

“Almost Pathetic ... But Also Very Glorious’’: The Consumer Spectacle of the Diamond Jubilee

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Queen Victoria’s diamond jubilee celebration in London in 1897 offers a window through which to explore how public ceremony became interwoven with the emerging consumer culture. Although centred on state-sponsored events, the diamond jubilee comprised many other elements. Souvenirs, press coverage, advertisements, and theatrical presentations were as much a part of the spectacle as the official procession; manufacturers, the press, and advertisers were as much its authors as were civil servants and politicians. Commercial activity geared to a burgeoning mass market had become not just a spinoff of the main event, but helped create the spectacle and define its significance.

La célébration du jubilé de diamants de la Reine Victoria à Londres en 1897 nous permet d’étudier la façon dont s’entrelacèrent les cérémonies publiques et la culture de la consommation, alors naissante. Bien que centré sur les événements parrainés par l’État, le jubilé de diamants comprenait de nombreux autres éléments. Souvenirs, couverture médiatique, publicité et représentations théâtrales, tout cela faisait aussi partie du spectacle que le défilé officiel. Les fabricants, la presse et les annonceurs en étaient autant les auteurs que les fonctionnaires et les politiciens. L’activité commerciale axée sur un marché de masse florissant était devenue plus qu’un simple dérivé de l’événement principal; elle aidait à façonner le spectacle et à en définir l’importance.

IN JUNE OF 1897 London celebrated the sixtieth year of Queen Victoria’s reign. The highlight of the festivities was on June 22, when British and colonial troops, visiting dignitaries, the royal family, and the queen herself processed through the streets of London. Hundreds of thousands of people, guided by special “sightseer’s” maps and armed with helpful hints about avoiding pickpockets, crowded into the streets to watch the procession. Many had travelled into the metropolis on special excursion trains, while others had journeyed from Europe, the colonies, and the United States. The upper echelons of society, including parliamentarians and religious, business,

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and military leaders assembled in special viewing stands, while middle- and working-class people stood on the pavements and in open areas such as Green Park and Trafalgar Square. Among the crowds numerous sellers hawked their jubilee wares, including souvenirs and programmes.¹

Although the procession lasted only two and a half hours, the impact on the metropolis was far-reaching. For weeks London had been caught up in a wave of excitement, as the city went “mad over the Jubilee”.² Signs of the impending celebration were everywhere. Even London’s physical appearance changed, as entrepreneurs contracted carpenters to build miles of huge viewing stands along the route, especially in the West End, the City, and Westminster. Images, products, and news relating to the celebration of the queen’s anniversary swamped the shops and streets. One columnist invented the phrase “jubilousity of the jubilee” to describe “people who are talking nothing but jubilee ... jubilee decorations ... jubilee lamps ... jubilee crowds ... jubilee songs”.³ As early as March, the *Telegraph* reported that, because of the demand for wholesale souvenirs, “trade in the City ... is already experiencing a sort of jubilee boom.”⁴ Some retailers transformed their shops “as though the jubilee had already commenced ... the premises of the drapers are gay with fluttering ‘bunting’.”⁵ A journalist described the anticipation among working-class Londoners:

They are simply full of the jubilee, and have no eyes for anything save what is connected with the upcoming event. The merest picture of the Queen or of any member of the royal family appeals to them. A Jubilee favour, the programmes of the fetes, the wooden stands fairly hypnotize them.⁶

The middle classes were no less entranced, and excitement mounted at the approach of what one newspaper called the “jubiloned for day”.⁷ At least one columnist decided that it was all too much, and vowed to flee to the seashore.⁸

When the procession was over and the crowds dispersed, most observers praised the diamond jubilee as a tremendous success; many called it one of

1 Accounts of the day do not describe this activity, but it is suggested by the great number of programmes and souvenirs produced for the diamond jubilee, by the ubiquity of street sellers in Victorian London, and by the comment in the *Times* that the funeral of the queen in 1901 was “perhaps ... the first time in London the voice of a hawker of mementos and programmes was not heard”. *Times*, February 4, 1901, p. 7.

2 India Office Records, Mss. C.125/2, letter from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, May 14, 1897.

3 *Graphic*, June 26, 1897, p. 795.

4 *Telegraph*, March 26, 1897, p. 7.

5 *Telegraph*, June 10, 1897, p. 10.

6 *Telegraph*, June 15, 1897, p. 11.

7 *Daily Mail*, June 22, 1897, p. 4.

8 *Daily Mail*, June 17, 1897, p. 4.

the greatest celebrations ever held. More recently, historian David Cannadine has argued that the era of the diamond jubilee saw the invention of a new tradition of royal ritual in Britain, which continued to evolve through the twentieth century.⁹ Examining the performance and context of ceremonials from the 1830s to 1977, Cannadine argues that 1870 to 1914 was a pivotal period in which rituals were marked by greater skill and success. While Cannadine is certainly right to suggest that royal ceremony changed greatly at the end of the nineteenth century, his broad sweep through the years sheds little light on the nature of the transformation. The diamond jubilee in London offers a window through which to explore how public ceremony became interwoven with the emerging consumer culture.¹⁰ The diamond jubilee and other late-nineteenth-century royal and state rituals were new kinds of public events: mass spectacles characterized by extensive commercial involvement, a new role for the public, and novel ways in which meaning became attached to the occasion.¹¹ As such a spectacle, the diamond jubilee was centred on state-sponsored events, but comprised many other elements and can be understood only by examining the ways in which it was embedded in the burgeoning mass market.

Commercial interests had been involved in the production of royal and state ceremonial for a long time, but, as consumer culture burgeoned in the last decades of the nineteenth century, such involvement became increasingly integral to large public events.¹² By the time of the diamond jubilee,

9 David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c.1820–1977" in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 101–164. See also Elizabeth Hammerton and David Cannadine, "Conflict and Consensus on a Ceremonial Occasion: The Diamond Jubilee in Cambridge in 1897", *Historical Journal*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1981), pp. 111–146; William Kuhn, "Ceremony and Politics: The Management of British Royal Ceremonial, 1861–1911" (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1990); Jeffrey Lant, *Insubstantial Pageant: Ceremony and Confusion at Queen Victoria's Court* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979). For a critique of Cannadine, see Walter Arnstein, "Queen Victoria Opens Parliament: The Disinvention of Tradition", *Historical Research*, vol. 63, no. 151 (1990), pp. 178–194.

10 Cannadine does include commercial exploitation and the role of the press as context for royal rituals. He also uses the degree of commercial exploitation as evidence of the level of the popularity of the crown. Similarly, John MacAloon, in "Olympic Games and the Theory of Spectacle in Modern Societies" in MacAloon, ed., *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984), cites commercial exploitation as indicative of the success of the modern Olympics as a spectacle. Both authors, however, describe commercial activity as tangential, rather than as integral, to the spectacle.

11 I am not contending that the diamond jubilee was the first such event; the 1887 jubilee shared many of the same characteristics, although to a lesser degree, as did the 1896 coronation of the Czar in Russia.

12 For examples of earlier commercial involvement, see Paul Fritz, "The Trade in Death: Royal Funerals in England, 1685–1830", *Eighteenth Century Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2 (1982), pp. 291–316. Susan Davis notes in her study of parades in Philadelphia that there was a "growing partnership of commerce and government in the production of festivity and spectacle" in the second half of the nineteenth century. Susan Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985), p. 170.

commercial activity was not merely a spinoff of the main event but helped create the spectacle and its meanings. Souvenirs, press coverage, advertisements, and theatrical presentations were as much a part of the spectacle as was the official procession, and the significance attached to the jubilee derived from the interaction of all these media, commodities, and events. Likewise, manufacturers, the press, theatrical impresarios, and advertisers were as much authors of the spectacle as were civil servants and politicians.

As public events became more commercial, new forms of public participation emerged.¹³ There were many ways to consume and experience the spectacle of the diamond jubilee: purchasing souvenirs, going to jubilee shows, reading about events and participants, seeing advertisements, wearing jubilee clothing, and even taking snapshots and watching films.¹⁴ Of course, hundreds of thousands also attended official events, but even that experience was mediated by exposure to the myriad other commercial images of the jubilee.¹⁵

The diamond jubilee was a hastily contrived holiday. Desiring to repeat the successful celebrations of Queen Victoria's fiftieth year on the throne in 1887, civil servants and politicians devised a celebration to mark the fact that her reign had surpassed the length of any other in British history.¹⁶ Although this record reign was achieved in September 1896, the celebrations were planned instead for the end of her sixtieth year.¹⁷ Since there was no tradition of sixtieth anniversaries, a list of possible names was assembled from which the queen chose "diamond jubilee".¹⁸

13 Critics and historians have often paired spectacle with passivity on the part of the audience. Mary Ryan, for example, characterizes nineteenth-century American political spectacle as involving passive spectatorship rather than active participation. This description assumes that viewing is necessarily a passive activity and obscures some of the new ways in which people participated as consumers. Mary Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825–1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 42. See also MacAloon, "Olympic Games"; Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994).

14 The *Daily Mail* claimed that thousands of spectators would take "snap-shots" of the procession. *Daily Mail*, June 18, 1897, p. 5.

15 For a closer examination of the official planning, see Lant, *Insubstantial Pageant*, pp. 215–246; Tori Smith, "Constructing Victoria: The Representation of Queen Victoria in England, India, and Canada, 1897–1914" (Ph.D. dissertation-in-progress, Rutgers University).

16 The decision to celebrate the queen's reign was also influenced by the success of the recent festivities in Moscow marking the coronation of the Czar. Eric Hobsbawm argues that jubilees and ceremonial anniversaries were particularly common in the period from 1870 to 1914, in "Mass Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870–1914" in Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds., *Invention of Tradition*, pp. 263–307. Hobsbawm, however, overstates the degree to which public anniversaries were a new "invention". Linda Colley discusses at length the 1809 jubilee of George III and the changes it ushered in which shaped public celebrations for the rest of the century. Linda Colley, *Britons* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 195–236.

17 In fact, neither the 1887 jubilee nor the diamond jubilee were celebrated on the actual anniversary of the queen's accession since Victoria felt that celebrations would be disrespectful on the day of her uncle King William's death.

18 Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), HO 45 b21471A/18, 1a, letter from Queen's Private Secretary to Home Office, January 27, 1897.

Invented or not, British entrepreneurs were ready to seize the occasion as an opportunity to make money. This was particularly apparent in the capital, site of the official celebrations. Late-nineteenth-century London was a visual marketplace, “a world saturated with pictures”, most of which were either for sale or selling something.¹⁹ In the summer of 1897 a good proportion of these pictures, and what they were selling, was connected to the celebrations. This was certainly true in the burgeoning commercial entertainment industry, where the main fare for 1897 was the diamond jubilee.

Across the metropolis audiences could attend shows which elaborately dramatized aspects of the reign and the jubilee.²⁰ One extravagant example was *Victoria and Merrie England* at the Alhambra in Leicester Square, hailed by one reviewer as “a splendid commencement of the rejoicings which are to mark this present year of Jubilee”. The Alhambra pageant ended with a “wondrous spectacle” of British troops “come from all quarters of the globe to pay homage to the Queen and to salute Britannia”.²¹ Many jubilee shows included similar scenes and promised exciting effects such as “1000 electric lights”.²² Alongside music halls, exhibition halls competed for the jubilee audience. Madame Tussaud’s, for instance, advertised that special tableaux of the accession, coronation, and diamond jubilee would be on display during the festivities.²³

By mounting jubilee shows, the commercial entertainment industry became a co-producer of the larger spectacle. With their large publicity budgets and their dazzling effects, music hall impresarios undoubtedly contributed to the sense of excitement and anticipation in the early summer months of 1897.²⁴ Thousands of people probably attended a jubilee show or exhibit — the Alhambra alone seated 3,500 patrons — and many more saw the advertisements. By the time of the official procession, many of the spectators had already seen a jubilee pageant or exhibit. There were other points of reference for viewers as well. The sights of both the official procession and the commercial shows were familiar to audiences accus-

19 Michael Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre 1850–1910* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 4.

20 Jubilee shows included *The Court Ball; or God Save the Queen* at The South London Music Hall and *Under One Flag* at the Empire in Hackney. The halls which produced jubilee shows included some which catered to local, working-class audiences and others which attracted more diverse and affluent crowds. For a discussion of the composition of music hall audiences, see Penny Summerfield, “Patriotism and Empire: Music Hall Entertainment, 1870–1914” in John M. MacKenzie, ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 24–25.

21 *Daily Telegraph*, May 26, 1897, p. 8.

22 *Reynolds News*, February 14, 1897, p. 5.

23 *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, June 29, 1897.

24 Peter Bailey has argued that the Victorian music hall was a “prototype of the modern entertainment industry”, thoroughly commercialized and able to secure a mass paying audience. Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest For Control, 1830–1885* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), p. 150.

tomed to spectacular military pageants and shows.²⁵ In the previous year, for instance, the *Sons of Empire Pageant* in Islington had been a popular attraction, featuring an assemblage of British soldiers dressed up to represent colonial troops.²⁶

As diamond jubilee performances took over London stages, related merchandise flooded the shops. Manufacturers encouraged the public to decorate their homes for the jubilee with decorations ranging from simple bunting to elaborate electric illuminations producing a “likeness of her Majesty, in almost any colour”.²⁷ Cheaper and less durable was a product billed as “Jubiletti, the New Confetti” which the manufacturer promised would be the “greatest novelty of the jubilee”, providing “endless fun”.²⁸ Manufacturers also offered many ways for people to dress for the jubilee. Children and adults could wear bonnets which mimicked the style common when the queen had ascended the throne, hats decorated with flags, or cycling caps stamped with portraits of the queen.²⁹ There were even special dresses available, fashioned in red, white, and blue.³⁰ Neither personal nor house decorations were a new element in royal festivities; what was new was the widespread commercial effort encouraging people to use them. With the introduction of elaborate, ready-made decorations, shopping became an important part of private preparations for public events.

The most numerous and popular jubilee products were souvenirs. There was a long tradition of producing a limited number of special items in honour of royal coronations, funerals, and marriages.³¹ However, changes in production, distribution, reproduction, and publishing techniques meant that a new scale of commercial exploitation accompanied late Victorian events. By the end of the century, souvenirs were cheap and plentiful, accessible to many working-class as well as middle-class consumers. As Thomas Richards has discussed in his study of the development of commodity culture, the fiftieth anniversary jubilee of 1887 was the first royal celebration to register the impact of new techniques of promotion and production.³² In that year manufacturers produced great quantities of sou-

25 See Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*; Summerfield, “Patriotism and Empire”; Scott Hughes Myerly, “‘The Eye Must Entrap the Mind’: Army Spectacle and Paradigm in Nineteenth Century Britain”, *Journal of Social History*, vol. 26, no. 1 (Fall 1992), pp. 105–131.

26 PRO, CO 323/421, Memorandum, January 18, 1897; *Illustrated London News*, May 6, 1896, Supplement.

27 *Telegraph*, March 27, 1897, p. 3.

28 *Telegraph*, June 19, 1897, p. 8.

29 *Telegraph*, March 26, 1897, p. 7.

30 *Lady*, June 24, 1897, p. 927.

31 See James McKay, *Commemorative Pottery and Porcelain* (London: Garnstone Press, 1971); John and Jennifer May, *Commemorative Pottery 1780–1900* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1972); M. H. Davey and D. J. Mannion, *Fifty Years of Commemorative China, 1887–1937* (Hemel Hempstead, U.K.: Dayman, 1988).

32 Thomas Richards, “In the Year of the Jubilee” in *The Commodity Culture of Victorian and Edwardian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 73–118.

venirs, as well as jubilee-related advertisements. In 1897 entrepreneurs remembered this commercial success and surpassed their earlier efforts, producing more souvenirs than ever before. Potters, who had long produced commemorative wares, greatly expanded their output of souvenirs. For example, Doulton produced only one mug design in 1887 but offered over a dozen diamond jubilee designs in a variety of colours.³³ One guide for collectors claims that the latter event “was commemorated with such a mass of plates and mugs and jugs and cups, and even toastracks that no full list can ever be compiled”.³⁴ Manufacturers also produced a tremendous array of souvenir medals. Spinks and Son Medallists, for example, offered over 30 different varieties ranging from 18-carat gold medals priced at 30 pounds to “special cheap medals for children”.³⁵ Many of these medals were produced in huge runs: over 300,000 medals of one design, featuring portraits of Victoria in 1837 and 1897, were struck.³⁶ There were also countless other types of souvenirs on offer, aimed at people of all classes. For six pence one could buy a child’s tin Diamond Jubilee Cup; cheaper still were printed souvenirs such as a card which allowed the owner to rotate a disc and choose which royal would appear.³⁷ One store billed itself as “Jubilee Headquarters” and offered souvenir teapots, clocks, and spoons to middle-class shoppers (see Figure 1). The most affluent could buy a special gold watch for 60 pounds, featuring enamel portraits of the royal family at each quarter hour with the queen presiding at twelve o’clock.³⁸

Victoria was the most common image on diamond jubilee souvenirs. Many plates, mugs, and medals featured two portraits of her, as she appeared in 1837 and in 1897. Manufacturers also embellished souvenirs with imperial regalia, scenes from the reign, drawings of the queen’s residences, and ornate decoration. One jubilee plate has been described as packed with “almost every event and person and notable place of the reign”.³⁹ Another plate featured developments in communications, including the penny post, the Atlantic telegraph, and the telephone.⁴⁰ Designers also piled facts and dates onto souvenirs as decorative elements. A souvenir puzzle, for example, featured an extensive — and barely legible — list of Victorian events in the design, almost as a decorative element.⁴¹ Another entrepreneur offered a

33 Davey and Mannion, *Fifty Years*, p. 16.

34 May and May, *Commemorative Pottery*, p. 74.

35 PRO, LC 2/37, Spinks and Sons Medallists, *Catalogue of Sexagenary Medals* (London, 1897).

36 J. R. S. Whiting, *Commemorative Medals: A Medallic History of Britain from Tudor Times to the Present Day* (Newton Abbot, U.K.: David and Charles, 1972), p. 174. See also Christopher Eimer, *British Commemorative Medals and Their Values* (London: Seaby, 1987).

37 PRO, COPY 1/133, no. 90.

38 *Graphic*, May 26, 1897, pp. 679, 711.

39 May and May, *Commemorative Pottery*, p. 80.

40 Davey and Mannion, *Fifty Years*, p. 19, plate 58.

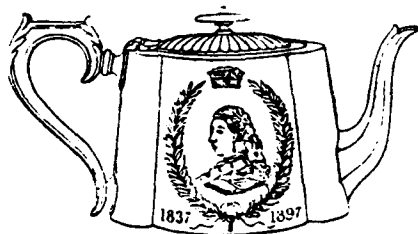
41 PRO, COPY 1/134, no. 163.

JUBILEE HEADQUARTERS.

We offer the opportunity to obtain, at a moderate cost, a beautiful and useful souvenir of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee.



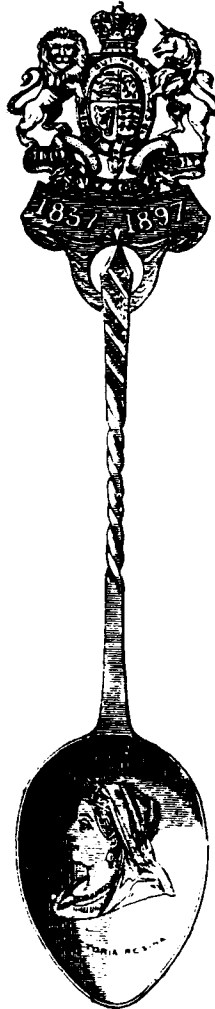
JUBILEE CLOCK. 6 inches high, very attractive appearance.
Our price, carriage free, 15s.



LARGE SIZE JUBILEE TEAPOT. (Our 12-year Silver Plate.) Carriage free, 15s.



JUBILEE BROOCH. Solid Gold, set with 27 real Pearls and 3 real Rose Diamonds.
Our price, 18s. 6d.



JUBILEE SPOON
(Exact size).

THIS YEAR'S SOUVENIR SPOON

POST FREE,
6s. 9d.

DESCRIPTION:
Massive Solid Silver,
Hall-marked, 22-carat
Gold plated Bowl.

We have the largest variety in London of Sterling Silver Souvenir Spoons. The prices are worked out by weight and are in all cases the actual cost price of the silver used plus the smallest possible charge for workmanship.

Our large Catalogue, quoting actual wholesale prices for Watches, Jewellery, and Silver, will be sent to any address.

SEND FOR IT TO-DAY.

Below we print a sample of the many testimonials that reach us for this beautiful spoon:—

From LADY PHILLIMORE,

"I am much pleased with the little Jubilee Spoons, and request that you will send me six more of the same pattern as advertised in the *Graphic* of May 3, in payment of which I enclose £3.

"Shedfield House,
"Botley, Hants.,
"May 14, 1897."

GOODE'S STORES, 184 Oxford St., London.

Figure 1 Advertisement in the Diamond Jubilee Number of the *St. James's Budget*.

portrait of the queen composed entirely of typeface spelling out the important events of her reign.⁴²

In addition to souvenirs offered for purchase independently, many companies included them as premiums or packaging with other products. Biscuit, candy, and tea manufacturers packaged their goods in tins emblazoned with pictures of Victoria.⁴³ Callard and Bowers Butterscotch gave, in addition to a special candy box, a history of the “Victorian Era” written for children.⁴⁴ A furniture company offered its own jubilee incentive to customers: with the purchase of 25 pounds’ worth of furniture the buyer would receive a souvenir diamond jubilee chair decorated with a picture of the queen.⁴⁵ Souvenirs also doubled as advertisements. Dunlop’s Tyres produced a souvenir booklet, *All About the Diamond Jubilee*, which included over 70 pages of jubilee facts, such as how far the money spent on the jubilee would stretch if guinea coins were laid end to end (and how long it would take a Scotsman to collect them all).⁴⁶

Many public agencies and politicians distributed souvenirs. One company encouraged institutions such as Sunday Schools to distribute “Jubilee Medals for Children” as “Lasting Souvenirs”.⁴⁷ Across Britain, city and church officials doled out souvenirs by the thousands; in Leicester the mayor presented 35,000 children with jubilee mugs, while the mayor of Leeds ordered 60,000 large colour portraits of the queen.⁴⁸ In ceremonies such as these, small personal items like mugs carried dual public significance, commemorating both the reign of the queen and the generosity of civic officialdom.

As objects, souvenirs held little intrinsic or practical value; in fact, they were often mundane and cheaply made. The value of souvenirs came from their association with some external place or event. In 1897 manufacturers enticed consumers to buy a mug not because they needed it to drink from, but because of its association with the diamond jubilee.⁴⁹ Events like the diamond jubilee helped establish souvenirs as important commodities. Their new popularity and importance even registered in the language with the

42 British Library, “All About The Diamond Jubilee” in the *Queen Victoria Collection of Pamphlets, etc. Referring to the Diamond Jubilee*, p. 57.

43 For example, the Dalu-Kola Tea Company produced a gold tin embossed with Victoria’s profile (in author’s possession). Richards distinguishes these items from souvenirs, but the lines between the two are blurry. Certainly from the evidence of what is available in flea markets and antique stores, jubilee containers were saved as regularly as were independent souvenirs.

44 *Graphic*, June 1, 1897, p. iv.

45 *Graphic*, May 29, 1897, p. 683.

46 British Library, *Queen Victoria Collection of Pamphlets*.

47 *Illustrated London News*, June 12, 1897, p. 834.

48 *Times*, June 9, 1897, p. 6; May 31, 1897, p. 8.

49 On the souvenir, see Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), pp. 132–145. Thomas Richards also discusses souvenirs in relation to the jubilee of 1887 in *The Commodity Culture*, pp. 93–95.

appearance of such phrases as souvenir-hunter, souvenir-programme, and souvenir-spoon.⁵⁰

Like the souvenir, the diamond jubilee had little intrinsic meaning, so the relationship between the two was reciprocal. Public events such as the diamond jubilee needed to be externally marked as significant; souvenirs were one important sign that this was an occasion to be remembered.⁵¹ To give value to otherwise useless objects, manufacturers and retailers amplified the message that the jubilee was worth commemorating. In ascribing significance onto humble spoons and mugs, they also bestowed meaning onto the diamond jubilee itself.

The souvenir also redefined the experience of public events, offering a new form of participation and engagement. In obtaining mugs or medals, consumers brought into their homes articles inscribed with public significance, which bore “the weight of history”.⁵² The souvenir, however, commemorated private as well as public history: in purchasing a souvenir the consumer marked both the public celebration of the longest reign in British history and some personal — if limited — experience of that event.⁵³ Indeed, to commemorate the reign it was not necessary to attend the jubilee but only to purchase a souvenir.

Souvenirs bore a strong resemblance to another phenomenon of late Victorian culture, the advertisement. In making souvenirs, manufacturers tried to render ordinary items special by linking them with extraordinary events. In advertisements, late Victorian manufacturers and advertising agents attempted to accomplish a similar task, associating particular commodities with broader cultural meanings.

Advertising was integral to the development of late-nineteenth-century consumer culture.⁵⁴ With national publications and large-run colour posters as primary media, manufacturers began to spend more money and effort, often engaging advertising agents, to create widespread recognition of their brands. One method advertisers used was to link their products with familiar images. In particular, the longstanding practice of associating products with royalty through the use of the royal warrant was extended to unofficial

50 *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). Thomas Richards suggests in reference to the first jubilee that “Queen Victoria was the great-grandmother not only of miniature Washington monuments and piggy banks of the Statue of Liberty but of ... honorific portraits of the eternal Elvis.” Richards, *The Commodity Culture*, p. 88.

51 Dean MacCannell makes this point about tourist sites in his study of leisure and tourism, *The Tourist: A New Theory of Leisure and Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), pp. 43–48.

52 Richards, *The Commodity Culture*, p. 94.

53 Susan Stewart suggests that a souvenir authenticates the experience of the spectator and that “the souvenir moves history into private time” in *On Longing*, pp. 134–138.

54 See Richards, *The Commodity Culture*; T. R. Nevett, *Advertising in Britain* (London: Heinemann — Advertising History Trust, 1982); Lori Ann Loeb, *Consuming Angels: Advertising and Victorian Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Robert Opie, *Rule Britannia* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Viking, 1985); Diana and Geoffrey Hindley, *Advertising in Victorian England, 1837–1901* (London: Wayland, 1972).



Figure 2 Advertisement in the *Daily Graphic*'s Queen's Diamond Jubilee Number, June 1, 1897.

depictions. In the 1880s this practice became commonplace when advertisers began to use images of Victoria and other well-known figures to sell their products.⁵⁵ In 1897 a huge number of advertisers used the image of the queen, the crown, and the diamond jubilee to sell cocoa, soap, beverages, cereal, paint, polish, tires, and more.

Advertisers employed a diverse range of approaches. Many ads suggested that the queen favoured specific products, such as one for Cooke's Soap declaring that "royalty cannot buy anything than the best!"⁵⁶ Others took a humorous approach; an ad for Golfer's Oats suggested that there were two "safeguards of the constitution", the queen and a regular diet of oats.⁵⁷ Many manufacturers associated their products with the length of Victoria's reign. In doing so they tried to invest brand names with both the stability and progress associated with her tenure on the throne. A magazine advertisement for paint, for instance, showed the improvements in paint manufacture and hailed "sixty years evolution in decorative art" (see Figure 2). In ads such as this, advertisers presented specific commodities as the apothe-

⁵⁵ Richards, *The Commodity Culture*, chap. 2. Richards argues that in 1887 the advertisers began using an image of Victoria as "consumer queen". However, this was only one among many images of the queen, and it had appeared prior to 1887. Lori Loeb briefly discusses Victoria in advertisements in *Consuming Angels*, pp. 85–86.

⁵⁶ *St. James Budget Diamond Jubilee Number*, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Nevitt, *Advertising in Britain*, pp. 114–115.

osis of progress and tried to endow them with public history and significance.

Many advertisers also tried to give commodities public significance by using imperial and patriotic imagery, which was common in advertising by the 1890s. The same ad that touted the progress of paint technology featured a portrait of the queen set against the Union Jack. The copywriter cleverly associated the product and the flag with the slogan “the finest colours in the world”. Another typical advertisement was for Fry’s Cocoa and featured a medallion portrait of the queen surrounded by flags of the empire.⁵⁸

Although diamond jubilee advertisements appeared most frequently in middle-class pictorial magazines, few people would have escaped some exposure to jubilee images on posters and packaging.⁵⁹ Like souvenirs, advertisements were integral to the experience and meaning of the diamond jubilee. By using royal and imperial imagery, advertisers hoped that the excitement around the celebrations would rub off onto their products. At the same time advertisers lent their “puffery” to the spectacle; as they advertised their products, they inevitably advertised the diamond jubilee as well.

Newspaper and magazine publishers also used the jubilee to sell their products. In the rapidly growing and competitive newspaper market of the 1890s, publishers found in the diamond jubilee a perfect opportunity for self-promotion. Papers with a range of political opinions and appealing to diverse audiences accorded extensive coverage to the jubilee. Even *Reynolds News*, whose editorial columns derided the “Toadies’ Jubilee”, covered the official events in full detail.⁶⁰ Most major newspapers and pictorial magazines published special commemorative numbers filled with reviews of the reign, accounts of the queen’s life, colour portraits, and many illustrations of the celebrations. Papers tried to outdo each other with the lavishness of their special numbers: the *Daily Mail* printed its special issue entirely in gold ink, and pictorial magazines each boasted that their coverage was the most thorough and elaborate.⁶¹ The *Illustrated London News*, for example, described its “record number of a record reign” as a “veritable edition deluxe” which would surpass “all other Special Numbers that have been previously published”.⁶²

The newspapers themselves ensured that the jubilee was news well in advance of the official events. Weeks prior to the procession they devoted regular columns, such as one titled “Diamond Jubilees”, to the prepara-

58 *Illustrated London News*, June 12, 1897, p. 832.

59 Robert Roberts describes the place of advertisements in working-class youths’ lives: “one soaked in information of every kind from posters and advertisements.” Roberts, *The Classic Slum* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), p. 134.

60 *Reynolds News*, May 23 and June 12, 20, 22, and 23, 1897.

61 Alfred Harmsworth, “The Diamond Jubilee Celebrations” in Herbert Maxwell, *Sixty Years A Queen* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1897), pp. 191–239, p. 238.

62 *Illustrated London News*, June 9, 1897, p. 854.

tions for the day.⁶³ By granting such extensive coverage, the press implied that the jubilee was a significant event. This claim was amplified in the content of their reporting. Journalists marshalled copious — and sometimes trivial — facts about the empire, the life and reign of the queen, and the diamond jubilee itself to demonstrate the importance of the day. Their coverage of official events teemed with superlatives; the *Times*, for instance, reported that “a military and Royal procession of unparalleled grandeur has successfully made an unexampled progress through the greatest city of the world.” The reporter continued, “in a word, it is no exaggeration to say that from the beginning to the end this unique celebration was perfect in itself.”⁶⁴ Even before the celebrations began, *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* predicted that the crowds would see a “spectacle conveying an idea of the military glory of our great empire and a gorgeous pageant proclaiming its wealth and pomp.”⁶⁵

Editors matched this effusive language with extravagant visual presentation. Where one illustration might convey a scene, the pictorial press offered pages of photographs as well as elaborate allegorical drawings. Souvenir editions overflowed with pictures. A typical page in the *Illustrated London News* “Extra Diamond Jubilee Number” features three scenes from the queen’s life, surrounded by an ornate border containing twelve medallion portraits of statesmen of her reign.⁶⁶ Even the regular press offered its own pictorial accomplishments: the *Daily Mail* boasted that one of its drawings was the “largest news illustration ever published by any daily paper in this country.”⁶⁷

With hyperbolic coverage, which echoed the style of advertising, journalists built up a sense of excitement about the day.⁶⁸ Some newspapers and magazines, however, went beyond reporting on events and positioned themselves as participants in the diamond jubilee. The *Daily Mail*, for instance, led a campaign to secure the visiting colonial troops better arrangements than had been provided by the government.⁶⁹ The *Telegraph* became involved early in the jubilee year, before the official plans were even set. In March, allegedly at the suggestion of one of its readers, the paper carried out a campaign to have the queen telegraph a greeting to all the colonial

63 “Diamond Jubilees” ran in the *Daily Mail*. The *Times* also ran a regular jubilee column beginning in May.

64 *Times*, June 23, 1897, p. 9.

65 *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, June 20, 1897, p. 5.

66 *Illustrated London News: Her Majesty’s Glorious Diamond Jubilee*, plates 9, 10, 11.

67 *Daily Mail*, June 23, 1897, p. 7.

68 In her examination of the opening of Selfridges in 1909, Erika Rappaport notes the important role journalists played in creating interest in the store and in shaping ideas about consumer culture in general. Rappaport, “‘A New Era Of Shopping’: The Promotion of Women’s Pleasure in London’s West End, 1909–1914” in Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds., *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 130–155.

69 After publishing letters and editorials critical of the government’s treatment of visiting troops, the paper claimed credit when arrangements were changed. *Daily Mail*, June 17, 1897, p. 5.

capitals on jubilee day.⁷⁰ The organizers adopted this proposal, and it became an important element in the jubilee events.⁷¹ By becoming active in these preparations publishers astutely represented themselves as champions of empire and as participants in the celebrations.

In addition to souvenir publications of major periodicals, Londoners could choose from scores of smaller, cheap publications as well as expensive commemorative books. Independent authors and publishing houses produced jubilee publications ranging from expensive leather-bound biographies, to cheap sheets of poetry, to official and unofficial programmes of events. Publishers believed that such items would be very profitable: one publisher hoped to sell two million copies of a souvenir programme.⁷² Other publications attached the jubilee name to special causes. Temperance activists, for instance, produced a “Diamond Jubilee Thermometer of Life” broadsheet.⁷³ Most, however, focused on the jubilee and on the life and reign of the queen. Over and over again, biographers told the story of her life, and poets praised her virtues. Like other souvenirs, these publications signalled the importance of the celebrations. They also gave spectators texts in which to read about the official and unofficial components of the spectacle.

By the time spectators assembled to view the procession on June 22, it was unlikely that anyone in London had avoided some contact with the “jubilosity of the jubilee”. Instead, the various elements of the spectacle were likely experienced in overlapping combinations. Working- and middle-class Londoners could purchase souvenirs, decorate their homes with jubilee paraphernalia, read poems in the press, or take in a jubilee show. Even the poorest Londoners might see the queen’s face plastered on outdoor walls. It was in the accumulation of these images, experiences, and products that the spectacle of the diamond jubilee took shape.

In producing jubilee products and images, publishers, manufacturers, and theatrical producers tried to inscribe commercial enterprises with a significance which would appear to transcend the commercial sphere. In doing so, they also assigned meanings to the jubilee. By shaping narratives and choosing images, they — alongside official organizers — co-produced the spectacle. Notably, the producers of the jubilee celebrated images of progress and prosperity and of imperial strength. Above all, however, they used images of Victoria, who, as the embodiment of virtue and simplicity, gave to the spectacle a sense of underlying significance. Each of these themes had a political cast, and certainly the diamond jubilee celebrated Britain, the monarchy, and the empire. At the same time, however, each theme and image was deeply connected to the forms of consumer culture.

70 The scheme was first mentioned in the *Telegraph* on March 29, 1897.

71 PRO, Home Office Minute, B21471 A18.

72 PRO, LC 2/137, letter from William Deverick to Lord Chamberlain, May 1, 1897. Deverick and other publishers wrote to the Lord Chamberlain anxious to get the details of the celebrations.

73 British Library, *Queen Victoria Collection of Pamphlets*.

The connections to consumer culture are most obviously apparent in the overall style of the jubilee, which was characterized by hyperbole and excess. The “‘jubilousity of the jubilee’” exemplified the sensational and boastful style of the late-nineteenth-century journalist, the advertising agent, and the showman: everything about the jubilee and the queen’s reign was described as the biggest, the best, or the most. In images and in texts, superlatives and details were piled up to show that the jubilee was the apotheosis of progress and prosperity. Journalists portrayed the 60-year reign of Victoria as the period of the greatest technological, economic, and social progress in British history. It was the “‘Record Reign’” not only in length but in achievements; that this was so was demonstrated through charts, allegories, facts, and illustrations. Newspaper and advertising copy and souvenirs listed inventions, reforms, discoveries, and increases in prosperity. With this hyperbole, the producers of the jubilee spectacle reiterated a central myth of late-nineteenth-century consumer culture: that abundance had been achieved.⁷⁴

With their hyperbolic style, the producers of the jubilee also trumpeted imperial strength and unity. In this aspect, commercial and political motives meshed easily. Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain had proposed inviting colonial troops to participate in the jubilee in the hopes that their appearance would spur interest in the empire.⁷⁵ In the scheme of the civil servants who executed the official jubilee plans, however, the colonial contingent remained a secondary component of the festivities. It was commercial involvement that made the visiting soldiers — and the theme of imperial unity — more visible in the spectacle.⁷⁶ Journalists and writers of souvenir publications placed the expansion of the empire prominently in the story of the queen’s reign and illustrated it with charts and maps. Advertisers and manufacturers used imperial regalia, as well as the image of Victoria, to embellish their products; an advertisement for Sunlight Soap surrounds the queen with the crests of the settler colonies (see Figure 3). By trying to involve themselves in the planning of the diamond jubilee, newspapers like the *Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* helped raise the profile of the imperial element in the celebrations.

The enthusiasm of writers and entrepreneurs for the imperial aspect of the jubilee is not surprising. By 1897 the empire was already a saleable commodity. In the 1890s publishers produced hundreds of imperial stories, music hall owners staged military adventures and jingoist entertainment, and advertisers began to use images of explorers, Africans, soldiers, and imperial

74 Richards discusses the “‘myth of the achieved society’” as a key part of commodity culture in *The Commodity Culture*, p. 66. See also Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

75 PRO, CO 323/421, Colonial Office Memorandum, January 14, 1897.

76 For a discussion of the representation of the colonial troops, see Smith, “‘Constructing Victoria’”.



Figure 3 Advertisement for Sunlight Soap, showing the queen's portraits surrounded by crests of the empire's colonies.

regalia in advertisements for soap and other household products.⁷⁷ This reflected a political climate in which educators, propagandists, and politicians increasingly tried to inculcate the English, including the working class, with nationalist and imperial values.⁷⁸ It also reflected, however, the complex way in which images of empire were domesticated and commodified within consumer culture.⁷⁹

The multiple uses and meanings of imperial imagery are revealed in repeated representations of a regal Queen Victoria surrounded by her cheering troops. Pictorial magazines used this scene, which never actually

77 John MacKenzie pioneered the study of imperial products and advertisements; he examines this material, however, within a narrow framework of propaganda. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). See also Mackenzie, ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture*; Richards, "Selling Darkest Africa" in *The Commodity Culture*, pp. 119–167; Anne McClintock, "Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising" in *Imperial Leather* (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 132–180.

78 Stephen Heathorn, "'Let Us Remember That We, Too, Are British': Constructions of Citizenship and National Identity in English Reading Books, 1880–1914", *Victorian Studies*, vol. 38, no. 3 (Spring 1995), pp. 395–428.

79 McClintock notes that "by the end of the century, a stream of imperial bric-a-brac had invaded Victorian homes" in "Soft Soaping Empire", p. 219. Richards argues that "these contrivances removed Empire from the domain of political struggle by moving it into the home ... where it became an unthreatening decorative fixture." Richards, "Selling Darkest Africa", p. 134.

occurred, as a visual allegory for the diamond jubilee (see Figure 4). Likewise, in prose and poetry, writers related the story of the diamond jubilee as the coming together of all the empire's peoples "to lay the tribute of their loving homage at the footstool of the noblest of monarchs".⁸⁰ With this image, writers portrayed the empire as unified by love not arms, as chivalrous soldiers rallied around the mother queen. It was also an image easily used by advertisers, who were fond of depicting men of different races or nationalities proclaiming one product's superiority. In one jubilee ad, colonial men toasted the unseen queen with glasses of "The Favourite Drink of the British Empire"⁸¹ (see Figure 5). Here, the men signify the empire, but also, perhaps, the manufacturers' hopeful vision of the extent of the mass market. Finally, this imagined assembly of troops, a tableau perfectly suited to the visually spectacular style of commercial entertainment, was the climax to many music hall shows. The South London Music Hall's jubilee show, for example, ended with "one of the grandest sights ever witnessed upon a variety stage" as the queen sat on her throne, "surrounded by her sons in arms around the world".⁸²

The regal, enthroned queen sitting at the centre of her troops bore little resemblance to the real Victoria, who had a marked aversion to the trappings of royalty. Yet artists, sculptors, and producers turned again and again to a regal Victoria to convey a sense of imperial power and glory and to make the queen visually spectacular. This queen, however, was only one image of Victoria celebrated in the diamond jubilee. The other — domestic, womanly, and virtuous — was equally important to the spectacle and to consumer culture.

The image of the queen as a good woman of simple tastes was commonplace by 1897, having been constructed in a variety of media over a long period, most notably in the 1880s and 1890s.⁸³ By the diamond jubilee, the narrative of her life was so widely known that the most common visual image of the jubilee — paired portraits of the queen in 1837 and in 1897 — related at a glance both the public history of her reign and the private story of her life. The latter, repeated in souvenir publications and jubilee poetry, told of the young queen who found domestic happiness with her prince and children and was widowed at the age of 40. Popular writers

80 *Graphic*, June 26, 1897, p. 782.

81 *Daily Graphic*, June 30, 1897, p. 18. For examples of other ads using similar images, see Opie, *Rule Britannia*, p. 15.

82 *Reynolds News*, February 28, 1897, p. 5. Although this image was depicted on the stage, in the press, and in advertisements, I have not found a similar image on manufactured souvenirs. This suggests that the imperial theme was only one among many celebrated by the jubilee. It also may reflect the fact that in the early stages of planning, when manufacturers went into production, the emphasis on the empire had not yet emerged.

83 See Smith, "Constructing Victoria"; Adrienne Munich, *Queen Victoria's Secrets* (New York: Columbia University, 1996); Dorothy Thompson, *Queen Victoria: Gender and Power* (London: Virago, 1990).



Figure 4 Illustration on the front page of *The Illustrated London News*, June 26, 1897.

The Favourite Drink of the British Empire!

MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS

FOR MAKING NON-INTOXICATING BEER.



'The Queen'

WONDERFUL! A 6d. Bottle of this Extract will make **EIGHT GALLONS OF SPLENDID BEER.** Try it!

The Best Beverage to take with your Meals.

IMPORTANT TESTIMONIAL FROM A STATION MASTER.

"Dear Sirs,—I have been using your Extract of Herbs the last ten months or so, and I have derived great benefit from it. All my life I suffered much from Indigestion, but since the first time I used your Extract I have not had a single touch of it, and am over 71 years of age. Yours truly, JAMES LYCROFT,
Church Rd. West, Hanwell, W. (Station Master at Clitheroe in 1852 and at Ross, Hereford, 1865 to 1885.)"

If unable to obtain it in your neighbourhood send nine Stamps for Sample Bottle, or Samples of both Wine Essence and Extract of Herbs Post Free for 15 Stamps. Sole Makers:

NEWBALL & MASON, NOTTINGHAM, Makers of Mason's Wine Essences & Mason's Coffee Essence.

Figure 5 Advertisement in the *Daily Graphic*, June 30, 1897.

contended that her sorrow at Albert's death increased her capacity for sympathy to an almost superhuman level, enabling her to become a compassionate mother to all her subjects. Her heart was one which listened 'to the world's distress', while her voice spoke

... as never monarch spoke,
With power to soothe the wound, to lift the yoke,
To still the sting...⁸⁴

Illustrators depicted the queen's womanly virtue, showing her enjoying the pleasure of family in her own home and comforting her subjects in their humble cottages (see Figure 6).

This image of Victoria as a domestic, virtuous woman was an integral component of the spectacle of the diamond jubilee. Even the regal image of the queen surrounded by her troops rested on the assumption that there was a sympathetic bond between the motherly queen and her subjects. Advertisers used imperial imagery to glorify their products, but they also used images of Victoria in the home to associate commodities with the values of domesticity (see Figure 7). While manufacturers rarely decorated souvenirs with domestic scenes, they often alluded to the queen's domesticity by including illustrations of several of her homes.

More generally, the image of Victoria as a virtuous woman lent a sense of worthiness to the diamond jubilee. In the official procession the queen's appearance was decidedly ordinary: she refused state regalia, travelled in a plain carriage, wore a black dress, and, rather than a sceptre, she carried a white parasol. Yet, rather than detracting from the spectacle, the tension between the colourful procession and the dowdy queen was used by commentators to suggest a sobriety and significance beneath the pomp:

You didn't want to look at the glittering uniforms now, nor yet at the bright gowns or young faces.... You couldn't look at anybody but the Queen.... Almost pathetic, if you will, that small black figure in the middle of these shining cavaliers, this great army, this roaring multitude — but also very glorious.⁸⁵

Journalists repeatedly described the queen as a counterpoint to the finery around her. Her power, it was suggested, came not from the crown or from any external sign but from her virtue; she was, in the words of a contemporary, "the embodiment of moral goodness".⁸⁶ This widespread belief

84 Cosmo Monkhouse, "To Our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria", *Illustrated London News*, June 26, 1897, p. 874.

85 Quoted in Harmsworth, "The Diamond Jubilee Celebrations", p. 208.

86 L. A. Law, *Victoria the Great and Good: An Essay on the Diamond Jubilee* (London: Elliot Stock, 1897), pp. 5–6.



Figure 6 "Sympathy", painted by G. Grenville Manton, in the Diamond Jubilee Number, June 22, 1897.

PABST
MILWAUKEE

The Jubilee.

The grand Jubilee recognition by the people of England and the people of the world has as its underlying principle not only the patriotism of the British Nation but that noble feeling recognition of the glory of her history. The Queen's long reign, during which she has borne the cares of state as well as the heaviest burdens which can be piled to right or left. While it is our duty to get the lesson which the well ordered life teaches us. Let us also endeavor to elaborate our own duties. Let us learn to hold in check the feverish haste which is one of the evils of the growing materiality of the world.

Let us go forward with calm minds and calm hearts, our strength and take the best opportunity to correct those habits of life which lead to exhausted vitality. Let us combine two elements, rest and moderate exercise on the one hand, and the use of some nourishing, invigorating, strengthening food product as an addition to the amount of life to add to our constitution. In this fighting the battles of life, taking health and strength and those who like the Princess Queen have taught the world that a strong physique, a strong mind and a happy contented heart.

Pabst's Malted Food is the food which is needed and available and it builds, reconstructs, calms the mind, adds together the various forces and activities and life where the process are taking.

1837 1897

ASK FOR "PABST"

HOME LIFE OF QUEEN VICTORIA

Figure 7 Advertisement in *The Illustrated London News*, Extra Diamond Jubilee Number, 1897.

supplied the contrived and commercial spectacle with a melodramatic, solemn undercurrent.⁸⁷ Melodrama was still a mainstay of commercial entertainment and, more generally, permeated many aspects of popular and commercial culture.⁸⁸ While the diamond jubilee lacked the villains and class conflict of stage melodrama, it shared an emphasis on virtue. Indeed, Peter Brooks's description of melodrama as a "spectacular homage to virtue" aptly describes the jubilee.⁸⁹ Its great lesson, in the words of *Vanity Fair*, was about "goodness and purity and its reward".⁹⁰

The melodramatic aspect of the jubilee depended on a sense of intimacy between the spectators and the queen, an intimacy which derived from the nature of the queen's fame. Like the diamond jubilee itself, Victoria was a product of the emerging consumer culture. The growth of mass media and entertainment fostered the creation of celebrities, such as music hall performers and military heroes, who were widely known by the consuming public.⁹¹ Victoria's celebrity was the construction of both officialdom and popular commercial culture. As perhaps the most famous living figure of her time, her image circulated worldwide in illustrations, on stage, in photographs, on film, and on products as well as in official portraits on stamps, coins, and statuary. It was not only the extent of her fame that was significant, however, but the content. In a highly competitive marketplace the lives and images of public figures were saleable commodities. Publishers, entertainment producers, and advertising agents all shaped the images of celebrities to fit popular conventions, emphasizing the personal, the sensational, the melodramatic, and the heroic. Public figures, including Victoria, were given personas, which made them human and accessible while keeping them untouchable.

Victoria's celebrity was enhanced by the diamond jubilee, as her image was reproduced on hundreds of commodities and advertisements. At the same time, the diamond jubilee depended on her celebrity: in the image of the good queen, the producers of the jubilee found a symbol of apparent significance which could prop up the hyperbole and excess. Her quality of being both known and beloved, as well as removed and exalted, resonated

87 Peter Brooks writes that in melodrama "good and evil are highly personalized" and inhabit people who, like the imagined Victoria, "have no psychological complexity but are strongly characterized". Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 16. Elaine Hadley discusses melodramatic rhetoric in Victoria's reign in *Melodramatic Tactics: Theatricalized Dissent in the English Marketplace, 1800–1880* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), especially pp. 171–179.

88 See Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

89 Brooks, *Melodramatic Imagination*, pp. 25–26.

90 *Vanity Fair*, June 24, 1897, p. 462.

91 Peter Bailey argues that the increased commercialization of the music halls was accompanied by the growth of the star system. The introduction of set show schedules and a formal stage removed the performer further from the audience, while producers began to promote their popular performers as characters both off and on stage. Bailey, *Leisure*, pp. 151–152.

throughout the spectacle. During the procession, one journalist imagined the private and public meanings she had for spectators:

Tears were very near the eyes of Her Majesty's loyal subjects and friends as the remembrance of what she is and has been — of the joys and sorrows she has endured — came back to them, ... and many a man and woman on the vast concourse felt a thrill of that inspiring enthusiasm which fires the heroes who die for Queen and country.⁹²

The journalist ascribed to the crowd a sentimental attachment stemming from intimate knowledge of the queen's life, which then translated into patriotic enthusiasm. Whether the latter was the case is a matter for debate, but it is likely that this affection for the queen translated into the desire to buy souvenirs and other items emblazoned with her likeness. More generally, reverence for Victoria gave to the mugs, advertising posters, and music hall shows, as well as the official procession, a sense of public importance. The jubilee had little intrinsic significance; even in the most exaggerated coverage journalists remained vague when discussing the celebration's "true meaning".⁹³ Yet in the marketplace of images, the contrasting elements — the excessive celebration of abundance, the imperial flourishes, and the simple queen — combined to create what one paper called a "pathetic, a noble and a hopeful spectacle".⁹⁴ While there were those who criticized the jubilee, their voices had little impact.⁹⁵ Perhaps this was because the coherence of it and other mass spectacles derived not from political logic but from the exigencies and energy of consumer culture.

92 "Marguerite on the Jubilee", *Penny Illustrated Paper*, June 26, 1897, p. 420.

93 *Times*, June 23, 1897, p. 9.

94 *Telegraph*, June 19, p. 8.

95 The jubilee was criticized by radicals and republicans, but its most noted critic was Rudyard Kipling, whose "Recessional" warned against forgetting the work of empire amidst the celebration.