicated to the panorama (manzar) of the Alps, and in particular of Canazei whose snowy peaks captured the imagination of al-Bāḡūrī. Having traveled through Switzerland and arriving finally in Paris, Fikrī, confesses: “as soon as we got here the first thing I decided to do was to visit the Exposition”.

59 Medici, Città italiane, 158-159.
60 Fikrī, Irīād al-ʿAlishā; 50.
61 Fikrī, Irīād al-ʿAlishā; 51.
64 Fikrī, Irīād al-ʿAlishā; 120.
V. THE EXPOSITION

It is a great, universal market (ṣūq) that brings together countries near and far and unknown people and languages; everyone exhibits in his own way the crafts and commercial products of his own country, the fruits of his knowledge and all manner of precious and rare objects that demonstrate the level he has reached in the progressive world thanks to the knowledge obtained by a restricted number of people (an élite), whose job it is to put what he has learned into practice as required by science.\(^65\)

This is how al-Bāḵūrī presents the Paris Exposition of 1889 to his readers. Since he was undoubtedly aware of the imminent publication of Fikrī’s weighty tome, al-Bāḵūrī leaves aside the numerous details about the organization, history and dimensions of the pavilions of the preceding Expositions and confines himself with a few exceptions (Cairo street), to a more general description. He is struck, however, by the commercial dimension of the event which, indeed, he refers to as a market or ṣūq, similarly to Sulaymān Ḥarā’irī who sang its praises in his pamphlet of 1867. “In this Parisian event”, wrote Ḥarā’irī, “Every nation, by exhibiting its products, diffuses its knowledge and progress and advances the use of commerce in order to better its own position among the Europeans (ahl al-Ūrāba)”.\(^66\) In Ḥarā’irī’s view, therefore, wealth and commerce are at the basis of European progress and for this reason, he urges his compatriots to take part in this ṣūq and he lists at length the products that they might exhibit, including Arab plates which would greatly appeal to Europeans in that they were new to them and they would, meanwhile, provide a substantial profit for the Arabs.\(^67\) Zakī too, seems to be of the same opinion, when he writes that “commerce is and will continue to be one of the mechanisms of progress and civilization”, adding that “a large number of those who have raised the Arabs and their language like a beacon and have laid the foundations of this illustrious nation have been travelers and merchants”.\(^68\) Enraptured by the sparkling grandiosity of the 1900 Exposition, to the extent that he elevates its marvels to the level of a dream and compares it to the City of Copper\(^69\) or to one of the marvelous cities of *The Arabian Nights*, Zakī observes that there already existed in the pre-Islamic age ‘Ukāẓ and in the Islamic age al-Mirbad: “two enormous markets where people worked

---

\(^68\) Zaki, *al-Dunyafī Bāris*, 44.
and bought and sold but also challenged each other and measured themselves against each other in composing poems with ability and originality”. That the origins of the Expositions being visited were Arabic was also the opinion of Ibn al-Ḥūḡa and al-Sanūsī who recall the market-fair of ‘Ukāţ which, according to Zakī ought to have been mentioned within the Exposition. In other words, Islam was the civilization from which the Europeans had drawn their heritage of knowledge and which allowed them to reach the results that could be seen in the Exposition. This position, expressed in different forms, is traceable in all the authors some of whom are more interested in the policies and administrative norms in Europe while others – perhaps the majority – are more interested in technological innovations (steam, electricity, the telegraph, the press, trains and cars, etc.). The fact remains, however, that there emerge in these writings, as never before, the lacerating ambiguities of an encounter that was already distinguished by the imperialistic combination – the dominators, the dominated, prelude to the colonial one – the conquerors, the conquered.

VI. Rue du Caire and Other ‘Oriental’ Pavilions

As far as the Arabic literary-travelers were concerned, the Exposition represented a positive experience, to the extent that they considered the ancient Arab fairs as its harbinger. The most diffuse feelings were of admiration and wonder: Zakī, despite the fact that he was annoyed by the delay in the inauguration of the 1900 Exposition which had obliged him to spend some time on the Côte d’Azure (!), at the end of his first visit wrote:

Yes, the sight of this Exposition is wondrous and inspiring both for the enormity of its dimensions and for the number and diversity of its buildings and their styles. All the nations of the world are present in it, displaying their precious objects and wonders in these extraordinary palaces and edifices which appear before our eyes one more beautiful than the other. The nations compete to show their greatness. There is a fierce war going on between them, but it is a peaceful and safe war of progress and development.  

The nocturnal lights that illuminated the Exposition – so much so that Zakī compared them to the stars (which, however, paled by comparison) – enchanted the visitors who were, however, also attracted by the cars and means of transport, including the electric train (the underground railway) and the three-speed moving walkway which

70 Zakī, al-Dunyā fi Bāris, 44.
71 Zakī, al-Dunyā fi Bāris, 51.
Zaki describes at length. In any case the common goal of these journeys was the pursuit of knowledge and the opportunities offered by the Expositions were unique. Wandering round the pavilions which were decked out in the 1867 and above all in the 1889 and 1900 Paris Expositions so as to reproduce exactly the most significant edifices of each nation was tantamount to traveling round the world and all for the modicum price of a franc, the cost of the entrance ticket to the Exposition. It was not for nothing that Zaki entitled his travelog *The Universe in Paris.*

Starting from 1867 ‘Exhibition architecture’ was established, which specialized in reproducing the buildings that more than any other symbolized individual nations. Many of the architects taken on to carry out the decorations often chose the easy way out, opting for the ‘picturesque’ and using ‘typical’ architectonic models that made a strong visual impact. There were, however, some notable exceptions such as the *art nouveau* style reconstruction of the Finnish Castle. In order to make them seem more ‘true to life’, these pavilions were often manned by natives of the country, dressed in traditional costume and engaged in doing craftwork (weaving, cooking, inlaying, etc.) or serving food and drinks in the restaurants and cafés of the Exposition. The arrangement of the ‘oriental’ sections was, with a few exceptions, entrusted to European scholars, planners and architects. The real brains behind the 1867 Exhibition were, respectively, the famous French Egyptologist Auguste Mariette (Charles Edmond was the general commissioner) for Egypt and Jules de Lesseps (brother of Ferdinand) for Tunisia and Morocco. In the 1889 Exposition the architect Charles Garnier who had the unenviable task of presiding over the commission, had to take into consideration ministerial decisions, which counted on financial support from the colonies. The government of the Bey of Tunisia agreed to make a financial contribution and, in return, took it upon himself to nominate some of his delegates to the Committee as well as choosing a Tunisian architect to plan the section. In the case of Egypt which was certainly not enjoying a rosy economic situation and which had been a British Protectorate since 1881, the Baron Delort de Gléon, a French entrepreneur living in Cairo undertook to provide the funds for the decoration of the Egyptian section of 1889, the picturesque Rue du Caire (Šārī’ Miṣr), while in

---

1900 the economic operation was entrusted to an Egyptian of Lebanese origin, Philippe Boulad, and to Muṣṭafā al-Dīb, an Arabic entrepreneur, who employed the architect Marcel Dourgnon to plan the section composed of three buildings: an Egyptian temple, a caravanserai and a theater. In the same way, for Algeria and Tunisia too, a group of French entrepreneurs (E. Pourtauborde, A. Chaudoreille, C.-E. Vaucheret) funded both sections of the pavilion (including the Rue de l’Algerie). The most detailed description of these pavilions is by Fikrī who underlines the supervision of the works on the part of the Baron Delort, who made it his business to have sent from Egypt numerous inlaid panels and ancient maṣrabiyyāt for reuse in the construction of buildings and habitations.

The street opened with a mosque the minaret of which resembled that of Qayt Bey in Cairo and there were some twenty five buildings, one after the other, decorated with muqarnās and maṣrabiyyāt; inside the street there were boutiques where artisans made their products by hand (vases, jugs) and prepared food and typical sweetmeats, according to a proposal Ḥarā'irī had made in 1867 when he had exhorted his fellow countrymen to sell Arabic culinary art to the West. One had the impression of actually walking along a street in Cairo: “the muezzin’s invitation to prayer, the roll of drums and the darabukka, the singing of arias, the sight of jugs and carafes and rugs and sellers of licorice root and lemon drinks and lucum”.

To render the layout even more ‘authentic’ there were the crowds, the disorder, the dirty, flaking walls and, above all the braying of the donkeys that moved all over Rue du Caire, led by more than fifty donkey drivers all suitably dressed as the Egyptian writers Fikrī and Bāḡūrī and also Ḥallāṭ observed. The latter, in particular, dwells on this aspect of the layout:

many were the French women (afrangi) who, fired with enthusiasm, rode about like doves on the branches of a tree, laughing and chasing and overtaking each other, turning the market into a race course, not to mention the children who made of it their favorite haunt.

The attraction of the donkeys and, perhaps, also of their drivers who earned a franc for every customer, created an atmosphere of mirth and fun but also a great deal of confusion, so much so that the organizers were obliged to establish fixed timetables for

77 Louca, Voyageurs et Ecrivains Egyptiens, 195; Reid, Whose Pharaohs?, 191.
78 Pourtauborde was also engaged to organize the kermesse at the Turin Expo, cf. Abbattista, Umanità in mostra, 893-894.
79 Fikrī, Irīād al-Alibbā’, 128.
80 Ḥallāṭ, Kitāb Sifr al-Safar, 132.
81 Ḥallāṭ, Kitāb Sifr al-Safar, 132.
rides. During the pauses and in the evenings, the donkey drivers welcomed visitors into the stalls where, dressed in Egyptian clothes, they beat their drums and clapped their hands for a charge of half a franc. In Ḫallāṭ’s descriptions the Rue du Caire figures as one of the most appealing areas of the Exposition: the atmosphere was perfect and to make it even more authentic there were even mosquitoes brought in by the donkeys and their drivers; the only thing missing were the hot, luminous rays of the Egyptian sun. There emerges, however, from the words of Fikrī, and even of al-Bāğûrī, who is generally less explicit, a certain sense of discontent at this representation of their country, reduced to a kind of stereotyped kermesse in which the predominant note is the exotic-commercial one. This note was evident also in the figure of Muṣṭafā al-Dīb, the only Egyptian entrepreneur in the pavilion whose shop was situated on the Rue du Caire; the conduct of the latter did not bother Fikrī in the least who considered him, on the contrary, as a model for the Egyptians: “the visitors surrounded him, curious not only about his wares but by his manner of dressing; in fact, he wore a caftan, a turban, a red cloak, etc. and, thanks to his spirit of initiative, he had learned a few French words such as ‘parfum’, ‘Madame’, ‘rose’, ‘un franc’ that helped him sell his goods…”. As well as displaying all kinds of wares just as in the market of Ḥān al-Ḩalīlī, the shop of Muṣṭafā al-Dīb was decorated with furniture, silks, carpets, chandeliers and lamps and was a meeting point for Egyptian intellectuals and personalities studying in France. It was there that Fikrī, while sipping a coffee and smoking the hookah, recounts that he had the honor of meeting not only Arab personalities but also French ones such as the Prime minister and the director of the Exposition.

The spirit of initiative of the Egyptian entrepreneur is, therefore, held up as an example not only of ambition and the quest for knowledge but also of how to enter into the commercial strategies of Europe. And this, according to Fikrī, was the road to follow:

We Egyptians must abandon our laziness and our stubbornness in refusing to leave our country; certainly if the more well-to-do of us made a point of doing so, people would be stimulated to earn their living and to obtain good results both in the East and in the West.

82 Fikrī, Iršād al-Alibbā’, 133.
83 al-Bāğûrī adds that many of the donkey drivers wasted their whole earnings on women and contracted illnesses of all kinds.
84 Ḫallāṭ, Kitāb Sifr al-Safar, 132.  
85 Fikrī, Iršād al-Alibbā’, 130.
86 Fikrī, Iršād al-Alibbā’, 131.
87 Fikrī, Iršād al-Alibbā’, 132.
That commerce and business needed to be radically modernized and, above all, projected toward western markets was Fikrī’s conviction and in this he demonstrated that he had assimilated an image of the East as a lazy and unmotivated area that corresponds exactly to the stereotyped image of the East prevalent in the West: that of men sunk in lethargy who drank coffee and smoked hookahs indifferent to what surrounded them. Fikrī’s disappointment about the donkeys is likened to that of a Dervish performing in a famous Egyptian café in a way that was not at all appropriate to the venue – revolving and speaking the name of Allah while the spectators sipped Arab coffee served in Egyptian cups by Egyptian waiters. But it is above all in the following pages that Fikrī expresses a negative judgment on the Egyptian section, affirming that there was nothing worthy of notice, so much so that there were fewer visitors to it than to the other sections. This is in contradiction not only with what he said earlier when he stressed how the French loved the street and crowded it at all hours but also with the facts of the matter if we consider that the Rue du Caire was presented again in other Expositions precisely because of the success it had enjoyed. Zakī, for his part, was of the same opinion when he commented on the Egyptian pavilion in the 1900 Exposition, designed by Dourgnon who drew inspiration from different monuments, from the Temple of Dandur to the gate of Ḥān al-Ḥālīlī; according to Zakī the section “does not represent the reality of Egypt; the visitor sees nothing that attests to its evolution in commerce and handicrafts or in science and literature”. The Egyptian writers would have preferred that greater attention had been paid to other aspects of their culture, linked to modernity and not only to the past and to the old traditions. They would have liked it to have been like the Persian pavilion organized by the Persians themselves in which were to be found not only artifacts of ancient times but modern ones too. Both Fikrī and Zakī seem to have been struck by the ephemeral aspect of the Exposition precisely in connection with the section dedicated to their country where even the mosque was only a façade behind which was a café with singers and dancers. Egyptian dress too, was chosen for its exotic appearance thanks to the force of attraction it exercised on French visitors; even the Cook’s Agency employees wore sarāwil and tarbush with the name Cook written on them. It is, therefore, within the context of their own country that writers saw the contradictions; the Egyptian pavilion came across to them as a mere place of amusement, a kind of fairground with its heartless attractions. Inside the caravanserai, in a room decked out with beautiful carpets, Zakī relates:

there is a beautiful Armenian girl about 17 years old, to whom God had not given the gift of arms but, in his benevolence, he had given her the possibility of

89 Fikrī, Iršād al-ʿAlībāʾ, 375.
carrying out with her feet women’s work such as spinning, weaving, combing her
hair and playing musical instruments.\(^{90}\)

By now sucked in as they were by the laws of modernity, the Egyptian authors were
unable to formulate the extent to which the world had been commodified and of which
Expositions were the main expression\(^{91}\) but they were able to express their sense of extra-
neousness and unease by means of a ‘false’ character who is present in both Fikrī’s and
Zaki’s texts and whom the writers recognize because he is an old acquaintance of theirs
and so they can unmask him.\(^{92}\)

These literary modes recall, in a way, the *maqāma* when ‘Īsa ibn Hišām meets Abū
‘l-Faṭḥ al-Iskandarī who, despite the fact that he is disguised as the most varied charac-
ters, is recognized and unmasked. Fikrī describes how, while he was visiting the Tunisian
section and walking in the *sīq* alongside the palace that was a reproduction of the Bardo
in Tunis, among artisans, barbers, weavers etc., he came across a scribe who was writing
in Arabic script the names of visitors in exchange for a few cents. Fikrī recognizes him
as a school fellow from Egypt who had cut short his studies in medicine to go in search
of fortune which, in fact, he never found. Zakī, on the other hand, was in the Egyptian
section when he saw a man walking along tiredly, dressed in a *ḏubba* and caftan and a
false turban, and passing himself off as a sheik of al-Azhar, while he was taking the French
visitors in by writing their names in Arabic script as a memento of the Egyptian pavilion.
“[…] Would to heaven he had been a real sheik and that his gains were honestly come
by! But Mr Tawfīq Šalhūb was an employee in the Iranian Consulate in Alexandria”.\(^{93}\)

VII. Conclusions

The texts examined here are, therefore, paradigmatic in content and structure. They
make evident, in fact, the arduous attempt made by the Arab travelers to modernize their
culture without, however, betraying it. In other words they use a common, traditional

---

\(^{90}\) Zākī, *al-Dunyā fī Bāris*, 75. Muwaylīḥī too describes the same scene: the three protagonists, while
they are getting ready to leave their country’s pavilion, highly annoyed by what they had seen, bump into
one of the organizers who takes them to see one of the most incredible marvels: a young girl without arms
intent spinning and in other activities by feet. See Muwaylīḥī, *Ḥadīth ʿĪsa ibn Hišām*, 306.


\(^{92}\) The literary expedient of the ‘false’ character is found also in Muwaylīḥī, in the chapter dedicates
to the Egyptian section (entitled *The maligned Homeland*), where the protagonists bump into a sheik who
writes the name of the visitors an Arabic script, but they immediately recognize from his accent that he is

\(^{93}\) Zākī, *al-Dunyā fī Bāris*, 74.
form which is that of the *riḥla* which they bring to life again by updating the contents, the language, the style and the terminology in relation to their new discoveries (translation from European languages or the invention of new terms using Arabic roots). These Arabic works which also have a corresponding version in Turkish were directed at a wider public than was the case with the medieval *riḥla* and they used a simpler and more immediate language as in the case of Zakī whose text can be considered as a travel diary where the author allows himself ample space for his own considerations. But the contradictions that I mentioned earlier already emerge in these texts which, although written with the intention of getting to know Europeans better in order to defend themselves from them, inevitably take on the European point of view which as we have seen does not always coincide with that of the ‘other’. None of the Egyptian authors dealt with here felt himself to be represented in the pavilion dedicated to his country although, by their own admission, the image of Egypt presented by the Europeans was very close to reality. This attitude, however, is not to be found in the texts of the other literary-travelers considered here. On the contrary, they seem to have enjoyed and appreciated both the Egyptian pavilion and that of their own country, Tunisia. There is no doubt that the reason for this difference in attitude can be attributed to the fact that texts such as those of al-Sanūsī and Ibn al-Ḥūġa were published at the expense of their governments so that their position could not be one of criticism. But perhaps a more profound reason for the negative judgment of the Egyptian writers is to be found in the history itself of their country where contradictions seemed to be more evident. Notwithstanding the fact that they had gone the way of Tunisia – debts contracted to the West and, in consequence, occupation by the Western powers – Egypt was the first country to develop a concept of *watān* or *patrie* (with Ṭāḥṭāwī) and, at the same time they undertook an accelerated race toward modernization of which, naturally, the principal point of reference was Europe. The process of Haussmanization of Cairo the object of which was to make of the city a modern European capital was already under way when in 1881 the British occupied the country and the following year repressed in bloody reprisals the nationalist revolt of ʿUrābī Paşa. But the paradox in which Egypt was moving is also made clear in the nationalist movement which was developing

---

94 Zakī, unlike the other authors provides explanation of the foreign terms used in a long final note.

95 Numerous are the travel accounts in the nineteenth century, such as that of ʿOmer Fāż Efendi who accompanied the sultan Abdūlaziz in his journey to Europe and to the Paris Exposition of 1867 and that of Ahmed Midhat who in 1889 to part in the Congress of Orientalists scholars at Stockholm. Cf. C. Hillebrand, “Ottoman Travel Accounts to Europe”, *Venturing beyond Borders: Reflections on Genre, Function and Boundaries in Middle Eastern Travel Writing*, eds. B. Āgai, O. Akyiliz and C. Hillebrand (Würzburg: Ergon, 2013), 53-74.

96 Tunisia, after declaring bankruptcy in 1867, was obliged to subject itself to the tutelage of a French, English and Italian Commission and in 1881 it became a French Protectorate.
in the country thanks also to Pharaohonism, a current of thought that developed under the influence of European Egyptologists and that became part of the ideology on which was based the idea of a modern Egyptian nation. All this seems to reflect perfectly the ambiguity of the Western idea of Egypt: a Pharaoh-based Egypt, symbol of ancient splendor which had become a common world heritage (the architecture of the Expositions in Paris made a great display of Egyptian Sphinxes, arabesques, symbols and decorations) as opposed to the idea of a ‘modern’ Egypt represented by the picturesque backstreets and markets of the old city as in the Oriental pictures of the Rue du Caire. The Egyptians, inevitably, are subjected to the predominant vision that wants to depict them as exotic Orientals, in sharp contrast to the idea of modernity and a renewed style of life to which they themselves aspired. Al-Bāǧūrī, Fikrī and Zakī in their texts show in a decidedly paradigmatic way the profound contradiction on which relations with the West were based, tightly bound up, as they were, on a process of modernization and at the same time of colonization. The Egyptian elite felt a strong fascination with the West and if, initially, it still seemed possible that the evolution of a process of interaction and reinterpretation was possible, at this particular point in history such a process had already been compromised by acculturation. The travelers here dealt with, although conscious of the dangers of Westernization, of becoming a hybrid culture that was “neither Eastern nor Western”, were overcome by the West-Modernity paradigm and it is through this prism that they regard the Exposition and themselves. Finally, to go back to the Exposition, it is within this richly imaginative and unreal space that the Egyptian travelers undergo a decisive experience concerning the relation between their own culture and that of the ‘other’, in that they take note of the fact, however fleetingly and partially, that they are actors in a representation of the world – that of the West – which relegates them to the subordinate and marginal role of tradition, the exotic, the picturesque, of the ‘other’ in himself and for himself – to use Hegel’s terminology – or, in other words to a role that has nothing to do with modernity, progress or civilization in a European or Western sense. Looking at his own image in the great mirror of the expo, the Arab intellectual does not recognize himself, he experiences for an instant a sense of estrangement (similar to that which a mirror image produces when the right seems to be the left and vice versa) – a feeling, however, that is destined to vanish as soon as he leaves the pavilion.

97 P. La Greca work on the modernization of Cairo highlights an analogous phenomenon from the urbanistic point of view; the author underlines the fact that up until the seventies of the nineteenth century the urban transformation of the city, although it welcomed external stimuli, was the fruit of local reinterpretation to the extent that it became “a cumulative knowledge”, while later on, also because of a massive presence of foreign investors, assumed a strongly colonial character. Cf. P. La Greca, Il Cairo. Una metropoli in transizione (Rome: Officina, 1996), 111-112.
“Ah! For we Belgians”, Anneke told him, “this is a very important part of the Exposition. It will be the section devoted to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi. On the other side, there is a tropical garden with a native village inside. All very authentic, with little huts and grass roofs! They’re even bringing some of the natives over to live here, for the time of the Expo. I can’t wait to see them. I have never seen a real black before. They look so strange and funny in photographs”. Thomas said nothing in reply to this but it gave him an uneasy feeling. There were plenty of black faces on the streets of London these days, and while he knew people who felt unhappy about it [...], he prided himself on being free of skin prejudice. If what Anneke said was true, he considered that this part of the Exposition struck the wrong note [...] She [Anneke] and some of the other hostesses had spent two hours looking for the little girl, only to find her sitting outside – of all places – one of the straw huts in the pavilion of the Belgian Congo, staring as if hypnotized at one of the half-naked natives as he stood and shivered in the unaccustomed chill of a North European summer evening [...] Anneke at one point asked him: “So you never got to see the pavilion of the Belgian Congo?”. “Not yet, no. I was planning to visit some time in the next few days”. “But you can’t”, she said, “They’ve gone home”. “Who’s gone home?”. “The Natives from Africa. Hadn’t you heard?”. “What happened?”. “Well, I read in the newspaper that they were complaining about the way that some visitors were treating them. They were sitting all day in their straw huts, working on their…native crafts, and so on, and apparently some of the people were shouting bad things at them, and sometimes they were trying to – (she giggled) – feed them bananas and things like that. They said they were made to feel like animals in a zoo. So now most of them have gone home and the huts are empty”. Anneke
frowned. “I thought there was something wrong about it, the first time I went there...It felt somehow...not kind, making them sit and work like that while the Europeans just stood and watched”. “Yes”, said Thomas, “I thought so too, when I heard about it. On the other hand – perhaps it’s not so different from what Emily has to do in the American pavilion”.


This contribution discusses two questions which were touched upon but not fully analyzed in the monograph I just published *Umanità in mostra*. The first question regards how the living ethno-exhibitions related to colonial policy and propaganda, to the formation of a ‘colonial culture’ and a ‘national identity’ in late nineteenth-century Italy. The second question concerns the return or re-proposition (or false disappearance) of the living ethno-exhibitions in contemporary society, both in the traditional forms of exhibitions of human, racial and savage diversity and in a whole variety of typical practices of the twentieth and twenty-first century society of exteriority, public events and performances, self- and collective exhibitions, the publicizing of privacy or the overbearing irruption of the private on the public scene. I shall consider the first question by referring to some publications, and one in particular, which deserve fuller consideration than I was able to give them in a book that did not engage directly with questions of ‘colonial culture’ and ‘national identity’. I shall discuss the second question by citing a series of human exhibitions held in the second half of the twentieth and the first decade of the twenty-first century, as evidence of the surprising tenacity and resilience of the practice of objectifying human beings in the multiple configurations of the exhibitionary complex.

---


I.

The contribution of African colonialism to the formation of Italian public opinion and cultural awareness at the turn of the twentieth century, and the problem of how a ‘colonial culture’ contributed to the construction of Italian national identity, have been attracting increasing attention among historians recently. *Umanità in mostra* did not set out to enquire into this order of problems specifically, even though it was inevitable to ask which sort of ‘colonial culture’ (ideology, propaganda) was detectable behind the ethno-expositions, and what type of specific contribution the latter made to the formation of a national identity. Although these are undoubtedly important problems, they were bound to remain in the background in a piece of research which aimed primarily to reconstruct certain events as they actually occurred, as life experiences of protagonists with their own intentions and reactions, and in the discourse structures elaborated at various communicative levels to identify their meanings.

Among the numerous works to have enriched the historiographical panorama regarding ‘colonial culture’ in Liberal and Fascist Italy from various points of view in recent years – investigating the role of the scientific societies, explorations, missions, legislation and the law, literature – I shall merely cite two collections of essays edited respectively by Patrizia Palumbo (2003) and Ruth Ben-Ghiat (2005) and a monograph by Giuseppe Finaldi published in 2009, making some comments on the latter work in particular. These are studies taking different approaches which nonetheless all feature the richness of cultural expressions and mentality that can be recognized in a ‘colonial culture’. In fact this is as far as the common ground goes, because there is a notable divergence as to what ‘colonial culture’ should be taken to mean. In the collection edited by Palumbo the expression ‘colonial culture’ typically denotes expressions of ‘highbrow’ culture: official and institutional speeches concerning the colonial experience, colonial historiography, the contribution of disciplines such as anthropology, legislation which regulated inter-ethnic relationships in colonial society in racist terms, and more overtly literary textual representations, both in the version destined for a more cultured readership and in the form of colonial subject matter for mass consumption.

Turning to Finaldi, he approached the problem of ‘colonial culture’ and the part it played in the formation of an Italian national identity with a particular aim. Taking issue with those historians – the majority – who have emphasized the poverty of ‘colonial culture’ in late nineteenth-century Italy (the period of the *First African War*) he sought to highlight the very rich presence of colonial themes in several forms of expression of the mentality and cultural awareness in the late 1880s (above all) and 1890s. To this end he drew on sources of considerable interest and impact which to date have undoubtedly
been largely overlooked: commemorative speeches, funerary orations, ceremonial rhetoric of various types, popular ballads, broadsheets, puppet shows, activities that went on in schools (making only minimal reference to textbooks), popularising publications, monuments and toponymy, epigraphs and national expositions – although he actually only referred to the one held in Palermo in 1891-1892. From this considerable range of minor textuality, which nonetheless excludes such higher brow expressions as political commentary, essays, historiographical elaboration for popularising ends, fiction, ethno-anthropological, geographical and travel literature, Finaldi draws two rather categorical conclusions. Colonial topics attracted a great deal of attention (indeed were practically omnipresent) in Italy at the time of the First African War; and – of even greater significance – the colonial experience tended to be integrated in a national-popular rhetoric which took the place of the patriotic nationalism of the Risorgimento, transforming the myths, epics, language and values into a factor of cohesion for the newly unified nation. Finaldi concludes that the pervasiveness of colonial topics, images and memories played a decisive role in the construction of Italian identity: the colonial experience became the object not so much of propaganda but of a pedagogical program of nationalization designed to transcend class barriers and produce a major impact in terms of geographical, political and cultural integration.

We might start by observing that Finaldi focuses on a very limited time span: 1887 and thereabouts, rarely extending into the early 1890s, before Adowa. He concentrates above all on the reactions to the events at Dogali and the way in which this episode was at the center of an authentic process of myth-making designed to reverse its significance: from a terrible defeat at the hands of an African nation to the proof of military virtues able to resist the savage aggression of African barbarians. Furthermore this process drew on a whole series of myths – from the revival of the classical heritage to the civilizing mission in the name of progress – fostering Italy’s self-representation as a nation that could claim a place at the international table alongside the major imperial and colonial powers.

If there is little doubt that the celebratory and commemorative rhetoric concerning the defeat of Dogali drew on batteries of subjects and images with a highly nationalistic and patriotic flavor, and that these subjects and images featured largely and repeatedly in a whole range of minor textuality responding to popular sentiment, it is not so legitimate to go on to deduce the existence of a widespread ‘colonial culture’. It is hardly surprising that an episode like Dogali should have caused numerous manifestations of public hand-wringing and mourning, nor that a particularly painful colonial military experience should have been interiorised by associating it with the fundamental values of nationhood in a country engaged in consolidating its identity and infrastructures as
a state. What is striking is the intensity, transversal nature and social pervasiveness of manifestations of cultural awareness that took place on a large scale and with a singularly common focus. Yet nonetheless it has to be said that such repetitive and stereotyped forms of justificatory elaboration of the facts does not necessarily prove the existence of a ‘colonial culture’. And furthermore, the other side of the coin never gets a showing, meaning the amount of opposition, criticism, repugnance aroused by these events in a country that by and large was little inclined – if we are to believe the historians of Italian colonialism – to support a colonial policy seen as alien to the true interests of the nation. Anti-colonial pressure groups were to be found across the political spectrum, and they undoubtedly received a boost from the fatal events of the years spanning 1887 and 1896.

The image that emerges from Finaldi’s book of a nation taking comfort in certain foundation myths and a rhetoric designed to exalt the colonial experience is unquestionably rich and variegated, but nonetheless one-sided and unconvincing if, as I believe, ‘colonial culture’ has to be approached as a set of notions and forms of consciousness based not on mere celebratory rhetoric but on the information made available in the public domain, debates and capacity for argumentation. It is undoubtedly important to recognize, as Finaldi does, that there was a transversal ‘popular’ awareness able to formulate its feelings about a tragic African experience and to speak a language and elaborate images enabling that experience to be absorbed into the framework of national life. But this is only one aspect of the emotional reactions of a public opinion that cannot be said to have embraced those values unanimously; just as it cannot be denied that many of the ingredients detectable in the emotional internalization of the colonial experience did not by any means surface only between Dogali and Adowa, but had been circulating widely in a multiplicity of forms – in some cases with an undeniably ‘cultural’ nature – right from the pioneering years of the first travelers and apostles of expansion in East Africa in the late 1860s, such as Sapeto, Issel and Licata, who manifested a true conceptual elaboration of the colonial theme. To put it in a nutshell, no one would deny that the existence of an Italian ‘colonial culture’ is a crucial element in the history of Liberal Italy and in the process of national construction. But it is surely debatable whether its most significant manifestations can be identified in the rhetorical expressions that were solicited by a single, albeit undoubtedly important, episode. One is left with the impression that, for all the plethora of texts produced by Finaldi, Italian ‘colonial culture’ has to be sought elsewhere. In any case, at the end of the nineteenth century it remained a generally weak and relatively superficial phenomenon restricted to a few elite circles, reflecting the undeniably limited economic interests supporting a policy of military expansion in Africa in those years. The divisions in the political class, public opinion and social forces over the sense of a colonial future for Italy remained profound.
Historiography has invariably viewed Italian colonialism as reflecting policies that were factitious, modelled on foreign examples and imposed by those at the top of the hierarchy, in contrast with the thesis of “social imperialism” used by Hans Wehler to interpret the expansionist policy of Germany under Bismarck. According to Battaglia, Del Boca and Labanca, in Italy there was no proper colonial culture that could be deliberately fostered so as to mold public opinion and orient it toward colonial objectives that would reinforce the nation’s internal unity. Indeed, in the 1970s an even more radical interpretation took hold, with Romain Rainero as one of its leading exponents, that was to become virtually axiomatic. According to this view African questions were fundamentally unpopular and seen as an imposition on the part of a ruling class cut off from common sentiment in an Italy that was grappling with much more pressing problems than launching a colonial enterprise in Africa. The widespread existence of a grassroots “anti-African” sentiment was in fact common knowledge in the colonial era: one only has to think of Vico Mantegazza’s diatribes against an attitude portrayed as anti-patriotic and “philo-French”.\(^4\) Although Finaldi’s study adds elements of indubitable interest – starting from his perfectly justified call to establish what ‘colonial culture’ in Italy at the end of the nineteenth century really consisted in – which render this historiographical tradition considerably more nuanced, it does not seem to alter this interpretation in any substantial way.

Besides, it is surely rather difficult to speak of a ‘colonial culture’ while deliberately leaving out of the picture all those authors, venues, agents and means of communication which did indeed give expression to an authentic ‘colonial culture’, seeking to root it in the Italian society and to make it indeed a component of ‘nationalistic’ discourse. It would take too long to name all the politicians, scholars, men of letters, travelers, war correspondents, political commentators, merchant bankers, but between the launching of Italian expansionism and the Libyan war the list would include Giuseppe Sapeto, Manfredo Camperio, Giovan Battista Licata, Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, Guido Cora, Attilio Brunialti, Antonio Annoni, Pippo Vigoni, Vico Mantegazza, Felice Scheibler, Mario Morasso, Achille Bizzoni, Adolfo Rossi, Edoardo Scarfoglio, Alfredo Oriani, Mario Bassi, Gualtiero Castellini and Enrico Corradini. And then there are the journals, from Assab. Gazzetta italo-africana illustrata to the Rivista coloniale, which still await proper study. It was through the initiative of men like these, and many others who backed them up, that a ‘colonial culture’ began to form in Italy at the turn of the nineteenth century, being disseminated in parliament and the universities, the press, travel literature, fiction, war reporting, in historical, geographical, economic and juridical studies, and in commercial, trade fair and popularizing initiatives. It was

on this basis that, from the first years of the new century, Italian colonial discourse underwent important evolutions, taking on ever more aggressive tones of civilization, militarization and empire building.

What can the history of living colonial ethnic expositions in Italy add to this picture? First of all we have to point out that the relationship between colonialism and ethnic-colonial expositions should not be seen exclusively in terms of cause and effect. The great exhibitionary and performative productions featuring the colonial, exotic, African- and Oriental-style themes fulfilled a demand for spectacle, inducing curiosity and astonishment in the general public, and entertainment based on the exhibition of the unusual and the alien which went well beyond the contingent requisites of colonial policy, propaganda and ‘culture’. Those productions sought to fulfill an escapism, fascination with and subjective abandonment to the experience of the alien which surpassed any ideological or propagandistic objective. I do not mean that this did not also involve a complex discourse on the world as a whole. On the contrary, these productions were modelled on value hierarchies and precise ideas concerning ‘civilization’ and ‘progress’. But this type of discourse provided a world view rather than a political program, even if the world view in question was eminently suited to making the program convincing.

With this premise in mind, the history of Italian ethno-expositions can be seen to supply conclusions which limits the effectiveness of the political and cultural ‘colonial’ discourse. This is true in particular for the period that features in the documentation assembled by Finaldi, i.e. the close of the nineteenth century. And this appears to be the case even if there was an undeniable tendency – visible also with reference to the great expositions – to reinforce the colonial-imperial ideology, above all once, by the early years of the new century, the trauma of Adowa had begun to be assimilated, leaving scope for expansionist issues to be dressed up in all the pre-existing rhetoric that inevitably came to the fore at the time of dramatic and traumatic events like those of Dogali.

There is no doubt that the national and international expositions contributed, also in Italy and above all in the twentieth century, to formulating an idea of the nation dedicated to enterprises overseas. No one can deny that a ‘colonial culture’ can be identified in the adoption of the discursive and representative schemes of otherness that characterized the colonial and ethnic expositions. Inevitably these manifestations presupposed and enacted, in both initiatives and symbolic or linguistic expressions, a hierarchical relationship of material or immaterial domination over human, social and natural realities perceived as ‘alien’. Within this relationship the ‘other’ is automatically inferior, doomed to subjugation, subject to a power which derives not only and not necessarily from political or military conquest. The power which appropriates the ‘other’ also derives from a cultural gesture. It is expressed in linguistic and representative acts
of an “appropriative” nature, in “acts of supremacy”.5 It is, in fact, what can be called an “identity-generating narrative”.6

And yet, the question as to whether there existed an Italian ‘colonial culture’ that can be seen in the colonial and ethnic expositions and to which we can attribute a function of nationalization of the masses or creation of an “imagined community” cannot be answered with an unqualified affirmative. Certainly, such an objective was attempted by the architects of colonial propaganda. But we have to recognize that these attempts, particularly during the first thirty years of Italian colonial history, were ephemeral, sporadic, amateurish, belated, inadequate, of limited impact, incapable of enhancing, and being enhanced by, experiences of success in the field of battle, government and the exercise of power. And what is more, these attempts were constantly frustrated by political and military reverses and by the persistence of substantial sectors of public opinion which remained profoundly skeptical or defiantly contrary, as can easily be seen if one leafs through a daily newspaper such as L’Avanti! for the last decade of the century. Besides, the implausibility of any idea of ‘race’ underpinning the national ideology7 bears out the fact that in the culture of Liberal Italy there was no overtly racial and racist attitude which could have backed up the colonial enterprises, although undoubtedly the experience of the ethnic-colonial expositions reveals the presence of expressions of a racist nature, although more in the mouths of individual observers than as a form of ‘official’ ideology.

Things changed somewhat with the advent of the new century. In the build-up to the events in Libya more significant efforts were made, even though they were inevitably sporadic and temporary like the expositions, to confront the public with a more structured image of the Italian colonial world, as was the case in the manifestations for the 50th Anniversary of Italian unification in Turin. And yet, also in this different political and cultural climate, the historian is obliged to paint a picture full of shadows and nuances.

Alongside stylistic and lexical features which were overtly and authentically colonial-expansionist, linked to a reality of colonial or even racial domination, the Italian ethnic expositions staged complex representations of the exotic and the ‘Oriental’ which were in fact imported wholesale from France. Furthermore the persistence in public opinion of contradictory reactions, at times skeptical and indeed hostile toward the ethnic and human expositions – even though the same can be said also for European nations with a much more solid colonial-imperial vocation – makes it problematic to postulate colonialism and ‘colonial culture’ as a fundamental component of Italian national

---

identity. We have to remember that this identity was still encumbered by the presence in the country of serious economic, social, cultural and religious structural rifts which were far from being overcome. It is in fact hardly a coincidence if colonial and ethnic expositions were put on in Italy by such public organs as ministries and bureaucracies or business and economic associations, but never by a private business sector possessing the necessary specialization to undertake – financially but also culturally – such ethnic exhibitionary projects as those which could be admired in the great European expositions and indeed in the same Turin celebration of 1911.

II.

The second question I wish to touch on is the historical trajectory of the particular form of public spectacle represented by the ethno-expositions, questioning the thesis of their decline and possibly cessation and asking whether it may not be more correct to speak of their metamorphosis and, in the long term, survival, reproposal and hence continuity in post-colonial times.

The starting-point is what Nicola Labanca has affirmed in essays produced in collaboration with myself. With the advent of fascism, Labanca argues, the living ethnic expositions in Italy disappeared from the panorama of forms of communication and propaganda of a nation intent on transforming itself into an empire. Although I at first endorsed this interpretation, I have had second thoughts. Labanca is right to affirm that in the fascist era there continued to be an emphasis on propagandist spectacle, above all involving colonial topics, in order to reinforce the African dimension of the ‘greater Italy’ preached by the Duce and the Fascismo. But he believes that this involved a general renunciation of forms of human exposition. For example, the colonial exposition held in Turin in 1928 featured the traditional colonial villages, but Labanca sees them as mere remnants: “On close inspection, however, the African villages smacked of old, Liberal Italy, and of cheap exoticism”. Labanca asks “why progressively fewer Africans were seen in Fascist era colonial Italy, while the regime spoke increasingly of colonies”. He believes that this type of ethno-exposition was merely a relic from the past, incompatible with an atmosphere that was undergoing radical change. But in what way exactly?

In the first place, he maintains, a sort of “primary education in ethnography”, albeit still insufficient and incomplete, had made it less compelling for the regime’s subjects to

see for themselves and marvel at colonial and exotic villages. This was also the effect of the development of the mass media, the picture press, the cinema, and publicity techniques which were domesticating the image of the African. Then there was the increasing accessibility of colonial Africa, involving trips and tourism: the African in flesh and blood could be seen in his native environment, without the need for fake villages created in Europe. All this caused a “saturation of the Italian collective imagination” to which Labanca adds other elements. In the first place the lack of involvement in, or indeed attention to, the expositions on the part of Italian anthropologists, together with the discipline’s overall weakness, seen in its failure to undertake any scientific expeditions in Africa. In fact the really rather anaemic Italian colonialism simply did not have much to display, and the coup de grâce came in 1937 with the race laws. The sole exception, according to Labanca, were the conquered askaris and chieftains: these were the only examples of native bodies put on show, although he does not consider them comparable to the physical presence of Africans in the ethnic expositions. Yet immediately afterwards Labanca himself recalls the enormous effort that went into mounting the Overseas Exhibition (Mostra d’Oltremare) in 1940, above all for the recreation of African villages and environments complete with the physical presence of natives who were not just askaris and zaptiè.

No one could argue that the elements Labanca has highlighted are not true or authentic, but there is one concrete fact that has been left out of the picture. In fascist Italy the ethnic expositions maintained an incontestable continuity — 1928, 1930, 1936, 1940 — which appears to justify speaking of the transformation of the expositional discourse rather than the passing of the nineteenth-century forms of human exposition.

Besides, the elements that Labanca defines as characteristic of the late 1920s and the ‘30s were actually present in the closing years of the previous century, and in particular from the turn of the century onwards. The militarist and expansionist vocabulary, the imperial rhetoric of ‘Grande Italia’, the image of the civilizing nation, the representation of a colonial Africa under domination, the object of programs of civilization, and the material presence in Italy of African civilians and military personnel as tangible evidence of domination. In fact there seems to have been an intensification rather than a complete mutation in the discourses, also because, on closer inspection, Italy had never known the really brutal ‘human zoos’ found elsewhere in Europe, and had always preferred to mount its colonial expositions according to paternalistic and reformist schemes. Obviously this does not mean that the Italians were inherently ‘better’; simply that, right from the start, the Italian ethnic expositions were conceived primarily as a means of vindicating what was undeniably a weak colonial power, in order to boost a fragile economic initiative and build up the prospects for a civilizing and evangelising activity. Rather than featuring representations of Africa as a distant, savage and brutal continent,
preference had always gone to presenting reconstructions able to evoke processes of civilization set in motion by the munificent colonial power, emphasizing initiatives of integration in an imperial and colonial context and images of concord and brotherhood.

If, however, we extend the time span to arrive at the present, it is possible to identify numerous indications suggesting a profound continuity in the way in which the West has had recourse to and exploited the bodies of ‘others’ (non Europeans, non Westerners, non whites) by inserting them into various forms of “exhibitionary complex”. These are forms of reification that consist in the appropriation and control of the movement of physical bodies, setting them *within* and making them pass *through* multiple and alien contexts – from their own native realities to multiform stages designed for their exhibition. Fundamentally these bodies are exhibited not in a static condition but in movement and mutation: they are *moving bodies* because their situation, context and identity all change and because in this movement – in their propensity for a movement comprising transfer, gestures, postures, attitudes – lies the attribution of sense to which they are subjected. At the same time they are *moving bodies* also because their exhibition in the West has never been detached from the expression of forms of sympathy, compassion and humanitarian protest. They are in fact bodies artificially set in motion which are nonetheless able to trouble people’s consciences.

As I have argued elsewhere,\(^9\) appropriation, transfer, transport and exhibition of the bodies of ‘others’ endowed with skills and movements belong to the history of European encounters with human otherness from the very first, and have been perpetuated for a whole variety of reasons and goals down to the present. Surely it is not overstating matters to compare the first natives brought back from Mexico to Spain and Italy by Columbus and Cortéz and put on display for their physical, artistic and ‘sporting’ prowess to the many performers originating from Africa and Asia who appeared in, and in some respects invented, the ethnic show in Europe from the first half of the nineteenth century onwards, through to Josephine Baker, the Globe Trotters, and troupes of ethnic artists or family or tribal groups representing ‘exotic’ cultures or ethnic groups facing extinction in the context of expositions or cultural events featuring folklore or conservation. Of course one might object that there are great differences in terms of consensus or ability to exert an autonomous control of one’s body, in short of *agency*. Nonetheless, in all these ‘alien’ bodies in movement, transported and exhibited in the West, one can recognize the accumulation of extraneous meanings. Their movement is apparently autonomous and voluntary, but there is a layer of direction, re-collocation, re-definition.

---

of significance and identity, irrespective of the cause in the name of which meaning and identity are articulated, or of the verbal and gestural vocabulary of their description. These movements betray, and are governed by, a mechanism of expropriation which is manifested in the reification of the exposition events and the domination of those bodies, quite prosaically, at the hands of impresarios, agents, organizers and managers. These movements, whether in the exhibition venue or throughout the geographical space of the tour, are the immaterial envelope of a subjugation concealed behind the appearance of consensus: the scrutiny and applause of the public denote appropriation and depersonalization.

It is extraordinary to observe how the phenomenon of human exposition has persisted since the Second World War and into the twenty first century, recurring in a multiplicity of guises. It still exerts a remarkable attraction, not to say fascination, in the world of communications, entertainment and the experimental performing arts. One is obliged to conclude that there is a mechanism profoundly rooted in human behaviour which pursues the possession and reification of the body of the ‘other’. This mechanism is certainly responsible for such events as the so-called ‘human zoos’ or living human expositions and ethnic shows put on in Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But it appears to go on producing a broad range of acts, gestures, movements, inventions and productions which throng the current spheres of communications, art, entertainment, cultural dissemination and political action.

III.

The first evidence for this can be very easily found in an article on Wikipedia.fr which lists some most unexpected forms of “contemporary human zoos”.10 The examples given enable us to outline a history of the phenomenon which has clearly not yet come to an end. In fact we are obliged to view it in the long term and to seek deep-lying reasons, rooted in human nature, which govern our relations with the ‘other’ and determine hierarchies of superior and inferior, dominant and dominated, actor and acted.

The first exposition to be held in post-war Europe, the Brussels Expo of 1958, was planned as a celebration of the renewed concord between peoples, in the spirit of peace, well-being and development, with the promise of putting atomic energy to pacific uses. In this spectacular event, for which contemporary film footage11 shows swarming human

11 See for example the film by Pascal Legrand, Une visite à l’Expo 58 de Bruxelles, both parts accessible on YouTube, last accessed 1 June 2014, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9fZakfKI64 and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_USRYSri48A.
being conveyed by all sorts of means of transport to the various national pavilions, a substantial space was set aside for the Belgian Congo. In the relevant pavilion – boasting no less than seven exhibitions featuring various aspects of life in the colony – a Congolese village had been set up: exactly as in the previous universal expositions held in Belgium in 1885, 1894, 1897, 1910, 1913, 1930 and 1935, as if the clock had been put back. Complete with natives in flesh and blood, including watussi dancers from what was still (although not for long) a Belgian colony, the village stood as tangible evidence that European colonialism in Africa – in Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Congo, South Africa, Rhodesia – was still alive and well, conveniently excluding any hint of a crisis that by this time was in fact inexorable. Without making the slightest reference to the conflicts then in course between the Belgian colonialists and the hutu and tutsi ethnic groups, a version of the reality was coolly presented in a context of teeming and uncontainable exaltation of Western progress in the interests of a pacific reconversion of nuclear energy. However, the persistence of such a relic of the imperialist past in the years of post-war reconstruction could not fail to appear in strident contrast with events characterising the independence movements, revolts, wars of liberation and de-colonialization processes in progress in Africa. When word got around that the Africans in the village were being treated in a totally unacceptable manner, there were strong protests at the diplomatic level. The reports of visitors throwing bananas and peanuts to the villagers merely repeated what had gone on in practically all the “human zoos” during the previous hundred years; at the colonial exposition of Terveuren in 1897 it had been necessary to take official measures and put up a sign proclaiming: “It is forbidden to give food to the Blacks, they are properly fed”. The official complaints obliged the organizers to dismantle the village and repatriate the natives before the end of the Expo. But the positive effect of the protest actions does little to diminish our incredulity at the persistence of practices which one would have thought were a thing of the past, even though in his literary reconstruction of the episode Jonathan Coe has acutely identified the affinity with aspects, roles, figures and functions to be found in all the pavilions and, when it comes down to it, with the very essence of the Expo, conceived as a gigantic living ethno-exposition.


14 See the excerpt from Jonathan Coe quoted at the outset.
However, it would be a grave mistake to think that this episode in Brussels in 1958 marked the swansong of human ethno-expositions. A rapid overview shows that there have been many subsequent cases of expositions, albeit laying claim to ‘progressist’ and ‘humanitarian’ aims, behind which it is not difficult to recognize the sinister imprint of ‘human zoos’, and indeed some of which have actually been stigmatised as such by public opinion.

In 1994, for example, in a nature reserve called “Planète sauvage” at Port-Saint-Père, near Nantes in France, an African village was erected, based on an original in the Ivory Coast. Sponsored by a confectionery firm, it was styled “Bamboula Village” using the name of the biscuits it was designed to publicise (unwitting heirs of the “assabesi” created in 1884 by a Turin-based confectioner’s as souvenirs of the Africans displayed in the Turin Exposition of 1884). Some 25 men, women and children from the Ivory Coast were housed in the village and employed to perform dances and ceremonies in traditional costumes, and the public were not denied the cheap thrill of seeing young women dancing bare-breasted. The guidebook, printed in thousands of copies, betrays the organizers’ intentions, which were in no way different to those of the impresarios of ethno-expositions dating back a hundred years and more: “the Bamboula village, built by the people themselves, is protected by fetishes who defend the entrance to the sacred wood. This mud village with its round huts takes us to the heart of black Africa”.

In spite of the organizers’ assurances that the Africans were participating in the exposition on an entirely voluntary basis, and that an agreement stipulated with the Ivory Coast ministry for tourism ensured that they received fair treatment as employees under the ministry’s supervision, there were negative reactions at the level of public opinion, echoing the polemics that invariably accompanied this sort of initiative. In April 1994 L’Humanité carried the headline “Safari park transformed into a colonial exposition”, highlighting the continuity with ethno-expositional practices of a century earlier, asking indignantly whether in the dual spectacle consisting, on one hand, of Africans staging their own way of life in front of tourists, and on the other of spectators indulging in a “shocking voyeurism”, the clock was not being turned back to the era of the colonial expositions. A few days later the same newspaper gave vent to increasing indignation – once again without giving the scholar of ethno-expositions cause to raise an eyebrow. An article highlighted some aspects inviting criticism not only from the

humanitarian perspective but also in terms of labor laws: the onerous and underpaid nature of the work being done by the Africans in the village, the failure to ensure the security and welfare of minors, the lack of social security payments, the limitations on personal liberties. Of course the organizers were at pains to insist on the voluntary nature of the commitments and the fact that the individuals were to be considered as “artists”, not as workers, and were in any case being paid and safeguarded according to the laws of the Ivory Coast. In the end, however, the wave of protests, together with the campaign of awareness raising carried out by unions and humanitarian organizations, succeeded in leading, if not to the village’s closure, at least to the repatriation of the Africans. The whole episode was accompanied by a wide-ranging socio-anthropological and politico-juridical reflection concerning human rights. And in any case the affair came before the French Senate, with a question bearing on a “violation of human dignity” tabled, in May 1994, by the senator Marie-Claude Beaudeau: “in order to put an end to this type


of spectacle and ensure the respect of the French laws against racism, on the protection of minors, and the labor legislation”.18

We have to add that in his reply the French justice minister, while on one hand undertaking to verify the regularity of the Africans’ situation with respect to labor laws, with particular attention to the minors, on the other sought to play down the affair and replace in a normal framework what had after all been

a manifestation organised by the authorities of the Ivory Coast in the context of touristic and cultural exchanges with France in order to promote the image of the Ivory Coast in our country. The installation of this village was also decided in view of the institution of a new direct air link between Nantes and Abidjan.19

An episode that occurred some ten years later confronts us with another contemporary brand of living ethno-expositions, providing more evidence that the persistence of this type of initiative was no mere coincidence. In July 2002 eight Baaka pygmies from Cameroon were exhibited at Yvoir, in Belgium, in a park usually used for animal shows. Their presentation as an ethnic group under threat of extinction was ostensibly motivated by humanitarian concern for safeguarding human rights. Soon afterwards La Libre.be, online version of La Libre Belgique, published an article by the Belgian anthropologist Ariane Fradcourt with the title “Pygmées: du parc naturel au musée”.20 Having previously worked as ‘ethnographic consultant’ for a documentary made by Francis Dujardin entitled Boma-Tervuren. Le voyage (1999) featuring the exposition of 267 Congolese nationals at the Brussels World’s Fair of 1897,21 and Deputy director of the Service du Patrimoine Culturel et des Arts plastiques for the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, Fradcourt had no hesitation in denouncing “an exposition that is degrading for its primitive and animal-based references conveying a paternalistic naïvety with racist overtones”.


19 Beaudeau, “Atteinte au respect de la dignité humaine dans le parc Safari de Port-Père (Loire-Atlantique)”.


21 That the memory of “this barbarous and inhuman story” is still alive is seen for example in F. Duja, “267 Congolais dans un zoo humain à Bruxelles en 1897”, Afrochild.com, 1 février 2012, last accessed 1 June 2014, http://afrochild.wordpress.com/2012/02/01/267-congolais-dans-un-zoo-humain-a-bruxelles-en-1897-by-francois-duja, where one can also see, on YouTube, the whole film by Dujardin referred to in the text, last accessed 1 June 2014, http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=TkMOi_L2mVw.
An opinion campaign was organized to highlight the unacceptable material conditions, detrimental to human dignity, in which these human beings were kept. The Baaka pygmies from Cameroon, like those exhibited at Yvoir, summer 2002. Picture coming from the article by Hugues B. Seumo “Que sont devenus les pygmées Baka exposés dans un parc animalier en Belgique en été 2002?”, Prisma Canal International, 12 July 2007, blog indépendant animé et dirigé par Hugues B. Seumo, <http://prisma.canalblog.com/archives/2007/01/15/3694254.html>.

justifications adopted by the organizer strike a very familiar chord: the aims of the initiative were educational, humanitarian and promoting solidarity. Yet this betrays the evident incapacity to recognize what was bound to be the degrading significance of an exposition put on in a venue usually reserved for animal shows. Both the event itself and the violent reactions it provoked seem to revive past experiences. And the fact that on this occasion the initiative was undertaken by people responsible for humanitarian projects does not make it any less serious that once again we are confronted by a case of reification of human diversity as a spectacle.

In order to appreciate that this was not in fact an isolated episode, we can recall what had happened a year earlier, again in Belgium, when an NGO, with the backing of the Direction générale pour la Coopération internationale, put on a “live exposition featuring the Masai in the Domaine des Grottes de Han, in Wallonia”. Once again the declared intention was noble and untainted by any suggestion of economic exploitation. The aim was to foster reciprocal knowledge, tolerance, the encounter of different cultures and respect for diversity. There was certainly none of the ‘animalising’ tendency detectable in Hagenbeck’s business model. Indeed, there was an attempt to contrast negative stereotypes – savage Africa and the Masai as proud warriors, hunters of the savannah and drinkers of blood – replacing them with the true image “of real Masai who have come specially from Kenya” and an “authentic Masai village”, to the point of producing positive counter-stereotypes. However, the best intentions could not cancel out the profoundly ambiguous nature of a radically Euro-centric initiative in its claim to represent the “authentic Masai culture” and make this the object of conservation and ‘musealization’. And it went even further. This conservation project did not just concern the particular ethnic group it had chosen to adopt. It formed part of a more general project concerning the conservation of a supposedly authentic and pristine ‘nature’. In the name of so-called “ecological equilibrium”, the Masai culture was elected guarantor and custodian of this virtuous condition. This culture was charged with taking on direct responsibility for ensuring sustainable and compatible forms of ethno- and eco-tourism, which would in turn contribute to the welfare of the local culture: and tant pis if this culture was invoked not in its own terms but in subordination to something from outside, extraneous and superior. In a word, the operation involved formulating programs for the humanitarian protection of the Masai, education and awareness raising among white Western tourists, affirming ideas of what is natural, typical and sustainable, having recourse to expositional artifacts steeped in ethnocentrism, exoticism and Euro-centrism.\(^{23}\)

In another example of enduring bad practices, with aims which were certainly less noble, a living human exhibition was set up as part of an ethno-artistic multicultural festival. This case had at least the merit of stirring up “a wave of controversy that received widespread media coverage: a global protest developed”, fuelled by the rapidity of mass media and e-mail communication, “with concern voiced by African-German organizations, rights organizations, academic associations, a Nobel Prize winner, and concerned individuals from many countries”. The occasion was a festival of African culture held at the Augsburg zoo in July 2005. Several individuals were brought from all over Africa and put on show in a fake native village in order to give the public a “taste of Africa”. Not only did anti-racist campaigners, as in the Yvoire case, protest against what was readily perceived as a revival of the ill-famed Volkerschauen so popular in nineteenth-century Germany, but anthropologists from the Max Planck Institute actively intervened in the debate. After a four-day visit making an on-the-spot enquiry, they drafted a detailed report analyzing the event in all its complexities. They concluded that the initiative, irrespective of the organizers’ intentions, replicated practices dating back to the times of German colonialism and reproposed “images dating from those times [which] contribute to contemporary exoticizing, eroticizing or stereotyping of Africans and are sometimes promoted as multiculturalism”.

The Max Planck Institute researchers concluded that they had identified forms of “marketing of cultural difference” which could be considered “incentives toward racialization”; and ended their report with words of clear condemnation: “The racialization processes facilitated by the Augsburg zoo and other zoos are not benign because they can lay the groundwork for discrimination, barriers to social mobility, persecution, and repression”.24

Another variation on the living ethno-exhibition theme took place in a bizarre way at the London Zoo in August 2005. On that occasion, the purpose was didactic or, better, provocative. Paradoxically, the exhibition set out to display not otherness but common origins and identity. The protagonists were not exotic, colored savages. “Caged and barely clothed in a rocky enclosure, eight British men and women were on display beginning Friday behind a sign reading ‘Warning: Humans in their Natural Environment’”. According to the Zoo spokesman, live – white – humans were exhibited to teach zoo-goers that “the human is just another primate”.

One further example brings us to the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle. Here the “Masai Journey” exhibit, which opened in May 2007, was set up in the zoo’s permanent “African Savannah” featuring animals indigenous to the East African grasslands. An

---

“African Village” was built including four Masai men as “cultural interpreters”. In this case too academics stepped into a discussion of the initiative, relating it directly to the Augsburg precedent and keeping alive a debate on twenty-first century living human ethno-exhibitions, most remarkably with the direct participation of Masai cultural representatives and the very persons taking part in the show.  

A still more recent case took place at the Zoological Gardens in Eberswalde, Berlin, in June 2010. Organized by a humanitarian association, this event was planned as an initiative in favor of the San ethnic group, “the last surviving original people”, with the aim of facilitating their smooth integration into modern life. Once again the

---


organizers adopted modalities of ethnic exhibition which were remarkably similar to the mainstream tradition of the expositions, featuring craft objects and rudimental art works, dancing and music with drums and original musical instruments, fires, religious ceremonies and the preparation of typically African foods. All this relying on the self-congratulatory philosophy, again by no means new, that it was the interests of the African protagonists which were paramount, being the first to benefit from it.

There are other examples of how the form of the living ethno-exposition has taken on a new lease of life even without such rallying calls as protection of ethnic groups facing extinction, of human rights threatened or denied, or of authentic cultures to be preserved. Instead the watchword for these initiatives has been the Western idea of ‘biodiversity’ and programs of environmental safeguarding and cultural conservation implemented by agencies and organizations like the Italian “Slow Food”. When it came to promoting traditional agricultural crops in certain regions of Africa (known as “A thousand market gardens in Africa”) in the most recent in a series of trade fairs entitled “Terra Madre”, the organizers felt obliged to exhibit representatives of the ethnic peoples in flesh and blood. For all the obvious differences with respect to the traditional ethno-expositional practices, surely we are not very far here from the missionary ethno-expositions, where clever natives capable of absorbing the instruction imparted by Europeans and of participating in a process of acculturation according to Western criteria were seen giving a public demonstration of the skills they had acquired and of their successful integration into the process of Christian civilization.

One also has to ask whether the survival of human ethno-expositions in today’s world is in fact a prerogative – even an exclusive heritage – of the European or Western community. There is some evidence suggesting that it is not, which obliges us to consider either that practices which had been invented by Europeans were assimilated and reproduced further afield or, perhaps more probably, that there exist deeper impulses which, superseding any temporal or cultural limits, inevitably force any form of power, domination or indeed business practice to subjugate, enslave and depersonalize the individual. The examples we have come across show that, in an era of mass Western tourism to exotic locations, ethno-expositions show no sign of disappearing: at most they are perhaps changing in nature. Their perpetuation is not only a matter, in Europe, of the forms we have recalled above, linked to humanitarian and eco-ethno-conservationist initiatives. They can also be reproposed, with modalities that are no less crude, precisely in those non European countries which represent the favored exotic, tropical or primitivistic locations. They reflect a tourism rich in voyeuristic impulses which do not in fact appear to have exclusively Western connotations, the heritage perhaps of an indomitable colonialism, but which seems to derive from more profound instincts.
In Thailand in November 2007, for example, women belonging to the northern ethnic group of the Karen Padaung, comprising refugees who had fled Burma in the 1980s, were put on display by Thai businessmen in a commercial show. The audience was supplied by tourist organizers and is likely to have been largely, but not exclusively, European, while the impresarios in this commercial venture were Asian. The main attraction was the physical peculiarity of the ‘long necks’, due to the traditional Padaung practice of procuring abnormally long necks in their womenfolk by the application of rings. In this case too some exponents of public opinion, but also the “Long Neck Padaung” women themselves, protested at the exploitation to which they were subjected in the villages, being forced to undergo an authentic internment in what was explicitly referred to as a “human zoo”. In spite of the public protests and even the intervention of the UN refugees agency, the economic interests at stake ensured that even in subsequent years highly debatable forms of ethno-expositional tourism continued which evidently had positive spin-offs for the local economy.

At the same time, in other parts of the world there have been other examples of living ethno-expositional practices. At a pan-African Music Festival in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, July 2007, a group of twenty pygmy artists, including ten women and a three-month-old baby, were given one tent to share in the city’s zoo instead of hotel accommodation like all the other guest artists. Here, as they went about preparing fires and cooking their meals, they became a visitor attraction. “They are used to living in close contact with nature” was the official reply to the protests of civil rights militants, and “the organizers say the grounds of Brazzaville zoo are closer to the pygmies’ natural habitat”. In fact a pan-African cultural event failed to safeguard minority ethnic groups against exactly the kind of abuse they suffered at the hands of Western science and show business.

This kind of story can conjure up further developments and variants which may seem surprising, but are not for the scholar of ethno-expositions familiar with the great range of individual behaviour associated with these expositions, above all when it is a question of the re-appropriation of subjectivity by the humans who are exhibited and reified. In May 2008 the African independent news agency Afrol News reported initiatives by African national park administrators in Congo, Cameroon and the Central African Republic designed to provide supplementary revenue sources for marginalized human groups like Baaka pygmies. The pygmies were induced to undertake income-generating activities in the context of ecotourism projects, as tourist guides and native arts performers, becoming involved in ethno-cultural conservation schemes with native

---


empowerment as a collateral benefit. Actually of course the natives’ indigence begs the question of consent, and it would be hard to deny that these are contemporary, postcolonial forms of recruiting “professional savages” under the direction, in this case, of African rather than European impresarios and managers.29

A final example brings us up to the present. At the beginning of 2012 a press campaign which immediately found an echo on the Internet, becoming a global issue, denounced episodes that could be identified without hesitation with the typology of ‘human zoos’ in their most brutal guise but whose scenario – as we have already had occasion to remark – were not the European metropolises with their florid universal expositions, nor were they staged for a public of exclusively white spectators, but were set in tropical forests and were visited by people coming from all over the world. The event involved the tribe of the Jarawas, natives of the Andaman Islands in the Indian Ocean, under Indian rule. The Jarawas are an *adivasi* population technically classified as “Negritos” reduced to a few hundred individuals descending from an African ethnic group which inhabited these islands for millennia. However, as a consequence above all of the construction of a road system in the 1970s, contact between the Jarawas and tourists has become much more common, thanks to private tourist operators of various nationalities. In 2008 the Indian government had to adopt measures to safeguard the aborigines, prohibiting vehicle traffic and direct contacts in the settlement zones which are home to the few surviving Jarawas. In spite of these measures, mass arrivals of tourists continued, driven by the interests of the private companies, until in 2012 a news story hit the headlines. It featured a video taken by a tourist showing half-naked Jarawa women being persuaded by tourists in a Jeep to dance with the inducement of food and other offerings in what was actually styled not just a ‘human zoo’ but a “human safari”.  

There were of course notices such as “Don’t give any eatables to the Jarawas”, “Don’t indulge in photography, videography. Otherwise you will be liable for legal action, including seizure of camera”, but they obviously had no effect whatsoever. The local police were not only disposed to turn a blind eye but actually participated in the activities of the local organizers, and columns of vehicles were allowed to enter the settlement zones, with hundreds of tourists not only photographing and videoing the Jarawas but treating them like animals on display and curiosities, exactly as had occurred for decades in the ‘human zoos’ in the European expositions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. What makes episodes of this type particularly intolerable is the fact that for some time now the Jarawas – like many other aboriginal ethnic groups in various parts of the world – have been at the center of debates and initiatives aimed at safeguarding their culture and pursuing all possible modalities of a gradual and balanced coexistence with a society subject to the pressing solicitations of globalization.


I would like to conclude by referring to some contemporary cases of intersection between living human ethno-exhibitions and experimental performing arts. These examples show how the historical experiences of exhibiting the human body as something ‘savage’ and ‘diverse’ continue to inspire present-day artists and installation makers, suggesting a post-colonial critical re-visiting of such vestiges of the colonial world.

The first example is the traveling performance conceived and realized by Cuban-American artist, writer and academic Coco Fusco with Guillermo Gómez-Peña in a direct and explicit reference to the forms of public exhibition of savages. In *The Couple in the Cage: Guatianaui Odyssey* (1993) Fusco and Gómez-Peña exhibited themselves in a public, open-air show as caged Amerindians from an imaginary island. This dumb show, ostensibly featuring caged savage bodies, turned out to be a provocative experience between fiction and reality. The artists’ intent was to elaborate a satirical and critical commentary on the way human beings’ bodies have been treated in history as mere objects of curiosity. It was an ironic re-enactment of the imperialist practice of displaying indigenous peoples in public venues. But the street performances in North America and Europe unexpectedly made clear how many viewers misunderstood the fiction and believed the artists were real ‘savages’, giving vent to reactions ranging from curiosity and interest to wonder and overt disapproval.32

The second example consists in a series of interesting installations conceived and mounted by Brett Bailey, South African playwright, designer, director, installation maker, author of iconoclastic performances which interrogate the dynamics of the post-colonial world. “Exhibit A” and “Exhibit B” are part of the *Exhibit Series* produced between 2012 and 2013 consisting of a series of composite *tableaux* or scenes such as “Trophies of Eden”, “A Place in the Sun”, “Dr Fischer’s Cabinet of Curiosities” and “The Enlightenment”. The latter features Angelo Soliman (1721-1796), who was brought as a slave from Nigeria to Vienna where he became a courtier and confidant of Maria Theresa and Emperor Joseph II.33 At the height of the ‘Age of Enlightenment’ his social ascent, secured by his exceptional intellectual gifts, did not save him, on his death, from ending up as an exhibit in a cabinet of natural wonders. Two centuries on, an actor lying motionless plays Soliman’s corpse in period dress. In fact Bailey stages museum-style installations of living models in static poses designed to highlight the troubled history


33 Abbattista, *Umanità in mostra*, 69 and 414.
of European colonialism in Africa. As fellow South-African Anton Krueger, teacher of performance studies and creative writing, states:

These productions replicate and parody ethnographic spectacles of the nineteenth century, interrogating European colonial atrocities in Africa, as well as contemporary xenophobia. They consist of a series of installations housed in individual rooms that audience members enter one by one. Inside these rooms one is confronted by beautifully arranged spectacles referencing historical atrocities committed in Namibia by German speaking peoples, as well as atrocities under the Belgian and French colonial regimes in the two Congos. The ‘exhibits’ also include references to more recent incidents of European racism against migrants from Africa. The work has been both applauded and derided. In Berlin, for example, activists called it ‘a human zoo’ and protested that this was ‘the wrong way to discuss a violent colonial history’, while others have called the work ‘haunting’, praising the production for its ‘dignity’ and ‘beauty’.34

The outbursts from the general public against what were seen not as forms of art but rather as actual re-enactments of living human exhibitions prove the highly controversial nature of practices that, far from being confined to distant memory, are still capable of arousing emotions, protests and repugnance even if re-interpreted in a critical or ironical outlook – or when, as some critics have it, forcibly reproduced by white Western art directors giving orders to voiceless black actors.

To the highly controversial, contradictory, multi-faceted exhibitionary phenomena like the ones recalled here, I would like to add a final one, which is particularly apt to demonstrate how the several forms and variations of such phenomena can offer inspiration to the witty, creative vision of film-makers. The case I am alluding to is

Australian film-maker Dennis O’Rourke’s (1945-2013) documentary *Cannibal Tours* (1988), a very provocative and disturbing satire of the commercial group tour up the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea by German, Italian, and American tourists, taken as an original example of double-meaning and bi-directional living human exhibition ‘on the spot’.\(^{36}\) This episode is particularly interesting as it shows all the infatuations, ambiguities and voluntary self-exposition to deceit on the part of white, bourgeois, well-to-do Western mass tourism. The protagonists of this film are the more recent examples of the classic category of European visitors overseas under the form of the so-called ‘Third World tourism’, the twentieth-century version of human ethno-exhibitions

---

organized not on European soil, but directly in the exotic and savage territories of uncivilized peoples. Emotions are guaranteed when the case in point is not just ‘Western tourism’ overseas, but properly speaking ‘Cannibal tourism’, that is to say when the objects of observation are the pretended remnant of cannibalism, even if such a practice has been banned and does not survive in pacified New Guinea. But, in the words of anthropologist Edward Bruner, the tourists are there for being induced to believe. They are conscious actors of an exhibition of which they are integral part:

They seek the titillation of a vicarious brush with danger. They want to see first-hand the ultimate savage Other, with penis sheath, painted face, and spear, but only from the secure and safe vantage point of luxury tourism, and only after the disappearance of the original object. Tourism prefers the reconstructed object, and indeed, this preference for the simulacrum is the essence of postmodern tourism, where the copy is more than the original.37

Dennis O’Rourke’s documentary has re-enacted the exhibition exploring all the ambiguities of a showing off where tourists and native peoples share the script as explicit negotiators of the event.

All the stories related here are as many confirmations that not only racial, but more generally human inequalities tend everywhere to exert their influence and power through the control and manipulation of the human body. It does not matter if the final results are social practices or artistic expressions, or whether the intention is not visual and commercial exploitation but denunciation and satire. The human body and human life are still treated as objects of appropriation. When the physical bodies of human beings are set in motion under others’ control and direction, transferred elsewhere and offered up to the curious, greedy or voyeuristic sight of ‘others’, the setting may be an exhibition, a festival, a reserve, a theater, the cinema or TV: in every case the spectre of the living ethno-exhibitions, with sinister throwbacks to ‘human zoos’, rises up cruelly with a mocking sneer.*


* This text has been translated from the Italian original by Mark Weir, whom I would like to thank.
Leonardo Buonomo

*Showing the World: Chicago’s Columbian Exposition in American Writing*

This essay examines a representative sample of the substantial body of writing which emerged from Chicago’s 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition. This compelling literary legacy is one aspect of that otherwise widely studied event that has so far received only scant critical attention. It is the author’s belief that through a close reading of these texts we can gain precious insights into a defining moment of the American experience, one that signaled the emergence of the United States as a major player on the international stage. The writers under consideration – ranging from canonical (William Dean Howells), to popular (Frances Hodgson Burnett), minor (Julian Hawthorne), and forgotten (Clara Louise Burnham) – had recourse to different literary genres, approaches, and registers to recreate, and comment on, the ways in which the United States presented itself to the world and how it interacted with, and responded to, the foreign delegations participating in the exposition. Although varying greatly from one another in terms of style, scope, and ambition, these works all testify quite eloquently to the significance of the Columbian Exposition as an occasion for national soul-searching and identity construction. They are illuminating interpretations of a crucial phase in American history, one marked by unresolved racial tension (the dark heritage of the Civil War) and massive foreign immigration, when the United States was endeavoring to come to terms with its new role as a political, economic, and cultural power.
This chapter examines the role African Americans had in the 1900 Paris Exposition. It focuses on “The American Negro Exhibit”, set up by prominent African American activists and intellectuals, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington and Thomas J. Calloway, in order to represent the progress and achievements of blacks in the U.S. in the three decades following the end of the Civil War. Based on research carried out in the Daniel Murray Pamphlet Collection and the Booker T. Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, the Archives Nationales and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, this chapter highlights the ways in which the 1900 Paris Exposition became a way for African Americans of challenging the forms of racism against blacks and colonized people carried out in the so-called “native villages”, and more broadly in society, and establish new forms of solidarity and political activism, domestically and internationally.

At the World’s Columbian Exposition, held in 1893 in Chicago, African Americans had already criticized the U.S. government for denying them fair representations, through the pamphlet, The Reason why the Colored American is not in the World’s Columbian Exposition. In 1900, they demanded the right to be assigned a space where to set up “an exhibit of the progress of the American negroes in education and industry”. “The American Negro Exhibit” presented African Americans’ success in education, literature, industry and commerce, by making wide use of photography, charts and graphs. Its main aim was to challenge the idea that African Americans were “a mass of rapists, ready to attack every white woman exposed, and a drug in civilized society”, and highlighted the achievements of the so-called New Negroes. The images showed middle-class, respectable urban blacks, members of a generation that had not experienced slavery, while at the same time emphasizing the emergence of new forms of racism and violence in the South.

“The American Negro Exhibit” served as a turning point in the history of African American activism. Indeed, in the context of the 1900 Paris Exposition, Washington and Du Bois grew further apart, offering profoundly different understandings of race relations in the U.S. and globally. On the one hand, Washington advanced the idea that the forms of racial integration promoted by the Tuskegee Institute should serve as a model for African colonies, uplifting Africans through work and discipline. On the other hand, in one of the plates displayed at the exhibition, Du Bois introduced the notion that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line”, a statement he later presented at the First Pan-African Conference, held in London in July 1900. For both leaders, the 1900 Paris Exposition allowed for the establishment of
new transnational alliances with activists in Europe and Africa, which flourished after the First World War.

Elisabetta Vezzosi

*The International Strategy of African American Women at the Columbian Exposition and Its Legacy: Pan-Africanism, Decolonization and Human Rights*

The essay focuses on the international activism of African American women between 1893 and 1960 identifying it as an essential area of study, calling for the *longue durée* and stressing the importance of the presence of African American women at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago for understanding the origins of that activism and reconstructing political networks that would endure many decades.

It seeks to respond at least in part to some critical questions: how did African American women use Pan-Africanism as a resource in their battle for racial progress and gender equality? What roles did these women play in the various Pan-African movements? To what extent could they hold leadership positions within these movements, at least during certain phases?

To do this it analyzes the foreign policy views of different African American Women associations – the National Association of Colored Women, the International Council of Women of the Darker Races, the National Council of Negro Women – and the political experience of many of their leaders.

The participation of African American women in universal expositions, especially the one in Chicago in 1893, has rarely been explored from the perspective of Pan-Africanism. Yet this context can reveal much about the life experiences that interwove with international ideas and public speeches and brought together women’s rights, the creation of a global community of the ‘darker races’, anticolonialism, peace, social justice and human rights.

Roberta Gefter Wondrich

*Exhibitionary Forms in Ireland: James Joyce’s Exhibits of Irish Modernity*

The Great Exhibition of 1851 marked the beginning of a bond between capitalism, consumer culture, the emergent advertising and the imperial ideology of England that would consolidate its hold not only economically but semiotically well into the early twentieth century. Within the new ‘scopic’ sense of the Empire promoted by the
Abstracts

International Exhibitions in the British context, the specificity of Ireland as internal colony and emancipating nation is worth considering.

The 1907 Dublin International Exhibition, in spite of its success, failed to elicit a strong interest on the part of Irish artists and intellectuals, at a peak time in the history of cultural nationalism championed by the Celtic Revival movement, with the two notable exceptions of novelist Bram Stoker and, to a lesser degree, of playwright John Millington Synge. The first part of the essay considers the cultural implications of the expositions in Ireland and the 1907 Dublin Exhibition in the light of the defining trope of the core-periphery relationship. The second and main part of this study focuses on what appears to be one of the most interesting and articulate textualizations of the “exhibitionary complex” in Irish – and English – literary culture, which should rather be ascribed, it is my contention, to the work of James Joyce, notably in Dubliners and Ulysses. This applies to the distinctively Irish minor expository form of the (Orientalist) bazaar (the Araby and Mirus bazaars, respectively in Dubliners and Ulysses), the phantasmagoria of commodity culture, the ubiquity and the spectacle of the imported colonial commodities as an instance of cultural imperialism, the consumption of Orientalist images as an escapist rather than imperialist fantasy, the nexus between the ephemeral expository space and erotic degradation, the museum (“Lestrygonians”), the press and advertising (“Aeolus”), the monumental apparatus of the city (“Wandering Rocks”), the Victorian seaside resort indirectly evoked as a sexualized space of leisure (“Nausicaa”), the pageant of colonial Ireland’s efforts of technical and scientific progress satirised in “Ithaca”, and, finally, the very idea of the modern city as exhibition.

Maria Carolina Foi
Wiener Weltausstellung 1873. A ‘Peripheral’ Perspective of the Triester Zeitung

A consideration of the phenomenon of international exhibitions in the political and cultural history of central-European powers as opposed to the models represented by the London and Paris great exhibitions offers relevant insights into this topic. The Exposition organized in Vienna in 1873 – the first in the German language area – should be studied in the light of the strategic urgency which impelled the Habsburg Empire to fashion or redefine a representation of its multinational formation, in the wake of the military defeats it suffered on the French-Piedmont and Prussian fronts. As will become apparent in the later Berlin exhibition of 1879, the Wiener Weltausstellung already makes clear its desire to exhibit the network of global relations in which the central-European Empires were also trying to gain prominence, despite the essential irrelevance of their extra-European colonial enterprise, as compared to British and French imperialist ventures.
The essay comprises a critical reassessment of the existing historiographies specifically devoted to the Viennese Exposition (the most significant of which dates to 1989), to be revised in the light of updated interpretive paradigms, and a further analysis which aims at a first systematic taxonomy of the most significant literary and journalistic echoes of this first central-European Weltausstellung. More specifically, the investigation will focus on the hundreds of articles, correspondence and notes which appeared in the Triester Zeitung, the principal newspaper in German in Habsburg Trieste. These textual sources have not as yet received scholarly attention and they make it possible to investigate the reception of the Exhibition within the geographical and cultural context of the multilingual and multicultural port of Trieste which, despite its peripheral position, was, nonetheless, of primary strategic importance to the central Austrian government.

Sergia Adamo

*Dancing for the World: Articulating the National and the Global in the Ballo Excelsior’s Kitsch Imagination*

In the multifarious complexity of discourses opened up by nineteenth century world exhibitions the role of the moving body has a relevance that still deserves to be investigated. In this realm, dance performances of different types stand out as significant moments that not only often accompanied the success and marked the memory of specific exhibitions; they also constructed and reproduced a particular kind of discursivity that lies at the core of the whole world exhibitions “phantasmagoria of capitalist culture” (Benjamin). Among others, the Italian Ballo Excelsior, which premiered in Milan in 1881, is one of the most significant cases, a great global success aimed at spreading the ideology of ‘progress and civilization’ first to the Italian newborn nation and then all over the world. It somehow anticipated the First National Exhibition, introducing the audiences not only to its ideological stances, but also to the forms of reception and perception the exhibition would impose. The essay traces, first of all, the link with the 1881 Milan exhibition, reconstructing the circumstances of the first staging of the ballet and its national reception. Then, the nexus between the ballet’s aesthetic and ideological features is analyzed, both from the specific point of view of dance history and from the broader perspective of cultural studies, also discussing the definition of ‘kitsch’ aesthetics, often mentioned in relation to this work. Thereafter, the essay looks at the global success the ballet had in the years to follow, highlighting the changes it underwent, both at an ideological and formal level, in order to meet the expectations of this new dimension through an articulation of the national and the global. Finally, it proposes some reflections on how this articulation is also an imagination of a
framed diversity, an artifact whose structure frames otherness into a phantasmagoric construction, something which deeply characterizes the kind of Western discursivity world exhibitions are a part of.

Matteo Pretelli
*Italian Migrants in Italian Exhibitions from Fascism to the Early Republic*

Between the 1880s and the outbreak of WWI, Italy experienced an outflow of 13 million migrants who settled in particular in Europe and the Americas. This movement started a couple of decades after the national unification of the country in 1861. In addition, from the late 1800s Italy became a colonial power through penetration into the Horn of Africa and later a full annexation of Eritrea and Somalia, Libya in 1912, and Ethiopia in 1936, the year of proclamation of Mussolini’s empire.

From the time of national unity onwards, Italy became part of an international scenario in which the European powers and the United States organised their own national exhibitions, or took part in international fairs where national pavilions raced to affirm each country’s particular economic and nationalist achievements. Late 1800 Italian exhibitions proved to instill a sense of national belonging that was traditionally lacking in the Italian population since Italy had always functioned as a collection of small- to medium-size states.

A small number of scholars has studied how Italian migration has been portrayed in national exhibitions during the liberal era of Italy’s history (1861-1922), but these same scholars have not as yet undertaken a thorough analysis of the fascist period (1922-1943) and the early postwar period, when Italy moved from a dictatorship to a republican political system. Based on an intensive study of primary sources and taking into account certain major national exhibitions — specifically the 1932 Exhibition of Fascist Revolution, organised for the celebration of fascist takeover of power; the 1940 Exhibition of Italian Overseas Lands; the plans for 1942 Rome World’s Fair (never held because of the outbreak of WWII); the 1952 Exhibition of Overseas and Italian Labor in the World —, and even relating to the participation of Italy to main international exhibitions such as the 1939 New York World’s Fair, this essay aims to answer the following questions: what role did Italians outside of Italy have in national exhibitions promoted in Italy by the fascist regime? Were these Italians conceived of as part of a process of fascist nation-building and construction of a totalitarian state? After the proclamation of the Italian empire in the Horn of Africa in 1936, what role did Italians abroad - including both migrants in foreign countries and settlers in Italian colonies - play in events like the Exhibition of Italian Overseas Lands held in Naples in 1940, or
in the plans for the 1942 World’s Fair in Rome? Lastly, after the collapse of the fascist regime, the end of WWII, and return of Italy to a democratic political system how did the perception of Italians outside of Italy change at the 1952 reopening of the Neapolitan exhibition now renamed as the Exhibition of Overseas and Italian Labor in the World? Did Naples’ new exhibition experience fractures or similarities with former events organised under Benito Mussolini’s dictatorship?

All in all this essay aims to reconstruct the depiction of Italian migrants outside Italy in the context of national exhibitions in the crucial period of recent Italian history of the fascist age, WWII, and the period of transition to the new republican system.

Anna Zoppellari

*The Painting and Writing of Gustave Guillaumet*

The article analyzes the orientalist work of Gustave Guillaumet, by means of exhibition of the world similar to that which was implemented in the great nineteenth-century exhibitions. The journalist-painter tends to construct a labyrinthine space, in which the North African reality is exhibited according to realistic aesthetic codes, but with fundamentally colonialist ideological objectives. The narration of the Great 1867 Exposition is inscribed in this view. To this, Guillaumet dedicated one of his articles originally published in the *Nouvelle Revue* and then merged into the posthumous volume, *Tableaux algériens* (1888).

Cristiana Baldazzi

*The Arabs in the Mirror: Stories and Travel Diaries relating to the Universal Expositions in Paris (1867, 1889, 1900)*

The Paris Universal Expositions of 1867, 1889 and 1900 turned out to be such a far-reaching event that it involved the Orient itself. There were numerous illustrious Arabs and intellectuals who did not want to miss the unique opportunity of visiting these exhibitions. Many of the Arab intellectuals in question left first-hand accounts of their experience. These nineteenth-century works, which we can insert into the category of travel literature, revisit and re-enact the tradition of the *riḥla* (journey) according to the new needs of Arab society. Modulated according to the universal structure of the journey – departure, transit, arrival –, the texts highlight the various modes by which an encounter with the ‘other’ came about and contributed to forming the consciousness of a collective identity. The Exposition, therefore, as a destination for the Arab traveler – a
traveler who, in this abstract and transient ‘place’, lives a dual experience, enraptured, on the one hand, by the phantasmagoric atmosphere of the event, and on the other, fascinated by the ephemeral aspect of the representation that it gives of his country – arouses a certain ‘effect of estrangement’ which, however, soon dissolves like the pavilions of the Exposition itself, to leave room for the dominant view which is the image that the West was constructing of the East.

Guido Abbattista

*Humans on Display: Reflecting on National Identity and the Enduring Practice of Living Human Exhibitions*

The study of living ethnic expositions in Italy in the nineteenth and twentieth century allows some additional considerations on two main questions: the contributions of such cultural phenomena to the creation of a colonial culture in Italy; and their continuity in modified and adapted forms whereas current interpretations acknowledge their lesser recurrence and relevance in periods of time marked by globalization and dramatic media revolutions. The first point is analyzed with reference to the most recent historiography. With regard to this the A. criticizes G. M. Finaldi’s 2009 thesis on the pervasiveness of a mass colonial sensitivity in late nineteenth-century Italy on the basis of his comparative studies on Italian and European living ethnic expositions and spectacles. These cultural phenomena in the last decades of nineteenth-century Italy reveal weakness, superficiality, improvisation and amateurish character especially if compared to analogous events in France and Germany, with respect to which the Italian cases do not show comparable racist features. Only on the eve of the Italian-Turkish War of 1911-1912 Italian colonialism and its social-cultural expressions assumed very aggressive nationalistic, expansionist and increasingly racist tones. This was the consequence, since the beginning of the twentieth century and the resumption of Italian colonial programs in Africa after the Adowa disaster in 1896, of the growth of a properly speaking colonial culture, with the birth of colonial societies and institutes, the development of colonial socio-economic, geographical, statistical disciplines and of a scientific anthropological interest in the study of submitted African peoples. These developments had consequences also on the particular way the living exhibition of human colonial diversity continued to occur, making those practices an occasion for publicising not an image of radical and irreducible otherness, but rather a civilizing, assimilationist discourse. The second part of this contribution tackles the question whether the living human exhibitions disappeared in contemporary collective socio-cultural practices. It recalls several, recurring examples after WWII of what could be termed the visual perception of anthropological difference in...
support of discourses radically different from the typical ones of the age of colonialism and imperialism. The essay shows that the settings partly remained the same as previously, as in the 1958 Brussels Universal Exposition, and partly changed radically both in their physical locations and in their intended meanings. Several examples of different nature – from commercial publicity to ethno-ecological advocacy, from mass tourism to experimental performing arts – converge in giving support to the idea that all historical ages create and rest on, or remember and reproduce plural visual, or ‘optic’ regimes of representation of human (and cultural) differences, thus suggesting how the construction of (especially public) visual perceptions and representations directly derives from or just implies the exercise of physical submission and acts as a device for reducing to order and control the disturbing human diversities.
Notes on Contributors

Guido Abbattista is professor of Modern History, Global History and Methodology of Historical Research at the University of Trieste, Italy. He is a specialist of eighteenth-century intellectual and cultural history, particularly of the historiographical and political analysis of colonial expansion, empire and the anthropology of otherness. He has written extensively on eighteenth-nineteenth century British historical and political culture, the anthropology and historiography of the French Enlightenment, twentieth-century English historiography and, more recently, on the relationship between anthropology, visual experience and the representation of human diversity as seen through living ethnic exhibitions, displays and shows. He recently published a book on Humans on Exhibition. Ethnic Expositions and Exotic Inventions in Italy (1880–1940) (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2013). He is currently working on a project on “China in European eyes: a shift in interest and representations, 1750–1850”, part of a larger project on “Commerce, civilization and the liberty of the Moderns in a ‘long’ Enlightenment”.

Sergia Adamo teaches Comparative Literature and Literary Theory at the University of Trieste. She was Visiting Professor and Research Scholar at Cornell University (NY), Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt, among others. She has written and edited books and articles on intercultural relations and on literature and other cultural fields. She is currently editing, together with Stefano Tomassini, a volume on dance and literature in Italian culture.

Cristiana Baldazzi is Senior Lecturer in Arabic Language and Literature at the University of Trieste, Department of Humanities. Her research interests include: autobiographical literature (memoirs and diaries) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Palestine and Egypt with special reference to political history (parties and
associations) and social history (Il ruolo degli intellettuali arabi tra Impero Ottomano e Mandato: il caso della famiglia Zu’aytir 1872-1939, Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli, 2005); travel literature between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a specific focus on national identities and the process of modernization.

Elisabetta Bini is a Research Fellow at the University of Trieste. She received her Ph.D. in History from New York University and has been a Max Weber Postdoctoral Fellow at the European University Institute, and a Research Fellow at the University of Rome Tor Vergata. Her work focuses on the history of the Cold War, the history of decolonization, the history of consumer culture, and the history of feminist movements. She is currently working on a research project titled Between Oil and Nuclear Energy: the U.S. and Italy’s Energy Policies during the Cold War. Her publications include: La potente benzina italiana. Guerra fredda e consumi di massa tra Italia, Stati Uniti e Terzo mondo (1945-1973) (Rome: Carocci, 2013); “Selling Gasoline with a Smile: Gas Station Attendants between Italy, the United States and the Third World, 1945-1970”, International Labor and Working-Class History, 81 (2012): 69-93.

Leonardo Buonomo received his Ph.D. from the University of California, San Diego. He teaches American literature at the University of Trieste and is the President of the Italo-American Association of Friuli Venezia Giulia. He has published on nineteenth-century American literature, Italian-American literature, and American TV series. His most recent book is Immigration, Ethnicity, and Class in American Writing, 1830-1860: Reading the Stranger (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013).

Maria Carolina Foi, Full Professor of German literature, studied Law at the University of Padua and specialised in German literature at the University of Trieste. DAAD-Alumna; Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation Fellow; FRIAS External Senior Fellow. Her research interests focus mainly on the connections between Law and German literature (Heine, Schiller, Kleist, Grillparzer, Arendt, Broch). She has also analyzed the cultural themes of the great tradition of Middle European literature, focussing on the problems of identity metamorphoses in the early nineteenth century (Bahr, Literatur in the Habsburg Trieste). In 2013 she published a monograph on the political theater of Friedrich Schiller.
Roberta Gefter Wondrich is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Trieste, Department of Humanities. She received a Ph.D. in Anglophone literatures from the Universities of Bologna and Trieste, is managing editor of Prospero, Rivista di letterature e culture straniere – A Journal of foreign literatures and cultures – published by the University of Trieste Press, EUT. She has specialised in the field of Irish contemporary fiction, on which she has written a book (Romanzi contemporanei d’Irlanda, Trieste: Parnaso, 2000) and many articles. Her field of interests includes the contemporary English and Irish novel, James Joyce and J. M. Coetzee. At present she is researching on the motif of the cultural object, collecting and the museological imagination in some British postmodern novels, she is completing a study on object matter in Ulysses and has another essay on Joyce forthcoming in 2014.

Matteo Pretelli is Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures - Italian Studies at the University of Warwick. Formerly, he has been Fulbright Research Scholar at the University of Minnesota, Lecturer in Italian Studies at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, and Research Fellow in the Department of Humanities of the University of Trieste. He has published on topics such as Italian migration, Italy-United States relations, Italy’s cultural diplomacy, education in Italy’s colonies in Africa.

Elisabetta Vezzosi is Full Professor of United States History at the University of Trieste, where she teaches also Women’s and Gender History and coordinates the Inter-University (Trieste – Udine) Ph.D. program “History of Societies, Institutions and Thought. From Medieval to Contemporary History”.

She has been President of the Italian Society of Women Historian, vice-president of the Italian Association for North American Studies, and she is currently member of the executive board of the Italian Society for the Study of Contemporary History. She is member of the editorial board of the Italian journal of contemporary history Contemporanea.


The names in *italics* indicate geographical places, expositions, works from the literary, visual and performing arts, and newspapers and journals. Page numbers in *italics* indicate illustrations. Arabic names starting with the article (al-) are filed under the main element of the name, ignoring the article (e.g. ‘Umar al-Bāḡūrī is filed as Bāḡūrī, ‘Umar al-). World expositions, exhibitions and fairs are filed under Expositions, subheadings are arranged alphabetically by city and chronologically by year. Titles of literary and figurative works, newspapers and journals are arranged alphabetically, ignoring articles.
Ahmed A’ali (Aḥmad ‘Alī), 204
Ahrām, al- (The Pyramids), 222
Alabama, 53
Alexandra of Denmark, Queen of United Kingdom, 111
Alexandria, 224, 229, 230, 237
Algeria, 43, 108n65, 197, 198, 200-203, 205, 206, 209, 214, 234, 253
Alonge, Roberto, 164
Alps, 230
American Negro Exhibit. See under Expositions
Amor (Manzotti), 167n89, 171
Andaman Islands, 264
Anderson, Benedict, 146
Angola, 253
Annoni, Antonio, 246
Antwerp, 158
Arabia, 171
Arabian Nights, The, 231
Aran Islands, The (Synge), 98
‘Ard al-Baḍā’ī’ al-‘āmm bi-Barī sanat 1867. L’Exposition Universelle de 1867 (al-Ḥarā’irī), 223, 226, 227, 231
Argentina, 174, 175, 184
Aristotle, 241
Arlberg, 162
Armstrong, Isobel, 167n88
Asia, 43, 88, 152, 171, 194, 251. See also names of single countries
Askew, Thomas E., 52
Asmodeo, L’, 149, 150n22, 150n23, 153
Assab. Gazetta italo-africana illustrata, 246
Atlanta, 52, 55
‘Aṭṭār, Ḥasan al-, 217
Audenino, Patrizia, 173n, 175, 176
Augsburg, 259, 259n24, 260
Augustus, roman Emperor, 180
Australia, 174, 192
Austria, 99, 128, 134, 137, 140, 141
Austro-Hungarian Empire, 18, 122-125, 128-130, 135, 142, 276
Avanti!, L’, 248
Avrupa’dan bir Cevelan (A Tour in Europe, Ahmed Midhat), 215n11, 238n95
Azores, 80
B
Bağır, 218
 Ба̀гир, Ма̀хмуд ‘Умар аль-, 215, 218, 220, 224, 226, 227, 228н53, 229-231, 234, 235, 235н83, 239
Bahamas, 72
Bahr, Hermann, 142n70
Baker, Josephine, 251
Balch, Emily Greene, 80
Balkans, 142
Ballo Excelsior (Marenco and Manzotti), 18, 143-150, 150n22, 150н23, 152, 152н30, 153, 154, 155-172, 158н53, 159н59, 161, 162н70, 163н79, 166, 277
Ballsbridge (Dublin), 92, 102, 103, 110
Bandung, 88
Barcelona, 10, 158
Barfoot, Gabrielle, 121n1
Baritono, Raffaella, 86
Barnacle, Nora, 108
Barnett, Ferdinand Lee, 37
Barrett, Janie Porter, 76
Barrias, Félix-Joseph, 198
Barrier Williams, Frances (”Fannie”), 64, 70, 71, 76, 81
Barzaghi, Ilaria, 152
Bass, Charlotta Amanda, 85
Bassi, Mario, 246
Battaglia, Roberto, 246
Bayram V. See Muḥammad Bayram al-Ḥāmis
Beaudeau, Marie-Claude, 255
Beecher Stowe, Harriet, 37, 61
Belfast, 102

288
Belgian Congo, 241, 253, 266
Belgium, 83, 192, 253, 256, 258
Benedict, Burton, 89
Ben-Ghiat, Ruth, 243
Benin, 33
Béni-Ouassine, 205, 207
Béni-Snassen, 209
Benjamin, Walter, 118, 118n101, 144, 148, 277
Bennett, Tony, 11, 117, 144
Berkley, Bubsy, 168
Berlin, 77, 121, 124, 124n9, 158, 187, 260, 266, 276
Bermuda, 81
Bini, Elisabetta, 16
Bins, Paul. See de Saint-Victor
Biskra, 198
Bismarck, Otto von (Otto Eduard Leopold, Prince of Bismarck), 246
Bizzoni, Achille, 246
Blasis, Carlo, 164, 170
Bloom, Sol, 23,
Bocche di Cattaro (Bay of Kotor), 136
Boito, Arrigo, 153
Bologna, 158, 179
Bömches, Franz, 139
Bongiovanni, Lynne, 107n60
Bonservizi, Nicola, 179
Boone, Daniel, 22
Bosnia-Herzegovina, 142
Boston, 74, 81, 196
Boulard, Philippe, 234
Bourgade, François, 223, 223n34
Brasil, 184
Brassaville, 262
Brindisi, 230
Brinson, Peter, 165
Britain, 95n16, 151, 157, 170
British Empire, 89, 90, 96, 100, 275
British Somaliland, 98
Brown, Charlotte Hawkins, 76
Brown, Hallie Quinn, 70, 74-76, 78, 80
Bruce, Marcus, 53
Bruner, Edward M., 271
Brunialti, Attilio, 175, 246
Brusasca, Giuseppe, 192, 194, 195
Brussels, 10, 81, 158, 254, 256, 281
Budapest, 124, 140, 158
Buenos Aires, 158, 175, 177, 184
Buffalo, 39, 65, 159
Bunyan, John, 24, 26, 26n17
Buonomo, Leonardo, 16
Burma, 262
Burnett, Frances Hodgson, 21, 24-27, 25, 30, 273
Burnham, Clara Louise, 21, 30, 31, 273
Burnham, Daniel, 23, 28, 30
Burroughs, Nannie Helen, 76

C

Caboto, Giovanni, 186
Cairo, 27, 33, 101n36, 102, 216, 218, 222, 233, 234, 238, 239n97
California, 183
Calloway, James, 65
Calloway, Thomas J., 16, 39, 40, 47, 48, 51-53, 55, 58, 61, 64, 65, 274
Cameroon, 256, 257, 262
Cammarano, Giovanni, 161, 165n86, 166, 172
Camperio, Manfredo, 246
Camus, Albert, 209
Canazei, 230
Cannibal Tours (O’Rourke), 270, 270
Cape Town, 72
Caramba (Luigi Sapelli), 164n80
Carby, Hazel V., 75
Carlyle, Thomas, 229n55
Carson, Christopher (“Kit”), 22
Carter Mason, Vivian, 86
Casely-Hayford, Adelaide, 79
Casely-Hayford, Joseph, 79
Caserta, 224
Index

Castellini, Gualtiero, 246
Castle of Miramare, 230
Central African Republic, 262
Charleston, 39, 65
Chaudoreille, Augustin, 234
Chebbi, Moncef, 223, 223n31
Chicago, 16, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 43, 45, 63, 64, 67, 68, 70, 71, 75, 76, 79, 80, 93, 97, 102n37, 159, 169, 274, 275
Chicago Conservator, 37
China, 10, 77, 79, 83, 157, 170
Choreographic Art, The (van Praagh and Brinson), 165
Christiania, 218
Church Terrell, Mary, 71, 75-77, 79
Ciano, Gian Galeazzo, 181, 185
Cini, Vittorio, 183, 189
Civilisation des Arabes, La (Le Bon), 229n55
Coe, Jonathan, 242, 253
Coffey, Jean, 7
Cohen, Mrs., 110
Colla, family, 164n80
Colored American, 36, 61, 64
Columbus, Christopher, 22, 23, 186, 186n26, 251
Conmee, John, 111
Conservation of the Races, The (Du Bois), 58
Constantinople (Istanbul), 79, 130
Cook, Thomas, 226, 228
Cooper, Anna Julia, 62-64, 63n64, 70-76, 73, 81
Coppi, Carlo, 159
Coppini, Achille, 163
Coppini, brothers, 159
Coppini, Ettore, 159
Cora, Guido, 246
Cork, 91
Corradini, Enrico, 174, 246
Corriere della Sera, 111
Cortéz, Hernán, 251
Cosmopolitan, 28
Costa Rica, 83
Costello, Peter, 102n40
Côte d’Azur, 232
Couple in the Cage, The (Fusco and Gómez-Peña), 265, 266, 267
Courbet, Gustave, 209
Court of Honor (Chicago). See White City
Courney, Charles, 197
Crary, Jonathan, 168
Crockett, David, 22
Crumbling Idols (Garland), 28n22
Crummell, Alexander, 73
Csáky, Moritz, 121n1
Cuba, 45, 47, 74, 83, 85

D

Dahomey (African Kingdom of), 33
Daly, Nicholas, 98, 99
Damascus, 204
D’Annunzio, Gabriele, 193
Danube, 135
Danzer, Alphons, 139
D’Aronco, Raimondo, 97
Da Vinci, Leonardo, 196
De Amicis, Edmondo, 153, 155
Dean, Teresa, 34, 35, 36
Dean Howells, William, 21, 27, 273
Deane, Seamus, 100
Debord, Guy, 146
Découret-Ahiha, Anne, 169, 170
De Gasperi, Alcide, 191, 193
Delacroix, Eugène, 199
Del Boca, Angelo, 246
Della Coletta, Cristina, 144
Delort de Gléon, Alphonse, Baron, 233, 234
de Parente, Solomon, 132
de Pujol, Alexandre-Denis-Abel, 198
de Saint-Victor, Paul Bins, 197, 200
Désert, Le (Guillaumet). See Sahara, Le
Deutsche Zeitung, 130
de Vertot, René Aubert, 241
Dīb, Muṣṭafā al-, 234, 235
Dickerson, Addie Whiteman, 78, 81, 82
*Dictionnaire des idées reçues* (Flaubert), 209
*Dire Dawa*, 184
*Dogali*, 244, 245, 247
Dore, Gianni, 190
Douglass, Frederick (Frederick Bailey), 21, 36, 37, 46, 53, 69, 80
Dourgnon, Marcel, 234, 236
*Dracula* (Stoker), 95
Drovetti, Bernardino, 216, 217
Dublin, 93, 93, 95, 101, 102, 103n45, 107, 107n60, 108, 110, 111, 116, 118, 119
*Dubliners* (Joyce), 18, 96, 100-107, 101n35, 111, 115, 116, 276
Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt (W. E. B.), 16, 39-41, 51, 55, 58-62, 60, 64, 65, 71-74, 81, 82, 84, 274
Ducuing, François, 202
Dudley, Earl of (William Humble Ward), 111. See also Ireland, Lord Lieutenant of
Dujardin, Francis, 256
Dujardin, Paul, 197
*Dunyā fī Bāris aw Ayyāmī al-tāliṣa fī Urūbbā, al-* (The Universe in Paris or My Age in Europe, Zakī), 221, 222, 227, 228n53, 231-233, 236-239
*Durar al-bahiyya fī al-riḥla al-urūbāwiyya al-* (Rare Pearls of a Journey in Europe, al-Bāǧūrī), 220, 226-231, 228n53, 234, 235, 235n83, 239

E

*Eberswalde*, 260
Edmond, Charles, 233
Edel, Alfredo Leonardo, 155
Edison, Thomas Alva, 160
*Education of Henry Adams, The* (Adams), 21, 22
*Education of the Negro, The* (Washington), 51
Edward VII, King of the United Kingdom, 111

*Egypt*, 18, 171, 180, 216-218, 230, 233-239
Ehrlich, Heyward, 101n35, 102, 104
Einaudi, Luigi, 191
Ellmann, Richard, 102n40
*Encyclopedia of World’s Fairs and Expositions* (Findling and Pelle), 7, 9
*England*, 22, 52, 62, 74, 81, 91, 115, 121, 138, 213n2, 275
*Eritrea*, 176, 278
esposizione italiana del 1881 in Milano illustrata, L’, 150, 151, 155
*Ethiopia*, 62, 77, 79, 81, 174, 184, 186, 190, 194, 278
Europe, 17, 19, 23, 40, 41, 44, 47, 52, 62, 71, 74, 83, 85, 89, 99, 106, 118, 122, 131, 152, 162, 170, 180, 192, 210, 214-218, 222, 224, 226-228, 230, 232, 235, 238, 250-252, 261, 265, 275, 278. See also names of single countries
Exhibit Series (Bailey), 265, 266, 268
Exhibitions. See Expositions
Expo 1958 (Coe), 242
Expositions
American Negro Exhibit (Paris, 1900; Buffalo, 1901; Charleston, 1901-1902), 16, 39, 40, 45, 48, 50, 51-53, 55, 59, 61-65, 274
Anvers, 1885, *Exposition universelle*, 253
Anvers, 1894, *Exposition internationale*, 253
Astana, 2017, Expo 2017, 9
Atlanta, 1895, *Cotton States and International Exposition*, 46, 47
Berlin, 1879, *Große Berliner Gewerbeausstellung*, 121, 124, 276
Brussels, 1910, *Exposition universelle et internationale*, 253
Brussels, 1958, Expo 58, 10, 241, 242, 252, 254, 281
Brussels-Terxeuven, 1897, *Exposition internationale*, 253, 256
Buffalo, 1901, Pan-American Exposition, 39, 65
Charleston, 1901-1902, South Carolina Inter-State and West Indian Exposition, 39, 65
Chicago, 1893, World’s Columbian Exposition, 16, 21-38, 27, 29, 40, 43, 45, 67-71, 75, 76, 80, 88, 92n9, 93, 97, 99, 102n37, 169, 273-275
Chicago, 1933-1934, Century of Progress Exposition, 10
Cork, 1902, International Exhibition, 91
Dubai, 2020, Expo 2020, 9
Dublin, 1853, Great Industrial Exhibition, 91
Dublin, 1894, Araby bazaar, 101-110, 107n60, 109, 107n60, 110-112, 110n74, 276
Dublin, 1904, Mirus bazaar, 105, 106, 107n60, 110-112, 110n74, 276
Dublin, 1907, Irish International Exhibition, 18, 92-100, 93, 93n12, 96, 111, 119, 276
Florence, 1861, Esposizione italiana, 151
Gand, 1883, Trente-deuxième Exposition triennale, 197n1
Genoa, 1892, Esposizione colombiana, 186n26
Ghent, 1913, Exposition universelle et internationale, 253
Liège, 1930, Exposition internationale, 253
London, 1851, Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations, 9, 10, 90, 91, 93, 94, 105, 107n60, 115, 121, 275, 276
Milan, 1881, Esposizione Nazionale, 19, 143, 145n8, 147-158, 154, 164, 175, 277
Milan, 1906, Esposizione Internazionale di Milano, 10, 175, 176
Milan, 2015, Expo, 8, 9
Naples, 1940, Mostra delle terre italiane d’Oltremare, 174, 187-191, 188, 250, 278
Naples, 1952, Mostra d’Oltremare e del Lavoro Italiano nel Mondo, 174, 175, 191-196, 278, 279
Nashville, 1897, Tennessee Centennial and International Exposition, 46
New Orleans, 1884, World Cotton Centennial, 45
New York, 1939-1940, World’s Fair, 181, 185-187, 278
New York, 1964-1965, World’s Fair, 10
Palermo, 1891-1892, Esposizione Nazionale, 244
Paris, 1855, Exposition universelle des produits de l’agriculture, de l’industrie et des beaux-arts, 200, 214
Paris, 1867, Exposition universelle d’art et d’industrie, 18, 121, 128, 151, 197n1, 198, 200-208, 201n12, 214, 223, 227, 231, 233, 234, 238n95, 279
Paris, 1878, Exposition universelle, 146, 151, 205, 222
Paris, 1931, Exposition coloniale internationale, 183
Philadelphia, 1876, Centennial International Exhibition, 40, 45
Rome, 1930, Giornata dell’Ala, 183, 250
Rome, 1932-1934, Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista, 174, 178, 187, 189-191, 278
Rome, 1937, Mostra Augustea della Romanità, 180, 181
Rome, 1942, Esposizione Universale, 174, 181-183, 182, 186, 189, 278, 279
Saint Louis, 1904, Louisiana Purchase Exposition (Saint Louis World’s Fair), 99
Index

Shanghai, 2010, Expo, 9, 10
Tripoli, 1939, International Fair, 187
Turin, 1884, Esposizione Generale Italiana, 175, 183, 254
Turin, 1898, Esposizione Generale Italiana, 175, 176
Turin, 1902, Esposizione Internazionale d’Arte Decorativa Moderna, 93n12, 97
Turin, 1911, Esposizione internazionale delle industrie e del lavoro, 153, 175, 176, 249
Turin, 1928, Esposizione nazionale italiana, 249, 250
Vienna, 1873, Wiener Weltausstellung, 10, 18, 121-141, 126, 127
Vienna, 1913, Österreichische Adria-Ausstellung, 141, 142, 142
Yeosu, 2012, Expo 2012, 9
Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée, 201, 202, 204

F

Fairs. See Expositions
Fāiz, Ömer, 238n95
Famine en Algérie, La (Guillaumet), 209, 210
Fanfulla, 184
Fasce, Ferdinando, 173
Ferrari, Angelo, 159
Fierce, Milfred C., 80
Figaro, Le, 59
Figuier, Louis, 171
Fikri, ‘Abd Allāh, 218
Fikri, Muḥammad Amin, 215, 218, 219, 222, 224, 226-231, 228n53, 234-237, 239
Finaldi, Giuseppe, 243-247, 280
Findling, John E., 23
Fisk Herald, 55
Fiume. See Rijeka
Flaubert, Gustave, 209
Florence, 151, 158
Foi, Maria Carolina, 18
Fortune, T. Thomas, 80
Foster, John Wilson, 91
Foucault, Michel, 144, 145
Fradcourt, Ariane, 256
France, 22, 41, 45n18, 51, 58, 74, 80, 81, 83, 121, 157, 197, 198, 201, 209, 213n2, 214, 217, 222, 223, 229, 235, 248, 254, 256, 280
Francis I, Emperor of Austria, 134
Franz Joseph, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, 124, 137
Franzina, Emilio, 173n, 175
Freud, Sigmund, 136
Fromentin, Eugène, 199
Fuorigrotta (Naples), 187, 191
Fusco, Coco, 265, 267

G

Galway, 108
Ǧamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, 214
Garland, Hamlin, 28n22
Garnier, Charles, 233
Gautier, Théophile, 197, 199, 210
Genoa, 20, 158
Gefter, Roberta, 18
Georgia (U. S. A), 53, 55, 58, 60
Georgia Negro, The (Du Bois), 60
Geppert, Alexander C. T., 7, 143n1, 157
Germany, 58, 74, 99, 128, 187, 246, 259, 280
Géry-Bichard, Adolphe-Alphonse, 197
Ghana, 88
Gibraltar, 108
Gifford, Don, 111
Gilbert, James, 28
giornale dell’esposizione, Il. See L’esposizione italiana del 1881 in Milano illustrata
Gissing, George, 111
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 134
Gómez-Peña, Guillermo, 265, 267
Gorizia, 132, 135
Gramsci, Antonio, 149
Grande, Adriano, 185
Grant, Ulysses S., 43
Great Britain, 59, 70, 83, 95
Greece, 171
Green, Nancy, 37, 38
Greenhalgh, Paul, 100
Griffith, Arthur, 92
Grimké, Francis J., 73
Grottes de Han, 258
Guadeloupe, 80
Guillaune, Gustave, 199
Guillaumet, Gustave Achille, 18, 197-200, 199, 202-211, 279
Guinea-Bissau, 253

H

Ḥadīṯ ʿĪsà ibn Hišām (A Period of Time, Muwayliḥī), 213, 213n4, 214, 237n90, 237n92
Ḥaiti, 37, 69, 71, 74, 77, 79-81, 83, 85, 88
halbe Jahrhundert der Weltausstellungen Berlin, Das (Lessing), 148
Ḥallāt al-Ṭarābulsi, Dīmitrī Niʿmat Allāh al-, 215, 224, 225, 234, 235
Ḥamaḏānī, ᴬḥmad Badiʿ al-Zamān al-, 214n15
Ḥamon, Philippe, 200
Ḥan al-Halīlī (Cairo), 236
Handy, Moses P., 43, 44
Ḥarāʾirī, Sulaymān al-, 215, 215n12, 223, 223n34, 226, 227, 231, 234
Ḥarar, 184
Ḥarāʾirī, Abū ʿAl-Ḥasan al-Qāsim al-, 214n5
Harper, Frances Ellen Watkins, 68, 70, 74, 80
Harris, Ada, 81
Hawaii, 45
Hawthorne, Julian, 21, 31-34, 32, 34n42, 273
Hegel, Friedrich, 134, 239
Height, Dorothy, 88
Herndon, Adrienne, 63
Herndon, Alonzo, 63
Hilāl, al- (The Crescent), 222
Hilyer, Andrew F., 51
Hochman, Barbara, 37
Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction (Brown), 74, 78
Hope, Lugenia Burns, 76, 77, 82
Horn of Africa, 189, 278
Howard, Joan Imogen, 63
Ḥūḡa, Muḥammad Ibn al-, See Ibn al-Ḥūḡa, Muḥammad
Hughes, William, 95, 97
Humanité, L’, 254
Humors of the Fair (Hawthorne), 30-34, 32
Hungary, 125, 139, 140, 141
Hunt, Ida Alexander Gibbs, 71, 81
Hunton, Addie Waites, 76, 79-82
Hyde, Douglas, 91

I

Iannuzzi, Giulia, 20
Ibn al-Ḥawḡa, Muḥammad. See Ibn al-Ḥūḡa, Muḥammad
Illustration, L’, 210
India, 77, 78, 87, 157
Information on Paris Exposition of 1889 (al-Sanūsī), 223, 226, 227, 229n56, 232, 238
Inventing Ireland (Kiberd), 89
Ireland, 18, 89-92, 94-100, 95n16, 102, 103n45, 107, 108, 110, 111, 115
Ireland, Lord Lieutenant of, 1902-1905 (William Humble Ward), 92, 110. See also Dudley, Earl of
Ireland, Lord Lieutenant of, 1905-1915 (John Campbell Hamilton-Gordon), 111. See also Aberdeen, Earl of
Irish Daily Independent, 92
Irish Times, 98, 101, 105, 108n65, 110
Irpinia, 193
Iršād al-Alibbā’ ilà maḥāsin Ùrūbbā
(Guide of Intelligent Men toward the Beauties of Europe, Fikrī), 219, 222, 226-231, 228n23, 234-237, 239
Isma‘īl Pasha, Egyptian Khedivé, 214
Istanbul, 215n11
Istria, 132
Italia all’Estero, L’, 175
Italian Eastern Africa, 174, 186, 189
Italian Empire, 174, 180, 183, 185, 189, 190, 278
Italian Islands of the Aegean, 189
Italia Nostra, L’, 180
Italy, 8, 19, 44, 94n12, 97, 97n26, 123, 129n18, 137, 151, 157, 158, 160, 164, 167, 173-181, 183-196, 191n39, 213, 218, 222, 224, 229, 230, 242-251, 278-280
Ivory Coast, 254-256

J
Jackson Coppin, Fanny, 70-72
Jamali, Muhammad Fadhel (Muḥammad Fāḍil al-Ǧamālī) 88
Japan, 27, 79, 87
Jay, Martin, 146
Johnston, Mordecai Wyatt, 82
Johnston, Frances Benjamin, 53
Jomard, Edme-François, 216
Jones, Anna H., 63, 73, 74, 81
Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor, 122, 127, 265, 269
Journal des Österreichischen Lloyd, 129
Joyce, James, 18, 89, 92n10, 96, 98-108, 105n50, 111, 114-119, 118n101, 275, 276

K
Kallis, Aristotle, 181
Kant, Immanuel, 134
Karst, 136, 137
Kenya, 253, 258
Kibéd, Declan, 89, 100
Kiev, 159
Kiralfy, Bolossy, 158-160, 162
Kiralfy, Imre, 159
Kitāb Sifr al-Safar ilà ma’raḍ al-ḥadār
(A Travel Book on the Exposition of Civilizations, al-Ḥallāṭ), 224, 225, 234, 235
Kopernikus, 141
Koran, 227
Krantz, Jean-Baptiste, 200
Krueger, Anton Robert, 266
Kulka, Tomas, 168

L
Labanca, Nicola, 246, 249, 250
Labourage, Le (Guillaumet), 209
La Goletta (Tunis), 229, 229n56
Lake, Marilyn, 40
Lakshmi Pandit Nerhu, Vijaya, 78, 84, 85
Lalla Rookh (Moore), 106
Lau, Tammy, 7
Laugel, Auguste, 47
Leader, 93
Le Bon, Gustave, 229n55
Legionario, 179n16, 186
Lehnert, Josef, 139
Le Play, Frédéric, 200
Le Rat, Paul Edmé, 197
Lesseps, Ferdinand Vicomte de, 223, 233
Lesseps, Jules, 223, 233
Lessing, Julius, 148
Lessona, Michele, 151, 152
Letters of an Altrurian Traveler, The
(Howells), 27-29
Liberia, 62, 77, 79-83, 85, 88
Libre.be, La, 256
Libre Belgique, La, 256
Libya, 184, 186, 189, 194, 246, 248, 278
Licata, Giovan Battista, 245, 246
Lisbon, 81
Liszt, Franz, 137
Little Lord Fauntleroy (Burnett), 24
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L. J., 137. See also Luzifer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ljubljana, 134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lloyd, David, 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locke, Alain Leroy, 72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan, Rayford, 82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loné, 65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London, 9, 10, 40, 59, 61, 64, 68, 71, 73, 74, 80, 81, 93, 95, 102, 121, 125, 130, 158, 160, 165, 180, 200, 213n2, 215, 241, 259, 274, 276</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louca, Anouar, 218, 218n21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loudin, Harriet G., 81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana, 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luzifer, 137. See also L. J.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar, 80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrid, 158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallarmé, Stéphane (Étienne Mallarmé), 165</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mancini, Pasquale Stanisloa, 246</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandell, Richard D., 41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangan, James Clarence, 104, 106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantegazza, Vico, 246</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manzotti, Luigi, 143, 147, 149, 150, 150n21, 153, 156, 158-160, 161, 163-168, 166, 171</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marconi, Guglielmo, 186</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mareno, Romualdo, 143, 161, 166</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Theresa of Habsburg, Holy Roman Empress, 265, 269</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariette, Auguste, 233</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materson, Lisa, 88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mattino d’Italia, 177</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, Vivian M., 72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayhew, Henry, 115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McClellan Stevens, Charles, 21, 24n16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCormick, Cyrus H., 44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKinley, William, 44, 48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLeod Bethune, Mary, 76, 77, 78, 82-88, 84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McNeill, Eoin, 91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mecca, 204, 226</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medici, Anna Maria, 226</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediterranean, 129, 175, 176, 187, 198, 201, 209, 229, 230</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mefistofele (Boito), 153</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memmi, Albert, 208n70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meucci, Antonio, 196</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico, 83, 170, 251</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan (lake), 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midhat, Ahmed, 215n11, 238n95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway Plaisance (Chicago), 16, 21, 23, 26, 29, 46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan, 8-10, 111, 143, 147-150, 155-158, 160, 162n70, 168n100, 175, 176, 277</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milano e l’Esposizione italiana del 1881, 154, 156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller, Frieda S., 86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis (MN), 267</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota, 53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirbad, al-, 231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misbāḥ al-Šarq (The Lantern of the Orient), 213n4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell, Timothy, 95, 100, 210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model of Christian Charity, A (Winthrop), 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle (Daly), 98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moniteur universel, 200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mont Cenis, 143, 156, 157, 162, 167, 170</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montevideo, 158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moody, Agnes, 63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moody-Turner, Shirley, 72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore, Thomas, 106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moran, David Patrick, 93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morasso, Mario, 246</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morelli, Giovanni, 168</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco, 233</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpurgo, Elio, Baron</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpurgo, Giuseppe, Baron, 132, 138</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscow, 86, 158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moton, Jennie, 77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique, 253</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Muhammad ‘Ali, Egypt Khedivé, 216, 217n17
Muhammad Bayram al-Ḥāmis (Bayram V), 215, 222, 223, 227, 228, 229
Muller, I., 197
Mullin, Katherine, 106
Muqatṭām, al-, 222
Murphy, William Martin, 92, 94
Murray, Daniel A. P., 39, 51, 80
Murray Washington, Margaret, 74, 76, 78, 79
Mussolini, Benito, 174, 177-181, 183, 187, 191, 193, 278, 279
Muwaylīḥī, Ibrāhīm al-, 213n4
Muwaylīḥī, Muḥammad al-, 213, 214, 237n90, 237n92

N

Namibia, 266
Nantes, 254, 255, 256
Napoleon III, 201, 203, 214
Nardal, Jane, 72
Nāṣir al-Din, Shah of Persia, 214
Nassau, 72
Negreli, Giorgio, 121n1
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 84
Ness, Sally Ann, 170
Nether World, The (Gissing), 111
Neufeld, Maurice, 22
New York (city), 10, 28, 30, 51, 68, 81, 88, 125, 157, 158, 160, 181, 193, 196
New York (state), 63
New York Herald, 59
New York Times, 59, 63, 199
Nigeria, 265, 269
Noble, Frederick Perry, 80
North America, 35, 159, 180, 192, 193, 165. See also names of single countries
North Carolina, 64
Norway, 218
Nouvelle Revue, 197, 279

O

Occupied Haiti (Balch), 80
Odessa, 159
O’Donovan Rossa, Jeremiah, 103n42
Olinsky, family, 121
Olmsted, Frederick Law, 23, 30
Oltremare, 183, 192
On Heroes ( Carlyle), 229n54
Opera del genio italiano all’estero (Ministero degli affari esteri), 179, 183, 186
Oran, 205
Or de Paris, L’. See Taḥliṣ al-Ibrīz fī taḥliṣ Bāriz
Oriani, Alfredo, 246
Ormonde, 3rd Marquis of (James Butler), 92
O’Rourke, Dennis, 270, 271
Ottino, Giuseppe, 152
Ottoman Empire, 184, 216, 218

P

Padua, 8n5, 20, 158
Pakistan, 87
Palermo, 20, 158, 244
Palmer, Bertha H., 43
Palumbo, Patrizia, 243
Panama, 178
Papin, Denis, 143
Pappacena, Flavia, 158, 160
Papua New Guinea, 270
Parini, Piera, 178, 185, 193
Paris, 10, 16, 18, 39, 41, 43-45, 47, 49, 52, 53, 58, 59, 61-64, 74, 81, 93, 121, 125, 130, 146, 149, 151, 158, 160, 162, 165, 169, 197-200, 201n12, 203-206, 208, 213, 213n2, 213n3, 215-218, 222, 223, 228n53, 230, 239, 274, 276, 279
Passegenwerk (Benjamin), 148
Patria degli Italiani, La, 184
Index

Parker, Hale Giddings, 45
Peck, Ferdinand W., 43
Pélegri, Jean, 209
Pembroke, 14th Earl of (Sidney Herbert), 92
Pèrès, Henri, 215
Persia, 214
Pester Lloyd, 124
Petit Parisien, Le, 59
Petke, Friederich, 138
Philadelphia, 55, 85
Philadelphia Negro, The (Du Bois), 51, 58
Philippines, 45, 47, 74, 83
Physics (Aristotle), 241
Picard, Alfred, 44
Picot, François-Édouard, 198
Pierre, Paul, 197
Pietro Micca (Manzotti), 173
Pilgrim’s Progress, The (Bunyan), 24, 30
Pipitè, Franz Ernst, 129n20
Playboy of the Western World, The (Synge), 98
Pompey, 224
Pope, Generoso, 193
Portrait du colonisé (Memmi), 208n70
Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, A (Joyce), 112
Port-Saint-Père, 255
Pourtauborde, Ernest, 234
Prague, 158
Pretelli, Matteo, 17
Prière du soir dans le Sahara (Guillaumet), 204
Proctor, Henry Hugh, 55
Progresso Italo-Americano, Il, 193
Prussia, 128, 128n16, 160, 276
Pula, 142
Purbrick, Louise, 90
Puteaux, 197
Putnam, Frederic Ward, 23, 35

R
Rainero, Romain, 246
Rains, Stephanie, 99n30, 101, 195n50, 107
Reason why the Colored American is not in the World’s Columbian Exposition, The (Wells), 36, 37, 46, 70, 274
Red Sea, 171
Republic of Congo, 262
Revue du Monde Noir, La, 72
Revue française, 205
Reynolds, Henry, 40
Rhodes, 189
Rhodesia, 62, 253
Richards, Thomas, 94, 95, 113, 114
Rief, Michelle, 67
Rihla hijāziyya (Journey to the Hijaz, Muḥammad al-Sanūsī), 223, 229n56
Rijeka, 140, 141, 193
Rio De Janeiro, 87, 158
Rivista coloniale, 246
Roberts, Jane Rose Waring, 81
Roberts, Joseph Jenkins, 81
Rome, 20, 137, 157, 158, 171, 174, 176-183, 182, 186, 187, 189, 193, 196, 198, 279
Romussi, Carlo, 156
Roosevelt, Eleanor, 83, 87,
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 186
Rossi, Adolfo, 246
Ruanda-Urundi, 241
Russia, 44, 58, 128n16, 165, 168
Rydell, Robert W., 70

S
Saddlemeyer, Ann, 99n30
Sahara, Le (Guillaumet), 197, 199, 199
Said, Edward, 122n2, 171
Saint Petersburg (also as St. Petersburg, Russia), 130, 158, 159n59
Šalḥūb, Tawfiq, 237
Sampson, Edith S., 87
Sandymount (Dublin), 112, 114
San Francisco, 10, 83-85, 84, 158, 159
Santo Domingo, 71
Sanūsī, Muḥammad al-, 215, 222, 223, 226, 227, 229n56, 232, 238
Sapeto, Giuseppe, 245
Sartorio, Matteo, 165n86
Sasportes, José, 167, 168
Scarfoglio, Edoardo, 246
Scheibler, Felice, 246
Schiller, Johann Christoph Friedrich, 134
Schnapp, Jeffrey T., 178
Schomburg, Arthur A., 73
Schwartz, Vanessa R., 146
Scotland, 100
Scott, Emmett J., 82
Seattle, 259, 260
Secret Garden, The (Burnett), 24
Selassie I, Haile, Emperor of Ethiopia, 184
Self Help (Smiles), 229
Sepik, 270
Shepherd, Harry, 52, 53
Sherman, William, 24
Sierra Leone, 71, 77, 79
Sirr al-Naḡāb. See Self Help
Slate, Nico, 78
Smiles, Samuel, 229, 229n55
Smith, Shaw Michelle, 59,
Snake’s Pass, The (Stoker), 95
Société du spectacle, La (Debord), 146
Sofia (Bulgaria), 130
Soliman, Angelo (Mmadi Make), 265, 268, 269
Somalia, 194, 195, 278
Souls of Black Folk, The (Du Bois), 41, 59
South Africa, 44, 62, 72, 253
South America, 83, 87, 159, 192. See also names of single countries
South Carolina, 53
Spain, 45n18, 157, 251
Stewart, Sallie Wyatt, 79
Saint Louis, 99
St. Denis, Ruth, 146
St. Paul (Minnesota), 53
Stockholm, 215, 215n11, 218, 238n95
Stoker, Abraham (“Bram”), 93-94n12, 95-99, 276
Stuckey, Sterling, 58
Suez, 143, 147, 156, 157, 160, 162, 170, 172, 178
Sulaymān, 224
Sulūk al-Ibrīz fī Masālik Bārīz (Threads of Gold in the Streets of Paris, Ibn al-Ḥūḡa), 223n36, 238
Sullivan, Louis, 23
Sweden, 218
Sweet Clover (C. L. Burnham), 30, 31
Switzerland, 74, 88, 218, 230
Sydenham (London), 111
Synge, John Millington, 98, 99, 276
Syrski, Simon von, 136

T:
Tableaux algériens (Guillaumet), 197, 198, 204-209, 279
Tahtāwī, Rāfi’ Rifā’ā al-, 217, 223n36, 226, 227, 238
Taḥliṣ al-Ibrīz fī talḥīṣ Bārīz, also as L’Or de Paris (A Paris Profile, Taḥṭāwī), 217, 223n36, 226, 227
Tālber, Mary Burnett, 76, 79, 81
Tan, Céline, 197n1
Tarnopolsky, Michelle Raissa, 20n, 197n1
Tecchio, Vincenzo, 189
Tenkotte, Paul A., 100
Tennessee, 53
Terveuren, 253
Thailand, 262, 263
Thames, 160
Thaon di Revel, Ignazio, 192
Tianjin, 189
Tissi, Franca, 162n63
Tocchetti, Luigi, 192
Togo, 65
Tolman, William H., 48, 49
Tove, 65
Trachtenberg, Alan, 24
Transleithania, 141
Traveler from Altruria, A (Howells), 28
Travis, Miles Everett, 55
Trento, 163
Trieste, 7, 18, 20, 102, 104, 123-125, 124n7, 129-142, 129nn19-21, 130n22, 158, 162, 162n73, 169, 230, 277
Triester Tagblatt, 129n18
Triester Zeitung, 18, 123, 124, 128-141, 129n19, 129n20, 276, 277
Trinidad, 71, 85
Tripoli, 187, 224
Truman, Harry S., 87
Tubman, William, 88
Tunis, 132n29, 207, 229, 237
Tunisia, 187, 222, 223, 233, 234, 238, 238n96
Turin, 20, 158, 167, 175, 176, 193, 196, 216, 217, 248, 249, 254
Turkey, 157, 170
Toussaint, Henri, 197
Two Little Pilgrims’ Progress (Burnett), 24-27, 25
U
Ulm, 135
Umanità in mostra (Abbattista), 19, 242, 243
Uncle Tom’s Cabin (Beecher Stowe), 37
ʿUrābī, Pașa (Aḥmad ʿUrābī), 238
V
Valencia, 158
Valente, Joseph, 95
Vallancey, Charles, 99
Vanity Fair (Bunyan), 26, 26n17
van Praagh, Peggy, 165
Vaucheret, Constant-Edouard, 234
Venice, 230
Verdi, Giuseppe, 150
Verrazzano, Giovanni da, 186
Vezzosi, Elisabetta, 16
Victor Emanuel II, King of Italy, 128, 137
Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom, 63, 74
Vienna, 10, 72n23, 121-135, 126, 127, 128n16, 137, 138, 140, 151, 158, 162, 265, 276
Vighi, Roberto, 192
Vigoni, Giuseppe (“Pippo”), 246
visite à l’Expo 58 de Bruxelles, Une (Legrand), 252n11
Vittorio Amedeo II. See Pietro Micca
Voice from the South by a Woman from the South, A (Cooper), 62, 72
Volta, Alessandro, 143, 157
von Bruck, Karl Ludwig, 129, 129n20
von Herman, Baron (Beno von Herman auf Wain), 65
W
Wallonia, 258
Warsaw, 158
Washington, D. C., 30, 63, 73, 74, 76n35, 83, 86, 180, 260
Washington, Margaret Murray, 74, 76, 78-80
Wehler, Hans-Ulrich, 246
Wells, Ida B., 36, 46, 52, 70
Weltausstellungscorrespondenz, 129
Wesley, Charles H., 82
West Indies, 40, 62, 72, 79, 81, 85
White, Walter, 82, 84
White City (Chicago), 16, 21, 23, 24, 26-31, 26n16, 27, 29, 35, 37, 38, 93, 97
White City Chips (Dean), 30, 34-36
Williams, Emily, 79
Willis, Deborah, 53
Willoughby, Westel F., 48
Winthrop, John, 24
Woodson, Carter G., 73
World’s Fairs. See Expositions
World’s Work, 95, 98

X

Ximenes, Ettore, 154

Y

Yvoir, 256, 257

Z

Zaki, Aḥmad, 215, 221, 222, 227, 228n53, 229, 231-233, 236-239, 238n94
Zoppellari, Anna, 18