

Introduction

Marianne North was one of the most prominent botanical painters and plant hunters of the nineteenth century as well as a pioneering global traveler. However, despite North's recognised importance as a botanical painter, plant hunter and traveler, relatively little of any critical/analytical substance has been written about her life and work from an art-historical or, indeed, scientific perspective. North's paintings were greatly admired during her own lifetime by eminent scientists such as Charles Darwin and Sir Joseph Hooker. Hooker, who was director of Kew Gardens at the opening of the gallery built to house a comprehensive collection of North's work there in the early 1880s, considered North's paintings to be extremely important to the botanical community. He wrote in the preface to the North Gallery's catalogue that it is 'not possible to overrate [the North Gallery's] interest and instructiveness in connection with the contents of the gardens, plant-houses, and museums at Kew' [Hemsley North Gallery Catalogue 1886: Preface].¹ North's work as a botanical painter was also championed during her lifetime by a number of fellow artists. One of these was the Australian botanical painter Ellis Rowan, whose work was, in the view of Rowan's biographer Patricia Fullerton, influenced strongly by North's own working methods. Furthermore, North was given personal encouragement by the painter Frederic Edwin Church of the Hudson River School, who not only took an avid interest in North's

¹ Hooker could easily have taken a different position in relation to the North Gallery. At the time of the North Gallery's opening in 1882, Hooker had decided to produce his second addition of Steudel's *Nomenclator Botanicus* (1840), which, he believed, required drastic revision [Desmond 1998: p.262]. These revisions would have been highly time-consuming. Hooker also had other responsibilities as Kew's archive was continuing to grow. Among other things, Hooker faced the task of having to detail the contents of the India museum's ethnobotanical material and over 3,000 flower drawings by Indian artists [Desmond 1998: p.260]. The North Gallery with its multiple references to flora and wood and numerous unnamed species to be catalogued, presented a great deal of additional work for Hooker and his team of botanists.

paintings, but also shared with her his extensive knowledge of the North American landscape.

In contrast, towards the end of the nineteenth century and throughout much of the twentieth century North's work was often described in distinctly mixed if not negative terms. W.B. Hemsley, a friend and colleague of North's at Kew Gardens, wrote in vol. 28 of *The Journal of Botany* in 1890, that 'her painting was a natural gift'. At the same time, Hemsley made it clear that he did not think of North as a botanist as 'she never attempted to master the technicalities of systematic botany' [Sheffield 2001: p.85]. According to Wilfred Blunt and William T. Stearn writing in 1950 in *The Art of Botanical Illustration*, North's contribution was notable because of her discoveries and portrayal of species new to science. However, in Blunt and Stearn's view, the quality of North's paintings as well as the manner of their display within the North Gallery was, from an artistic point of view, 'displeasing' [Blunt and Stearn 2000: p.277]. These sentiments were repeated by Blunt in his book *In for a Penny*, where North's work is described as 'unattractive' [Blunt 1978: p.185]. Writing in 1980 in his book *A Vision of Eden*, Anthony Huxley echoed Blunt's lukewarm opinion by asserting that many of the plants depicted by North were 'barely known botanically or horticulturally when North painted them', but that the quality of North's painting was open to question as it had shown 'little change throughout her period of travel'.

Writers did not begin to show any significant art-historical interest in North's work until the late 1980s. In 1989, Dea Birkett gave an account of North's work in her book *Spinsters Abroad*, which describes the activities of a number of nineteenth-century itinerant women artists. Birkett also wrote positively about North's work in relation to that of twentieth-century female artists in an article for *The New York*

Times in 1992. North's paintings were acknowledged subsequently in chapter fourteen of Lionel Lambourne's *Victorian Painters* in 1999, but only in passing as part of a consideration of the wider contribution of women to the development of Victorian painting. In 2005, Lambourne also made a brief reference to North in his book *Japonisme*. However, Lambourne's reference to North, which concentrates on her travels in Japan, lacks any detailed consideration of North's paintings in relation to the wider context of their making and showing during the nineteenth century. Within all of these texts there is little or no analysis of North's work from the point of view of visual art practice.

Writers coming at North from a botanical rather than an art-historical perspective since the late 1980s include Laura Ponsonby (previously of Kew's Education Centre), whose book *Marianne North at Kew Gardens* was published in 1990 to coincide with the centenary of North's death. This book, which was republished by Kew Gardens in 2000, presents a conscientious biographical account of North's life and work based largely on readings of North's diaries. Ponsonby's book is one of three that draw heavily on North's diaries. The others are *A Vision of Eden* by Huxley and Susan Morgan's *Recollections of a Happy Life Being the Autobiography of Marianne North*, a reflective feminist reading of North's diaries published in 1993.

Judith McKay in *Ellis Rowan: a Flower Hunter in Queensland* (1990) and Patricia Fullerton in *The Flower Hunter Ellis Rowan* (2002) also assess North's work from a botanical point of view, but only as part of writings about the botanical paintings of Rowan, the Australian flower hunter and friend of North. Ray Desmond, the one-time Senior Librarian at Kew Gardens, makes passing reference to North within his revised history of Kew Gardens first published in 1995. Desmond considers

that there are direct similarities between North's work and that of the twentieth-century botanical illustrator Margaret Mee (1909-1988) [Desmond 1998: Plate 24, no page number given]. In 2007, Mee and North were exhibited in separate rooms at the Mona Bismarck Foundation in Paris. In the exhibition catalogue, *Exploratrices Intrépides*, their work is described as 'disparate'. However, there is also an acknowledgement of connecting themes including 'conservation, discovery and a driving need to record observations' [Stiff 2007: p.1].

The lack of art-historical attention to North during much of the twentieth century is almost certainly due to the ascendancy of Modernist art and its related theories at the end of the nineteenth century. Formalist aesthetics associated with European and North American modernism involved an explicit rejection of Victorian stylistic eclecticism. During the 1980s, postmodernism ushered in a shift in aesthetic sensibilities that sparked renewed interest in the significance of North's work from distinctly non-formalist post-colonialist and feminist perspectives. The contemporary vision of a postmodernist history is associated strongly with the figure of the subaltern, and therefore with the domination and displacement of the *other* as a female and/or post-colonial subject. Society and culture under colonialism are salient features of North's writings and paintings. Because of her privileged social status, North received numerous letters of introduction that not only gave her safe passage around the world but also hospitality in far-flung outposts of empire. North was, for example, a guest in the house of arch-colonialists Charles and Margaret Brookes, who were the Raj and Rani of Sarawak (now Malaysia/Singapore). North stated in her diaries that she much preferred to be involved with local life than that of colonialist society. North's diaries include numerous recollections of indigenous peoples she met on her travels, some of which are nakedly prejudicial and some of which are

sympathetic. In some of her paintings North depicted the effects of industrialisation on colonised spaces and in her diaries she registered the impact on local plant life of importations of non-indigenous plants by European scientists such as Dr. Lund in Brazil. It is therefore possible to place North's writings and paintings convincingly in relation to a wider history of nineteenth-century colonialist/imperialist domination.

Barbara T. Gates' book *Kindred Nature* (1989), Marion Tingling's *Women into the Unknown* (1989) and Susan Morgan's *Place Matters* (1993) all include chapters on North from a post-colonialist view point, focusing largely on North's published travel writings rather than on her paintings. Other writers have taken a more gender-based/feminist approach towards the analysis of North's work; for example, Monica Anderson's *Limina A Monumental Autobiography: Marianne North's Gallery at Kew Gardens*, 2003, which focuses on the construction of the North gallery at Kew but which does not do so in any great analytical depth. Pat Hirsch also mentions North briefly in a chapter of a biography on Barbara Bodichon, the radical early feminist, professional artist, traveler, and friend of North, which was published in 1998. Other instances of gender-based/feminist writing on North can be found on web sites. Consider, for example, Helena Wojtczak's contribution to *The Victorian Web*, 2005 which indicates that North did not write at length about the indigenous people she came across during her travels.

Another writer who adopts a feminist perspective on North's work is Suzanne Le-May Sheffield. Sheffield's book *Revealing Worlds: Three Victorian Women Naturalists* of 2001 is the only published work so far that not only presents a substantial critical analysis of North's position as a nineteenth-century woman traveler and painter, but that also alludes directly to North's marrying of science and art through her paintings. Indeed, Sheffield identifies the key conceptual starting point

for this present thesis, which is that North's paintings can be understood to occupy an uncertain position as contributions to both art and science.

North's place as a contributor to nineteenth-century science is widely recognised. Her artwork nevertheless remains problematic to both botanists and art historians. North's work has been consigned to a visual limbo with no clear sense of containment within any particular genre or canon. Botanical writers, such as Huxley, writing in *A Vision of Eden*, and Blunt, writing in *In for a Penny*, have condemned North's paintings as unsufficiently scientific records while upholding her importance as a plant hunter. Furthermore, North has not achieved widespread acceptance as an artist either institutionally or as part of art-historical narratives. Sheffield, hints at this uncertainty by stating that North has been referred to as a flower painter, a botanical illustrator and a botanist while concluding that she can best be described as a botanical artist [Sheffield 2001: p.7].

Despite Sheffield's description of North's work as a marriage of art and science, her writing does not offer any close critical analysis of North's working practices as a painter, nor of her paintings from a specifically visual analytical standpoint. Instead, Sheffield's writing is largely informed by historiographic trends relating to the history of science and gender [Sheffield 2001: p.5] that take her rather more towards the reading of literary texts than a close consideration of visual working practices and techniques of visual display. Consequently, while Sheffield makes reference to differences between scientific and botanical drawing practices, she does not substantiate her position through careful readings of actual paintings by North. What is more, Sheffield says very little of any substance about the North gallery as an actual site of public display, preferring to discuss the gallery only in broad conceptual terms. Sheffield does make reference to the relationship between North's work and

photography. However, Sheffield again falls short of any close reading of actual visual texts, asserting without any substantial justification that photography played little or no part in the making of North's paintings. Sheffield's view of North as a contributor to both art and science can therefore be seen as somewhat underwrought from the point of view of visual art practice. This thesis will attempt to show through a close analysis of North's paintings from the point of view of visual art practice and of the North gallery as a site of public visual display that while North's work does straddle the fields of art and science it is in practice an assured contributor to neither and, as such, a deconstructive supplement to both.

This reassessment of North's paintings comes from the position of a researcher who is also a practicing artist and a trained botanical illustrator. From this position it is possible to highlight with practical insight North's combined application of high art practice, botanical illustration techniques and, as it will be argued, composite approaches to image making based on the use of photographic materials. This combination of approaches marks North out as a problematic figure whose work sits uneasily in relation to the established scientific and artistic conventions of the nineteenth century.

North's work is problematic because it did and still does not conform to the established conventions of botanical painting. Ultimately, North did not, or could not produce botanical paintings with the empirical exactness required by the nineteenth-century scientific community. Instead, she produced works with the semblance of botanical exactitude that also drew upon the conventions of nineteenth-century high art practice. What is more, it will be argued here that she also drew upon a prevailing nineteenth-century tendency towards combinatory uses of visual materials, including

photographic sources that presages the use of collage-montage as part of fine art practice during the twentieth century.

Drawing is not a singular practice. It is a means that has been developed and redeveloped for numerous purposes including high art and empirical modes of representation. Drawing is not simply the application of a pencil to paper. It is also implicated in the acts of painting, sculpture and design. Differences in drawing style relate to differing lineages of thought and practice. An understanding of these lineages is crucial to the reading of applied drawing languages.

North's paintings present viewers with contrasting approaches to drawing. The separation of these approaches is necessary if we are to read her paintings with any degree of insight. Artists read pictures differently. The artist, instead of reading words on a page, reads marks as well as compositional techniques and representational systems concerned with space, colour, textural juxtaposition and tonal contrast. The combination of these elements can be understood to make up a particular visual language. Botanical illustration and painting involve a topological approach towards representation, whereby depicted form and space are flattened out so that botanists can read visual information quickly and clearly. North's work, which deploys elements of visual representation common to high art practice of the nineteenth century, does not confirm exactly to this expectation.

This dissertation will draw attention to North's combined use of differing scientific and artistic systems of representation through an assessment of the influences on her work as well as close formal analysis of the paintings themselves. North's life and work will also be analysed in relation to twentieth and twenty-first century attitudes to visual representation including the use of collage-montage as a key technique of modernist and postmodernist high art. This comparative analysis is

intended as a means of throwing new light on the significance of North's work, drawing out aspects of her practice overlooked or unacknowledged at the time of its making and since. This analytical approach draws on the work of the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), whose writing characteristically seeks to recontextualise and remotivate established textual significance through a registering of the continuing interactive relationship between the traces of past, present and future meaning [Derrida 1982: pp.9-13].² In art-historical terms artworks are often analysed solely in relation to the immediate contexts of their making and initial display. However, this does not take into account the possibility, as Derrida makes clear, of latent supplementary meanings brought to the fore by subsequent events. With this in mind North's work will be interpreted not only in relation to the immediate conditions of its making and display, but also subsequent artworks and the particular conditions of their making and display as part of an extended historical trace-structure.

North not only utilised differing approaches to representation conventionally associated with botanical painting and high art practice, there is evidence that she also made use of composite compositions influenced by illustration and possibly photography. North, was at one time a guest of Julia Margaret Cameron, at her home in Ceylon [Sri Lanka] and may have used photographic material found at Cameron's home to produce paintings. North's landscape paintings do not correspond exactly to actual landscapes surrounding the Cameron house. This dissertation will examine the possibility that North used photographic material as a starting point for her paintings,

² According to Derrida, linguistic signification is made possible by a persistent movement of differing between signs, which he refers to as *Différance*. Derrida also argues that in relation to the workings of *Différance* linguistic meaning is constantly open to recontextualisation and remotivation in the face of changing circumstances of time and place. If we accept this view it therefore follows that texts are subject to shifting historical perspectives that render their significance open to the possibility of persistent change. [Derrida 1982: pp. 1-27].

especially in light of the North letters, which indicate that she did indeed employ other forms of visual material to finish her paintings.

North's topographical works most definitely combine stylistic and technical influences taken from the work of other nineteenth-century artists and illustrators, including Edward Lear and Thomas Baines. These influences in turn reveal connections to earlier historical topographical and botanical works, such as those used to illustrate the work of the botanists Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius and Dr. Robert Thornton. Many of the topographical works that influenced North's paintings employed high art stylisations that can be linked to the work of painters such as Frederic Edwin Church of The Hudson River School and William Holman Hunt of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. North was closely acquainted with many of the artists who influenced her. She was friends with both Lear and Church and wrote of her admiration for paintings made by William Henry Hunt and William Holman Hunt. North's paintings can also be interpreted in relation to numerous historical influences that include Dutch cornucopia and still life paintings of the seventeenth century.

Influences on North's work during her own life time would almost certainly have come not only from botanical illustration and high art but also popular forms of visual presentation, such as the cutting and pasting of images in scrapbooks and the overlaying of visual advertising in urban settings. Consider here, for example, John Parry's painting *London Street Scene* (c.1837) [Figure 1], which depicts an urban setting with a wall covered in typographic billboards and advertising illustrations. Some of the posters have been torn, revealing a chaotic jumble of visual information strongly reminiscent of the use of collage-montage as part of postmodernist artistic practice during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Fredric Jameson has argued that postmodernism of the late twentieth century involves an active deconstruction of all spatial and temporal certainties; not only in terms of the authority of signified meanings, but also any attempt to define history as a sequence of distinct periods [Jameson 1991]. Charles Jencks, an authority on postmodern architecture and art, has traced the beginnings of postmodernism to the nineteenth century. In Jencks view 'one of the great strengths of the word, [postmodernism] and the concept, and why it will be around for another hundred years, is that it is carefully suggestive about our having gone beyond the world-view of modernism [Appignanesi and Garrett 1998: p.3]. In their book *Introducing Postmodernism*, Richard Appignanesi and Chris Garratt cite Jencks as having pointed out that the earliest recorded use of the term 'postmodernism' was by the British artist John Watkins Chapman in 1870 and that the term was subsequently used in 1917 by the German author] Rudolph Pannwitz (1881-1969) [Appignanesi and Garrett 1998: p.3].

The mélange of styles that were brought together as part of the construction of the North gallery is in many ways similar to the historical cosmopolitan and stylistic eclecticism we now associate with twentieth-century postmodernism. The Marianne North Gallery and Marianne North's paintings can therefore be discussed in the light of Jencks' observations as part of an emerging if not wholly manifest tendency away from the progressive rationalism conventionally associated with twentieth-century modernism; even if that tendency might be best described in relation to its immediate historical context as a manifestation of 'postmodernism' *avant la lettre*. While the Victorians were by no means self-conscious deconstructors, much of what they did could nevertheless be allied to postmodernist practice. Our own historical view of Victorian modernity is informed strongly by the intervention of high modernism

during the twentieth century, which explicitly rejected the stylistic pluralism of the nineteenth century in favour of a supposedly international formalist abstraction. At the same time, modernism acknowledged the pioneering technical developments of the Victorian era that strongly informed much of the progressive art and architecture of the twentieth century.

The Crystal Palace of 1851, at the London World's Fair was a modern prefabricated construction.³ Its designer, Joseph Paxton (1803-1865)⁴ used a large-scale metal frame construction as part of the building of the Crystal Palace. In March 1852, after taking photographs of the Crystal Palace [See figure 2], Benjamin Bracknell Turner (1815-1895) described the building as the 'most modern and topical subject' of its day [Barnes 2001: p.69]. Turner's photographs of the Crystal Palace were taken 'when the last of the six million visitors had departed and nearly all the thousands of exhibits had been removed' and before the building had been dismantled to be rebuilt at Sydenham. Turner's photographs recorded Paxton's revolutionary design in iron and glass without any intervening contents, thereby revealing its 'brilliant tensile geometry' [Barnes 2001: p.24]. A new, and to some extent misleading, vision of a modern open space flooded with light had been coined for

³ The idea for the Great Exhibition of 1851 emerged from discussions between Henry Cole of The Royal Society of Arts and the Prince Consort, Prince Albert [Picard 2005: p.270]. A royal commission was appointed in January 1850 under the presidency of Albert with other members 'carefully drawn from every aspect of British life except, [...] the working class' [Picard 2005: p.262]. The exhibition was designed to show exhibits from all over the world and to show 'all that was best in raw materials, industrial design and new inventions', all of which, it was hoped, would lead to new 'improvements in public taste and in technical education' [Picard 2005: p.263].

⁴ Joseph Paxton, the designer of The Crystal Palace of 1851, had previously been head gardener at Chatsworth House and had built the Duke of Devonshire's glasshouse between 1836 and 1840. Paxton was also commissioned to build a new hot house in Hackney, London to house a private collection of orchid plants and palms. Paxton used laminated wood and curved glass in his designs, just as Decimus Burton had for his vast palm house at Kew Garden's in 1844. During the early nineteenth century glass had been costly due to tax, impelling 'some house owners to blank out windows of the house façade to save duty'. In 1845 'the duty was abolished, creating a surge in demand which in turn inspired new production technology', meaning that by 1850 'Britain's principle glass manufacturer, Chance Brothers of Birmingham, could accept Paxton's demand for 9000,000 square feet for his building, in panes of 49 inches by 10 inches, 16oz per square foot' [Picard 2005: p. 265].

posterity.⁵ This envisioning of an uncluttered, light filled geometric interior would go on to inform much of the modernist architecture of the twentieth century. This new kind of composition was, ironically, also home to a very different form of visual presentation. The Crystal Palace's main function was to house an industrial fair containing numerous objects, machines and cultural artifacts. These items were often placed in unusual combinations, with industrial machinery set alongside 'anthropomorphic stuffed frogs being shaved and kittens seated round a table having tea' [Picard 2005: p.265]. An alternative combinatory aesthetic was thereby enshrined that would eventually, principally through the work of Marcel Duchamp, come to challenge conventional nineteenth and early twentieth century notions of art and of artistic display ushering in what has now come to be thought of as postmodernism. Subsequent fairs based upon the London 1851 exhibition also displayed objects in a manner similar to that later associated with the Duchampian ready-made.⁶ The Duchampian *ready-made* can be interpreted as a supplement to the artistic technique

⁵ This vision of architectural purity was not without precedent. The geometric white interior can be traced back at least as far as the Church of St Mary Magdalene, Withersdale at Wenhasdon, which had been 'purged [...] purified' and 'denuded' of images and relics by the Puritans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries until 'every last vestige of superstition' had been removed [Graham Dixon 1999: p.32]; making it, as Andrew Graham Dixon has argued, in *A History of British art*, the most adventurous space ever made in Britain' [Graham Dixon 1999: p.29].

⁶ During 1912, the French artist Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) visited Munich. His visit, between May and October, coincided with the Munich world fair of 1912; an 'industrial exposition [...] of 'industrial art', 'artisanal production' and 'manufacturing' [De Duve 1989: p.59]. The fair was one of a series of international exhibitions that had taken place following the example set by the Crystal Palace exhibition of 1851. Like the Crystal Palace, the Munich Fair contained 'large halls divided into stands and rows' [De Duve 1989: p.59]. Germany like the UK had an 'acceptance of the functional' [De Duve 1989: p.43] and had started to engage in the systematic training of industrial designers [De Duve 1989: p.52] as well as the public display of their products. A few months after his visit to Munich, Duchamp devised his signature contribution to twentieth century art, the *ready-made*: an extension of collage-montage that seeks to present otherwise everyday objects as works of art. According to Thierry de Duve, writing in *Duchamp Artist of the Century*, Duchamp may well have been inspired in his conceiving of the *ready-made* by visits to the Munich world fair [De Duve 1989: p.43]. There is no direct evidence to confirm the truth of this speculative assertion. Nevertheless, as De Duve suggests, 'reverberations' would most likely have been present in Munich during the fair in 1912, to such a degree that Duchamp 'could not help noticing' its visual impact during his stay [De Duve 1989: pp.60-61]. Certainly, in conceiving of the *ready-made*, Duchamp 'chooses an industrial product, displaces it,' and 'puts it to another purpose' [De Duve 1989: p.58] in a manner not dissimilar to the way industrial and other objects would have been presented at the Munich world fair.

of *papier collé* first used by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and Georges Braque (1882-1963), as part of the development of Cubism before World War I [Taylor 2004: pp.7-8]. By definition, *papier collé* involves the pasting together of various materials onto a flat surface, while the found object (*objet trouvé*) or *ready-made* is ‘usually a common mass-produced item selected by the artist [that] might be altered or combined with other objects’ [Waldeman 1992: p.8]. Picasso’s *Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass* of 1912 [See figure 3], depicts found paper articles, such as newspapers, discarded sheet music, wallpaper and wood to simulate not only the shape of the guitar, but its relationship to everyday French café society. The layering process used by Picasso echoes that of the layered posters upon a street wall as depicted in Parry’s previously mentioned painting of a London street scene.

The *ready-made* and *papier collé* both involve the remounting of objects within new settings wherein they take on supplementary meanings that render their significance and/or function undecidable—a critical ‘deconstructivist’ technique otherwise referred to generally as collage-montage. As a result of which the perceived distinction between art and life is revealed to be an arbitrary and highly uncertain one. Initially, Picasso and Braque were accused of embellishing the ‘low’ cultural practice of collage-montage by integrating it within the ‘high’ cultural practices of professional art. As such, their use of collage-montage was considered ‘inappropriate, jarring or wrong’ [Taylor 2004: p.8].⁷

The use of collage-montage became central to the professionalised production, first of aspects of modernist and then of the entirety of postmodernist art [Waldeman 1992: p.8]. However, this use was not without precedent. Diane Waldeman indicates

⁷Other artists, such as those associated with Surrealism and Dada, would go on to formulate artworks that orientated themselves ‘towards an aesthetics of *objets-trouvés*, assemblage and the eradication of the art-life divide’ [Brandon 2004: p.28].

in her book *The Found Object*, that the use of collage-montage by modernist and post-modernist artists has ‘many ancestors’. Included among them are twelfth-century Japanese text-collages embellished with foil papers, African tribal emblems, eighteenth-and nineteenth-century butterfly wing collages, lace valentines [Waldeman 1992: p.8] and decoupage screens, which entailed the cutting out and remounting of family photographs, and magazine illustrations. [See figure 4] Also relevant here are methods of display associated with cabinets of curiosity, which themselves involve the remounting of objects within unusual settings.

Later applications of collage-montage by the Surrealists, were ‘more complex than that of the Cubist *papiers collés*,’ [Waldeman 1992: p.127] insofar as they combined collaged objects, images and texts with ‘the tangible qualities of paint and canvas and more traditional forms of sculpture’ in order to ‘convey the equally intangible realm of dreams’ [Waldeman 1992: p.129]. In doing so the Surrealists could be construed as having placed a continuing emphasis upon tradition, thereby raising questions about their place within progressive modernist art. Consider here, for example, the painting/collage, *Demonstration Hydro-Mertique à tuer par la Température*, of 1920, by Surrealist artist Max Ernst [See Figure 5].

During the second half of the twentieth century, as part of the development of Pop and conceptual art, it is not only possible to see a reassertion of the importance of collage-montage as a deconstructive artistic technique, but also a renewed interest in the historical use of collage-montage prior to the twentieth century.⁸ The neo-

⁸ During the twentieth century the modernist avant-garde promoted artistic practices that placed emphasis upon form, conceptual rigour and purity [Spalding 2009: p.70]. Consequently, the development of modern art was understood to involve at its core a succession of movements, including Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism and Constructivism, each of which saw the production of artworks that became progressively more abstract. This emphasis on formalist abstraction effectively divided modernism into two camps (although in practice artists often shifted between the two): on the one hand, artists and art groups dedicated to the production of an abstract-formalist art; and on the other movements such as Dada, Surrealism and Pop Art (neo-Dada), all of which produced artworks making explicit use of various forms of collage-montage.

Victoriana of British and indeed some American Pop art in the 1960s looked back towards Britain's Imperial past for visual inspiration, and as a consequence, developed a historical revivalism that held Victoriana at the centre of its creativity [Sandbrook 2006: p.447].

North's work was not modern in a modernist context, nor can it convincingly be described as postmodernist. Nevertheless it was modern within a Victorian context that held an open preference for stylistic and technical eclecticism and popular forms of combinatory visual presentation not unlike that of the later twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The North Gallery at Kew⁹ testifies to North's historical positioning by displaying an eclectic arrangement of architectural styles combining classical Greek, Egyptian, Indian and possibly even Chinese influences. The North Gallery is a unique space, with paintings seriffed from the top of its walls to a running dado of exotic woods. Monica Anderson writes of North's 'double-voiced-ness' in relation to her gallery, stating in *Lumina* that the gallery is not just a focus for scientific display but a form of 'autobiography' [Anderson 2003: p.63]. The gallery project was paid for by North and designed by the renowned amateur Victorian architect and architectural

⁹ According to North's letters held at The Royal Botanical Garden's Library and Archive, It was while sitting at Shrewsbury Train Station after missing her train on the August 11, 1879 that North found time to write to her friend and then Director of the Garden's, Joseph Hooker, about the possibility of building a gallery in which she [North] could house and exhibit her paintings within Kew Gardens [North 1882-1938: MN/23 North Gallery Letters]. North apparently came up with the idea after reading the Pall Mall Newspaper's review of her flower paintings show then being exhibited at 19 Conduit Street. North stated in her letters that she had 'often [...] wondered over to Kew [...] beyond all its houses with the beautiful Park' with the 'longing of a rest course for my feet & poor old bones'. North also wrote that she 'should like very much to place them [her paintings] near their live neighbours & if a piece of spare ground could be found in or close to the pleasure grounds at Kew I would build a suitable gallery for them which might be a rest house for the tired visitors at the same time with a cottage attached'. North wanted a 'married gardener or other guardian' to live in the gallery; one 'whose wife would be capable of boiling a kettle & giving tea or coffee & biscuits' (nothing else) in the gallery at a fair price—if you [Hooker] think this a practicable scheme?' North offered to 'willingly spend a thousand or even two thousand pounds on the building' as she thought 'it ought to be worthy of the grand old gardens'. North concluded that she would 'make the whole [sum of money available] even at my death' [North 1882-1938: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters]. In response to this, Joseph Hooker draughted a letter on the August 13, 1879 that acknowledged North's request. Hooker also stated that he was indeed 'contemplating' her offer of 'tropical views, flowers, fruits & to Kew a building for the depiction, at her own cost' [North 1882-1938: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters].

historian James Fergusson (1808-1886). Despite this, the North gallery became something of a contested space because of concerns among members of the Kew Board that it would become a focus for public entertainment rather than scientific enquiry. North, nevertheless, created a highly personalised site for the display of her paintings that continues to function as such over one hundred years later.

Her paintings are equally eclectic, displaying North's knowledge of the established conventions of botanical painting, represented by the botanical works of Ehret and Dr. Robert Thornton, as well as the topographical stylisations of Thomas Baines and Edward Lear alongside the prominent high art styles of her day. North's work also displays a knowledge of past styles related to the picturesque and techniques of Dutch seventeenth-century cornucopia painting.

The eclectic nature of North's paintings and the North gallery can be seen to coincide with other areas of ambiguity pertaining to her life and work. North's personal relationship with Charles Darwin enabled her to puzzle over environmental hybridity caused by colonialist seed dispersal and the deliberate moving of plants from one site to another as part of a colonialist expansion.

North's subsequent impact on visual culture has also been varied. According to Jonathan Farley, Senior Conservator at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, the original staging of Gilbert & Sullivan's the *Mikado* not only used the Kew Pagoda as inspiration for the design of its stage flats, but may also have referenced North's paintings of Japan [Farley 2011]. Reproductions of North's work were certainly used to decorate ceramic cups during the Victorian period. Farley cites one such example held within the Stoke-on-Trent Potteries Museum. Farley has also found ceramic tiles decorated with reproductions of North's paintings that can be purchased currently from manufacturers in the USA [Farley 2011].

This combining of diverse visual languages leads to the question: is North's work an example of culturally resistant hybridity; one that through its very plurality challenges the authority of established cultural identity? North was certainly aware of notions of biological hybridity put forward by Darwin as part of his theory of evolution. However, the term hybridity as it is now used in relation to post-colonial writings by Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha has significantly differing connotations relating to a deconstructivist resistance to authoritative/essentialist readings of identity. As previously indicated, North's life and work is open to reassessment in light of contemporary post-colonialism. However, application of post-colonial critical analysis to North's work has to be tempered by the fact that she was, despite her idiosyncracies, in many ways very much part of mainstream Victorian society.

North was a woman amateur painter of a kind not entirely unusual during the nineteenth century. She gained an inheritance from her father that allowed her, along with family connections, to travel widely, paint, write and then build a gallery for her work in the course of just thirteen years. North did go against the conventions of her day deciding to travel and paint alone. Moreover, she did so without any significant concerns about her own safety or the way she looked and behaved. Friends, family and reviewers of her work 'attempted to contain [North's] activities within the tradition of lady-like endeavours' [Sheffield 2001: p.90] but North was able to continually override these attempts at containment because of her independent financial status. Towards the end of her life, Joseph Hooker recommended North for the Order of the Cross of Malta in light of her contributions to botanical science, but was 'told that the only women who were eligible for this award were royalty and the wives of high-ranking colonial officials'. [Gates 1998: p.99]. North's diaries, which

were started in 1880, were not published in her life-time; publishers having read and initially rejected the first two volumes [Sheffield 2001: p.91], leaving them to be published ‘posthumously’ by her sister Catherine as editor [Gates 1998: p.99]. This posthumous publication was through Macmillan & Co. of London in 1892, with a third volume of writings being published in 1883. Despite these high-level rejections, North nevertheless felt important enough to engage an ‘agent’ for her works [North 1893: p.67]. Gates concludes that women like North did not, despite such social limitations, ‘allow their lives to be negatively over determined by their culture simply because they did not have access to museum jobs, scientific journals, or other organs of scientific dissemination’. Instead, they became public figures individually affecting ‘the culture of their time’ [Gates 1998: p.101].

North was an unconventional woman and a non-conformist who was often dismayed at the ignorance of her class and its ideals and avoided mainstream society whenever possible. John Addington Symonds described North as ‘good humoured’ but ‘a little satirical’; a woman who was ‘bored and irritated by conventional ‘society’ people’ because she ‘longed for stimulating conversation with intelligent and interesting scholars or Bohemians’ [Ponsonby 2002: p.17]. Nevertheless, her independence was very much dependent upon her high social standing and continuing involvement in capitalist/colonialist society.

North knew many important and interesting people of her day, including Charles Darwin (1809-1882), and his cousin Francis Galton (1822-1911) [North 1892a: p.33] (famous for his work on eugenics) [Gates 1998: p.21] and the geologist Charles Lyell (1797-1875). North’s father knew Sir William Hooker, the then director of Kew Gardens. North later got to know Sir William’s son Joseph (1814-1879), who succeeded his father as the director of Kew. North also knew naturalists in the USA,

including Louis Agazzsi (1807-1873), a glacier specialist, and Mr. and Mrs. Asa Gray, who collated material for Darwin. North's connections to the arts included writers such as Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865) [North 1892a, p.34] and her brother-in-law John Addington-Symonds. Amelia Edwards and the painter Edward Lear were also firm family friends. In addition, North found time for philanthropic work, including the painting of the proscenium arch, flats and the surrounding features of the Normansfield Theatre.

Despite her unconventional attitudes towards gender and society, North was not at the forefront of the gender politics of the 1800s. Instead North challenged convention through her travels, which were reported by the media at the time as important events [Farley 2010]. North was also 'instrumental in promoting the art of women painters' and utilised her 'wealth and her Kew connections to do so' on several occasions [Sheffield 2001: p.88]. This included the introduction of Ellis Rowan [North 1876-1879: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters]. North argued that Rowan's 'painting and patronage was of great educational value to botanists, artists and the general public' [Sheffield 2001: p.90].

It would therefore be a mistake to define North wholly in contemporary critical terms. While her life and work do not conform directly to the expectations of nineteenth-century society, there is no compelling evidence that allows us to frame North either as a self-conscious feminist or as a prototypical deconstructive postmodernist. If North's life and work do find resonance with feminism and postmodernism it is only in actuality by historical default.

This dissertation begins with a concise account of the early life of Marianne North from her birth to the death of her father and the beginning of her career as a dedicated botanical painter. Chapter one then goes on to focus on the Marianne North

Gallery at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew. The gallery is analysed closely in the wider context of Kew both in terms of its function and its stylistic influences. At the time of its construction the gallery's intended use as a site of public display was understood to challenge the role of Kew as a specialised site of scientific enquiry. This contested status will be discussed with close reference to contemporaneous documents including correspondence between North and Kew's director, Joseph Hooker. The Gallery, which was designed by James Fergusson with significant input from North, displays various stylistic influences reflecting the extraordinary complexity of visual culture in Britain during the late nineteenth century. The gallery's stylistic diversity can be connected to a range of other architectural forms, including grottos, follies, lodge houses and kiosks, which were already an established part of the layout at Kew at the time of its construction. The gallery's stylistic diversity will be discussed in relation to readings by Carol Duncan that view nineteenth-century exhibition spaces not only as sites of secular display but also of socially inclusive liminality. This interpretative framework will be used to illuminate the North gallery's relationship to a variety of other architectural constructions and sites of displays, including Asian temple architecture. The contested status and stylistic hybridity of the North gallery will be discussed here as a starting point for subsequent discussions of North's uncertain status as both artist and botanical illustrator.

Chapter two will explore similarities between the North Gallery and the Cabinet of Curiosities as a pre-scientific focus for visual display. While the paintings displayed in the North gallery are hung according to a rational, geographically defined taxonomic order they can also be understood to mimic the format of a cabinet of curiosities. Cabinets of curiosities, which were a precursor to secular-scientific

museological forms of display, presented images and objects not simply as a focus for objective study but also as a source of strangeness and wonder. North's gallery is therefore open to interpretation as part of genealogy of visual display that places it somewhat uncertainly between modern scientific and pre-scientific scopic regimes. As such, the North gallery will also be analysed as a site of nineteenth-century stylistic and technical eclecticism that sets the scene for later artistic preoccupations with collage-montage and the found object.

Chapter three will explore the relationship between North's paintings and those of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. North's relationship to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was recorded in her diaries. The Pre-Raphaelites had a major impact on Western visual culture throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, influencing various artists, art groups and aesthetes. During the mid nineteenth century, members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had, along with the critic John Ruskin (1819-1900), raised concerns with regard to established ways of depicting the natural world as well as the relationship of art to natural history and philosophy. North's assimilation of technical and aesthetic attitudes associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood will be discussed, giving a context for the uncertain standing of North's own painting as a contribution to both art and science.

Chapter four will reflect not only on the relationship between North's own painting and the wider history of botanical illustration, but also on how the techniques of botanical illustration differ from those of fine art. Botanical illustration's application of a topological system, which deliberately flattens represented forms and spaces, allows botanists to read off information with speed and accuracy. Botanical illustration is therefore shaped primarily by a scientific demand for visual clarity rather than aesthetic feeling or idealism, as was the case with regard to fine art

practice during the nineteenth century. Consequently, North's paintings, which combine techniques taken from high art practice and botanical illustration, can be seen as highly problematic from both scientific and artistic perspectives.

In chapter five North's work will be analysed as a meeting place for multiple stylistic and technical influences. North's contemporaneous influences came from the work of Edward Lear, the Pre Raphaelites, the Hudson River School and Japonisme. However, it is also possible to discern less obvious influences coming from the work of Juan Sánchez Cotán and Casper David Friedrich. At the same time, North's work can be linked stylistically to the work of later painters such as Frida Kahlo and Georgia O'Keeffe. North has also had a discernible influence on the work of present day botanical illustrators, including Margaret Mee and Pandora Sellers. Through this analysis, North's work will be presented not only as a typical example of nineteenth-century visual eclecticism, but also as a precursor to the combinatory techniques of artistic modernism and postmodernism.

Chapter six will explore the relationship between North's paintings, photography and the composite image. The latter half of the nineteenth century was awash with photographic materials. However, during the nineteenth-century photography was not widely considered to be a fully functional art form. Indeed, photography's connections to art were viewed with suspicion, not least because the use of lenses to make paintings and drawings was assumed to undercut the necessary skill of the artist in projecting ideas of truth in nature. Despite this suspicion, during the nineteenth-century photography and photographic processes played a large part in the reproduction of artworks and in the production of scientific images. Moreover, photographs were increasingly accessible to the many and not just the few. North therefore lived in a world where photographically supplemented images and

composite works were considered normal. In this chapter it will be argued that North's paintings, like those of others at the time, may well have involved the use of photographs and composite forms of representation based on photographic materials.

Chapter seven will focus upon North's relationship to Darwinian science and environmental change. North developed a friendship with the naturalist Charles Darwin and this friendship resulted in North visiting Australia at Darwin's recommendation. North was exposed to environmental changes as a result of modernisation not only in the English countryside as a girl, but also as a traveler through colonial landscapes. North wrote of these changes and the damage caused by tree felling. North also questioned why she found European plants in many of the places she visited outside Europe. In Australia, while visiting fellow flower hunter, Ellis Rowan (1847-1922), North painted and wrote of the Australian landscape being powerfully affected by seed and plants brought in from Europe and elsewhere. This chapter will explore the relationship between North's painting and writing and the dispersal and hybridization of European plant life as part of Western colonialism and environmental man-made damage.

Chapter eight will focus on North's relationship to nineteenth-century Western colonialism. North's topographical and urban paintings are very much connected to the use of visual practices as part of nineteenth-century colonialism. North's travels were also marked by conversations with people from all walks of colonial life. North wrote of these experiences and of the mixed enjoyment and displeasure she felt or observed in indigenous peoples. North's paintings of topographical scenes were part of a lineage within art and illustration that went back to the eighteenth century and the Middle East. Her friendship with landscape and topographic painter Edward Lear, was one that had engaged North with his methodologies even as a child, since Lear

had lived and worked at the North's Hastings residence. Here, North's work will again be shown as ambiguous, adapting numerous stylizations and techniques that contradict one another.

A Concise Biography of the Early Life of Marianne North

Marianne North is a major figure within the history of nineteenth-century botanical painting, having produced a substantial body of paintings as the result of extensive travels to many different parts of the world. She was also responsible for the founding of a major purpose built gallery containing a representative collection of her work, which still stands in the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew. North's early life is largely described by writings found in the three North diaries of 1892 and 1893, which were edited by her sister Catherine. Some additional information can be found in Laura Ponsonby's book *Marianne North at Kew Gardens*, and Anthony Huxley's *A Vision of Eden*. All information cited within this biography is sourced from these earlier texts. No North family tree is presently available. Diary information about certain North family members has been cross-referenced with Jonathan Farley's current work on a concise North family tree, which is at present incomplete [Farley 2012].

Marianne North was born on October 24, 1830 [Ponsonby 2002: p.11]. She was named after her aunt Marianne who had taught North's mother. North received a legacy from her aunt Marianne's older brother 'who on his return from India found no other memento of his favorite sister [but a] small baby' bearing her name [North 1892a: p.4]. North's birthplace was Hastings Lodge at the corner of Ashburnham road and old London Road in Hastings, England [2005: www.English Social History]; this despite her father's ancestral family home having been at Rougham in Norfolk.

North's great- great- great-grandfather, Roger North was the youngest son of Dudley North, fourth Lord North of Kirtling, and North's great-great-great-great-grandfather, who had married Anne, daughter of Sir Charles Montagu, Attorney-General under James II'. Roger wrote about his brothers' lives: the Lord Keeper

Guilford Sir Charles Dudley, Commissioner of the Treasury to King Charles the second and Doctor John North, Master of Trinity College Cambridge' [North 1892a: p.1]. North's great-great-great-uncle, Sir Charles Dudley, wrote a book entitled *Discourses upon Trade* in 1691, and was connected to early colonialist trade and commerce [Porter 2000: p.149]. Roger earned North's 'especial respect' [North 1892a: p.1] because of his cultural pursuits in which he had found time for a love of music and painting [North 1892a: p.1]. Roger also wrote 'histories of music, building, and architecture, and covered his walls, with pictures including duplicates of many of the lovely but souless beauties of his friend, Sir Peter Lely' (1618-1680) [North 1892a: p.2]. Furthermore, Roger held an interest in curiosities, building a library at Rougham that, despite being connected to the Church, contained 'many curious and valuable books, including the Oriental manuscripts collected by his niece Dudleya North' [North 1892a: p.2].

The family connection to Rougham was broken by Roger's son and North's great-great-grandfather (also named Roger), who, according to North, had a 'vile temper' and 'flogged his son Fountain to such a degree that the boy ran away to sea' deciding not to return until after his father's death. Despite being left Squire of Rougham, Fountain, North's great-grandfather, decided to order the 'house to be blown up with gunpowder' and the 'contents to be dispersed and sold by public auction'. It seemed that the 'sailor-squire' only cared for the sea and in his old age settled in the first ever let lodge house at Hastings [North 1892a: p.2]. North's grandfather Francis Frederick also lived at Hastings, and according to North, he never went to Rougham either [North 1892: p.3]. The North's also had an eminent relative living close by in Hastings, the Countess Waldgrave, who was considered the most prestigious person in the town [2005: [www.English Social History](http://www.EnglishSocialHistory.org)].

It was to be North's father, Fredrick (1800-1869) [Ponsonby 2002: p.11], who re-connected the family to Rougham, by choosing to spend his Harrow school holidays, and college vacations from St John's College, Cambridge there. On leaving university, Fredrick moved to Mont Blanc, where he engaged in the early scientific study of rock crystals. He formed a large collection of crystals, before returning to the UK permanently to study Law [North 1892a: p.1].

According to North, Fredrick decided to fall in love with her mother instead of studying the law. At the time, North's mother was in 'deep widow's weeds' with a young child, Janet, since her first husband had died from upsetting a coach and four [North 1892a: pp.4-5]. North's mother was the eldest daughter of Sir John Marjoribanks who had been an M.P. for Berwickshire. North's grandmother was a Ramsay of Barton, giving North's family a romantic link to the River Tweed, where her mother threw pebbles into its clear water and enjoyed the romances of Sir Walter Scott as a child [North 1892a: p.4].

The North family's home life revolved between Hastings in the winter, and London in the spring. The summer time was divided between North's half-sister's ancestral home of Gawthorpe Hall in Lancashire and a farmhouse in Rougham. Gawthorpe was intriguing to North since it contained secret closets and a sliding panel in the Lady's boudoir and another 'secret chamber with some chests of old plate [that] had been found up a chimney' [North 1892a: p.7]. North's writings on Gawthorpe during the Industrial Revolution reveal that the near-by River Calder was 'spoilt by numbers of factories which threw in their surplus dyes'. North also writes of the working-classes, stating '[t]he noise, smoke, and general grimness of everybody and thing in that county were most unattractive to me, and I was always glad to move from it to clean dull Norfolk with its endless turnip-fields and fir

plantations, pigs and partridges' [North 1892a: p.8]. While in Norfolk, North followed her 'father about from field to field while he was busy with his axe', devouring novels under the trees her father had already planted, until she fancied herself in the 'virgin forests of America' (the first place North visited and painted seriously in 1871) [North 1892a: p.8].

North also wrote of travelling south, on the railway that was somewhere 'beyond York' since '[t]here were only bits of railways in those days' [see figure 6]; as depicted in J.M.W. Turner's painting of early industrial train travel, *Rain, Steam and Speed*, of 1844. North states 'we generally drove a long way to reach them' and 'used to sit in our own carriage, which was tied on a truck, surrounded by luggage' [North 1892a: p.12]. North goes on to write that 'I knew every big tree, pretty garden, or old farm-house, with the wooden patterns let into the walls, and yews and box trees cut into cocks and hens, and I sadly missed them when the days of "improvement and restoration" came' [North 1892a: p.12]. Here, North recalls the ensuing decline of the countryside painted by Constable and other picturesque landscape painters of the early nineteenth century. North's early education was to be filled with the wonders of natural history. She took two volumes on British fungi by Mrs. Hussey, from her local library, which started her interest in collecting and painting all varieties of fungi, found at Rougham [North 1892a: p.12]. North stated that her governesses hardly interfered with her self-education. This included her readings of Walter Scott and Shakespeare, which, she declared, gave her 'their versions of history', and Robinson Crusoe, which gave her 'ideas of geography' [North 1892a: p.8]. Regarding her religious instruction, North wrote of '[e]verything' being 'most unconventional' in Norfolk, as the Methodists and Wesleyans in the area had their own way of doing things since there had been 'no resident clergyman within the memory of man' and

that consequently all the parishers were differing kinds of dissenters but chiefly “‘rangers” or Primitive Methodists’. North reports that the locals even used women for preachers, something against which North’s mother rebelled by starting a Sunday school in order to bring more people to Church (an activity of which North stated she ‘could never quite see the benefit’) [North 1892a: p.9].

North was to later complain to her mother that she [North] ‘was very uneducated’; after this North was promptly sent to school at Norwich with a Madame de Wahl. Her father, Fredrick North, ‘thought she [North] was becoming lazy and restless, and showing a craving for excitement’. He therefore agreed to her being sent to school because he ‘refused to spoil her’ [Sheffield 2001: p.79]. North described her school life as ‘hateful’ because the teaching was ‘purely mechanical routine, and the girls, with one exception [...] uninteresting’ [North 1892a: p.13].

North’s father was elected Member of Parliament for the town of Hastings in 1830. The town, which was the first of the Cinque Ports, had, at that time, ‘not half – a-dozen regular lodging houses’. Mr. North had become a freeman of the town after being voted in by ten freemen, one of whom was himself [North 1892a: p.5]. Mr. North was a Liberal politician [Ponsonby 2002: p.11] who was one of a small party formed in 1859 that called itself ‘The St. Stephen’s Club’ [North 1892a: p.32]. North remembered seeing the great dinner given after the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832, for which her father had voted; a controversial bill that would have repercussions upon the whole of nineteenth-century British society, rich and poor. Fredrick North’s ‘health broke down and he had to give up Parliament for a while’ [North 1892a: p.5], but became an M.P again from ‘1854-1865’ and again in ‘1868’.

Throughout this time, the North family would choose to go abroad whenever Mr. North had not been elected to office. When he failed to maintain his

parliamentary seat in 1847, it was decided that in August they were to ‘let Hastings Lodge to go abroad for three years’. The Norths settled in Heidelberg with an English governess whom North hated. During her time In Heidelberg, music was North’s principal ‘mania’ [North 1892a: pp.13-14]. North was to maintain this mania through ‘a great deal of time spent having music lessons’. North was engaged in a continual round of concerts and ‘spent eight hours a day singing and playing the piano’ [Ponsonby 2002: pp.11-12]. According to Ponsonby writing in *Marianne North at Kew Gardens*, North had a beautiful singing voice, stating that, in Dresden, ‘it was discovered that her voice was contralto not soprano’ [Ponsonby 2002: pp.11-12]. It was noted by North that in Brussels her practicing became ‘more incessant than ever and probably a perfect nuisance to the neighbours’, so much so, that she had ‘wished it could be done silently’ [Ponsonby 2002: p.12]. Later she would write that music was a comfort to her while travelling and that melodies she had learned in Germany ‘filled many a wakeful night and heavy day of a voyage with pleasant memory’ [North 1892a: p.25].¹⁰

North wrote, that while in Prussia she extended her artistic repertoire by learning ‘to know the famous pictures by heart’ and was ‘conversing with paintings that were too well known to need description’ [North 1892a: p.22]. These paintings could have included the works of Casper David Friedrich and others, whose influence was widespread at the time and whose landscape compositions were replicated by painters and technical illustrators alike. North certainly refers to the painters Vogelstein and Dahl who wrote extensively about Casper David Friedrich. Dahl chose to give North’s mother a study of a female martyr related to one of his large paintings because of its similarity to her. [North 1892a: p.22]. North wrote of meeting

¹⁰ North wrote of one occasion in Jamaica when a ‘great blue-bottle fly [...] buzzed’ and ‘a bird whistled two notes, scientifically describable as the diminished seventh of the key of F, and E natural and B flat alternatively, always the same and in perfect tune’ [North 1892b: p.95].

‘Old Moritz Retsch’ and his wife, who lived five miles from Dresden in the Saxony countryside in a ‘small cottage among the vines’. Retsch had apparently won many honours by his genius for illustration. North states that ‘[h]is original drawings were done with a pencil shaded with the greatest fineness, and were very unlike the bold outlines which have been engraved’ [North 1892a: p.22]. North’s description is of a person taking pains with the making of his work. Retsch is also described as treating his illustrations as if they were his children and as telling ‘marvelous stories about them’ [North 1892a: p.22].

North’s diaries describe the Revolution ‘hatching all over Europe’ during 1848, including the riots that began after Louis Philippe fled from France; commenting that ‘Revolutionary ideas are infectious, and soon crossed the Rhine’ to [Heidelberg] and that students there ‘strutted about like cocks’. North noted seeing ‘raw recruits’ being ‘sent off to wars [...] in Hungary and Italy’ [North 1892a: pp.19-20]; many of whom were ‘poor creatures’ who had been taken from ‘their homes in picturesque sheepskins coats, with the wool inside and embroidery outside, their well shaped sandaled feet [...] forced into regulation boots, while their bodies were squeezed into tight uniforms [looking] miserable’ [North 1892a: pp.19-20].

In March 1848 the North family took a trip to the Elber (Elbe) with its ‘picturesque rocks and forests in Saxon Switzerland’, reaching Dresden ‘the day after the revolution began’ [North 1892a: p.20]. On March 26 the North family decided to leave the area, steaming ‘up the Neckar to Heilbronn’ and ‘[t]hrough Ulm to Augsburg and Munich’ where they took a flat that belonged to a Bavarian grandee. North then promptly fell ill with typhoid fever and was moved to recover at the Lake of Starnberg with the ‘lovely Alps in the far distance’ [North 1892a: p.15]. At Starnberg, North was exposed to the German Romantic vision of the sublime. North

undertook 'walks over the beautiful Bergstrasse, covered with crisp frost or snow' and wrote of her father taking her on expeditions that started by rail and then plunged into forests, over hills and valleys where they 'met pretty roe deer, hares, or foxes [...] and gathered great bunches of lilies of the valley' [North 1892a: p.14]. North describes a time while in Ober Tarvis during a tour of the Dolomite Alps and Austria when she 'offered a gulden for a flower to paint'. The seller asked North for '50 Krentzers more', to which North consented. North's father, however, was disgusted and was said to have stated that 'such extravagance would raise the hotel bill'. North countered by protesting that she 'really wanted this flower' because it was said that it grew nowhere else [North 1893: p.218], thus revealing a strong calling toward the rare and the beautiful as well as a desire to capture such things pictorially. North's family eventually escaped the revolution via Vienna with their 'luggage in two wheel barrows' [Ponsonby 2002: p.11].

On North's return to England, there were 'many musical evenings, where both amateur and professional musicians performed' [Ponsonby 2002: p.12]. North's passion for music continued with lessons from a 'Madame Dolby', who was 'admired enormously' by North [Ponsonby 2002: p.12]. North wrote of her new mistress as having 'been famous in her youth' and as having gone through all Mozart's operas and masses with her, often passing 'eight hours a day at the piano' singing and transposing all the solos and duets. [North 1892a: p.19]. Dolby made North perform 'solo parts in some of her concerts', but, according to Ponsonby writing in *Marianne North at Kew Gardens*, North suffered from an 'uncontrollable nervousness' that marred the occasion [Ponsonby 2002: p.12]. North's sister Catherine believed that 'singing was where her [North's] real genius lay,' but sadly North's voice 'deserted her just when its cultivation reached its highest point' [Ponsonby 2002: p.12]. North's

enjoyment of music was also accompanied by a love of riding and of painting [Ponsonby 2002: p.12]. At this time, North stated that she had an innate desire to ‘keep away from social events’, balls in particular being seen as ‘a penance’. North ‘hated dressing up and loathed the perpetual dreary talk [...] and the general formality of the occasions’ [Ponsonby 2002: p.12]. In her journals North states that she never ‘thought much of the treadmill routine called “society”’ [North 1892a: p.31]. Despite this, North found London to be ‘full of delights’.

It was during her time as a young woman in Hastings that North met Lucie Austin, later Lady Lucie Duff Gordon, a Victorian writer, traveler and highly unconventional intellectual, whose celebrated salons were attended by Tennyson, Thackeray and George Meredith [Clarke 2009: p.12]. Lucie made a strong impression upon North [North 1892a: p.5], who described her as ‘one raised above ordinary mortals’ with a ‘fearlessness and contempt of what people thought of her’ [North 1892a: p.6]. She also made a long-term friend in Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon [Hirsch 2006: p.21], the artist, law reformer, pamphleteer, journalist, co-founder of Girton College, intrepid traveler, first cousin of Florence Nightingale and George Eliot’s closest friend. Bodichon was associated with the Pre-Raphaelite circle, including Anna Mary Howitt, who painted Bodichon as Boadicea [Hirsch 2006: p.vii]. Bodichon’s political views stretched to the application of the crafts and like William Morris she agonised about the way cheap factories and European imports ‘destroyed local crafts and skills’ [Hirsch 2006: p.139], thus indicating a political orientation toward the aesthetics of making and toward making itself.

Formal art education for women had been available in Britain since the 1850s, with a government school of design being founded in 1865. John Ruskin declared an interest in women’s art and art education and was impressed by ‘a number of women

artists' [Lambourne 2005b: p.315]. However, as part of a critique of Bodichon's painting *Louisiana Swamp*, Ruskin was openly hostile and complained about the placing of the work inside the headquarters of the English Woman's Journal, prompting Hirsch, in *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, Feminist, Artist and Rebel*, to argue that 'Ruskin was more interested in keeping female ambition under control than in offering aesthetic criticism' [Hirsch 2006: p.164].

Ruskin's hostility extended towards the showing of Anna Mary Howitt's painting of Bodichon as Boadicea at the Sydenham Crystal Palace exhibition in 1856. Ruskin attacked history painting at the event, holding in high esteem, despite many mixed reviews, a painting of a pheasant's wing, stating that it was Botany not Art [Hirsch 2006: p.164]. This move by Ruskin, places him at the forefront of a changing world that would begin to challenge the primacy of history painting within the European art world. Ruskin's Romanticism dealt with particulars: 'a birds wing [...] a waterfall or hill' [Spalding 2009: p.160], as witnessed in his gouache painting *Spray of Withered Oak*, in 1879 [See figure 7]. North's own botanical paintings were in many ways very much in keeping with Ruskin's views on art.

North continued to be trained in feminine accomplishments that included drawing and painting. She was tutored as an amateur by a number of artists, including the Royal Academician John Ballantyne (1815-1897), Madeline Von Fowinkel (no dates found), from whom North states she 'got the few ideas I possess of arrangement of colour and of grouping', and the Australian Robert Dowling (1827-1886), who taught North oil painting while spending Christmas with the North family in Hastings [Ponsonby 2002: p.15]. North complained about lessons in watercolour from Valentine Bartholomew (1799-1879), who, despite having been 'flower painter in ordinary to Queen Victoria' [Ponsonby 2002: p.14], North did not hold in high

esteem. North was not a professionalised painter since she did not attend formal classes at art school. Nor did she display her work commercially, despite the fact that at the time of North's early artistic education many women painters were becoming highly regarded professionals. Generally, during the nineteenth-century women painters were regarded as either 'amateurs or competent amateurs' as the Victorians expected the fairer sex to acquire accomplishments but never a profession [Lambourne 2005b: p.307]. Despite this, many female painters, amateur and professional, often had a dedicated space in which to work, as pictured in Mary Ellen Best's painting of *The Artist in her painting Room*, of 1837-9 [See figure 8]. Moreover, there had been 'two women artists among the 36 Foundation Members of the Royal Academy': Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807) and the flower painter Mary Moser (1744-1819) [Lambourne 2005b: p.307]. Accomplished Victorian women painters included Louise Jopling (1843-1933), a close friend of Whistler and Millais. Jopling painted *Blue and White* [See figure 9] in 1896, which was bought by Lord Leverhulme for his gallery at Port Sunlight as a document of the then current taste for blue and white Chinese ceramics [Lambourne 2005b: p.311]. North herself took an interest in Chinoiserie and Asian porcelain.

Despite this mix of amateurism and professionalism among nineteenth-century women painters, as Griselda Pollock cited in Sheffield's, *Revealing Worlds: Three Victorian Women Naturalists*, and other feminist art writers have acknowledged, women artists were still at a disadvantage compared with male artists because many women's families objected to such pursuits and 'denied them permission [...] often withdrawing money for education' [Sheffield 2001: p.109]. North defended her own educational shortcomings by stating that a really distinguished woman 'needs no colleges or higher education lectures' [Tinling 1989: p.204].

North's painterly ambitions were from an early stage associated with botanical painting. From the eighteenth century onwards, this genre had suffered from the mainstream artistic view that there was 'a profound difference [...] between a beautiful design and [...] botanical art associated with female polite culture, and a professional work created to aid scientific understanding' [Barber 2011: p.57]. However, further to the professionalisation of female painters during the nineteenth century many botanical works were actually made by professional women artists and they were perceived to offer 'technical precision and scientific accuracy' [Barber 2011: p.57]. North's own botanical paintings did not make extensive use of empirical techniques but, instead, incorporated stylistic influences from high art. North combined myriad stylisations while choosing not to confine her self to any one particular genre. Despite this, North did garner plaudits for her work from journals such as *Nature*, the *Dial* and *Athenaeum* [Gates 2001: p.101].

There were other untrained women painters to which North could have looked. Within the Pre-Raphaelite circle the life model Elizabeth Siddal produced paintings in a recognisably Pre-Raphaelite style. Siddal's work, which was inspired by poetry, displays a naivety that can also be witnessed in North's own botanical works. Rossetti, Siddal's lover, found her work to be 'quite wonderful' because of its 'fecundity of invention and facility' which he considered to be 'much greater than his own' [Cruise 2011: p.138]. Rossetti's brother William Michael Rossetti, however, had a lower estimation of Siddal's work, but in taking this position did not 'take into consideration her almost complete lack of training, let alone her poverty and inability to buy drawing materials' or indeed her lack of 'working space' [Cruise 2011: p.138]. Siddal moved to Sheffield in 1857 to take a ladies class at the art school and her watercolours are now regarded as 'hauntingly' individual [Lambourne 2005b: p.313].

Other Victorian female painters who challenged the primacy of their male counterparts include Rosa Bonheur (1822-99). Bonheur, who was born in Bordeaux, exhibited regularly at the Salon in Paris from 1841 and was the first woman artist to be awarded the Légion d' Honneur in 1865. Bonheur's paintings influenced Lady Butler [Elizabeth Thompson] (1846-1933). Indeed, Bonheur and Butler were thought by some to have 'surpassed any male competition in their chosen genres' [Lamborne 2005b: p.322]. Butler was to astound the public through her incredibly masculine war paintings. Consider here, for example, *The Roll Call (Calling the Roll after an Engagement, Crimea)* of 1874, which was purchased by Queen Victoria after being praised highly by the Prince of Wales in his opening speech at a Royal Academy dinner. Consider also Butler's *Scotland Forever* of 1881 [See figure 10], which depicts the onrushing cavalry of the Scots Greys at Waterloo [Lambourne 2005b: p.322]. Butler declared that she 'never painted for the glory of war, but to portray its pathos and heroism' [Lambourne 2005: p.323].

North was therefore painting within a historical context that included other more professionalised women painters. This may have led her to seek better teaching outside of the expected remit of genteel tutors. William Henry Hunt (1790-1864), whom Ruskin described as having given 'bench-marks at which to aim as an artist' [Lambourne 2005b: p.115] and from whom Ruskin had taken lessons, had lodgings nearby to North's home in Hastings but rejected North's proposal that he might teach her. North was devastated and declared 'the only master I longed for would not teach' [North 1892a: p.27]. Bodichon did, however, receive advice on her paintings from Hunt [Hirsch 1998: p.19].

Despite his refusal to teach her, Hunt is nevertheless a strong candidate as an influence on some of North's compositional as well as paint application choices.

Hunt's technique initially adhered to the classic Girtinesque style (after the eighteenth-century watercolourist Thomas Girtin (1775-1802)) whereby coloured washes are applied to a painting layer upon layer. However, in 1825 Hunt replaced this technique in favour of a mixture of transparent and body colour to be placed over a ground of Chinese white as a way of giving 'luminosity' [Hirsch 1998: p.19] [See figures 11, 12 and 13] This latter technique, which is transferable to oil painting, was also used by North. North believed Hunt's work to be 'absolutely true to nature' [North 1892a: p.27]. Hunt worked on a small scale, as did North, and his work anticipates Pre-Raphaelite naturalism despite being rooted in the nature based teaching of John Varley (1775-1802), the watercolourist, astrologer and friend of William Blake (1757-1827) [Blayney Brown 2001: p.73]. Hunt's paintings are sometimes so realistic that they approach the photographic. His work often depicts bird's nests with accompanying flora built up in painted layers that give a dense colouration and luminosity.

Hunt's studio belonged to John Hornby Maw, a retired Pharmaceutical businessman who owned a fine collection of J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851) watercolours. North, a friend of Maw's daughter, remarked on the paintings in her diaries describing them as an 'exquisite collection' displayed in a 'thirty-foot-long drawing room' [North 1892a: p.28]. Other artists chose to paint in Hastings, including Prout, who, according to North, 'drew even in his bed' because of his delicate health [North 1892a: p.28]. Cox and Linnell also worked in the town, as did Edward Lear (1812-88); the latter making regular appearances there throughout North's life. Lear had been a lodger in the cottage of the North's gardener [North 1892a: p.29] and he wrote of North as a 'clever & delightful' person [North 1878: (MN/1/1) Letters to Dr. Burnell].

Lear wrote to entomologist Eleanor Anne Ormerod (1828-1901) that North was ‘a great draughtswoman and botanist’ [Sheffield 2001: p.106]. Lear, an ornithological draughtsman, landscape painter, musician, creator of nonsense rhymes and a travel writer, wrote *The Owl and the Pussy Cat*, for North’s niece Janet Symonds [Ponsonby 2002: p.15] and entertained North at the piano singing Tennyson for hours to North’s ‘great amusement’ [Ponsonby 2002: p.15]. Lear also painted in North’s presence, and she wrote of him being ‘most good-natured in letting us watch him at work’ [North 1892a: p.29].

North explored the world as a single woman, choosing never to marry. North’s niece Margaret Symonds ‘thought that many people must have wished to marry her’ stating that North asked ‘one suitor to leave the room and then shut the door behind him’ [Ponsonby 2002: p.15]. There were political ramifications attached to marriage despite ‘Victorian women [...] making unparalleled advances, socially and politically’ [Sweet 2001: p.181]. Susan Morgan, writing in *Recollections of a Happy life Being the Autobiography of Marianne North*, suggests that ‘unlike many Victorian women, including rich ones’ North ‘had no practical incentives to marry’ because ‘[n]ot only did she inherit plenty of money’, she was also ‘free from entangling family obligations, free to follow her own inclination, which was to go to interesting places and meet interesting people and paint’ [Morgan 1993: p.xv]. Furthermore, as the daughter of a widowed father, ‘she spent approximately fifteen years enjoying the position of being the female head of an impressive household’ [Morgan 1993: p.xv]. What is more, North grew up well before 1882 when The Married Women’s Property Act of 1870 was put in place [Morgan 1993: p.xv]. Victorian Britain is generally remembered as a time when women’s lives were ‘severely policed and circumscribed’ and ‘[p]ost-Victorian culture has been

inexpressibly keen to dwell upon images of women housebound by stern husbands restricted by forbidding social codes' [Sweet 2001: p.177]. The nineteenth century was a time during which women of social standing found their political voices and won property rights [Sweet 2001: p.177]. However, these rights were not given over uncontested, but were won through many years of extensive campaigning by women.

One by one, North saw her sisters marry. Her half sister Janet married Dr. Kay 'the great educationalist' [North 1892a: p.11] while Catherine married John Addington Symonds (1840-1893) [North 1892a: p.34]. This latter marriage may not have been a steady or traditional one, however, since Addington Symonds was 'an alleged bisexual'. This rumour may have started after Addington Symonds wrote *A Problem in Greek Ethics* in 1883, devoting much energy in his writings toward 'signs of Uranism' [Sweet 2001: p.201], a coded term for homosexuality. North may not have known about these allegations, since she found works by Addington Symonds to be 'tough books' that 'some younger men think hard reading' [North 1892b: p.214]. However, North could quite easily have chosen to be ignorant for the sake of family pride and her sister's marriage.

Female sexuality escaped regulation due to changes to an amendment to the criminal law on homosexual behaviour in England by Queen Victoria (1819-1901). The Queen refused to sign the amendment until 'all references to women were removed', thereby creating a perfect smokescreen for lesbian relationships because of a 'constitutional impossibility' [Sweet 2001: p.199]. North never chose to broach the subject of her own sexual inclinations in public.

North did however display signs of real affection toward a male associate, Dr. Burnell, a Sanskrit scholar, for whom North produced paintings of Hindu 'sacred plants' that are set within the alcove of the second room within the North gallery. The

project was to be a book. North wrote to Burnell on February 5, 1878, about ‘the best way of printing [it] in colour’ [North 1878: (MN/1/1 Letters to Dr. Burnell)]. North admitted to trying copper etching, taking lessons from a Mr. Edwin Edwards (1823-1879) who had illustrated the old inns of England [North 1892b: p.191]. However, no other records of this activity exist. This is almost certainly because the planned book never materialised. North did ask about the progression of the project, but feared being snubbed by Burnell deciding to write casually ‘don’t hurry yourself [...] they may be done in time’ [Sheffield 2001: p.127]. However, three years later Burnell was dead at forty-two from an inflammation of the lungs brought on by a ‘chill in Hampshire’ [Sheffield 2001: p.127]. North’s letters to Burnell are often tender in their wording. In a letter dated February 26, 1878, she writes, ‘I have found no one yet in India who talks as you do & very seldom meet anyone who takes interest in anything here’ and ‘I am always getting some of your plants done & I shall get them all in time I long to read your book about them—when you are on the move, can’t you get a new photograph done of yourself I want one very much as you really are, with long hair below your ears & deep sunken eyes no beauty, but something different from others’ [North 1878: (MN/1/1) Letters to Dr. Burnell]. North also writes to Burnell of her feelings towards marriage, in a letter dated January 20, 1878, she warns him:

[n]ever fear, you will fall a victim to some clever mother-in-law in time!

And be tied to a croquet – badminton young person in high heeled boots and no end of nervous gentility – it is a terrible experiment matrimony for a man especially, as a woman is something like your cat and gets to like the person who feeds her and the house she lives in- but men if they have brains have a romantic idea of companionship in their wife and then

discover they have no two ideas in common, - after the first prettiness have lost their charm – I pity you in advance when that stage comes! And I pity the poor wife too when she finds herself snubbed, and only a sort of upper servant to be scolded if the pickles are not right – and then she will have to amuse herself by flirting with the most brainless of the male croquet badmingtons – and then you will lock yourself up and sulk and think it isn't your fault, and wish yourself free again [North 1878: (MN/1/1) Letters to Dr. Burnell].

North's statements reveal real concerns regarding loss and the fear of marital rejection as well as the isolation that follows, with its accompanying sense of entrapment, hopelessness and claustrophobia. North also showed concern over the extreme lengths Americans went to concerning marriage and divorce. During her visit to the USA in the 1870s, she states that 'divorces were so common that a lawyer would do the thing cheaply by the dozen' and described one woman pointed out to her as having been 'divorced eight times' [North 1892a: pp.76-77].

North, like many single women in the nineteenth century, need not have been celibate however. Despite prostitution being rife, leading to the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864-1886, casual sex for both men and women of all classes and distinctions was, according to Matthew Sweet in *Reinventing the Victorians*, very much available. There were many places one could go to find casual partners. The Cremorne, a pleasure garden on the Chelsea embankment, was between the years 1846-1877 'one of the busiest cruising grounds' in London [Sweet 2001: p.213]. In spite of this many spinsters were not free agents. Women with no family responsibilities were thought of as ideal candidates to nurture the larger society. It was thought that charity work, philanthropic concerns, education or nursing were admirable occupations for these

women, because they were being useful. Indeed, North toyed with the idea of joining her old-friend Marie Hillebrand as a nurse [Sheffield 2001: p.84].

North's diaries present a daughter whose father was the real love of her life. North writes, 'from first to last [he was] the one idol and friend of my life, and apart from him I had little pleasures and no secrets' [North 1892a: p.5]. In May 1854, her father again became M.P. for Hastings after the death of a Mr. Brisco [North 1892a: p.29]. The following year on the January 17, 1855, North's mother died. North, writes of her mother's gradual demise as one during which she did not suffer, but also declared that she had 'enjoyed nothing, and her life was a dreary one'. Sheffield states that North found her mother 'insufferable'. North apparently 'had little respect for what she perceived to be her mother's domesticity', finding her life to be 'dutiful and non-descript' [Sheffield 2001: p.78]. North wrote to her friend Amelia Edwards¹¹ (1831-1892), stating that her mother was 'very beautiful but little educated [...] I knew little of her'. She also writes that her 'father was all in all to me, & she [her mother] more or less jealous, was devoted to my brother [Charley] [...], adding 'at last my mother died' and 'I had still more to do for him' [Sheffield 2001: p.78]. Upon her mother's death North made a promise, agreeing to never leave her father [North 1892a: pp.29-30].

It was at this time that Mr. North and his daughter took a flat in Victoria Street London in order to make a new home [North 1892a: p.30]. North recalled riding to Chiswick Gardens with her father to collect specimens of flowers to paint as well as visits to Kew Gardens. It was during one of her visits to Kew that she first met Sir William Hooker who gave her a hanging bunch of the *Amherstia nobilis*, which he claimed to be 'one of the grandest flowers in existence'. On seeing such an unusual

¹¹ Amelia Edwards was a traveler, Egyptologist and novelist [Sheffield 2001: p.83]. Her travel writings include *A Thousand miles up the Nile* of 1876.

bloom, North wrote, that it made her 'long more and more to see the tropics' [North 1893a: p.31]. North's relationship with her father can be seen as highly significant. As Sheffield argues with reference to Linda Boose, a daughter's 'relationship to the world beyond her father's house' could support 'a Victorian woman's intellectual development' and, moreover, that a 'daughter who is close to her father [...] may benefit' from 'such a relationship' and not have to 'sacrifice the roles of wife and mother completely' [Sheffield 2001: p.76]. North's choice not to marry or bear children meant that she 'firmly acknowledged the worth of her relationship with her father both on an emotional and an intellectual level' [Sheffield 2001: p.79]. Furthermore, any conflict created by the 'desire of the father to both retain and separate from his daughter and between the relatively powerless daughter who is torn between loyalty [...] and love' could be reconciled by the daughter remaining at home and as 'a child in her relationship with her father'. Under such circumstances all that the daughter could do was to 'wait until her father dies to become a sexual, procreative, adult woman' [Sheffield 2001: p.76].

On losing his seat in 1865, North's father decided to travel east with North, first to Trieste and then onto the Adriatic via 'Spalatro' (Spilt), Ragusa and 'Cattaro' (Kotor), passing eleven days in quarantine in the harbour at Corfu. After this, they ventured to Damascus, spending Christmas on a Nile boat, before moving on to Syria in the Spring of the following year. North and her father returned to London in the summer of 1866, after which they travelled back to Hastings to devote time to their garden, building 'three glass-houses: one for orchids, another for temperate plants, and another quite cool for vines and cuttings' [North 1892a: p.35]. This was a task North clearly enjoyed, constantly moving 'from damp tropical heat to cold English east winds' [North 1892a: p.35]. It was almost certainly North's father who

introduced her to the practical study of plants as together ‘they learned about plants, hunted for rare varieties of them, painted them and grew them’ [North 1893: p.xvii]. According to Ponsonby, North had no formal education in botany, but learned about plants from the ‘close association’ with her father as well as reading ‘a great deal about the subject,’ [Ponsonby 2002: p.13].

In 1868 North’s father lost his large majority after his being petitioned by the opposition party over a bribery scandal. North wrote ‘[i]t was most galling [...] poor old father [...] had been all his life fighting against bribery’ [North 1892a: p.37]. North also wrote of her father’s growing and of her own impending deafness, through which in later life ‘some harsh voices’ gave her ‘positive pain’ [North 1892a: pp.31-32]. On August 4, 1869, North and her father decided to embark on yet another trip abroad, this time to Salzburg [Ponsonby 2002: p.15], from where after a few days rest they moved on to Gastien, getting familiar rooms at the Hirsch’s hotel. North’s father then set about planning a walk ‘over the hills to Heiligenblut [in] eighteen hours’.

Father and daughter first ‘went up an Alp 3000 feet above Gastien [to] try [their] powers’ [North 1892a: pp.37-38]. North recounts that her father ‘came back so well that he went up another hill the next day’, leaving North to rest; this time, however, the walk was too much for him. North refers to ‘his old disease’ [North 1892a: pp.37-38], ‘congestion in one of his lungs’ [Sheffield 2001: p.81], as well as of having to go down to Salzburg to find a doctor who advised them to return home to England. North writes that on their return journey via Munich her father ‘arrived in the greatest state of suffering’ [North 1892a: pp.37-38]. After returning home to England, North’s father died on October 29 [Ponsonby 2002: p.15]. North writes of her father’s ‘parting words,’ using her family pet name of ‘Pop’. He asked her for a kiss and told her he was ‘only going to sleep’; but he never woke up. North writes, he

‘left me indeed alone’ and ‘I wished to be so, I could not bear to talk of him or of anything else’ [North 1892a: p.38].

North left Hastings forever, and placed her affairs into the hands of a Mr. Hunt of Lewes. North, embarked upon a trip to the Riviera and Sicily in the summer of 1870. Her family servant, Elizabeth accompanied her [North 1892a: p.38], but it was not a success. North ‘wanted to be alone and was increasingly irritated by Elizabeth’ and Elizabeth for her part ‘just wanted to get home’ [Ponsonby 2002: p.15]. Thereafter, North returned to take up life alone in Victoria Street [North 1892a: p.38]. In 1871, North visited the United States of America, embarking upon her first visit to the country of which she had dreamed when accompanying her father at Rougham. North then moved onwards, travelling to and painting in the Tropics, beginning a life style she would make her own. North had been watching and learning from her father who had ‘provided her with the opportunity to learn how to travel in non-European lands’ [Sheffield 2001: p.83].

North’s travels throughout the British Empire ‘needed no passport and the only bureaucracies she encountered were postal clerks and bankers’. She ‘carried with her ‘letters of introduction’ to government officials and friends of her circle’ [Tinling 1989: p.204]. After her visit to the United States, North was able to visit the West Indies in 1871-72 and Brazil in 1872-73 through letters of introduction that she had received from Charles Kingsley (1819-75).¹² North states that Kingsley’s book *At Last*, was responsible for ‘adding fuel to the burning of my rage for seeing the tropics’ [North 1892a: p.39]. Kingsley presented natural history as a ‘purification of the eye’ and he was heavily influenced by the ideas of Ruskin that involved ‘elements of

¹² Kingsley, an Anglican canon of Chester Cathedral, was part of the Victorian movement that focused on ‘self-improvement’ associated with ‘leisure time’ and ‘the language of self improvement’. This movement had its roots in the idea of leisure as a source of redemption as opposed to its perception as a ‘little world of vanity and self-interest’ [O’Gorman 2000: p.148].

poetry, prophecy, and religion-all in one' [O'Gorman 2000: pp.148-9]. These ideas would go on to influence views on nature painting in the UK, and the US. North would also gain introductions from William and Joseph Hooker, including letters to the then Rajah and Rani of Sarawak, [Charles and Margaret Brookes] (Malaysia). However, despite being 'entertained in Government residences or palaces', Ponsonby states that North thought 'nothing of finding her own way to totally out-of-the-way places, staying in the most primitive accommodation or experiencing the most diverse and often uncomfortable and dangerous forms of transport' [Ponsonby 2002: p.17]. While in Tenerife in 1875-77, North wrote of sleeping in an old house in a 'great barn-like room' that had 'heaps of potatoes and corn swept up into the corners of it'. North was to sleep upon a stretcher-bed with 'cocks and hens roosted on the beams overhead' from where she could hear a 'donkey and other beasts munching their food and snoring below'; despite this North had by her own admission, 'a very large allowance of good sleep' [North 1892b: p.195].

North's working trips abroad involved the exotic and the tragic. In the Seychelles in 1883, she writes of 'exquisite turquoise crabs with red legs' that excited her so much that on seeing them she dropped her bag and 'screamed with wonder'. In contrast, North writes of the leper camp where inmates were 'no longer compelled to go' but still remained and wrote compassionately of a time when the camp was so crowded that the lepers were buried without coffins. According to North, the lepers had such a horror of this that they came to the island deliberately in order to 'make enough money to buy' a coffin and that they 'worked and begged till they had succeeded' [North 1892b: pp.285-295]. North's writing was to be peppered by reports of the peoples and of the surrounding flora and fauna on her trips abroad, sometimes disparaging and sometimes compassionately. North's distaste for the upper classes

that had developed since she was a child, extended into her adult life. North was often upset by bureaucrats and powerful people alike, and in a letter to Dr. Burnett dated February 26, 1878 she wrote of ‘govt House stories’ and of rejoicing in not belonging to ‘big people’ [North 1878: (MN/1/1) Letters to Dr. Burnell]. North’s own confidence grew. Coupled with the prestige of a good family name, it enabled her to name four species of plants giving her own name meaning and gravitas [Rose 2001: pp.70].

North had become a plant hunter; a risky pursuit with ‘many collectors [expiring] in the field’ [Synge 1990: p.57]. In 1884, North wrote of searching for a ‘blue Puya’ in Chile where she organised a ‘guide and a horse and started up to the mountains’. On finding their way blocked, they tied up the horses and ‘proceeded on foot into the clouds’. North describes the clouds as so thick that at one time she ‘could not see a yard’ before her. North was to be rewarded when the mists cleared and the flowers, ‘standing out like ghosts at first’, revealed their ‘full beauty of colour and form in every stage of growth’. North proclaimed that ‘I reached a new world of wonders’ [North 1892b: p.316]; wonders that North would then go on to present to the British public through her paintings, initially at the Pall Mall Institute, where North first exhibited, and then, following the favourable reception of her work, at a self-built gallery set within Kew Gardens [North 1879-1896: M/N /1/4: Kew North Gallery].¹³

¹³ At the time, Kew Gardens was part of the Pall Mall institute [Farley 2009].

Chapter One

The Marianne North Gallery

Every person interested in horticulture, botany, and art will join with Sir Joseph Hooker in feeling “grateful” to Miss North for her fortitude as a traveler, her talent and industry as an artist, and her liberality and public spirit. – [1882: pp. 763-765]

The Marianne North Gallery was opened to the public at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Kew on 7 June 1882.¹⁴ On Saturday 10 June the *Gardeners' Chronicle* included an article on the opening of the gallery stating that ‘there are in this unique collection no less than 627 oil paintings of plants, and landscapes in which plants form a prominent part’ [The *Chronicle* 1882: pp.763-765]. The *Chronicle* also reported that in the gallery’s accompanying catalogue under the letter ‘A’ there were ‘no fewer than 103 entries of plant names’ and ‘it is no exaggeration to say that a visit to this collection of pictures [...] gives the visitor an opportunity of acquiring a good idea of the natural vegetation of the greater part of the world’ [The *Chronicle* 1882: pp.763-765]. North’s importance as a botanist was also acknowledged with the range of flora she had discovered being listed alongside the statement, ‘there are several handsome and remarkable plants here represented that are at present unknown both in gardens and

¹⁴ The North gallery was extended, with building work planned between 1884 and 1886. The extension was completed in 1885 and the Gallery re-opened to the public in 1886 [Farley 2011]. North’s letters to W.B. Hemsley of June 27, 1882, reveal that she was already contemplating an extension to the gallery and that it would most likely be built in the court at the back of the gallery, where ‘the sacred plants are’. North was to consult with Fergusson about the project that very morning. She also refers to visiting the gallery and that it looked ‘so nice & full of people’ [North 1882-1883: Hemsley Letters Vol 2].

herbaria' [The *Chronicle* 1882: pp.763-765]. Indeed, at the time of the North gallery's opening, some of the species painted by North had not yet been named by science.

North's paintings were described by the *Chronicle* as 'an adjunct to a botanical garden', and were compared favourably to other forms of botanical illustration, which, it was argued, 'seldom or never give life-like representations of plant life, habit, and natural surroundings'. The display of paintings at the North gallery was described as a 'noble collection of oil-colour sketches', which had been 'dashed off with such bold and truthful drawing and colouring that the fruits themselves seem to be before the visitor in a living state' [The *Chronicle* 1882: pp.763-765]. Moreover, the *Chronicle* considered that the verisimilitude of North's work was such that not only would botanists be able to name nearly all the plants represented, but zoologists and entomologists would be able to identify the numerous birds, animals and insects that were featured alongside them.

At the time of the North gallery's opening, its display of paintings was divided up into the following geographical groupings: Tenerife, Brazil, Jamaica, the United States, California, Ceylon, India (with a series of sacred plants of the Hindus), Singapore, Borneo, Java, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia—the Australian and New Zealand sketches being the most recent additions. As the *Chronicle* makes clear, within the North gallery 'a great number of timber trees are portrayed, and the whole dado of the room is made up of polished specimens of the woods derived from the trees sketched above' with 'each example of wood [...] named' [The *Chronicle* 1882: pp.763-765].

The catalogue to the gallery had been deliberately 'cut up, framed and glazed in pages, and hung under the pictures, so that every person who desires to see and learn may do so [...] without the expenditure of a penny' [The *Chronicle* 1882: pp.763-

765].¹⁵ The writer of the article for the *Chronicle* also stated that in the centre of the gallery's main room mounted on a metallic table was a large map of the world illustrating the distribution of vegetation; 'a most elaborate and highly finished watercolour drawing by Mr. Trelawney Saunders'. North's intention of placing 'a similar but larger map painted upon the ceiling' was perceived to be an excellent idea to be carried out at some point in the future [The *Chronicle* 1882: pp.763-765]. Visitors to the North gallery were therefore left under no illusions as to its intended purpose as a taxonomically ordered focus for secular-scientific display.

The gallery building itself, which had been designed by James Fergusson F.R.S. (1801-1886), was, however, reported by the *Chronicle* somewhat disparagingly as being 'really much too small for the pictures to be properly seen in—a room two or three times the size of the present one is required' [The *Chronicle* 1882: pp.763-765]. The same report was equally critical of the North gallery's interior décor, stating that '[w]e were not quite pleased with the big and heavy classic ornament under the cornice, and we think the shiny black frames are too strong in colour' [The *Chronicle* 1882: pp.763-765] [See figure 14].

North's decision to offer her paintings for permanent exhibition at Kew was almost certainly influenced by visits there as a younger woman with her father, who was a friend of Sir William Hooker (1785-1865), the gardens' then director [North 1892a: p.31]. William Hooker had overseen the construction of the Museum of Economic Botany at Kew, during the late eighteen-forties. This museum, which accommodated a collection of textiles, drugs, gums, dyes and timbers accumulated by

¹⁵ According to the *Gardener's Chronicle*, the North Gallery's catalogue was compiled by Mr. William Botting Hemsley along with a little hand book that sold for sixpence containing 'all that Miss North Knows about the subjects and places painted'. Sir Joseph Hooker provided a preface for the catalogue. Other contributors included a Professor Oliver, Mr J.G. Baker, Mr. J.R. Jackson, Mr. F. Du Cane Godman and the Rev. Cambridge (who assisted in the naming of the numerous birds present in North's paintings) [The *Chronicle* 1882: pp.763-765].

Hooker over a quarter of a century or more, was originally housed in an pre-existing brick building situated in the Royal Kitchen Garden at Kew, the central room of which had been modified by the architect Decimus Burton (1800-1881), who also designed the vast Palm House at Kew in 1844. Burton included a skylight and a gallery as well as furnishings with glazed wall and table cases for Hooker's museum. The museum was perceived by Hooker himself 'as complementing the living collections in the Gardens by exhibiting examples of products derived from them' [Desmond 1998: p.191]. In 1857 the museum was moved to a new location at the eastern end of the pond at Kew, at which time 'the original arrangement of exhibits by commodities' was replaced by a taxonomic grouping with objects displayed in 'glazed mahogany cabinets on the three floors of what was now referred to as museum 1'.¹⁶ Alongside all of which 'flower paintings, engravings and portraits' were also hung. Further donations were made to the museum from time to time, including items from international exhibitions, such as one held at Kensington in 1862 that 'added an outstanding collection of colonial timbers' to the display [Desmond 1998: p.193] [See figure 15].¹⁷

¹⁶ The Museum of Economic Botany was originally a brick building in the Royal Kitchen Garden at Kew, which had previously served as a fruit store. The building was to be temporary home for Hooker's collection until another purpose-built structure could be erected. A replacement was built and opened in May 1857 [Desmond 1998: p.191]. The second site for Hooker's museum was chosen by Sir William Molesworth (later to become The First Commissioner in April 1885) and Sir Benjamin Hall, who insisted that the museum should be placed at the eastern end of the pond at Kew Gardens; a location that Hooker disliked but had to accept [Desmond 1998: p.191]. The building's exterior came under criticism. Sir Joseph Paxton, designer of the Crystal Palace, thought that the building 'resembled a third-rate lodging house' instead of an 'elegant riposte to the dominating presence of the Palm House' [Desmond 1998: p.193].

¹⁷ William Hooker's Museum of Economic Botany was a principal beneficiary of the disposal of material from the Great Exhibition of 1851. It was also suggested that the entire structure of the Crystal Palace be relocated to Kew before its eventual removal to Sydenham [Desmond 1998: p.193]. At the end of the original exhibition of the Crystal Palace in October it had been Prince Albert's intention to use the proceeds of the exhibition, which totaled 186,000 pounds, to be given over to the Albertopolis scheme; a complex of museums to be built in South Kensington [Picard 2005: p. 275]. However, The House of Commons ordered that the funds should be dispersed by May 17, 1852. Consequently, the Crystal Palace Company was formed and declared the major share holder of the complex. Joseph Paxton was a share holder and the complex was promptly bought for cash, 70,000 pounds in total, and re-erected at Sydenham Hill, Norwood, six miles south of London [Picard 2005: pp. 277-278] to be used as a museum.

The interior arrangement of the gallery built to house North's paintings at Kew some twenty-five years later, with its atrium and first floor gallery, is similar in many respects to that of Hooker's museum.¹⁸ Indeed, colour photographs of Hooker's museum from the nineteen-sixties, when it was still in existence (it has since been dismantled), reveal a space very close in size and design to the North gallery, with trestle tables in the centre of the room comparable in layout to the seating arrangements and framed paintings set out in the middle of the North gallery. In addition, the same photographs show the use by Hooker of black Japanned frames similar in design to those used by North. The collection of woods contained by the North gallery would also appear to echo the collection of woods by Hooker [See figure 16]. North's presentation of the woods was, however, as previously indicated, incorporated into her gallery's design not as a grouping of specimens but in the architectural form of a dado.

While the North gallery was at the time of its opening undoubtedly intended to act as a focus for scientific display, correspondence related to its construction shows that this intended function was, in the planning stage at least, far from being securely defined. As documentation of events leading up to the gallery's construction reveal, there were continuing concerns over North's wish that it should afford visitors access to refreshments. The parliamentary lords responsible for the conduct of public spaces

¹⁸ North's preferred placing for the North Gallery was next to a deserted railway lodge opposite the Temperance house. North's preference was based upon her opinion that 'a shelter and resting place was needed in that part of the gardens for those who had toured the glasshouses' and that there would be 'an entrance gate near the gallery site' [Brenan 2002: p.7]. In her letters North indicated that she felt that the gallery could be a dry and warm venue in winter, and that the gallery might even have a 'arcade round it which would be good shelter from rain for the weary visitors' [North 1882-1938: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters]. At the site of the future North Gallery there was a lodge house that had been designed by William Eden Nesfield. The original function of this building was to be part of a railway station serving the 'extension of the London and South western railway at Kew'. It was built with the 'certainty of yet more visitors to the gardens'. The station was to have had a grand entrance, suitable for receiving Royalty. However, the railway never opened and the gravel path leading to the proposed station that had been laid from the gate to the Temperate house was grassed over and planted as an avenue of alternating deodars and Douglas firs [Desmond 1998: p. 234].

in London were inclined, in the wake of the public success of the Great Exhibition of 1851, to think in terms of the broader welfare of society and to accommodate such requests. Joseph Hooker (1814-1881), and the board of governors at Kew did not, however, share in this view and almost certainly influenced the lords' decision to oppose North's request because of a desire to protect Kew's standing as a centre of serious scientific study [North 1882-1938: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters];¹⁹ a move that can be understood to have made the gallery into what might now be referred to as a contested space.

The proposed use of the North gallery in part as a public tea room was almost certainly perceived to be problematic because it echoed what many on the board at Kew saw as a previous violation of the sanctity of science by the Great Exhibition of 1851. The Kew board's objection to the serving of refreshments at the North gallery was not simply about the refreshments themselves, but the way in which their availability threatened to alter the definition of the space from one of scientific enlightenment to something akin to that conferred on the Great Exhibition's Crystal Palace [See figure 17], where a high-minded display of industrial arts had been made to take on an additional role as open public spectacle. Henry Cole (1808-1882), director of the Great Exhibition and overseer of the later development of the South Kensington Museum, had been determined that refreshment rooms would be made

¹⁹ The legitimate function of Kew arose during the 1850s when successive Commissioners of works ruled that the Garden's had to cater for pleasure seekers. At the time of Joseph Hooker's appointment as Director of Kew Gardens, on November 1, 1865 a responsibility [of some twenty years standing] had been placed upon public institutions to contribute towards London Parks for the poorer inhabitants of London. Kew contributed in the form of seasonal flower beds. Hooker did not regard Kew as a park but as a scientific site that was non-recreational. Despite this belief, Kew had to spend money on public gates and conveniences and additional salaries for gatekeepers, police patrols and garden ornaments [Desmond 1998: pp. 228-230]. As a consequence of Hooker's view that Kew Gardens was principally a site of scientific research, he was criticised for 'planting trees everywhere, sacrificing spacious lawn' [Desmond 1998: pp. 228-230]. Hooker wrote about this issue to Charles Darwin, stating that he was not going to give in and that he 'was prepared to improve the Gardens enormously' but that 'if the character of the establishment' was to 'go down one iota, I shall intimate that I only hold the post with a view to retirement' [Desmond 1998: pp. 225].

available at both the Great Exhibition and at the South Kensington Museum; a request that Prince Albert (1819-1861), chairman of the two committees ‘promptly approved’ [Bonython and Burton 2003: p.179].²⁰ The availability of refreshments at the Great Exhibition was intended to support Cole’s view that the exhibition should present itself as a book, ‘with its pages always open and not shut’ [Bonython and Burton 2003: p.183].²¹

A letter from Hooker, dated November 7, 1879 indicates, that at some stage he may well have had candid words with North on the subject of the availability of refreshments at the North gallery. Here Hooker writes that ‘Miss. North has frankly and unconditionally withdrawn her proposition as to the sale of refreshments in her proposed gallery’, pointing out that she had not taken into consideration, the scale of persons taking advantage of the refreshment rooms and declaring, ‘[h]er view was simple that she w.d [sic] like to be able to obtain tea for herself and such as her friends as being particularly interested in her work w.d [sic] occasionally make a prolonged visit to her gallery’[North 1879-1896: M/N/1/4: Kew. North Gallery Letters MF].

Hooker’s own objections to the serving of refreshments at the North Gallery can be viewed in relation to earlier problems he had faced during his time as director

²⁰ There were numerous refreshments on offer at the Crystal Palace including buffets with all kinds of pastries and several fountains of filtered water supplied with small drinking cups. There were also retiring rooms and washrooms available for a penny as well as free urinals. However, most visitors brought their own food as well as alcoholic drink. Some tickets did not allow re-entry. Consequently, many ate at the foot of the exhibits rather than settling to eat on the grass outside the Palace [Picard 2005: pp.277-278]. Hooker’s concerns for Kew were probably exacerbated by the expansion of the rail network throughout London and outlying districts, which made Kew accessible to what has been described as ‘a more varied and disparate clientele’. As a consequence of this enhanced accessibility, the gardens were ‘rated as one of London’s most popular attractions for the poor of the East End’. Hooker was said to have been concerned with public interference in the maintenance of the grounds for botanical study [Desmond 1998: pp.234-235].

²¹ After his death in 1885, Cole was widely celebrated for his achievements as a reformer of tastes and in particular with regard to his work in the construction of public spaces and the staging of public displays [Bonython and Burton 2003: p.282]. Cole’s example may have influenced North’s desire to establish a gallery for her work at Kew. North had certainly been a visitor to the Crystal Palace in 1851 and was a contemporary of other public developments instigated by Cole [North 1892a: p.26].

at Kew. Matters concerning the relationship between Kew and the public often included dialogue with Parliament. On one occasion, at least, Hooker was accused of ‘despotic behaviour’ in this regard. Sir Trevor Lawrence a Member of Parliament for Burford Lodge, Dorking, and a ‘plantsman’ was concerned about the habitual problem of Kew’s opening times to the public, a problem that would plague Hooker throughout his directorship. Lawrence announced that Hooker was ‘full of what I cannot but call inveterate prejudice on this question’. Lawrence apparently deplored a reference by Hooker to ‘a swarm of filthy children and women of the lowest class [who] invaded the Gardens’ as well as the ‘serious charge against the people that they resorted to the woods for immoral purposes in great numbers’ [North 1879-1896: MN/1/4: Kew. North Gallery MF].

In addition to being a contested space with regard to institutional concerns over the distinction between specialized secular-scientific display and open public spectacle, the North gallery can be understood to have played uncertainly across the boundary between secular-scientific concerns and the giving of artistic-aesthetic pleasure. In many respects, North presented herself as a woman whose outlook was aligned securely with scientific modernity. What is more, at the time of its opening the North gallery was clearly intended to act as a focus for display related to progressive scientific thought.²²

²² On the August 14, 1879, North acknowledged Hooker’s acceptance of her proposal for a gallery within the grounds of Kew, stating that she was ‘so glad you think my plan feasible all but the kettle boiling, which I must of course give up-though reluctantly’ [North 1879-1896: MN/1/4: Kew. North Gallery MF]. Hooker approached the Lords concerning North’s proposed gallery through a document headed ‘The subject Miss North’s offer’, and sub-titled ‘Service Kew Gardens 13. 84. 13 1879’ dated August 21, 1879. The office concerned with the offer was ‘H.M office of works, 12 Whitehall Place, London S.W’. Hooker is reported [within the document] to have suggested that ‘these paintings wd [sic] prove a most instructive & attractive addition to the collection now exhibited at Kew Gardens, and is strongly of opinion that they should be acquired as national property’. The letter concludes that North’s offer ‘should be accepted, except so far as it relates to the scale of refreshments: it having, after frequent consideration been found impracticable on various accounts to permit the sale of refreshments in the Royal Gardens’ At the bottom of the page it states that the letter is for the information of Sir Joseph Hooker and dated August 22, 1879, and that the secretary seen was J. Thiselton Dyer [North

The actual design of the North gallery [See figure 18] is, however, highly aestheticised, bringing together aspects of ancient Greek, Egyptian, Indian, Chinese and Japanese temple architecture as part of an ornate and eclectic layering of stylistic influences. The North gallery can therefore be understood to provide an uncertain architectural framework within which to view North's work that is neither wholly

1879-1896: MN/1/4: Kew. North Gallery MF]. On the October 30, 1879 Hooker wrote a letter to A.B. Mitford concerning his objections to a refreshment room within North's Gallery. Hooker in this exchange of letters states that he 'had not the smallest intimation of her [North's] plans previous to the receipt of her letter'. A list of issues was compiled for a letter dated September 11, 1879 by Mitford about the matter. The list to the office of works at Whitehall states that at 'Kew after a full afternoon the whole of the outdoor staff is occupied till noon of the following day in cleaning up litter of orange peel, paper bags, matchboxes, rags, and cigar ends and would therefore not wish the sale of refreshments at Kew to take place because:

- '1, There have been for some years no complaints of the want of Refreshment stalls in the gardens.
- 2, The Refreshment rooms on Kew green appear to satisfy the wants of the public.
- 3, At Present moment picnicking is not allowed in the gardens' nor are persons allowed to carry provisions. If a refreshment stall or stalls were to be erected it w.d [sic] be impossible to prevent the public from carrying in parcels of provisions & to raise the complaint that they were forced to deal with the amount of litter & untidiness which may be appreciated by inspecting one of the London parks after a Bank Holiday or on a Monday morning.
- 4, Picnicking w.d [sic] altogether destroy the character of the Gardens as a peace-ful & scientific resort & introduce a new element of conviviality & noise. For these reasons it has been the policy of the Board under successive F.C's not to entertain the idea of permitting the sale of refreshments into the gardens [North 1882-1938: M/N/2/3 North Gallery Letters].'

On the September 29, 1879, William Law of the Office of Works, Whitehall wrote 'I am directed by the Lords commissioners of her Majesty's treasury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter B 9102 of the 19th giving, in reply to the letter from his Board 14564 of the 6th instant, a statement of your reasons for thinking that it would not be expedient to permit the sale of refreshments in the house which Miss. North is about to erect in Kew Gardens'. The letter concludes that the Lords 'cannot altogether agree with your conclusions and they think that with proper regulations drawn up, and strictly enforced, for the prevention of provisions being carried into the garden's, there is no real ground for apprehending any evil result from the adoption on trial, at least, of Miss. North's proposal of tea and coffee should be sold in the new building', The letter also states that 'it should of course be carefully explained to Miss. North that the sale of provisions in this way is only an experiment, and that it will be immediately discontinued if it is found to entail any damage to the gardens, of the kind you suggest' [North 1882-1938: M/N/2/3 North Gallery Letters]. The idea was finally thwarted it seems on the grounds of the initial and long term costs to Kew, since additional accommodation would have to be built for such provisions. Mitford's letter in response to the Lords indicates that concerns over dirt and dust were preoccupying the Kew Board, since they would be brought into the gallery space by persons simply wishing to find refreshments 'creating an adverse effect on the pictures'. It had been estimated that a possible 10,000-20,000 people may be attracted to the North gallery simply for refreshments, many of whom, it was suggested, would be persons of the lowest class who would 'very soon ruin the pictures'. There were concerns that the gallery would become a 'rowdy tea stop'. In the end the Kew Board simply stonewalled the North refreshment room [North 1882-1938: M/N/2/3 North Gallery Letters]. North rebelled against the Board's decision by painting flowers of the coffee and tea plants alongside hops and grapes on the doors where the refreshments would have been served [Farley 2005]. North referred to the affair for a final time on November 12, 1879, stating that the Board had sent her 'no word about the refreshments' and concluded that she hoped 'there would be no further official difficulty' [North 1882-1938: M/N/2/3 North Gallery Letters].

secular-scientific, nor wholly aestheticized, but one that is both secular-scientific and aestheticized at one and the same time. It is an uncertain framework that engenders a tension not only within the space of display itself, but also with regard to the individual paintings it contains, which can themselves be viewed by turns as scientific documents and as works of art.²³

This uncertainty should, perhaps, come as no surprise since, as Carol Duncan indicates in *Civilizing Rituals*, from the eighteenth century through to the mid-twentieth-century museum spaces were often designed deliberately to resemble Greek and neo-classical Renaissance architecture. As a consequence of which, argues Duncan, museums can be understood to have functioned not simply within the ‘realm of secular knowledge’ as the focus for ‘the scientific and humanistic disciplines practiced in them—conservation, art history, archaeology’, and as ‘preservers of the community’s official cultural memory’, but, in addition, as places of enervating (liminal) aesthetic experience [Duncan 2006: p.8]. Duncan bolsters her argument with reference to the work of ethnographer, Victor Turner, (1920-83), and in particular his use of the terms liminal and communitas [Turner 2003: p.358]. Turner’s work focuses on quasi-religious experience through anthropological data gathered from non-Western cultures [Turner 2003: p.358]. Turner recognised strong affinities between quasi-religious experience and western notions of aesthetic experience [Duncan 2006: p.11].

In Turner’s writings on communitas he states ‘[w]hat is interesting about liminal phenomena for our present purposes is the blend they offer of lowliness and sacredness, of homogeneity and comradeship’. Turner argues ‘[w]e are presented in

²³ In *A Vision of Eden*, Anthony Huxley refers to the actual design of the North gallery as resembling ‘a Greek temple with oriental verandahs’ [Huxley 2002: p.7].

such rites with a moment in and out of time, and in and out of secular social structure which reveals, however fleetingly, some relegation (in symbol, if not always in language) of a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties' [Turner 2003: p.360]. Turner also states that *communitas* or '*comitatus* community, or even communion,' emerges from the liminal [Turner 2003: p.360].²⁴ Therefore, argues Turner, '[t]he distinction between structure and *communitas* is not simply a familiar one between "secular" and "sacred"', since 'every social position has *some* sacred characteristics'. Rather, this 'sacred component is acquired by the incumbents' through "'rites de passage'" whereby they change position because 'something of the sacredness of that transient humility tempers the pride of the incumbent' [Turner 2003: p.360].

According to Duncan, the ritual that is associated with religious practices and that can be likened to 'magic, real or symbolic sacrifices [...] miraculous transformations or overpowering changes of consciousness' may appear to 'bear little resemblance to the contemplation and learning that [...] museums are supposed to foster'. It does, however, she suggests, have a continuing relationship within a secular society with aesthetic experience and its persistent associations with notions of individual transcendence and subjective transformation [Duncan 2006: p.8].

Turner also wrote of 'threshold people' who are ambiguous since they arguably 'elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space' [Turner 2003: p.356]. According to Turner, 'liminal entities are neither here nor there: they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arranged by law' [Turner 2003: p.356]. Arguably such apposition could be

²⁴ The term 'liminal' is properly understood to refer to a transitional or initial stage at a boundary or threshold [Saone's and Stevenson 2008: p.826]. The use of the term liminal by Duncan derives from the Belgian folklorist Arnold van Gennep who associated the term with ritual [Duncan 1995: p.11].

assigned not only to the North Gallery but also to North herself. North's gallery and paintings are indeterminate in their styles and applications.

North's paintings, allow for individuals to step back 'from practical concerns and social relations of everyday life and look at themselves and their world—or at least some aspect of it—with different thoughts and feelings' [Duncan 1995: p.11]. The North Gallery with its conspicuous embodiment of the accepted nineteenth-century conception of the museum as a surrogate temple, arguably presents itself, alongside other similar gallery and museum spaces of the time, as a hybrid space; one that announces itself simultaneously and uncertainly both as a site of aesthetic contemplation and objective scientific revelation. Moreover, North's paintings could be interpreted in Duncan's terms as exploiting their latent liminality as 'art' as a means whereby 'individuals could step back from the practical concerns and social relations of everyday life and look at themselves and their world – or at least some aspect of it – with different thoughts and feelings' [Duncan 2006: pp.12-13].

Traces of ancient temple architecture are most obvious with regard to the North gallery's frontage [See figure 19], where the Delft green door to the hallway, originally framed by teal blue windowpanes, is set back from iron verandah poles that reflected, the then fashionable use of Egyptian scarabesque architectural styling's. In addition to which, the architrave and lintel surrounding the door is a direct replica of those to be found at the entrance to the temple of Thebes in Egypt. Furthermore, there is a floral frieze circling the walls inside the gallery that is very much Greek in influence [Huxley 2002: p.7]. North's painted doors and their frames with flower paintings are also similar in style to traditional forms of Asian temple architecture. North's placing, of painted water Lilies, near the doorway echoing a popular image utilized by Chinese and Japanese temple painters. North confessed that her style of

painting, had been heavily influenced by Chinoiserie [Farley 2011]. In her journals North also describes the temples and tombs she encountered in Japan as picturesque and highly coloured [North 1892a: p.215] and as being ‘like a Chinese pagoda’ [North 1892a: p.221]. She also records that the interiors of the temples were ‘full of exquisite bronzes, china, and fresh flowers’. [North 1892a: p.218], adding that the paintings of birds, insects, and flowers she found in Japan were exquisite too [North 1892a: p.220]. The interior of North’s gallery can therefore be seen to project the aura of oriental temple architecture as well as that of ancient Egypt and Greece.

The façade of the North gallery echoes European classical forms of a sort used by William Chambers (1723-1796), in the construction of his Theatre of Augusta at Kew during the 1820s [Desmond 1998: p.50]. At the same time, it is also possible to discern stylistic similarities between the exterior of the North gallery and that of traditional Chinese temple buildings, such as the Abstinence Palace within The Temple of Heaven complex in Beijing. The Abstinence Palace [See figure 20] was originally constructed in the fourteen hundreds [Yuan Long 1999: p.40] and was utilised by both Ming and Qing Emperors as part of annual ritual sacrifices to heaven. The palace is a beam-less squat brick structure with slab and triangular steps leading up to a broad stone platform supporting a bronze tower that from a distance creates a false entrance to the palace. This general design is mirrored visually by the North gallery’s front elevation with its entrance steps leading up to the gallery door and verandah; the latter having been added to the gallery ‘to afford shelter to a custodian in charge of wet umbrellas and ladies clogs’ [Blunt 1978: p.185].

This hybrid use of occidental and oriental stylings in relation to the design of the North gallery was far from being a new addition to the general environment at Kew. As part of the refashioning of the gardens under Prince Fredrick’s direction in

1749, Chambers had not only designed and built the famous pagoda at Kew [See figure 21], but also a now demolished House of Confucius, which he dedicated ‘to the teaching of the Chinese [...] moralist then much admired in the West’. A bridge was also designed to join the Chinese house and a Chinese arch [Desmond 1998: p.28]. Chambers was largely responsible for the popularization of the Chinese garden in England [Shou Yi 1998: p.339], publishing a book on the subject in 1757, entitled *Designs of Chinese Buildings*. The Pagoda at Kew, which supposedly followed the Canton style of architecture, is ‘one of the few survivors of Chambers’ Chinese phase’. As such, the building reflects the then fashionable rococo vogue for European Chinoiserie, a style that brings together aspects of orthodox classicism with highly imaginative translations of Chinese design. Chambers’ design of Chinese buildings at Kew can therefore be understood to have related just as much to existing western architectural preoccupations as it did to authentic Chinese building [Desmond 1998: p.48]. It is therefore possible that the exterior of the North gallery also echoes buildings designed for Kew by Chambers in a Chinese style.

According to Shou Yi, writing in *The Vision of China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, the Chinese-style gardens that were to eventually permeate Europe during the mid eighteenth century were initially called the Anglo-Chinese fashion to the apparent ‘resentment of the English’ since ‘[a]n awareness of China did not intrude on the English landscape until the late 1730s.’ [Shou Yi 1998: p.340] It appears that France and Germany ‘had learned the first details concerning Chinese gardens [...] but the theories were not put into practice until they had been systematized and demonstrated in England’ [Shou Yi 1998: p.352]. Kew appears to have replicated the judgement of the Chinese-style while enriching and beautifying particular prospects of the gardens ‘without any detriment

to the general aspect of the whole composition, in which Nature almost always appears predominant' [Shou Yi 1998: p.349]. Similarities between the layout of Kew and that of classical Chinese gardens include the large boulevard-esque walkways lined with trees, the use of follies mirroring the functional buildings of Chinese Temple gardens and the naturalistic use of rock formations (whose representation of nature was adapted for use at Kew alongside Western designs).

Following on from Prince Frederick's (1763-1822) refashioning of Kew, further work was undertaken at the gardens by Charles Bridgeman (1690-1738), under the instruction of Queen Caroline (1683-1737) with the help of Augusta Princess of Wales (1719-1772) (wife of Frederick). This included contributions by 'Capability Brown (1716-1783), who indulged his skills in naturalism' within the gardens. Brown's work marks an end to the political landscape [Richardson 2008: p.6] first inspired by staunch whigs who began 'to experiment with landscaping ideas in a concerted and semi-public way, as part of a political agenda' [Richardson 2008: p.3]. Brown's work was also in contrast to the later work of W.A. Nesfield (1793-1881) at Kew, who 'pursued [...] a geometric display' in garden design that could be construed as more traditional in approach [Richardson 2008: p.6]. During North's time, the gardens at Kew were therefore already 'a palimpsest of garden styles' [Desmond 1998: p.xii].

North's letters reveal initial concerns about how her gallery would fit into Kew's rather eclectic scheme. They also demonstrate that she was satisfied with Fergusson's 'numerous ideas of how the gallery should be framed within the context of Kew' [North 1882-1938: MN/ 2/3 North gallery letters], perhaps in part due to the 'architect's extensive knowledge' [Huxley 2002: p.7] not only of Greek but also of Asian architecture. Fergusson, who was made 'a member of the Royal Asiatic

Society' in the 1840s and became an advisor 'on the display of Indian art in the Crystal Palace at Sydenham in the mid 1850s' [Cunningham 1999: p.44], had seen Asian architecture at first hand during extensive travels in Asia and this may have inspired him to compliment the Chinoiserie already present within the gardens at Kew.

Following his travels, Fergusson wrote *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, a major historical account of Asian architecture, published in 1876, and is credited with being 'the first historian to make extensive use of photography in recording and comparing buildings' [Cunningham 1999: p.42]. Fergusson's history includes the vernacular architecture of India, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand and Java as well as that of China and Japan, although it is important to note that at the time of Fergusson's travels the Indian subcontinent was not perceived to be a unitary country [Cunningham 1999: p.45]. Fergusson also described the architecture of the three major religions in Asia: Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.

Despite his evident openness to cultural otherness, Fergusson can nevertheless be understood to have viewed Asian architecture very much through western eyes, comparing one Mughal building—a Mosque in Bijapur—for example, to a medieval cathedral; a comparison that resonates strongly with a prevailing nineteenth-century British interest in the Gothic. Fergusson's enthusiasm for Asian architecture and sculpture' was also continually overshadowed by his preference for, and belief in, the superiority of ancient Greek and Roman architecture [Cunningham 1999: p.65]. While Fergusson acknowledged that the first stone architecture to be built was in fact Buddhist architecture [Cunningham 1999: p.65], he also believed that the Greeks had influenced early Buddhist forms through the work of traveling Greek artisans [Cunningham 1999: p.59]. What is more, Fergusson did not like the abundance of

ornamentation that is common to the construction of historical Indian buildings. The prevailing high-cultural taste in Britain during the 1870s was for simple shapes, there having been a widespread acceptance, partly fostered by Ruskin, that ‘the mid-Victorian love of ornament was vulgar and unacceptable’ [Cunningham 1999: p.53]. Fergusson himself was a Ruskinite, which goes some way to explaining why the outside of the North gallery is largely without ornament. This prevailing high cultural taste for simplicity allied with a preference for Greece and Rome may well have influenced Fergusson’s design of the North Gallery, guiding him towards a combination of Western classical and simpler non-classical architectural styles.²⁵

Fergusson and North’s choices in the design of the outside of the gallery, could therefore be perceived in part as a reminder of what Duncan has called ‘a pre-Christian civic Realm’ [See figure 22]; as featured in the 1851 construction of The Temple of Empedocles at Selinute by Jakob Ignaz Hittorff.²⁶ One whose ‘classical porticos, rotundas, and other features of Greco-Roman architecture could [be used to]

²⁵ A request for James Fergusson to build a gallery for North at Kew Gardens came to him by letter, on the August 22 and on August 23 [no year given]. North wrote to Hooker of Fergusson’s agreement to build her a folly at Kew [North 1879-1896:MN/1/4:Kew. North Gallery Letters]. Fergusson declared that he could keep within North’s plan of a 50=20 gallery, studio and cottage but may have suggested changes to the design so that it might be both fit for purpose and within budget since North wrote of the plans being simpler than she first fancied. North also thought of adding creepers to cover the façade’s brickwork. North’s agreement to Fergusson’s design is acknowledged in a letter to Hooker praising Fergusson for saving her life and freeing her of constant worry. In her letters on the subject to Hooker, North seems pragmatic in her attitude towards the building of the gallery and as having asked for something Indian in tone. North left monies with Hooker and Fergusson to enable the building of the gallery to begin while she left the UK to work abroad once more. In her absence, North placed her friend Miss Ewart in charge as a supervisor for the build [North 1879-1896: MN/1/4:Kew. North Gallery Letters]. The building’s aesthetics caused Fergusson difficulty. He wrote to Hooker on the subject, referring to the building as a ‘single ugly shed at the moment’ and declaring to him ‘as you know I am not a practicing architect & have no staff’ [North 1879-1896:MN/1/4:Kew North Gallery Letters].

²⁶ The floral frieze, surrounding the interior of the gallery could be described as Greek in influence. The Greeks are thought to have preferred ‘[g]eometric friezes or panels’ while eastern fashions preferred ‘curvilinear or flora patterns’. However, the Greeks were influenced by Eastern design, despite the fact that they never ‘quite ousted the geometric’ fully. Floral influences were subjected to Greek discipline when used as part of design outcomes. The inclusion of the floral in Greek design ‘became an integral part of Greek Classical design at any scale from jewelry to temple architecture’ [Boardman 1995: p.275]. North’s frieze contains an emblem of her initials, influenced perhaps by the Ionic order, based ‘on orientalizing patterns of flower and scroll’ [Boardman 1995: p.284].

signal a firm, adherence to Enlightenment values' [Duncan 2006: p.10]. In short between the inside and the outside of the gallery it is possible to perceive a shift in the significance of North and Ferguson's appropriation of the antique from the rational to the liminal and back again. In the North gallery we therefore witness a tension between the liminal and the scientific, amplified by the gallery's contested relationship to the external space of the gardens at Kew, something which would appear to have forced North's friend, Joseph Hooker, to police the boundaries of his own personal rational secular view of the space.

According to Duncan, the enactment of ritual is 'thought to have a purpose, and end [...] [i]t is seen as transformative', conferring or renewing 'identity or purifying or restoring order in the self or to the world through sacrifice, ordeal, or enlightenment'[Duncan 2006: pp.12-13]. By extension, Duncan argues, the beneficial outcomes of visiting a gallery space are that upon leaving 'visitors come away with a feeling of having been spiritually nourished or restored' [Duncan 2006: pp.12-13].

To this extent, the staging of the North gallery may be seen to act not just as an opportunity for viewers to survey the botanical world in microcosm, but also to enter into a transformative engagement with North's representation of it, both through her paintings and the accompanying map and guide. With its allusions to sacred Greek, Egyptian and Asian architecture, the gallery therefore provides a site for the historical journeying of pilgrims, following a structured narrative route from the exterior verandah to the interior gallery. What is more, it offers points of contemplation prompting its pilgrims to imaginatively re-live the sacred story of North's journeys [Duncan 2006: pp.12-14].

It is therefore unsurprising, that since its opening the North gallery has become something of a shrine to those who find pleasure and inspiration in North's paintings.

Many visitors over the years have bestowed personal markings—fingerprints and the like—within the gallery space. According to Jonathan Farley, currently Senior Conservator in the Library and Archives at Kew, the Perspex, which covers the gallery's painted door surrounds is there specifically to protect them from human finger grease. In the past, continual touching of the surround on either side of the doors darkened the paintings so much that it was thought by many to have worn the images away completely. However, when the area was cleaned during restoration in 1981, it was found only to have been discoloured. According to Farley, the bust of North [See figure 23], and set inside the gallery was also covered in a greasy, soot-like substance, which was found, yet again, to have been human finger grease, left behind by what might be seen as the ritualistic touching of a sacred effigy (the bust within the North gallery space is, in fact, a likeness of her niece Katherine Furse who modeled for the bust because she was the one female relative that resembled North as a younger, more ideal, subject) [Farley 2007].

Added to all of which, it is also possible to view the construction of the North gallery as contributing to the uncertainty of limits through its self-conscious doubling of the external world of the garden. To visit the North gallery, visitors are first obliged to make their way through the surrounding gardens, visiting, perhaps, the extensive collection of exotic plants in the Palm and Temperate houses and lingering on the wrought iron benches on the gallery's verandah on the way (subsequently 'pinched by William Dallimore for use in his Temperate House') [Blunt 1978: p.185]. Before entering the gallery through a small entrance hall after which they are confronted, beyond a set of double-doors, with the inner sanctum of the gallery space itself. In this way, the gallery's interior presents us both with an interior record of North's travels and a seamless adjunct to the exterior world of the gardens beyond.

In addition, the design of the internal space with its tiled Minton style floors and garden benches, accompanied by black wooden framing stands containing further paintings by North [See figure 24], would appear to have been designed to further blur the boundary between interior and exterior by imitating the layout of the verandah surrounding the gallery façade. Farley has even suggested that there was no practical or aesthetic necessity to have the iron benches in the gallery, but that North made direct use of them to duplicate the experience of contemplating the outer world of the garden within the gallery itself. Consequently, North can be understood to have attempted to present visitors with an experience analogous to the gardens surrounding the gallery, but one which ultimately draws on their proximity to underwrite the capacity of her work to offer an expansive and transporting vision of a wider world beyond [Farley 2007]. The concept appears ‘mindful of the communion between man and nature’, and emphasises a world garden in imitation of nature, all of which reflect the relationship between the gallery interior and wider nature itself. This proposed (Landscape-(Living)-Room) with elements of a three-dimensional world, reflected through two-dimensional paintings [Tsong-Zung 2008: no page numbers given].

North can be understood to have grafted further stylistic layers onto her gallery in the form of two aspects of late nineteenth-century European domestic interior design: a muted colour palette that had emerged in Britain as a reaction to established mid-Victorian styles associated with the term chintz, and a sense of visual clutter characteristic of French interior décor. According to Sweet writing in *Reinventing the Victorians*, ‘[c]hintz’ is a ‘Hindi word used to describe brightly coloured fabrics’ (as observed in William Kilburn’s highly floral *Chintz Design*, of the 1800s [See figure 25]). In our own time it has come to signify a rather staid sense of Englishness. The Victorians, however, saw chintz as ‘exciting, exotic and cosmopolitan’ [Sweet 2001:

p.124]. In her writings, North refers to exotic fabrics worn by young women in Smyrna, stating that their chintzy dress was made of the kind of fabric that one would use to make curtains [North 1893: p.95]. The gaudy application of chintzy colour in English homes during the mid-Victorian period was, among other things, a deliberate attempt to combat the soot, dust and grime of the Industrial Revolution, which tended to 'reduce colours to a dull monotonous grey' [Sweet 2001: p.124]. North's sister complained of such calamities, stating that collections of 'stuffed birds [and] tropical butterflies were both sadly liable to ruin from the London climate and [...] dirt' [North 1893: p.315].

Interior lighting played a huge part in Victorian decoration, with more 'muted colours [becoming] fashionable in the last quarter of the nineteenth century' as a consequence of improvements associated with the introduction first of gas and then of electric lighting; improvements which illuminated rooms 'more brightly than ever before' [Sweet 2001: pp.125-126]. At this time, the old chintzy colour palette began to appear violent to the eye, having only been seen previously under the poorer lighting conditions that had necessitated it in the first place. The new interior colour schemes ushered in by improved lighting conditions included russets, apricots, slate blues, teals and dark browns as well as olive green [Sweet 2001: pp.125-126], which accords with North's use of teal, Delft green, dusky pink and plum as part of the interior and exterior design of the North gallery as well as the use of a more demure sage green with accompanying brown in her adjoining studio room, and which are mirrored in William Morris's 1864 design *Trelis* [See figure 26].

At the same time, the dense hanging scheme of the North gallery exhibited a tendency toward visual clutter also characteristic of many nineteenth-century British domestic interiors. Indeed, '[a]ffluent Victorians knew they were affluent [...] by

casting an eye over the volume of material objects' within their homes [Sweet 2001: p.126].²⁷ This tendency was not approved of by leading design writers, of the day, nor perceived as a British design custom but as having been imported from France [Sweet 2001: p.126]. In 1853, writing in *The Stones of Venice*, Ruskin declared under rule number two, that one should '[n]ever demand an exact finish for its own sake, but only for some practical or noble end'; a declaration that Sweet interprets as meaning 'don't [...] go mad with stencils and varnish and stippling when something simple will do' [Sweet 2001: p.134]. Nevertheless, by the 1880s gaudy French décor had established itself in Britain and had interacted with other developments such as the mass production of wallpaper [Sweet 2001: pp.126-127].

By insisting on a dense hanging scheme for her paintings alongside the use of stenciling on the walls of the North gallery, North would therefore appear to have continued to embrace a popular British interest in continental taste. The dado, which North had included as a way of displaying exotic woods was also a fashionable aspect of late nineteenth-century Victorian homes.

This domestication of the interior of the North gallery may go some way to explaining why North wanted to serve refreshments there. The gallery was in effect an extension of the home, with paintings replacing abundant knick-knacks. It may also explain why the unadorned exterior of North gallery looks in many ways similar to colonial domestic architecture (according to Farley, Fergusson also built a house in Tasmania, using the same format as the North gallery exterior [Farley 2006].

²⁷ North wrote to Hemsley, who was Assistant for India in the Herbarium at Kew and who compiled the descriptive catalogue for the North Gallery, about the interior layout of her gallery. This concerned not only the plant classifications involved in the interior layout and their geographical location but also possible interior design ideas for the gallery. She writes to him of adding extra doors and of the ideas she had of painting them, including spring flowers and old and new world plants [North 1882-1896: Hemsley Letters].

On entering the main exhibition space of the North gallery, the visitor is confronted by an overwhelming array of botanical and topographical paintings completely covering the walls of the lower gallery as an interlocking structure without intervening gaps from the height of the dado to the under part of the running gallery, with each painting framed individually by a black Japanned surround and placed securely behind leaded glass like a butterfly in a case. At the time of the gallery's opening in 1882, North herself considered its display of paintings to be more or less complete both in scope and overall design. Moreover, the way in which the paintings were hung side by side as an interlocking structure [Farley 2006] has served to protect them from casual interference and rearrangement by Kew's Botanists, who until very recently were allowed to alter and over-score botanical illustrations and paintings in the collection of the gardens in the service of scientific exactness [Ward 2007].²⁸

However, despite this apparent state of architectural fixity, the actual experience of viewing the paintings contained within the North gallery is a far less than certain one. The sheer scale of the imagery held up to view is such that the gaze of the viewer is constantly deflected from one image to the next. What purports, on the face of it, to be a stable, well ordered representation of the natural world consequently becomes, through the act of viewing, a sublime engagement with baffling illimitability. Although housed within a relatively small space that allows for a sense of encapsulation or containment, North's paintings represent something vast and unimaginable: an unattainable Eden forever projecting itself beyond the limits of the

²⁸ A note with an illegible signature dated February 21, 1881, suggests that North's paintings should be placed under glass. Fergusson's terse reply to Hooker suggests that the note came from North herself, and he states that 'nothing whatsoever has been arranged with regard to either the framing glazing or hanging of Miss North's pictures', and that 'it will add materially to the expense & difficulty of hanging'. Fergusson concludes [h]owever it can be done if necessary & must be done & shall if found to be the case sir all this must be left to Miss. North [...] when she returns' [North 1882-1938: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters].

gallery. What is more, the interior of the gallery gives the impression of something akin to a huge cabinet of curiosities [See figure 27]. Still life and cabinet paintings of the sixteenth century onwards known as cabinets of curiosities, which were also referred to as curiositas or wonder chambers, were used to display strange objects ‘unveiled or discovered through man’s curiosity and inquisitiveness’ and, as such, were thought of as being ‘filled with pleasurable terror’ [Schneider 2009: pp.158-159].

North did not complete all of the paintings for the North gallery during her travels. She painted some away from the original motif to fit in with Ferguson’s design [North 1882-1883: Hemsley Letters, Vol 2.c.]. In addition, North would appear to have adopted a high degree of flexibility with regard to the hanging of individual works. Evidence of this has been found during the recent restoration of the gallery where paintings were found to have alternative images on the back of the framed works with one format in landscape and the reverse in portrait [Farley 2009].²⁹ North would therefore appear to have juggled the order and format of her pictures deciding the spaces where they were to be placed and repainting some according to what could be accommodated by the limits of Ferguson’s overall design.

Such an approach also bears comparison to the showing of images as part of cabinets of curiosity and in particular the ‘propped or hung up’ images strategically

²⁹ North’s paintings were framed from off cuts of a standard size, as was the beading material to be used for the Japanned framework. The system used to hang the works in her gallery was one that planned to marry up the paintings once they had been placed upon the gallery walls. This meant that some pictures had corners that had to be planed due to being too big and in other instances, the opposite was true and areas had to be patched. [Farley 2006]. The glass used by North was cheap, it was greenhouse glass and according to Jonathan Farley, it probably saved the paintings from discolouration due to its high lead content [Farley 2006]. Frames containing glass had become much more available after the success of Paxton’s Crystal Palace and cold frames also became highly fashionable [Picard 2005: p.175]. It was therefore feasible for North to obtain such large amounts of glass. In an undated letter to Hemsley North reveals that she was involved with the decision to glaze her paintings and find North asking Hemsley ‘I think you took a page of mine’ which ‘I wanted to send to Kew to show the size of the 130 glass covers-would you let me have it back or a bit of paper cut the exact size of the page’ [North 1882-1883: Hemsley Letters Vol 2].

placed within cabinets in order to arrive at the ‘fiction of replacing the reality depicted in them’. This was ‘especially true of flower still lifes which were to make a certain species permanently available to the viewer, even though they were in bloom at different times’ and were, according to Norbert Schneider in his book, *Still Life*, part of ‘the late effects of a magical view of art, verging on illusionism, in which pictures were seen as substitutes for reality’ [Schneider 2009: pp.158-159], something that North plays upon in her particular cabinet, albeit – a cabinet of previously unseen species. That she combined with the lure of topography and difference in order to permanently amaze the viewer.

In returning to the North gallery’s original layout, another hidden significance is arguably brought to the fore. As previously stated, the gallery’s stylistically hybrid, pre-aestheticist order, places its contents in a setting that strongly echoes those specifically designed for ancient ritual. It therefore carries with it another complicating characteristic: namely, the bringing together of a supposedly objective, de-aestheticised form of representation, the botanical illustration, with nineteenth-century notions of the transformative powers of art. Those in the Royal collections were sometimes called museums [Schneider 2009: p.158] and (like the North gallery) were filled with ‘trophyes [...] brought back home from dangerous voyages’. Cabinets of curiosity were not initially ‘guided by an interest in classification’ even though the ‘labels on some display cases’ show ‘the first hesitant beginnings’ of taxonomical practices [Schneider 2009: p.158]. Nevertheless, they constitute some of the first steps through which the museum (as we now know it) was formulated. As Graham Dixon in his book, *A History of British Art*, states, Victorians ‘were forever constructing imaginary ideal communities. It was, in part, a way of pretending that all was well in

the real world. It was also a way of dreaming of other and more harmonious types of existence' [Graham Dixon 1999: p.170].

In recent years, the North gallery has undergone a substantial restoration funded by The National Lottery. This restoration, which took place between September/October 2007 and November 14th 2010, has brought new information to light that has not been previously dealt with in published writings. Conservation proposals for the North gallery included the restoration of the tiled floor as well as the installation of facsimiles of the original benches. The original benches in the gallery space were replaced by Sir Arthur Hill in the 1930s, at approximately the same time as the interior floor tiles were removed and replaced by fashionable ruboleum [North 1882-1938: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters]. Farley believes that this resulted from a desire to modernise the gallery as much as possible by getting as far as possible away from a then unfashionable Victoriana. It had been suggested at the time that leather sofas could be placed in the gallery to emulate the interior of the National Gallery in London, but this idea never came into fruition. According to Farley, the removal of the tiled floor during the modernization of the North gallery 'ripped part of the psychology [out] of the gallery' [Farley 2007], compromising North's intention to allow visitors a simultaneous experience of an exterior and interior world.³⁰

Today, as part of the modern process of restoration, existing material is peeled away layer by layer in order to reveal the past's actual, and not presumed, tastes in colour and pattern. In alignment with this tendency, conservators of the North gallery removed a section of wood next to the studio room to expose the original, dusty pink colour of the wall and skirting board. This can be seen to marry with the cornice

³⁰ The use of 'encaustic tiles laid in pattens of black and white, browns and creams on the hall floor and on the path leading to the front door' of Victorian middle-class houses was widespread. Oil cloth was more common, however. [Picard 2005: p.169].

painted by North, which is in parts discoloured due to previous restoration work; its fading blamed on the use of non-lead paint, which Jonathan Farley, director of the restoration programme, believes allowed the previous sections painted by North to remain stronger in colour [Farley 2007]. According to Farley, the hidden section of wall had not seen the light of day since 1886, when North completed the placing of the woods within her dado design. Farley had believed that the stencil paintings running around the upstairs verandah were completed in the 1980s, in replacement of original works by North now in storage at Kew [Farley 2007]. However, the process of restoration has revealed that the stencils are accurate replicas of North's original designs. In the course of the recent restoration they have been carefully replicated once more [Farley 2009].

In completing the current restoration of the North gallery, Farley did not want to encroach upon the fabric unduly, declaring that he wished to keep technology in the background. Farley's creative solutions to the problems presented by the restoration of the North gallery were consequently aimed at giving the gallery 'the best of both worlds' (Victorian and contemporary) while retaining a room prior to the aestheticism of the 1890s. Fluorescent lights were to be removed and were to be replaced by fibre optics, [Farley 2007] but these were later perceived to be too intrusive. Hanging globe lights, which were originally used by North, were returned instead [Farley 2007].

North's paintings in the gallery were re-hung [See figure 28] and the conservation of the gallery structure meant that the pictures had to be taken off the walls and returned using a new hanging and locking system allowing for a gap between the walls and the pictures so that the structure of the building could breathe [Farley 2007]. An under floor heating system originally installed by Fergusson was removed as Farley believed that it had caused an imbalance in temperature within the

gallery that warped the exotic woods, which make up the dado, [Farley 2007] Farley believes that the under floor system was yet another design compromise; one that allowed Fergusson to apply a classical Roman heating system, but in a manner that has, in the long run, not benefited the gallery's overall structure. A new ventilator system was also installed that will, it is hoped, stop spores from settling on the walls following the discovery of dry rot in the gallery in 1981 [Farley 2007]. Fergusson's use of cloistral lighting has benefited the paintings, however. According to Farley, while this lighting scheme creates a hard reflection on the glass used as part of the framing of the gallery's paintings, making the paintings difficult to see, it nevertheless protects them from excessive light damage [Farley 2007]. Here Fergusson would appear to have applied classical architectural principles set out in his book, *An Enquiry into the True Principles of Beauty in Art* (1849), which 'included a study of how Greek temples such as the Parthenon were lit' [Cunningham 1999: p.4].

Chapter Two

The North Gallery as a Cabinet of Curiosities

The stylistic eclecticism of the North gallery was challenged by nineteenth-century commentators who felt that it conformed neither to prevailing aesthetic tastes nor the sobriety required for serious scientific display. According to Guy Brett writing in *Chilean Flora Through the Eyes of Marianne North*, North departed ‘from the norms of both art and science of her times’ because ‘[a]esthetes derided the hanging [of her gallery] as ridiculously overcrowded’ while ‘conversely, scientists were not presented with orderly ranks of isolated specimens’. They were however, argues Brett, presented with ‘something richer: an attempt to convey the whole feeling of an environment’; one that was ‘made to serve, not fashionable taste or respectability, but a version of nature’ [Brett 1999: p.33].

Seen in this light, it is therefore possible to view the North gallery as heir to a form of visual display that precedes the modern division of science and art: namely, the cabinet of curiosities. The cabinet of curiosities, which was used by European aristocracy and the rich from the 1500s to the 1700s as an often aestheticised focus for the collecting, display and classification of objects, and was revitalized during the 1800s and into the 1900s as part of Victorian family life. Pre-Victorian examples include the Poggi Museum, in Bologna, Italy comprising the Ulisse Aldrovandi Museum and the Luigi Ferdinando Marsili Collections [See figure 29]. Victorian domestic cabinets included ‘works of art, illustrated texts and maps, coins, scientific

devices, seashells, and other natural specimens' collected randomly from around the world [Roscoe Hartigan 2007: p.145].³¹

The eighteenth century's preoccupation with proto-scientific classification [Fara 2004: p.20] can therefore have been understood to have continued into the nineteenth century not just through dedicated forms of scientific collection and display, but also through domestic cabinets of curiosity as a hybrid visual scientific/aesthetic form.

North's childhood encounters with cabinets of this sort as well as visits to scientific displays of objects such as Hooker's Museum of Scientific Botany at Kew, are likely to have had a strong influence upon the arrangement of her own gallery, encouraging her to combine a sense of visual wonder with the numbering and naming of the species and actual wood specimens she had gathered. The North gallery is, however, a most curious Victorian cabinet; one that has been conceived not only on a very large non-domestic scale, but that also makes, a distinctly domesticated Victorian use of collage-montage/decoupage and stylistic diversity [See figure 30].

The history of cabinets of curiosity in the West has a relationship to the development of the garden grotto. Garden grottos are cave-like structures used as places to display effigies or statues that can in some cases act as a reminder of the

³¹ Thought to be the first cabinet of curiosity collection in the western world, the Palazzo Poggi museum in Bologna Italy, is '[a]n immense collection of everything [...] needed to study the sciences and practice the arts'. It is described as '[a] sort of encyclopedia' according to J.W.von Archenholtz in 1787 [Tega 2001: p.8]. The museum is an extended 15th century home of the Poggi family, where in 1711, it became the Istituto delle scienze [institute of science] [Tega 2001: p.16]. The Ferdinando Cospi's museum (1606-86) is also housed within the museum. It is a collection of art objects, marvels and natural curiosities and is an example of an Italian wunderkammer, or room of marvels [Tega 2001: p. 40]. The Ulisse Aldrovandi museum is also housed at the Poggi, and named after its founder who was regarded as 'the founder of modern natural history' by Linnaeus [Tega 2001: p.22]. It contains curios of natural sciences. The Poggi also contains the Luigi Ferdinando Marsili collections of rocks, corals and minerals as well as the Museum Diluvianum of the Istituto delle scienze of fossils. The school of obstetrics is also present, complete with models of babies within the mother's womb and obstetric instruments going back to the eighteenth century. The Ercole Lelli's Anatomical waxworks include full-scale flayed bodies in various stages of anatomical investigation, and are complimented by the Morandi and Manzolini's Anatomical waxworks. The Poggi also houses light and optics rooms, as well as an Electrical physics room. The colonial nature of the cabinet of curiosity is presented through the Poggi's inclusion of the Geography and Nautical Science room, alongside rooms dedicated to Military Architecture [Tega 2001].

religious life of Christian hermits. As such, grottos are intended to frame the objects they contain in such a way that their aura as objects of aesthetic contemplation is powerfully enhanced.

The aesthetic effect, to which the grotto is intended to give rise, is discussed by Leonardo da Vinci, (1452-1519), in his *Fragment Speleology*. Here, Leonardo states that after entering a cave he was ‘seized by a strong feeling of desire’ to find out ‘whether something fascinating might be found inside’ [Schneider 2009: p.158]. According to Norbert Schneider in *Sill Life*, Leonardo was exposed to two feelings: one of horror and one of craving, which together suggested the possibility of some form of religious enlightenment; a combination that can be experienced in relation to the Romantic painting, *Felslandschaft Mit Mönch* (1825-26) by Carl Blechen which depicts a wonder cave with a monk at the its edge contemplating a shaft of divine light [See figure 31]. Schneider argues that Leonardo’s words are a reflection of the then current concept of curiositas; that is to say the notion that ‘[w]henever people [...] were confronted with something strange that had been unveiled or discovered through man’s curiosity or inquisitress, they were filled with pleasurable terror’[Schneider 2009: p.158].

Schneider then goes on to assert that this combination of curiosity, pleasure and terror is also commensurate with the ‘impression [...] gained from natural history collections and wonder chambers’ that could be as large as a room [Schneider 2009: pp.158-159]. The wonder chamber (or *wunder kammer*)—a variation on the cabinet of curiosities—can be defined as a chamber or room, rather like a theatrical stage set, used to display a collection of objects of curiosity within a grand house setting [Schneider 2009: pp.158-159]. In the 1600s, Frans Francken II, painted *Art Room* after 1636, which disclosed a collection of paintings and objects within a room, and

between 1664-66, Jan van Kessel (1626-1679) grandson of Jan Brueghel the Elder [See figure 32], with Erasmus Quellinus (1626-1679) painted an allegorical grouping that depicted all the then known continents of the world [Schneider 2009: pp.159-162]. The centre-piece of these paintings depicts peoples from the continents of Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas set within the geographical context of their particular continent alongside its flora and fauna. Other paintings, framed by black Japanned surrounds, were systematically organised around this centre-piece [Schneider 2009: p.159], thus creating a dense hanging of images not dissimilar to that of the North gallery.

Early forms of Gothic and Chinese landscape gardens in Europe also made use of ‘practical diversions in ‘the form of temples and other garden buildings’ [Richardson 2008: p.353], whose aesthetic affect as garden follies was intended to be similar to that of grottos and wonder chambers. The folly as a garden structure ‘emerged out of the antiquarian enthusiasms of the 1710s and 1720s’ associated with the Gothic style. Antiquarians of the early eighteenth century ‘tended to be archeologists and local historians’ sometimes referred to as Itinerants [Richardson 2008: p.353].

Most of these antiquarians ‘were scholars [...] who did not come from a Grand Tour background’ making do, as it were, with whatever they could find in their own backyard. The Itinerants were to be joined by the gentry who took an interest in their own ‘patriotic enterprise’ [Richards 2008: p.354]. Tim Richardson in *The Arcadian Friends*, states, that these members of the gentry were ‘interested in architecture and the decorative arts, connoisseurs who might perhaps be members of the society of Dilettanti [...] or of a Masonic lodge’ [Richardson 2008: p.354]. The Gothic, according to Richardson, was seen as a ‘precursor of both the picturesque and the

Romantic movement'. Allied to this new style was the fashion for 'hermitages, primitive huts or rest houses, sited in atmospheric areas of woodland', [Richardson 2008: p.357] as witnessed in William Kent's *Hermitage*, illustration of 1735 [See figure 33].

Constructions of this sort were 'built on a small scale and relatively cheaply' mirroring 'Horace Walpole's (1717-1797) Strawberry Hill [See figure 34], built after 1747' [Richardson 2008: p.357]. Walpole, whose Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* of 1764 initiated what was to be a growing eighteenth and nineteenth-century interest in the Middle-Ages, constructed Strawberry Hill to his own neo-Gothic designs [Blayney Brown 2001: pp.195-6] as a focus for the engendering of an atmosphere which he referred to as 'gloomth': a combination of warmth and gloom not dissimilar to the combination of pleasure and terror associated with grottos and wonder chambers.

Eighteenth-century Gothic and chinoiserie also had associations with science. Thomas Wright (1711-1786), the astronomer who discovered the Milky Way, had an interest in chinoiserie showing a 'preference for the little kiosks [...] for if you had a Gothick castle or ruin, you had to have a Chinese hut' [Richardson 2008: pp. 8-9]. Moreover, a growing eighteenth-century interest in botany as well as 'the aesthetic possibilities of the landscape garden' allowed for another over-lap in grotto making; one 'which frequently utilized unusual or foreign rocks and minerals' and brought 'harmonization of scientific and artistic interests' into the garden sphere [Richardson 2008: pp. 8-9].

Chinese kiosks as follies, such as *The House of Confucius* c.1749 [See figure 35] could have been found at Kew Gardens during the eighteenth century but had perished by the nineteenth century, like so many others, 'because they were made of

wood and canvas' [Richardson 2008: p.367]. The Gothic and the Chinese went hand in hand during this period and pastiches of the Chinese and the Gothic were sometimes melded together [Richardson 2008: p.370]. The Chinese fashion and European interest in cabinets of curiosities during the eighteenth century also saw the deliberate placing of cabinet-like structures within garden spaces. In 1773, the landscape gardener Sekell, who studied under Chambers, popularized Frederick the Great of Germany's interest in the new Chinese fashion. The result could be witnessed in gardens such as Wilhelmshöhe near Kassel, which contained a Chinese literati water village with its 'winding streams' and a 'Chinese bridge accompanied by a long Chinese salon with two cabinets for the dining ballrooms' [Shou Yi 1998: pp.352-353]; the acceptance of this 'stylistic alliance' between the Gothic and Chinese [Richardson 2008: p.370] led to kiosks and grottos being established in English gardens, including Kew Gardens. This use of kiosks and follies took its cue from not only in part from the wonder chamber, but also the architecture and political landscape gardening of the day [Richardson 2008: p.6]. Moreover, the makers of these structures 'tended to be determinedly amateur, which only added to the idiosyncrasy of the gardens', including as they sometimes did 'a cage in the corner of a grotto or a humorous verse on a wooden placard' [Richardson 2008: p.8].

During 1876-7, James Abbot McNeil Whistler (1834-1903), decorated the *Peacock Room*. This room, which had been designed for Frederick Richards Leyland (1832-1892), contained fine gold lacquered cabinet shelves containing Chinese blue and white style and Japanese porcelain as well as a dado of decorated woods [Lambourne 2005a: p.93]. Whistler had seen a fireplace at number 1 Holland Park, the London residence of Aleco Ionides (1840-1898), somewhere between 1870 and 1873. Above this fireplace the designer Thomas Jeckyll (1827-1881) had devised a

cabinet to house blue and white pottery [See figure 36] styled in imitation of a Japanese structure known as a 'mon' [Lambourne 2005a: p.92]. Whistler adapted this original design as part of his decoration of the *Peacock Room* [See figure 37].

The craze for blue and white Chinese ceramics dated from the early 1860s and can be traced to Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), who furnished his 'Tudor House with a miscellaneous collection of old furniture and bric-a-brac' [Calloway and Le Orr 2011: p. 116]. Whistler, who had arrived in London at a later date via Paris, was 'fascinated by all things Japanese' and had a more 'discriminating eye for the better examples of Kangxi wares' [Calloway and Le Orr 2011: p. 116]. The craze for all things Blue was further enhanced by the Pre-Raphaelites and Murray Marks (1840-1918), an astute art dealer who, along with Charles Augustus Howell (1840-1890), did 'much to spread the taste [...] among circles of rich patrons' [Calloway and Le Orr 2011: p.116]. Whistler's interest in all things oriental also consumed his living quarters. Between 1867-8, his room at Lindsey Road, Chelsea displayed oriental panels painted directly onto the wall [Lambourne 2005a: p.93]. Whistler also incorporated this style of oriental panelling as part of his decoration of the *Peacock room*.

Leyland, who commissioned the design of the *Peacock Room*, was upset to find that Whistler had invited the general public into his home to witness the construction without his permission [Lambourne 2005a: p.96]. Whistler may have deliberately opened up the space to the public because the cultural scene of the 1860s and 1870s had become fixated upon the artist, since 'little was publically known of the way in which painters such as Whistler, Rossetti and Leighton actually worked and lived' [Calloway and Le Orr 2011: p.90]. As a consequence, a 'life devoted to art came to be

perceived as a high calling' and the 'idea took hold that artists' studios were in some way sacred spaces' [Calloway and Le Orr 2011: p.90].

Whistler incorporated orientalist style into his drawings and paintings, such as *The Balcony* (c.1867-8) and *Rose and Silver: the Princess from the Land of Porcelain* (1863-4). Opening the *Peacock Room* to the public may therefore have been an effective way of exploiting public interest and, as a consequence, of advertising Whistler's wider artistic ambitions. This form of viewing was not new. In Antwerp during the seventeenth century Ruben's (1577-1640) artwork, studio, and his collected antiquities and 'costly goods', were viewed by the public through a system that became known as 'The Palace of Art' [Calloway and Le Orr 2011: pp.90-91]. Moreover, during the mid nineteenth century the new well-to-do had already begun to visit their favorite artists at home and view their works in a particularly novel, semi-formal social ritual called 'Show Sundays' [Calloway and Le Orr 2011: p.92]. On these days, the 'Show Studios' concerned often displayed rich furnishings [Calloway and Le Orr 2011: p.91], as displayed in Lord Leighton's Great Studio in 1866 [See figure 38].

The style of the *Peacock Room* coincided with another fashion of the time; that of Asian shadow boxes ('[n]ot to be confused with the miniature or toy theatre tradition' [Roscoe Hartigan 2007: p.59]). In the nineteenth century, this display system of hardwood boxes including sliding glass covers with papered or silk-lined interiors used 'to display fine ceramics [...] made for export'. This form of display, which was utilized in the East and West, was often used to house sculpture and other mementoes. Smaller boxes existed with partitioned interiors that 'accommodated arrangements of multiple items' [RoscoeHartigan 2007: p.59]. These cabinets echoed display systems used during the reign of the Chinese Emperor Qian Long, (1711-

1799) of the Qing Dynasty, whose own art and ceramic collection was kept in specially constructed boxes and on decorative display shelves such as the ones on display at the Summer Palace in Beijing, China and in the decoration of screens and divans on display at the Palace [See figures 39 and 40].

Whistler's designing of the *Peacock Room* coincided with North's visit to Japan in 1875-7. It is therefore possible to view the construction of the North gallery as being open to orientalising influences encountered by North both at home and abroad. Both Whistler's *Peacock Room* and the North gallery could be described as exquisite follies that not only reflect a long standing European interest in wonder chambers and cabinets of curiosities, but that also incorporate a contemporary interest in shadow box display from the East. There were certainly other examples of Victorian cabinets, which combined Eastern and Western stylistic influences. Consider here, for example, Gabriel Viardot's cabinet of 1888, and E.W. Godwin's (1833-1886) of 1877-8 [See figure 41], both of which harked back to the eighteenth-century design of the cabinet while incorporating aspects of the oriental, thereby creating a 'rich jumble' of styles that supplemented one another for effect [Lambourne 2005a: pp.98-99].

North's own fascination with Japonisme is evidenced by screens kept in her room during her time in Japan along with examples of Satsuma pottery. Moreover, North's description of 'a gold ground with red and white pinks', accompanied by 'pink and white acacia painted in the most lovely curves' on the screens [North 1892a: p.222] as well as the gold over black paint which was subsequently applied to the doors and architrave of the North gallery, both have a distinctly orientalising feel. North's use of fine lacquered Japanned frames with inserted silver leaf mount, that have subsequently faded to look like ivory [Farley 2009] as part of the hanging scheme for her gallery, could also have been made directly as a consequence of her

visit to Japan. North is known to have purchased oriental ceramics from ‘a succession of fascinating shops’, which she ‘never passed [...] without picking up some beautiful little “curios”’ [North 1892a: p.224]. North certainly painted two still lifes included in the North gallery that were clearly influenced by Japonisme. The paintings 0661, *Study of Japanese Chrysanthemums and Dwarfed Pine* [See figure 42], and 641, *Japanese Chrysanthemums, Cultivated in this Country*, which are hung in the Japan section of the gallery, depict chrysanthemums accompanied by Japanese vases. They are highly stylised paintings that look forward to later fin-de-siècle images from the 1890s. North however, likened her work to chinoiserie, and questioned the labeling of some chinoiserie works as Japonisme [Farley 2011]. North’s gallery and gold leaf decoration work can be likened to Chinese designs and artistry on show at the Summer Palace in Beijing, including detailed beam work and individual literati paintings of nature placed strategically as banners around the walls and architraves [See figures 43, 44, 45 and 46].³²

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the form of the scientific garden was dominated by the work of the Swedish taxonomist Carl Linnaeus (1707-78). Linnaeus had ‘wanted to make his country self-sufficient by cultivating foreign plants’ [Fara 2004: p.28]. To further this aim, Linnaeus developed a new, highly organised form of garden at the Uppsala University Botanical Garden which placed plants together in groups according to the structure of their reproductive parts in an attempt to ‘record and classify the natural world in its entirety’. Linnaeus wanted ‘every species available’ for his project ‘[n]o matter how small, ugly or insignificant it might appear to other gardeners’ [Wulf 2008: p.114]. Beginning with a modest 300

³² According to Farley, the panels on the doors of the North gallery interior were ‘marouflaged onto canvas and attached to the door with the aid of beading’. Gilding was added to finish them off decoratively giving the viewer an appearance of their having been painted upon the door panel directly [Farley 2007].

species Linnaeus studiously transformed the Uppsala garden [See figure 47] from a ‘ramshackle’ affair into ‘one of the finest collections in Europe’, substantially altering its layout between 1743 and 1745 with the help of Sweden’s foremost architect of the time Baron Carl Hårleman [Blunt 2001: p.147]. In transforming the garden at Uppsala, which included ‘a new orangery and hothouse, both filled with exotics from across the globe, as well as a large collection of American plants supplied by [the British botanist] John Bartram’ (1699-1777), Linnaeus claimed that he ‘had brought the natural sciences to their highest peak’ [Wulf 2008: p.113]. Along with the transformation of the Uppsala garden, Linnaeus published the *Species Plantarum* in 1753, which was ‘a survey of all plants known to man’. To make this study Linnaeus enlisted botanists across the world who were asked to send him plants complete with flowers including ‘the comparatively rare’ as well as those ‘that had not yet been described’ [Wulf 2008: p.115].

Linnaeus’ efforts may well have been influenced by an interest in the existing format of cabinets of curiosity. In a letter he describes ‘the precious and delightful cabinet of curiosities’ that he had seen in December 1728 in the university library at Uppsala, which included a famous collection of dried plants made by Joachim Burser (1583-1639) a century earlier [Blunt 2001: p.30]. In one of the rooms in the living quarters of the Linnaeus house at Uppsala [See figure 48], there is also a room with botanical prints displayed upon the wall. Though not framed, these prints are placed cheek by jowl as if in a wonder chamber or cabinet with a framed painting of a monkey in the centre of the prints. Linnaeus’ home also contains a wallpaper segment depicting an oriental shadow box replete with objects [Fromup-vaz-Linnés Hammarby (Sweden), Kew Archive, no date given: no page numbers given]. The garden at Uppsala, when viewed aerially, can be seen to take the form of a giant

cabinet-like structure with its borders clipped and plants set into beaded arrangements as if confined by the finely turned corners of a wooden cabinet and each species housed in a section like a cabinet draw.

If we look again at the North gallery, it is therefore possible to view its own rather crammed and eclectic bringing together of images and specimens as one that stands in relation to existing forms of visual display associated with cabinets of curiosity and wonder chambers, not just as part of deliberately aestheticised or semi-aestheticised approaches to the showing of images and objects, but also more decidedly scientific and supposedly non-aestheticised forms of display.

It is also possible to shed light on our understanding of the North gallery by looking forward and not just backwards to forms of visual display similar to those associated with cabinets of curiosities. The North Gallery is in many ways a typically cluttered Victorian space. It is crammed to bursting with paintings in a way that resonates with ‘an immense, insatiable hunger for things in the real world’ [Graham-Dixon 1999: p.163]. Its design and contents do not, therefore, conform to the showing of artworks in modern white cube gallery spaces, where individual artworks are presented in uncluttered, visually neutral surroundings. That said it is nevertheless possible to trace telling similarities between the way images are displayed within North gallery as a latter day cabinet of curiosities and artworks by the twentieth-century North American artist Joseph Cornell (1903-1972).

Between the 1930s and 1970s, Cornell produced a series of artworks involving the showing of images and found objects within boxes or cabinet like structures that make direct and indirect reference to science and the natural world. In his work, *Cabinet of Natural History: Object, 1934-1936-40*, for example, Cornell clearly ‘acknowledged the eighteenth century’s free standing “cabinets of natural history”

[...] which had gained prominence among “natural philosophers” as well as physicians, pharmacists, and chemists’ who ‘dispensed medicines from shop-front pharmacies’. It can also be understood as making reference to ““traveling apothecary chests” [...] often filled with hundreds of small labeled vials,’ [Roscoe Hartigan 2007: p.147]. This use of vials, extended to Cornell labeling parts of his artwork as a scientist might [Waldeman 2002: p.29].

Cornell was ‘familiar with natural philosophy as a synthesizing way of thinking [...] largely through his major in general science at the Phillip’s Academy’ in the U.S. [Roscoe Hartigan 2007: p.66]. Cornell believed that science was ‘a naturally spiritual philosophy rather than a rational discipline’, as ‘the term science properly understood refers only to the laws of God and to his government of the Universe, inclusive of man’ [Roscoe Hartigan 2007: p.67]. Cornell’s spiritual-scientific beliefs can be linked directly to discourses associated with the birth of the U.S. as a new nation-state during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Cornell, a Christian Scientist, chose from one of the many religions linked to pseudo-science in the United States that envisaged the U.S. at the centre of all things in the new world, enshrining the country as a new Eden. This foundational North American bringing together of science and theology can be witnessed through texts such as Charles Colbert’s *A Measure of Perfection: Phrenology and the Fine Arts in America* of 1846, which outlines ‘the impact of Pseudoscience on nineteenth-century American culture’. Colbert’s book presented a ‘ubiquitous, if not wholly respected theory’ that the Hudson River School painter Asher B. Durand (1796-1886), and ‘a host of his artistic contemporaries’ believed to be the ‘foundation for a nature philosophy grounded in the notion that man [...] must exist in harmony with the universe (or nature) in order to flourish’ [Ferber 2007: p.64]. Cornell adapted the Duchampian *ready-made* as well as other artistic influences

that came into America from Europe during the twentieth century, including Surrealism and Dada, along with a growing interest among U.S. artists in eastern philosophies [Cornell Richter 2001: pp.40-42] to signify the continuation of this seminal conjunction of art and science.

A similar view of science was also in place in Britain during North's lifetime. Early Victorian natural science in Britain was linked directly to the 'ways in which knowledge of nature was constructed in theological, political, moral, aesthetic and gender terms' [O'Gorman 2000: p.147]. But in Britain, during North's lifetime and beyond, it would become heavily overshadowed by the secular-scientific rationalism of Darwin's theory of evolution. Cornell's cabinets can therefore be viewed as looking back to a pre-Darwinian view of science almost certainly shared by North; one that envisages science not simply as an objective, secularised means of gathering knowledge but also as something involving a universal sense of order and wonder.

Cornell's obsession with cabinets as a means of artistic display allows us to make other interpretative connections with the North gallery. In many of his works, including *The Elements of Natural Philosophy*, 1936-37 [See figure 49], Cornell seeks to mimic the form of colonialist collections and curiosities. Cornell also appropriated aspects of Victoriana, which extended to him naming one of his works *The Crystal Palace* [Roscoe Hartigan 2007: p.94]; this preoccupation with Victoriana lead Cornell not only to a re-appropriation of historical space and its uses [Waldeman 2002: p.140], but also to the selection of art and science as the subject of his 'first ambiguous box' [Roscoe Hartigan 2007: p.14]. Cornell even created an artwork called *The Garden Center*, started in 1944, which was to be an ongoing project up and until the time of his death [Waldeman 2002: p.35] in 1973. Cornell played continually with the term 'Garden' extending his fascination to children's gardens, seeing the 'direct

and self directed learning’ opportunities made possible within such spaces’ [Roscoe Hartigan 2007: p.64].

The genealogy of the cabinet of curiosities can also be traced beyond Cornell to later artworks of a similar kind. British Pop artists of the 1960s such as Peter Philips (b. 1939), Joe Tilson (b. 1928) and Peter Blake (b.1932), who placed ‘Pop’ objects within cabinet-like structures as did the American artist Jasper Johns (b. 1930). These three-dimensional structures contained curiosities—including badges, shop signs, matchboxes—often appropriated from urban spaces. Pop artists also juxtaposed pictorial glamour shots of pop stars and young actors as in Joe Tilson’s painting *A Box of Friends* [See figure 50]. Furthermore, Blake’s work was also ‘nostalgic and self-consciously’ Victorian [Sandbrook 2006: p.74].³³ Blake’s ‘domestic nostalgia’ also ‘suited the contemporary fashion for Victorian revivalism’ ideal for the cover of the Beatles album *Sgt Peppers’ Lonely Hearts Club Band* of 1967. [Sandbrook 2006: p.74].

Today the artist Damien Hirst (b. 1965) openly admits that his work reflects upon cabinet-like forms of scientific visual display. Hirst recalls ‘being blown away by the natural history museum in Leeds’, drawing the conclusion that he ‘wanted to make art like that’ [Hirst 2010: p.5]. Hirst’s work *Untitled* (1996), for example, comprises a heart shaped support covered with butterflies stuck to its once freshly applied gloss painted surface—a work that encapsulates the tradition of butterfly

³³ In 1915, Marcel Duchamp arrived in New York, bringing with him a ‘nihilistic and antagonistic’ attitude to ‘conventional traditions in art’ more widely associated with European Dada [Waldeman 1992: p.135]. The Surrealist movement (many of whom had fled from Europe during the nineteen-thirties as a result of the rise of fascism in Europe) also informed the work of many neo avant-garde American and European artists of the mid to late twentieth century, including US and British Pop artists of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Jasper Johns, Peter Blake and Joe Tilson, as well as the Fluxus movement of the 1960s-80s [Waldeman 1992: p.114]. This nihilistic response would exert an increasing influence on the American and European art scene of the later twentieth century, leading to the development of neo-Dadaist forms of art that would eventually overshadow formalist-abstraction forming the basis for what we would now see as postmodernist art.

collecting and the gratuitous nature of the naturalist's collection methods. Hirst has also made artworks that use glass cases or that collect objects together under glass. Examples of this include *A Thousand Years* (1990), which brings together a rotting animal head, a colony of flies and an insect-o-cutor in the playing out of a conspicuously deadly life cycle, and *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* (1991) in which the body of a dead Tiger shark is preserved by formaldehyde in a large glass tank. In 1994, Hirst also produced the work *Away from the Flock* (1994) [See figure 51], this time placing a lamb in formaldehyde within a glass case as if it were a scientific curiosity. In *Isolated Elements Arranged for the Purpose of Understanding* (1991), Hirst creates a cabinet that contains different species of fish all swimming in the same direction each isolated within its own glass display case [Shone 2001: p.87]. Hirst has also continued Cornell's appropriation of the drugs cabinet in artworks such as *Holidays* (1998) in which facsimiles of drug bottles are arranged taxonomically. As Richard Shone has indicated, these works can be understood to quote British nineteenth-century painting. Indeed, Shone had referred to Hirst's work as 'pre- Raphaelite' in its detail, in *200 mg Amiodarone Hydrochloride Fr.*, [Shone 2001: p.86]. Hirst's *Away from the Flock* is also redolent of William Holman Hunt's paintings *The Hireling Shepherd* (1851) and *Strayed Sheep (Our English Coasts)* (1852), which depict sheep, realistically in paint [See figure 52].

The history of the cabinet of curiosities is one that pertains to both art and science. The North gallery, as a cabinet of curiosities, is consequently part of an aesthetic-scientific lineage that pre-dates the gallery's construction and that extends into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the form of artistic and scientific modes of display. The North gallery space is contestable because it is a focus for both

scientific and aesthetic contemplation and as such cannot be defined securely in its relation to either science or art.

Chapter Three

Marianne North and the Pre-Raphaelites

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was founded in 1848. The Brotherhood's chief aim was to defy all artistic conventions including the established teaching methods of the Royal Academy; conventions that, among other things, placed 'an emphasis on rich shadow and tone at the expense of colour'. The Pre Raphaelites response was to paint 'perversely bright coloured, evenly lit pictures that appeared almost flat' [Landow 2005]. The techniques used by the Brotherhood had already 'been anticipated by a number of other artists', such as William Mulready (1786-1863) of the Nazarenes, who used 'the technique of painting in pure colours over a white ground' [Wood 2000: p.12]. The Brotherhood also tended away from the classicism of established academic art, embracing instead Gothic stylisations and medieval literary themes. Pre-Raphaelite medieval stylization was to become extremely fashionable during the latter half of the nineteenth century, influencing other aspects of the arts from 'architecture to the initial letters and borders in Punch' [Lambourne 2005b: p.232].

The Brotherhood's founding members included William Holman Hunt (1829-1919), John Everett Millais (1829-1896), and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882). Later, there were four 'newcomers' to the brotherhood: Ford Maddox Brown (1821-1893), [painter] James Collinson (1825-1881), [writer] Frederick George Stephens (1828-1907), 'who had never completed a picture', and [critic] William Michael Rossetti (1829-1919), who was Gabriel's brother 'and not an artist at all'. Initially Ford Maddox Brown's membership had been opposed by Holman Hunt because he

was perceived to be ‘too steeped’ in the academic conventions that the Pre-Raphaelites as a group ‘wished to overthrow’ [Wood 2000: p.13].

The showing of Van Eyck’s Arnolfini Wedding portrait, at the National Gallery in 1843—which in turn, spurred another ‘major exhibition of early Italian, German, and Netherlandish painting’—exhibited a truth about ‘the nature of nature’ that was to be a crucial spur to the development of the Pre-Raphaelite movement [Gage 2007: p.41]. Even when producing highly romanticized paintings on medieval and literary themes, the members of the Brotherhood were always committed to the fidelity of nature [Wood 2000: p.12]. This fascination with natural detail was supported by changes in attitudes towards the collecting of art. During the mid nineteenth century, collectors were in a ‘state of flux’ because they were no longer ‘drawn primarily from the landed gentry and aristocracy’. Instead, there was a new breed of merchant princes, and self-made men, who ‘wished to see scenes rounded in the minutest detail’ [Meyer 1992: p.12]. North’s favoured painter, William Henry Hunt had anticipated this ‘reverence for the minutiae of nature’. John Frederick Lewis (1804-1876) also demonstrated a similar zeal for natural detail in his orientalist works [Wood 2000: p.12].

During the 1850s, following the European revolutions of 1848, there was ‘a fear of revolutionary secret organizations or brotherhoods’ [Wood 2000: p.13], which would have included the Pre-Raphaelites. At the same time, there was also ‘acute concern over the drift towards Roman Catholicism in the Anglican Church’ [Lambourne 2005b: p.238], leading Ruskin to declare that ‘British artists [...] should not be painting figurative religious pictures, nor attempting to resurrect the Old Catholic art of signs and symbols’.

The Catholic aesthetic did however have its champions. Among these was Augustus Pugin (1812-1852), whose architectural works include the Church of St Giles in Cheadle, Staffordshire [See figure 53], and the interior of the Houses of Parliament. Pugin claimed the ‘Gothic was good for the soul’ and saw the architecture of the middle-ages as a means with which ‘to beat the British back towards a virtuous life’ [Graham Dixon 1999: p.172]. Pugin was a convert to Catholicism and ‘wanted to reform English architecture’ to its pre-reformation status [Graham Dixon 1999: p.172]. Pugin’s equation of Catholicism and the Gothic style ‘was based on a belief in their moral superiority, for many Romantics the nostalgia for Catholic pomp was aesthetic’ [Blayney Brown 2001: p.391]. Pugin also wrote an architectural treatise, *Contrasts* in 1836. Ruskin, nevertheless, ‘greatly disliked what he saw as the taint of Catholicism in Pre-Raphaelite art’—preferring an approach to the making of art through Natural Theology [Graham Dixon 1999: p.176]. Despite this, plant drawing had been utilized specifically for the ‘production of modern ornamental work’ traceable to Pugin’s *Floriated ornament* of ‘1849’ [Cruise 2011: p.180].

The Pre-Raphaelite’s love of naturalism and the Gothic permeated the latter half of the nineteenth century, profoundly influencing the aesthetic movement as well as other aspects of American and European art. The aesthetic movement was made up chiefly of a small group of ‘poets [...] painters, makers, or thinkers’ who lived around Holland Park west and Chelsea. Like the Pre-Raphaelites, these individuals were ‘united in their opposition to prevailing orthodoxies concerning art and design’ rather ‘than in any comfortably shared vision or precise definition of the beautiful’ [Calloway and Le Orr 2011: p.13]. The aesthete poet Charles Algernon Swinburne (1837-1909), who later declared himself a fan of the North gallery [Lambourne 2005b: p.325], was one of the most prominent members of the aesthetic movement.

Swinburne was described as a ‘most extraordinary man’ who espoused ‘the power of ‘beauty and originality’ [Lambourne 2005b: p.440]. Swinburne was a friend of Lear and Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898), [Lambourne 2005b: p.325]. Burne-Jones’s *Laus Veneris* (now lost) was based upon ‘parallels to Swinburne’s poems’ [Calloway and Le Orr 2011: p.46].

Some of the original members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood would go on to form a second wave of pre-Raphaelitism, one that included Edward Burne-Jones and that had Rossetti as its leader and had associations with William Morris (1834-1896), who painted his *Oxford Murals* of 1857 and *Queen Guenevere* of 1858 very much in the Pre-Raphaelite manner. Morris’s Arts and Craft’s company, Morris & Co., designed wallpapers, fabrics and tiles in a medievalist style. Morris also suggested that the Great Exhibition of 1851 was responsible for determining changes in ‘taste [...] pattern and applied design’. He pointed towards international examples and oriental ceramics that had exerted a huge influence on changes in art and craft production, arguing that they had ‘expanded the repertoire of the Gothic revivalists into a greater acceptance of good design from other periods and cultures’ [Cruise 2011: p.179].

This tendency towards cosmopolitanism in design was later expanded upon by Morris through the founding of the Kelmscott Press. The Kelmscott Press specialized in publications of medieval literature, such as *The Canterbury Tales* of 1896, which were accompanied by medieval style illustrations. Burne-Jones was to illustrate a number of these books and this was in turn to influence the work of the fin de siècle illustrator Aubrey Beardsley, including his *Hamlet Patris Manem Sequitur* of 1891 [Calloway 1998: p.32]. The Newlyn School of the later Arts and Crafts Movement was also influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites [Wood 2000: p.152], despite the Pre-

Raphaelite Brotherhood's techniques' being regarded by many as 'extinct' by the 1870s [Gage 2007: p.42].

According to Christopher Wood writing in *The Pre-Raphaelite's*, the last phase of the movement, after 1890, had become more diffuse. By this stage it 'had become part of the very fabric of English culture' permeating almost 'every branch of the arts'. Despite this, some artists, such as John William Waterhouse (1849-1917), 'remained faithful to the cause' [Woods 2000: p.148]. Although there were stylistic similarities between the work of the Pre-Raphaelite's and that of younger artists, there were also differences. The inclusion of classical forms is strongly characteristic of the work of latter day adherents to the Pre-Raphaelite style [Weeks 2008: p.20], bringing the movement back to the academic conventions it had once sought to overthrow.

The impact of the Pre-Raphaelite movement upon the arts and culture of the latter half of the nineteenth century was profound. It is therefore reasonable to assume that North would have been very well aware of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and its influence. Indeed, North makes reference to the marriage of the great Pre-Raphaelite beauty Mrs. Herbert, whom she wrote of when in Bombay on February 11, 1878, likening her to Julia Jackson (niece of Julia Cameron) and describing her as a 'a very beautiful creature' [North 1878: (MN/1/1) Letters to Dr. Burnell]. What is more, Lear, North's friend, had an artistic relationship with Holman Hunt, which almost certainly informed his later influence upon North's own painting. North was also taught to paint by John Ballantyne (1817-1867) the successful Royal academician, who specialised in portraiture and who had painted Holman Hunt [Tromans 2008: p.105]. North also befriended a cousin of Millais in Sarawak and it was this 'Mr. E.' who provided North with foliage to draw; foliage that included 'the largest of all

pitcher-plants', which she painted and catalogued as a new specimen and which was named after her as *Nepenthes Northiana*, by Joseph Hooker [North 1892a: p.238].

According to Jonathan Farley, North was distinctly anti-aesthetic in her approach toward the design of the North gallery, seeking instead a pre-aesthetic combination of classical styles [Farley 2008]. The North gallery does however appear to have applied elements that coincide with Morris & Co.'s *Green Dining Room* at the V&A, designed and executed in 1866. Morris's room was included in the advertising of the exhibition *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement*, which was held at the V&A in 2011, in acknowledgement of its relationship to the aesthetic style. The dining room's inclusion of rectangular paintings of gold-leafed plant forms and Pre-Raphaelite styled figures cuts a decorative line between an aqua-green wooden dado and a light green finely patterned Morris wallpaper [See figure 54]. The overall affect is highly reminiscent of the North gallery's interior.

According to the Kew Archive conservation department [Farley 2011], North was involved in the decoration of the Normansfield Theatre. The building, which houses the theatre, was built in 1868, two years after the opening of the V&A's *Green Dining Room*, by the physician John Lyndon Down. It was intended as a home for people with learning disabilities, allowing them to be cared for and educated at a time when most would have been placed into asylums (Down's syndrome takes its name from Down). The theatre was built for the students to learn music and drama, music being close to North's heart [Normansfield Theatre 2011] [See figure 55].

The theatre includes paintings of aspects of the natural world, including birds, rendered partly in gold leaf that are similar to the door panels in the North gallery [See figure 56]. A pale green woodwork has been used, which brings the overall affect much closer to the Morris room than that of the North gallery interior. The

theatre is, however, serifited with images, also bringing it close to the overall design of the North gallery. North may have pursued the theatre project because her favourite artist, William Henry Hunt, had himself been a scene painter at a Drury Lane Theatre, [Smith 2011: p.16]. North's work on the Normansfield theatre, and the North gallery interiors can therefore be seen to have been part of a prevailing tendency towards pre-Raphaelite influenced aestheticism. Indeed, the Normansfield theatre has been used in a recent film version of Oscar Wildes' *'The Picture of Dorian Gray'* as a modern day signifier of aesthetic decadence [Parker 2010].

North's use of oils also correlates with some of the Pre-Raphaelite's own exuberant colouration and application of gaudy tones. A painting of North's that usually resides in Kew Library archive, exhibits a distinctly Holman Hunt like approach to colouration with its depiction of a magenta-violet, mountain scene on board. The crude under-drawing showing through the paint in this work reveals a shorthand technique often used by painters to gather additional information about a scene and its colouration *in situ* so that it may be completed later in a studio setting; a technique used by Lear, perhaps under the influence of Holman Hunt. It appears that North too made notes about her paintings in order to finish them off elsewhere. North may have copied Lear who 'habitually made elegant inscriptions around the lower parts of his drawings' [Tromans 2008: p.107], as noted by North during Lear's stay at the North home.

Other sketches by North reflecting a fascination with colour are also present in Kew Archives. Many of these painted sketches are somewhat abstract, perhaps referencing Turner. Indeed, in the case of image 038, (an unnamed painting) [See figure 57] the marks might even be described as impressionistic. North abstracts still further in this painting presenting a sunset over a cool flecked blue sea, with a

magenta coloured central zone accompanied by an orange flash that represents the sun setting in a yellow-blue-grey mackerel patterned sky. These paintings reflect elements of romanticism [See figures 58 and 59]. But they zing and pop with the vibrancy of late Turner rather than the cool abstractions of Casper David Friedrich's 'allegorical manner' [Blayney Brown 2001: p.151]. Here, North's abstraction arguably coincides with Turner's desire to arrive at a 'synthesis of subject and meaning' [Blayney Brown 2001: p.160]. This synthetic approach is again visible in North's sketchbook image 027b, (an unnamed painting) with its pale, yet colourful red skies accompanied by gold sand and rocks ebbing into the sea, evoking watercolours by Turner such as *The Scarlet Sunset* (c.1830-40) [See figure 60]. There is no finesse present in North's works and they are often daub-like and mannered.

In these small sketches, North would appear to have attempted what Landseer referred to in relation to Turner's works as the production of 'pictures of light itself'. Turner achieved the effect of light first through contrast then gradually by eliminating shadow and eventually through colour alone [Meyer 1992: p.118]. Turner was, unlike North, however 'remarkably uninterested in the substance of landscape'. His 'trees are schematic' and his 'plants are rarely recognizable' with '[o]nly mountains [...] allowed convincing material form'. Turner was ultimately more interested in climate [Blayney Brown 2001: p.160].

These bright and courageous sketches by North, though not entirely confident in their handling, do suggest an awareness of the artistic experimentation of her contemporaries. North's use of colour does however suggest a child-like and in many ways untutored vision; one that exhibits neither good colour mixing practices, nor a capacity for fiddly technique. North refrained from mixing her colour on a palette, deciding instead to paint directly onto the support, mixing the colour as she went

along. It was a technique that she applied to all of her paintings regardless of finish or scale [Farley 2006]. The *Gardener's Chronicle* states that North made use of '[l]ittle or no medium' with the colours and the tints being used just as they were 'pressed out of [...] tubes'. Moreover, no turpentine was used for the cleaning of brushes they were 'merely wiped clean with a piece of rag' [Chronicle 1882: pp.736-765].

According to Farley North's colour palette was modern and could well have been influenced by the Impressionist movement, especially in relation to the painting of shadows [Farley 2011]. As a young woman, North recorded her colour perceptions during a trip to the Middle-East. She describes a 'river of the most intense blue', referring to green shadows and sand that was of a 'most dazzling apricot colour'. North declared that these colour combinations were impossible to imitate, but liked her 'own crude attempts in pure tints better than our academian friend's usual mixture of Prussian blue, Van Dyke brown, pink, and yellow ochre' [North 1893: p.140]. While North's description is in keeping with impressionist colour schemes it could just as easily be read as one of Pre-Raphaelite or Turner-esque colouring. It is perhaps worth noting that at this particular point during North's trip to the Middle-East, Lear had met up with the North family [North 1893: p.142]. Farley argues that the impressionists may have visited Hastings to paint, as the town was a hub for artists, thereby making it possible for North to have met and fraternized with at least some of them [Farley 2011]. However, this is a highly speculative proposition, as North would have had to have met impressionist artists before her father's death in 1868 when she decided to close the family home in Hastings and before her first visit to the U.S. in 1871. Indeed, by 1871 Claude Monet (1840-1926), had not yet exhibited his *Impression-Sunrise* of 1872. North's use of a portable easel and paints in tubes does, however, link her practice technically to that of the impressionists. Portable easels had

been used from the early nineteenth century onwards as a travelling companion containing paints [Ayers 1985: p.97] and a small ivory palette only four inches across, thereby enabling the artist ‘to mix colours onto a surface, and at a scale appropriate to their work’ [Ayers 1985: p.107].

In many respects, North’s paintings adhere to Holman Hunt’s application of colour and texture, for example Holman Hunt’s painting *The Scapegoat* of 1854-55 [See figure 61]. North’s choice of the violet-end of the colour spectrum can also be linked to painterly techniques first pioneered by Ford Maddox Brown [Tromans 2008: pp.108]. This tendency in painting was referred to as the ‘Dry School’ by Delacroix, who admired the Pre-Raphaelites ‘feeling for truth towards what is real and characteristic in detail’ [Lambourne 2005b: p.246]. Delacroix also admired English landscape and its makers’ application of drawing [Delacroix 1995: p.300]. In a dissertation written at Aberdeen University in 1993, Elizabeth Bracegirdle suggests that Lear was ‘depressed by the doleful subject matter’ of *The Scapegoat* [Bracegirdle 1993: p.9]. Holman Hunt also later confessed to finding the painting’s shrill colour rather absurd [Gage 2007: p.42].

Holman Hunt’s under-paintings on display in *The Lure of the East* exhibition at Tate Britain in 2008 show a severe, dry application of paint that his over painting and finishing skills build upon. North, was criticized by Blunt, for her use of an extremely dry paint application [Blunt 1978: p.185] revealing similarities between, *The Scapegoat* and North’s general painting style. North’s paintings also involved a similar ‘exploration of tinted shadow’ [Tromans 2008: p.108] found in many of Holman Hunt’s works. This exploration can be found in North’s painting 0035, *View of the Jesuit College of Caracus, Minas Geraes, Brazil* [See figure 62], a Himalayan

mountain scene with a violet and pink sky over looking a terrain of trees in detail with the college placed viewer side left.

North was certainly an admirer of Holman Hunt's *The Scapegoat*, citing the painting in her dairies. North wrote of walking up to the top of a hill in Palestine in 1866 where she saw 'the wonderful red and purple sunset clouds roll over the Dead Sea, and the deep dark mountains beyond reminding us of Holman Hunt's wonderful picture of the Scapegoat'. North concludes that it was 'perhaps the finest of modern English pictures' [North 1893: p.163]. The stylistic influence of Holman Hunt's *Scapegoat* can certainly be felt in relation to North's Painting 0035, *View of the Jesuit College of Caracos, Minas Geraes, Brazil* and 00351, *View of the mountains from the railway between Durban and Maritzburg, Natal* [See figure 63], which echoes the shape of the mountainscape in *The Scapegoat* as well as the vastness of Holman Hunt's landscape.

In North's painting 0331 of the *Temple of Tanjore, Southern India* [See figure 64], there are echoes of Holman Hunt's painting *The Sphinx, Giza, Looking towards the pyramids of Saqqara* of 1854 [See figure 65]. North's rendering of the building's rough-hewn walls echoes Holman Hunt's depiction of the marks and ridges and geological scarring on the Sphinx's decaying surface. Holman Hunt's decision to paint the rear view of the Sphinx enables this comparison, since it appears like a great rock in a desert and not a manufactured landmark. Holman Hunt's painting also includes a snake. However, the snake in Holman Hunt's painting is symbolic, whereas in a North painting it would simply be a record of scientific fact. Another difference between the work of Holman Hunt's and that of North is that the landscape backgrounds in Holman Hunt's paintings served as a setting for narrative or symbolic

scenes, whereas North projected nature to the very fore-front of her paintings simply as a visual record.

The methodical approach of the Pre-Raphaelites was not wholly empirical. Nevertheless they did attend to details through the ‘systematic registration of observed facts’ and ‘a consideration of nature’ as if seen for the very first time [Hoozee 2007a: p.12]. The Pre-Raphaelites believed in ‘taking infinite pains’ in order to ‘succeed in pinning down nature’ [Lambourne 2005b: p.109]. When required, they insisted on working ‘out of doors directly [...] as a means of studying more deeply Nature’s principles of design’ and in order to ‘escape the conventional treatment of landscape backgrounds’ [Lambourne 2005b: p.106]. This infinite taking of pains did, however, often work against the completion of paintings in situ. The Pre-Raphaelites chosen method of painting was labourious and in actuality worked against certain kinds of picture making [Gage 2007: p.41] especially detailed, large scale works. Holman Hunt, for example, was unable to complete the landscape of *The Scapegoat* out of doors allegedly due to the Dead Sea area being surrounded by thieves something, which forced him to finish the painting in Jerusalem with final touches not being made until he was back in London. [Gage 2007: p.42].

In his second volume of *Modern Painters* (1843-60), Ruskin advised artists to ‘follow nature [...] rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing’ as truth was to be found there [Mancroft 2003: p.6]. Many of Holman Hunt’s ideas had their basis in nature and in the preceding Romantic Movement’s ideas on the picturesque. The Pre-Raphaelites had accordingly declared the sciences as exact. They argued that since this ‘adherence to fact added so much to the knowledge of man in science’ why ‘may it not [...] assist the moral purposes of the arts’ [Gage 2007: p.41].

Darwin's theories on evolution and other new scientific discoveries, would, however, start debates challenging the existence of a divinely inspired natural order. The 'basic truth of Genesis' had already been questioned through radical scientific thoughts formulated in 1795 by the Scottish geologist James Hutton (1726-1797), who had argued in *History of the Earth* that the 'immense forces that had formed mountains, carved out valleys, rivers, lakes and other geo-physical features of the planet' would have taken millions of years to do their work, an estimate that was much longer than the then current belief that the earth was approximately 6,000 years old [Trumble 2007: p.321]. As a consequence, changes in thought and practice were brought about not only with regard to the relationship between science and religious faith but also between art and religion. These changes 'imposed real barriers to the practical acceptance of faith' by some artists, in some cases spurring the question of a 'separation of art and morality' [Sturgis 1998: pp.315-316]. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood produced paintings that still adhered to a religious world-view, often in the form of fables or homilies. Consider here, for example, Holman Hunt's *The Scapegoat*, and *The Light of the World* (1851-3). The Brotherhood was, however, acutely conscious of the amorality of their own times, which had included the hungry forties and a profound increase in prostitution (as witnessed by Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* of 1853) [Wood 2000: p.12]. The premise of male dominance was explored in Millais's painting of *Ophelia* (1852) [See figure 66]. This painting can be read as a blurring of the boundaries between a high moralising art and science, since it includes a somewhat Darwinian portrayal of a victim of circumstance. At the same time botanists drew their students' attention to the painting, so that they might study its remarkably detailed representation of English *flora* [BBC Pre-Raphaelites 2010b].

Despite the technical challenges posed by the Pre-Raphaelites attention to natural detail and the challenges to conventional morality posed by a Darwinian view of the natural world, Ruskin nevertheless championed the work of the Pre-Raphaelites and in particular the work of Millais. Ruskin commissioned Millais to paint his full-length portrait in 1854 [See figure 67]. He also painted alongside Millais, often concentrating upon the detail of geological structures. Though, instead of oils, Ruskin chose to paint in watercolour [BBC Pre-Raphaelites 2010b]. Ruskin's particular interest in Millais may have been an acknowledgement of the differences between Millais's early painting style and that of the other members of the Brotherhood one, which demanded an exhaustingly meticulous truth to nature.

Ruskin himself had a continuing fascination with eroded rock, as evidenced by his painting of *Chamonix: Rocks and vegetation* of 1854 [See figure 68]. Ruskin constantly 'sought artists to represent mountains and geological subjects with careful attention to the physical mechanisms that had operated upon these landscapes' [Howarth-Booth 2007: p.269]. Ruskin's interest in rocks came from initial studies he had made in 'Oxford, [...] under the distinguished geologist William Buckland' (1784-1856). Buckland 'supported a new theory, proposed in 1840 by the Swiss naturalist Louis Agassiz (1807-1873), which contended that 'the mountains of Scotland [...] had in very ancient times been subjected to the immense pressure and movement of an ice-sheet covering most of Europe' [Walton 2000: p. 67].

On her trip to the U.S.A. in 1871, North was befriended by Mr. Agassiz and his wife [North 1892a: p.48]. North reports that the Agassiz's were at the time organising another voyage, this time to the 'Cape Horn and the Straits of Magellan to Hunt for prehistoric fish' [North 1892a: p.49]. Mrs. Agassiz was to inform North of her own famous Amazon expedition and promised her letters of introduction there if she ever

decided to visit [North 1892a: p.49]. Mr. Agassiz had earlier procured a subsidy from the Prussian Government in 1846 to explore in America. Upon his arrival Charles Lyell (1797-1875), had ‘secured him the opportunity to give a course of lectures at the Lowell Institute’ [Emerson 1918: p.30]. Lyell, who wrote *Principles of Geology* (1830-33), was also a friend of Darwin, Hooker and indeed knew of Ruskin [Trumble 2007: pp.321-322]. North’s own painting can thus be seen to have overlapped with that of the Pre-Raphaelites both in stylistic terms and in terms of the Brotherhood’s attempt to bring art together with science. Unlike the Pre-Raphaelites however, North as a scientific illustrator and as a confirmed atheist was not unduly troubled by the difficulties posed to conventional artistic morality by the rise of a new Darwinian view of the natural world.

Chapter Four

Marianne North's Painting as Botanical Illustration

Throughout western history images have been subordinated consistently to words. As W.J.T. Mitchell, writing in *Iconology, Image, Text, Ideology*, indicates 'rhetorical moves' occurred in 'the contest between the image and the word' repeating 'the age-old quarrel between nature and culture' as witnessed in Plato's *Cratylus*. As Mitchell also makes clear, 'when the conventionality of language is invoked' to make the case for the image's subordinate position to poetry, 'the arbitrary sign becomes a token of our freedom from and superiority to nature' because it is understood to signify 'spiritual, mental things, in contrast to images' that can 'only represent visible, material objects' [Mitchell 1996: pp.78-79]. However, as Mitchell goes on to argue, when viewing a visual artwork what one sees is not always clear or transparent because viewing a visual artwork is more complicated than simply 'opening your eyes and seeing objects in the world' [Mitchell 1996: p.85] It too involves the mediation of language—not that of words, but of images as constructed signs—and therefore the necessity of active interpretation.

A translation therefore occurs whereby critics and art historians produce readings of images through the use of words [Rose 2001: p.10]; readings that often make reference to the image as a text [Mitchell 1996: p.78]. In *Visual Methodologies*, Gillian Rose cites Delacroix, who argued that while others may refer to a painting's narrative quality or the life of an artist and the biographical nature of paintings, 'when painters talk about painting they talk about process' [Rose 2001: p.10] Delacroix

condemned the writings of critics and historians because he believed the outsider did not understand art language, preferring to translate it through an illustrative narrative that ‘often completely misses the point of form, flow, function and aesthetics of an artistic kind’ [Rose 2001: p.10]. In short, the making of images can be understood to involve the use of visual languages that can be both written or spoken about and articulated on their own terms.

During the nineteenth century there were conventionally recognised differences between art and scientific forms of representation. Although art and scientific illustration both maintained the importance of truth to nature, art for the most part did so with an eye to presenting the ideal as truth, while scientific illustration aspired to an unmediated form of objective visual representation. This distinction placed scientific illustration in a subordinate position to art as the latter aspired through its idealism to the poeticism of the word. North intended that her botanical paintings would stand principally as objective records of the visual world rather than as poetic works of art. In doing so, she effectively conformed to an established subordination of images to words by considering herself a maker of images that would objectively register visual facts without the intervention of linguistic conventionality. North’s paintings are, however, far from being transparently objective, combining as they do high art *and* scientific modes of representation. This combining of artistic and scientific modes significantly problematises the notion that North’s paintings are in any sense neutral and/or objective. Hence, the difficulty that botanists and art historians have experienced in trying to place North’s painting definitively as either art or science.

As Sheffield indicates, even ‘[d]uring the nineteenth century there was some confusion over the labeling of North’s activities’, which highlighted existing ‘tensions

between [...] artistry and scientific acumen' [Sheffield 2001: p.106]; and this despite North's own desire to be part of the nineteenth-century scientific project.

What is more, it should not be assumed, as Mitchell indicates, that objective visual representation is in fact possible. What North's conspicuous combining of art and science arguably does is to reveal botanical illustration's inescapable debt to artistry and therefore to visual linguistic conventionality.

In addition to all of which it is important to recognise that North's paintings were produced in relation to particular concrete circumstances. As Sheffield states, 'North did not enjoy her travelling and painting experiences purely on aesthetic grounds'. Instead she '[s]ought not only the challenge of painting out-of-doors, which in itself was full of pitfalls and difficulties' but also to 'set herself tasks which challenged her artistic ability' [Sheffield 2001: p.96]. North's paintings were therefore shaped in part by the immediate conditions of their production and not just by established visual linguistic convention.

Representations of the natural world have been traced back to early cave paintings in places such as Altamira and Lascaux. In *Images of Science: a History of Scientific Illustration*, Brian J. Ford claims that these prehistoric images belong 'not [to] art but science', since many portray the 'muscle structure in animals and hunters'. Ford also states that these images were used for ritualistic purposes because many are in deep caves in often, inaccessible locations. They could not therefore have been for general display or decoration, he suggests, but must have been revealed only to initiates by the elders of tribal communities [Ford 1993: p.7]. The images of animals and hunters made during prehistoric times may have been made for ritualistic purposes, linking humans magically to their prey by way of pictorial likeness, but

they were certainly not scientific in purpose. Prehistoric peoples were not scientists in any recognisably modern sense.

In *The Art of Botanical Illustration*, Blunt and Stern refer to a series of limestone bas-reliefs in a ‘small, roofless hall at the eastern end of the great temple of Tuthmosis III at Karnak’, describing them as the earliest representations of ‘florilegium known to us’ and therefore unique [Blunt and Stern 2000: p.30].³⁴ These reliefs functioned as architectural decoration rather than as botanical illustrations, however. According to Sherwood writing in *A New Flowering*, the ‘scientific study of plants began in the sixth century BC in the Greek-speaking Ionian cities’ and was ‘driven [...] by the economic and social imperatives of agriculture and medicine’ [Sherwood 2005: p.190]. The first realistic depictions of botanical specimens can be dated back to the Islamic invasion of Spain in the eighth century. An illustrated treatise on medical botany by the Arab physician Serapion the Younger was translated into Italian circa 800CE [Ford 1993: pp.83-85].

This treatise, which came out of an established Arabic botanical tradition, exerted a strong influence upon depictions of organic material within Christendom. Islamic style botanical illustration, which was remarkably naturalistic, spread not only throughout Italy via the epicurean illustrations of Padua’s monasteries, but to other parts of Europe, including Burgundy and Flanders, where ‘[r]ealism was desired and soon to a surprising degree achieved’, leading to the establishment of various European schools of flower painting, [Blunt and Stern 2000: p.23]³⁵ and can be witnessed in Brunfels’ illustration of a *Green Hellebore*, in 1530 [See figure 69].

³⁴ North knew of these seminal images. When in Brazil she referred to making a sketch of the avenue of Royal palms in Rio writing that ‘[t]his huge avenue looked fine whenever you saw it (and reminded me of the halls of Karnak)’ [Huxley 2002: p.60].

³⁵ The first example of Flemish flower painting was by the artist Memling (c.1490). It has been suggested by Blunt and Stearn in *The Art of Botanical Illustration* that a commission given to Jan

During the Renaissance artists made a significant contribution to the development of botanical illustration, extending the use of early scientific approaches and devices. Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) and Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528),³⁶ though very different in their approaches to painting, both applied geometry to the depiction of natural forms. Da Vinci also understood and applied plant iconography, using his knowledge to convey ‘specific historical meanings to the viewer’ [Emboden 1998: p.105] and his sketches are very three- dimensional and realistic in form and tone as witnessed in his depiction of a *Madonna Lily*, of 1479 [See figure 70]. Da Vinci ‘made a point to have his drawn plants seen in [their] proper ecological setting’ rather than ‘scattered plants about their canvases, as allegorical decoration’ as other Renaissance artists might. [Emboden 1998: p.105].

In *Leonardo Da Vinci on Plants and Gardens*, Emboden states that Dürer had a different approach toward the depiction of plants from that of Da Vinci. According to Emboden, ‘Dürer sought to go beyond mere representations of the visible world, but succeeded only in [terms of] allegory and fantasy’. Nature was to remain ‘one of God’s secrets’ to Dürer with the exception of what could ‘be explained by arithmetic and geometry’ [Emboden 1998: p.115]. Consequently, his work ‘approached life with a compass and ruler’ [Emboden 1998: p.115]. Indeed, it has been suggested by David Hockney that Dürer produced some of his work through the use of a mirror lens; an early form of camera obscura. Dürer’s painting *Large Turf* of 1513 [See figure 71], which depicts a patch of meadow grass against a neutral white background, is, for example, so exceptionally detailed in its representation of nature that it can only have been produced, Hockney believes, through the use of optics rather than the

Brueghel (1568-1625) by an unknown Dutch woman to paint flowers, was the origin of flower painting in oils [Blunt and Stearn 2000: p.127].

³⁶ Sheffield states that North knew of Dürer’s work and made ‘reference to his art’ [Sheffield 2001: pp.110-111].

straightforward use of the naked eye. Hockney bases his assertion in part upon a comparison of *Large Turf* with a black and white photographic representation of the painting [See figure 72], which exposes what Hockney claims, is its optically heightened naturalism [Hockney 2006: p.143].

Norbert Schneider writing in *Still Life*, has suggested that '[s]ymbolic aspects are not likely to be involved' in *Large Turf* 'as Dürer was probably more interested in the medicinal and herbal aspects, as well as the healing powers, of different kinds of sap' [Schneider 2009: p.145]. Schneider also argues that in *Large Turf* Dürer tried to give the impression that this partial view was totally accidental by showing a chaotic arrangement of grasses, leaves and meadow flowers' [Schneider 2009: p.145]. Despite the likely absence of symbolism and its extraordinary detail, Dürer's painting does not, however, fulfill the conventional requirements of scientific botanical illustration. It is non-specific in its depiction of plant forms and as such would not meet the systematic requirements for botanical illustration set out later by Linnaeus and Ehret.

The botanical textbook as we would now recognise it, was first developed by Leonard Fuchs (1501-1566), in Europe during the sixteenth century. Fuchs worked with the best artists and took 'direct control of projects, insisting that special attention be paid to accurate outlines and botanical detail' and that 'shadows and shading were extirpated' [Ford 1993: p.91].³⁷ In doing so, Fuchs effectively developed the practice of topological drawing for the purposes of taxonomy.

³⁷ William Turner's *Herbal* of 1551-1562 used illustrations from Fuchs woodcuts. Turner was later given the title of the 'Father of British Botany' [Ford 1993: pp.91-93]. As the botanical illustrator's expertise increased, printing techniques also began to change. The use of copperplate engraving was introduced shortly after 1550. Pietro di Nobili published his *Herbal* (c.1580) as one of the first copperplate plant texts. However, it was not until the work of Adrian Collaert and his *Florilegium* of 1590 that botanical illustrations appeared without accompanying text [Ford 1993: pp. 93-95].

During the eighteenth century, the German botanical illustrator Georg Dionysius Ehret (1708–1770) produced illustrations that continued Fuchs’ emphasis upon detail and that also applied Linnaeus’s classification of plants according to differences in their structure [Arnold 2007: p.164].³⁸ In the *Sandbox Tree*, illustration (no date given) [See figure 73] one finds evidence of the illustrative schema for which Ehret is famous, which looks towards the systematic representation of parts: ‘flowers, fruit, leaves, stem, roots or bulb, and seeds’ [Arnold 2007: p.164], and follows Linnaeus closely. Linnaeus claimed that initially Ehret did not want to apply his structural divisions, arguing ‘they would spoil the drawing’ [Barber 2011: p.57]. What later came to be known as Ehret’s schema ‘still exerts its influence over the format’, with all the essential elements that determine the taxonomic classification’ of plants being isolated in a ‘neutral pictorial space’ [Arnold 2007: p.164].

According to Brian J. Ford, writing in *Images of Science A History of Scientific Illustration*, Botanical illustration was to reach ‘the highest levels of accuracy’ and ‘the highest forms of artistic beauty’ in the form of the illustrations of the two German brothers Ferdinand (1760-1826) and Franz Bauer (1760-1826) [Ford 1993: p.96].³⁹ Ferdinand and Franz Bauer were regarded as ‘[t]he greatest exponents of Botanical illustration in England since the death of Ehret’ [Blunt Stern 2000: p.224]. Ferdinand was to be an illustrator on the Flinders expeditions to Australia at the request of Joseph Banks (1748-1810), the British botanist. Later, Ferdinand returned home to Germany to finish his illustrational work for Banks. His brother Franz settled in

³⁸ Ehret moved to England where he was to produce numerous works including illustrations for Erasmus Darwin’s *Botanic Garden*. In 1738 Ehret and Linnaeus completed *Hortus Cliffortianus* for the Anglo-Dutch banker George Clifford (1685-1760) [Blunt and Stearn 2000: p.160].

³⁹ There were three Bauer brothers, each trained by their father Lucas Bauer who was court painter to the Prince of Liechtenstein. After Lucas’s death, his wife Therese continued to teach the boys. Josef the eldest succeeded his father by becoming a court painter, while Ferdinand and Francis (Franz) pursued careers as botanical illustrators [Blunt and Stearn 2000: pp. 223-230].

England and worked at Kew Gardens as an illustrator until his death in 1840 [Blunt and Stern 2000: p.224].

Goethe (1749-1832) praised the drawing skills of Ferdinand Bauer, regarding his innovative approach toward tonal gradation as a highly effective way of depicting a natural form's 'true position in space' as demonstrated in Bauer's illustration of a *Grevilla Banksii* (c.1801-05) [See figure 74]. Goethe concluded that '[n]ature is visible, art concealed', therefore, distinguishing scientific drawings from idealizing forms of artistic representation. What is more, he stated that, '[t]he task of the botanical draughtsman, is far more exacting than that of the artist of old fashioned florilegium' as 'the former may feel the same inspiration as one of our great Low (Flemish) country flower painters; but he is always at a disadvantage. The one had only to satisfy the lover of superficial beauty; the other has to give truth' [Blunt and Stearn 2000: p.233]. Here, Goethe ascribes a positive value to botanical illustration distinguishing it favourably from artistic forms of representation. In doing so, he inverts the conventional classical view of his time that art should be placed above scientific illustration because of its capacity to represent the ideal rather than the superficiality of appearances (an inversion that is commensurate with Goethe's anti-classical valorisation of the Gothic).

The relationship between art and natural history illustration was much debated during the mid nineteenth century. As previously indicated, Ruskin 'had a profound admiration for the work of natural history illustrators' [Barber 2011: p.56]. Indeed, Ruskin's own paintings were 'characterised by close observation and meticulous depictions of detail'. At the same time Ruskin increasingly 'resisted the rise of scientific naturalism'. Ruskin disliked this particular aspect of illustration, rejecting the 'microscopic malice of botanists' and their emphasis on dissection and

classification, which he believed to be at the expense of poetry and beauty' [Barber 2011: p.56]. Ruskin's dislike of scientific naturalism can therefore be understood to reinstate, despite his love of the Gothic, a conventional classical hierarchical ordering of art and scientific illustration previously overturned by Goethe. Ruskin's view, which arguably still holds sway today, accounts for the work of natural history illustrators being almost wholly absent from art historical discussion; even 'the greatest natural history artists [...] are not usually considered alongside the watercolourists of mainstream history'. Despite botanical illustrators producing works of undeniable aesthetic beauty, '[n]atural history illustration cannot be divorced' from its specific scientific purpose, as its role is to 'visually elucidate and import scientific knowledge' [Arnold 2007: p.164]. Equally, as an attentive reader will have already acknowledged, the genealogy of the development of botanical illustration from antiquity to the mid nineteenth century is one in which botanical illustration persistently plays across the boundary between art and science and where the certainty of botanical illustration as objective representation is, consequently, never wholly guaranteed.

Alongside which, it has been necessary as part of postmodernity to rethink what art is and what it does, engendering, as Mitchell suggests, an open-ended model of an art that questions 'what people say about images' and what people 'do with images in practice' [Mitchell 1986: p.154]. As part of this model, art techniques are understood to embody conventional strategies involving particularized formulations of visual language that can be included within or overlap with other forms of design and craft practice. This overlapping can also occur in other depictions of nature, such as entomological drawings and paintings, which can appear not only within a scientific context but also in high art, still life drawings, and paintings. In figure 75, a scientific

drawing of *Lizards*, of 1896, is depicted, where one finds the compositional approach is similar to that of a traditional botanical illustration with the exception of some tone being applied in the form of shadow [See figure 75].

Whereas, in figure 76, North's personal approach in her painting, *Flowers and Fruit of the Pomelo, a branch of Henna and Flying Lizard, Sarawak*, (no date given) veers toward the high art application of a still life paintings outcomes and grouping methods; despite North being particularly exact in her depictions, so that they might be read accurately as a species by science [See figure 76].

However, from the point of view of postmodern culture, North's encompassing of differing language systems, as well as an adherence towards the artistic techniques of Victorian modernity, allow for a different reading; one that highlights the conventionality, open-endedness and artistry that, from a postmodernist position, attaches itself inescapably to both art and science. North's paintings have been deemed redundant from the point of view of established botanical science because a case for proof cannot be made based on the visual evidence they present, which is seen to lean too far towards artistic rather than botanical convention. North's paintings are contradictory. They may not have been conceived as a deliberate deception, rather the opposite, but they nevertheless contain the problematic taint of another language.

The principal focus for this inconsistency is the North gallery. During the late nineteenth-century western painting was still dominated by monocular perspective and the 'illusion of the veduta' that includes, the space of the canvas, the lighting, and the position of the viewer [Foucault 2009: p.14]. This system was to prove advantageous to North, since the layout of her gallery meant that her paintings, which often make use of perspective, would be viewed from a distance, like a traditional fine

art salon, rather than up close, like botanical illustrations in a scientific archive. Scientific botanical illustration does not have to take perspective into consideration, since it is not viewed conventionally for scientific purposes at a distance and the application of shadow would be distracting. In contrast to an artwork, a botanical illustration requires close-up scrutiny. North applied an existing form of artistic display that would show off her distinctly perspectival paintings to best advantage.

Furthermore, North's choice of medium, oil paint, also lent itself more towards the making of works of fine art rather than botanical ones. Traditional botanical works are, more often than not, painted in watercolour due to its accuracy in portraying fine detail [Sheffield 2001: pp.112-113]. North wrote that oil painting was 'a vice, like dram drinking' [Huxley 2002: p.13] thereby, revealing that she had something of an understanding of its illicit intoxicatory nature with respect to the supposed purity of botanical illustration. As Rose points out with reference to the writings of John Berger in *Visual Methodologies*, the strength of oil painting lies in its ability to 'render the tangibility, the texture, the luster, the solidity of what it depicts' [Rose 2001: p.17], thus rendering depicted objects as though they might be picked up and possessed by the viewer. It also allows the maker to cover up any mistakes because it is a slow drying medium and malleable. Unlike watercolor it can be scraped off when things go horribly wrong, allowing for the artist to finish a work at a later date.

In *A Vision of Eden*, Anthony Huxley claims that North never wrote about actual 'technique or painting problems' [Huxley 2002: p.13]. Her diaries do however include numerous accounts that touch on her attitudes towards painterly technique. North's first attempts at painting outdoors in the Pyrenees and Spain in her youth found her commenting in her diaries upon her developing abilities as a painter. She comments that she 'had an idea till then' that she 'could only draw near objects the

size of life', but that the beauty of the view from her window tempted her because of the poplar trees, a river and the vision of fresh snow on the mountains [North 1893: p.9]. North's travel writings suggest other technical concerns. When describing 'the sight of a huge lily, with white face and pink stalks and backs, resting its heavy head on the ground' North describes how '[i]t grew from a single-stemmed plant, with grand curved leaves above the flower', suggesting a detailed attention to the pictorial projection of form. North also comments that the flower head was two feet across, complaining of the technical difficulty of placing such a large head upon paper. North concludes that she 'had to take a smaller specimen to paint, in order to get it into my half-sheet of paper life-size' [North 1892b: p.100]. In this instance North would appear to have approached her subject matter very much as a botanical illustrator, conforming to the requirements of science that expected life-size correspondence between plant and image. Botanical illustrators typically use dividers to achieve this 1:1 correspondence. Within the sphere of artistic practice, makers would normally expect to scale a given subject up or down through the application of middle-distance measurement, using a pencil or another straight object held out at arms' length in front of the subject with one eye closed. North had been given tuition by a number of professional artists and by this stage would certainly have acquired a basic knowledge of compositional geometry and middle-distance measuring techniques as witnessed in many of her paintings. North's selection of a flower head small enough to fit her page suggests that she was not using this received artistic knowledge. As an aside, North also commented that the plant was called there the Brookiana lily, but that Kew 'magnates call it *Crinum augustum*.' North then boasted that '[a]nother crinum has since been called Northiana'- after herself [North 1892b: p.100] [See figure 77].

Other differences between high art practice and botanical illustration occur in relation to the use of colour. Colour outcomes in painting are affected by distance (aerial perspective) as well as the maker's aesthetic intentions. Early scientific applications of colour had been confined to the diagnostic techniques associated with medicine and a need to catalogue the 'principles of vegetable classification'. It was Linnaeus who would provide the stimulus to develop colour systems during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries [Gage 2001: p.169]. Science separated colour language from the artist and the arts. Moreover, it was perceived that natural scientists would be 'better at judging and collating colour' [Gage 2001: p.168].

Science attempted to devise a colour system that would be constant and that would work within the laws of science. Historically, systems had already evolved via the work of naturalists, the most ambitious of which attempting to establish a comprehensive set of colour standards. Ultimately, however, these systems had been taken up not only by naturalists but also by painters, manufacturers, artists and artisans. The imposition of scientific requirements over the arts in this way was attacked by artists for its exclusive concentration on the 4,800 local colours that were of use within a scientific context [Gage 2001: p.170]. As a result, some artists decided to take matters into their own hands. Including Delacroix, who according to Gage, in *Colour and Culture*, had a problematic relationship with science, but 'had shown some interest in colour theory from an early age'. Delacroix's 'distaste for the positivism' led him to develop his own, more artist friendly, approach toward colour [Gage 2001: p.173].

These marked differences in outlook are referred to in *The Art of Plant Evolution*, where W. John Kress and Shirley Sherwood cite differences in artistic and scientific practice under the auspices of the chapter title 'Art meets Science'. Kress

and Sherwood state that when ‘botanists first encounter a plant, their first question is, ‘what species is this?’’ And the ‘second question is usually [...] what is it related to?’ However, when an artist first encounters a plant, Kress and Sherwood argue, their reactions may be quite different from that of a botanist. The artist may not ask any questions about the species at all, but rather look at a flower as an ‘individual of nature’, concentrating upon ‘its unique features of colour, texture, form, size, and proportion’. The artist may also ask ‘how do I capture the essence of this flower on my canvas’ or ‘how do I create a work of true beauty that may equal or surpass nature itself’ [Kress and Sherwood 2009: p.10].

The technique of botanical illustration also differs from that of artistic image making because it requires the illustrator to concentrate on reproducing one small part of a plant at a time, while a painter would usually try to capture something of the whole of the plant form in one sitting. This highlights the purpose of botanical illustration; that is to say, the procurement of visual information so that a botanist may read the specimen’s taxonomy clearly. Botanical illustration also includes the technique of topological drawing, which involves the pictorial flattening of plants to present a clear image of their form vital for botanical readings. This drawing method deliberately brings information forward for the purposes of taxonomy at the expense of any spatialised rendering. According to Kress and Sherwood, ‘[w]hen looking at a flower the artist sees form’ but the ‘botanist sees function’, the ‘artist sees colour’ but the ‘botanist sees pollinators’. Moreover, ‘the artist sees the structural relationship among the parts’ whereas, the ‘botanist sees characteristics for determining evolutionary relationships’, thereby bringing together two disciplines: botanical illustration and botany, as pictorially described in Nickolas Joseph von Jacquin’s illustration of a botanical field book page, of 1792 [See figure 78]. The determination

of the botanist to classify species [Kress and Sherwood 2009: pp.10-11] attests to a belief that botanical illustration is not an art form, despite the presence of exquisite technique [Kress and Sherwood 2009: p.11].

In *South African Botanical Art, Peeling back the Petals*, Marion Arnold broaches these differences by citing Wittgenstein in relation to how an artist and a botanical illustrator might read the world around them. Here she quotes Wittgenstein as saying that, '[w]e see the world the way we do not because that is the way it is, but because we have these ways of seeing'. Arnold links this assertion to the way in which we learn to interpret reality and that plant portraits are 'expectations [...] mediated by context' [Arnold 2007: p.164]. Differences in applied drawing techniques between art and botanical illustration are further explained by Arnold's quotation of the botanist Louisa Bolus (1877-1970), who in 1915, referred to teaching practices related to botanical illustration, citing the example of a particular student who 'had not, up to this time, done any botanical drawing' and who for three months lived with her, learning 'to paint from the botanical point of view'. Here, Bolus taught an 'already accomplished painter to look for information that botanists want to see in plant representations' [Arnold 2007: p.166]. In doing so she imparted a technique that differed from that used to produce flower paintings in exhibitions, which Arnold describes as contemplated, 'objects with aesthetic and material presence whose subjects are plants' [Arnold 2007: p.164]. Western artists and illustrators can thus be understood to operate in relation to two perceived drawing styles: one that seeks to arrive at an idealized representation of nature; and another that is concerned with objectivity.

At the same time, since it is 'virtually impossible to eliminate personal style [...] exerted by individual ways of seeing' [Arnold 2007: p.166], botanical illustration

remains replete with aesthetic markers within its visual language [Arnold 2007: p.166]. Technical difficulties can also force a botanical illustrator to make aesthetic decisions about an illustration. A plant specimen ‘may arrive damaged’ or ‘ravaged by insects [...] or in bud’. Consequently, the specimen may need to be ‘immersed in water or supported by stakes’ [Arnold 2007: p.165]. A succulent plant ‘can be persuaded to sit patiently for days before drooping or dying, but a gladiolus could fold [...] after a few hours.’ There is, then, a necessity for botanical illustrators to be resourceful as they produce an illustration from ‘living and dying forms, remnants and fragments’. Botanical illustrators also have to ‘resurrect and construct convincing images resembling typical living species’, collating ‘information on flowers, fruit and seeds which do not occur simultaneously’ [Arnold 2007: p.165]. In order to accomplish this visual synthesis the illustrator needs a good memory and ‘knowledge of plant structure, and experience in the art of visual deception’ [Arnold 2007: p.165].

According to Sheffield the botanical illustrator’s most difficult task is ‘that of attaining a balance between art and science’ [Sheffield 2001: p.113]. From the point of view of science, however, this is most decidedly not the case. If art and science are brought together through the practice of botanical illustration it is by no means the result of a self-conscious attempt to achieve balance. Instead, art and science collide without intent in such a way that the identity of both is deconstructively compromised. Botanical illustration is therefore rendered a form of crypto art, wherein ‘[t] the devices of naturalism’ point indecisively towards two modes, one of realism and the other idealism [Arnold 2007: p.169].

Chapter Five

Marianne North: A Question of Hybridity

'There are those who consider the moral character of a work to have a bearing on its value as art; from Aristotle, St Thomas Aquinas, Hume, Ruskin and Tolstoy through to the feminist, post-colonial and socio-political criticism often favoured today' [Kieran 2005: p.166].

Historically, there has always been 'the hope for some master trope' or 'structural model' that would allow a 'scientific, comparative formalism to proceed under the umbrella' of a 'true comparative criticism of texts and image—one that would create a 'master theory to unite the arts' [Mitchell 1986: p.157]. In recent decades, however, an alternative vision has emerged. As Mitchell has indicated, it is one that proceeds from the view that if 'we were to understand the text-image relation as a social and historical one [...] characterized' by all 'individuals, groups, nations, classes, genders, and cultures' then the study of image-text, 'might be freed from this craving for unity' moving towards a 'third direction' [Mitchell 1986: p.157]. Such a vision might provide a merging of 'the aesthetic and cognitive, with the possibility of interplay between philosophy and metaphor, science and art' [Mitchell 1986: p.158]. Moreover, it might also go some way to denouncing Plato's historically ingrained projection of fear of imagery [Mitchell 1986: p.159].

In today's often highly theoretical readings of artworks, there is an insistence 'on seeing images in relation to philosophy, historical and literary texts' [Mitchell 1986: p.156]. It is through this application of applied discourse that the case for

language and literature being an essential part of the study and production of visual arts has been formed. High importance is placed upon textuality within these readings, rendering the reading of an artwork analogous to that usually associated with the interpretation of literary texts as interpretable objects [Mitchell 1986: p.156]. Theoretical readings are not only applied to artworks that acknowledge the importance of (con)textualising discourses, but also artworks that do not.

Sheffield argues (but does not fully substantiate through close analysis of sources) that North's painting was placed at 'the margins of both art and science' thus uniting 'the two in one unique practice'—a 'unique form of botanical art that married art and science'. Sheffield also asserts that North's painting was a borderland practice 'between cultural deposits that allowed new growth and surprising hybrids' of a Darwinian kind [Sheffield 2001: p.116]. Sheffield argues that this practice allowed North to become 'part of both communities', thereby linking art and science.

However, as has previously been demonstrated through a close analysis of her paintings and writings, North was not a fully-fledged, competent member of either an established scientific or artistic community during her lifetime. She was always and remains a problematic figure in relation to both, despite a persistent institutional tendency to frame her as part of a scientific milieu. Consequently, rather than bringing art and science together, as Sheffield suggests, North can be understood as having deconstructed the standing of both during her own time and now, by revealing an endemic uncertainty with regard to the status of all botanical painters. Indeed, Sheffield undermines her own position by stating that North's 'limited [education] in both art and science' stood as a hurdle to her 'admission to the scientific community' [Sheffield 2001: p.107].

Sheffield's argument that North was able to 'contribute substantial knowledge to the botanical endeavour created at Kew Gardens' is also in need of qualification. North was persistently ridiculed by botanical experts on the grounds that her paintings depart from the necessary conventions of scientific botanical illustration and are, therefore, somewhat useless as not only scientific records, but as artworks. North's paintings were praised by some nineteenth-century experts, such as Darwin, and Hooker, but that does nothing other than make her position in relation to Kew a contested one. Furthermore, the claim that North personally linked art and science suggests that she may have been conscious in this endeavour. However, this is far from being the case. Despite the appropriation of scientific forms of representation by the artistic community of the second half of the nineteenth century, and despite the widespread use of visual techniques associated with the pairing collage-montage during the nineteenth century, North viewed herself consistently, in line with sharp divisions between art and science held at the time, as a botanical illustrator (with the likes of Ruskin and members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, for example, holding to the converse position despite their use of quasi-scientific forms of representation). North was not however a maker who adhered to modernist specialisation, North's work therefore did and does not conform to the use of modernist principles. Modernism in the twentieth century believed specialism was key to outcomes, however before modernism, nineteenth-century artists were not specialised and worked in a hybrid way and did not limit themselves to exact specialism's but worked across disciplines.

While it would be wrong to describe North as a postmodernist, it is nevertheless possible to view her work from our present historical standpoint as part of a cultural context whose cosmopolitanism and eclecticism foreshadows that of our own time.

North's work as a botanical illustrator is inescapably connected to the increasing rationalism of Victorian science. At the same time, her painting incorporated multiple stylistic influences taken from the contemporary art of her day, which in the case of the Pre-Raphaelites also sought to combine scientific and aesthetic points of view. What is more, the North gallery brings together scientific and aesthetic forms of visual display along with architectural influences taken from different times and places at a time when collage-montage techniques of one sort or another were very much to the cultural fore. North's painting and its display as part of the North gallery is therefore arguably a focus for a pervasively unsettling combination and overlapping of differing elements, all of whose assumed limits are persistently blurred (deconstructed) as a consequence of their proximity.

Sheffield rightly points out that North 'did not [...] submit to the rules and regulations' of the botanical genre, deciding instead to draw 'upon landscape art, the realist school, and botanical illustration' [Sheffield 2001: p.114]. Sheffield asserts that North developed 'her own unique art form that aimed to be both aesthetically pleasing within the established art traditions and useful within the botanical sciences', concluding that North's 'art may not be classed as 'genius' per se,' but that 'her attempts of innovation, and her denial of the boundaries of artistic and botanical conventions, exhibit her commitment to these realms beyond that of an amateur dabbler' [Sheffield 2001: p.114]. Sheffield does not however back up these observations and assertions through a close examination of North's painting in relation to established visual practices or styles of the nineteenth century. As earlier chapters in this thesis demonstrate, it is necessary to think of North's painting as a highly uncertain and therefore problematic supplement to the spheres of art and science, since North was, though by no means a dabbler, effectively incompetent in

both areas by dint of her willful mixing of differing scopic regimes. Sheffield's stated opinion that botanical illustration 'is not strictly speaking' a science, though it is an 'integral part of a botanical investigation', falls short of a careful examination of differences between and within art languages and practices. While from our own skeptical postmodernist standpoint, botanical illustration emerges as an impure aesthetic-scientific form we should nevertheless accept that during the nineteenth century it was viewed in principle and intention as scientifically empirical and topological in its approach. Indeed, Sheffield unintentionally backs up this position by citing 'Agnes Arber, a turn-of-the-century botanist and historian of botany' who argued that 'systematic botany avoids the accidental peculiarities of any individual specimens' therefore 'seeking [...] to portray the characters fully typical for the species' and for that reason 'the botanical illustrator should have some scientific education' [Sheffield 2001: p.113]. The issue here being, that while botanical illustrators of the nineteenth century may not have been trained scientists, they were nevertheless expected to adhere closely to conventions established and validated by botanical science; conventions, which Ruskin claimed were an anathema to the idealising poetic functions of art. In short, we must view North's conspicuous hybridizing of art and science in its true historical perspective not as a useful contribution to both, but as an unsettling and in many ways unproductive transgression of their limits.

North's paintings of colonised village life and botanical plant forms from around the colonised world can be seen as part of a western project that sought to objectify, possess and dominate. Equally, North's position as a highly unorthodox member of polite mainstream Victorian society—that is to say as a financially independent woman painter and traveler who resisted established Victorian

conventions of marriage, religion and social intercourse while drawing short of aligning herself decisively with the radical feminism of her day— places her very much at and beyond the margins of the normal positioning of a woman of her class as part of nineteenth-century western colonialism. According to Sheffield, she ‘vehemently protected herself against the idea that she was a feminist’ [Sheffield 2001: p. 94]. Therefore to define North as a feminist, would be erroneous because she most certainly was not.

North’s positioning within history is always that of an insider/outsider within both art and botanical illustration. Moreover, North starts to cut an unsettling figure in relationship to her own personal historical/social-political/environmental history.

Despite North’s insistent use of artistic modes of representation and her consequent incompetence as a Botanical illustrator, there has been a persistent tendency to exclude her work from exhibitions and collections dedicated to the displaying of artistic forms of visual representation. The North gallery at Kew remains the one place in which it is possible to view a significant collection of North’s paintings within an aestheticised rather than in an archival setting. A recent inclusion of paintings by North in Lionel Lambourne’s book *Victorian Painters* under the chapter title ‘Women’s Art’ goes some way towards recognition of North’s engagement with artistic modes of representation. However, even there, she is described simply as yet another woman who excelled as a botanical painter [Lambourne 2005b: p. 325].

Traditional art-historical readings do not encompass the problematic uncertainty of North’s painting because of their tendency to formulate patterns within a linear chronological time frame, thereby, placing everything into a more or less neat periodizing order. Practices of visual representation do not, however, fit neatly into

this order. Makers of images have always sought to work within the context of their own times while making reference to the past production of images. At the same time, while images and visual practices are understood contemporaneously in terms of the prevailing discourses of their immediate contexts of production, they involve a bringing together of past and present that is open to recontextualisation and remotivation in light of future events. In short, images and visual practices are open to interpretation according to constantly shifting perspectives over time that deny the possibility of a fixed historical narrative. If we wish to wrest a now demonstrably hybrid and uncertain North from her currently imposed historical-taxonomical identity, it therefore becomes necessary to view her painting from an unconventional historicising point of view; one that overwrites, but does not entirely erase, conventional readings of pictures, allowing for the possibility of new conceptions of visuality to emerge. Such an unconventional view would enable a re-mapping of North's paintings to occur, involving a close analytical reading of the particular styles and practices contingent upon her paintings, thus allowing us to formulate a time line that shuttles across historical boundaries presenting a hybrid reading of North's paintings as a site of prior influences and latter day parallels, something that artists have been doing for centuries.

Turner's personal reactions to the Landscape painter Claude Lorrain's artworks in 1799, a whole century after Claude had died, are significant. Turner recorded his thoughts on the Claude landscapes within sketchbooks and from then on constantly referred to them throughout his own landscape paintings again and again. Turner's inspiration explains how artists look both backwards and forwards while still remaining present within the making of a work [Lewis 2012 p.17]. Susan Foister states in Tim Lewis's article in *The Observer*, newspapers' review, *Hockney, Freud*,

Turner and Hirst: art blockbusters of 2012 that Turner was ‘looking backwards and forwards at the same time’ because Turner ‘could look at a work painted decades earlier and make something different of it’ something that ‘artists go on doing’ today [Lewis 2012: p.17]. There is an acceptance within art history and making that a painting holds something of the past through the referencing of art language. An artwork presents form that is the position of the artwork at the time of its making, and this may also comply with other artworks made at the same time. The maker is after all surrounded by visual material and the work of other makers within their own lifetime. There are expectations placed upon artworks and their future is therefore an uncertain one, as fashions change over time. The overall cultural outlook is that an artwork’s future is undecided as well as the artwork’s influences upon future art works, thereby forming a trace structure in accordance with Derrida’s thinking on the relationship between past, present and future readings.⁴⁰

‘Past’

The earliest identifiable direct influence upon North’s paintings is arguably Dr. Robert Thornton’s composite work [Blunt 1990:p.27] *The Temple of Flora* (1799-1807). On the frontispiece, Thornton is described as a ‘Garden Botanist Poet Painter

⁴⁰ The “present” according to Derrida is an element which appears on the ‘scene of presence and is related to something other than itself’. It therefore keeps ‘within itself the mark of the past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element’. This ‘trace being related no less to what is called the future, then to what is called the past, and constituting what is called the present by means of this very relation to what it is not: what it absolutely is not, not even a past or a future as a modified present. An interval must separate the present from what it is not in order for the present to be itself, but this interval that constitutes it as present must, by the same token, divide the present in and of itself’. This divide or spacing is ‘the becoming-space of time or the becoming-time of space that allows for a ‘synthesis of marks, or traces of retentions and protentions’ that reproduce amongst other things a transcendental language [Derrida 1982: p.13].

and Philosopher' [Thornton 1812: p.1].⁴¹ Engravings are also present in the Greek style of Aesculapius, Ceres, and Flora. Cupid is shown honouring the bust of the creator of the floral classification system, Linnaeus and its inclusion could be perceived as a reference to the sexual nature of Linnaeus's system; a controversial taxonomy, because of the analogies it drew 'between the reproductive organs of flowers and people' [Fara 2004: pp.38-39]. Women in particular, were 'targeted as purchasers of these new publications' as 'studying flowers seemed an ideal pastime for women - not too taxing mentally, a gentle occupation' despite the fact that after Linnaeus 'botanic vocabulary vibrated with sexual innuendo' [Fara 2004: p.41]. Thornton's publication coincided with the development of a 'cleaned up version of Linnaean classification' [Fara 2004: pp.44-45].

Many famous names provided sickly prose to accompany the images in Thornton's book, including George Dryer (1755-1841) and Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802). Thornton had 'hoped to make his future by organizing an extensive series of lavish botanical illustrations to accompany a Linnaean text' by '[c]ommissioning famous artists to produce elaborate coloured plates of exotic flower arrangements' [Fara 2004: pp.44-45]. Many of the images in *The Temple of Flora* were by the renowned painter Phillip Reinagle (1799-1807), and included representations of a *Selenicereus* or *The Night-blowing cereus* and a print of *Calliandra grandiflora* otherwise known as *The Large Flowering Sensitive Plant*. In the mass print version of *The Temple of Flora*, there are rather crude images in 'mezzotint' and 'aquatint', with

⁴¹ It must also be pointed out that John Ray (1628-1705), the son of an Essex Blacksmith who became known as 'East Anglia's greatest naturalist' and described as the 'English Aristotle', went on to produce a system of classification for plant species after the death of his friend and fellow companion Francis Willughby (1635-1672) with whom he had travelled throughout Europe during the middle part of the seventeenth century, cataloguing and describing specimens. Ray's work was subsequently 'extended and rationalised' by Linnaeus through a series of books entitled the *Systema Nature* (1735) and *Species Platarum* (1753) [Ford 1993: pp.93-94].

some of the plates ‘executed in one of the stated mediums - and some in the other’, while in some cases ‘certain prints apply both processes to the same plate’ [Blunt and Stern 2000: p.241], with others, still, appearing to have been coloured afterwards in paint, making them rather messy. In contrast, the limited edition of *The Temple of Flora* is well executed and the illustrations appear to have been, painted in oils [Sherwood 2005: p.152] North’s favoured medium. In *Great Flower Books 1700-1900*, Wilfred Blunt asserts that copies of *The Temple of Flora* are ‘a bibliographers nightmare’ because ‘hardly any two are quite the same’ [Blunt 1990: p.42]. In the same book, Sitwell stated that the publication was fraught with financial difficulties and that ‘Thornton [...] ruined himself by this project’ [Sitwell 1990: p.27]. As a result, Thornton’s book is considered to be one of ‘the greatest white elephants of botanical art’ [Sherwood 2005: p.152].

North’s compositional layouts appear to have been heavily influenced by the illustrations created for Thornton’s book, including their additional floral information and the (colonialist) use of indigenous people standing next to trees in town and village scenes, (something that was echoed by colonialist photography) such as that of Dr Hans Shafer and his photograph of a *Amorphophallus Brooksii*, *Lebong*, in Sumatra in 1937 with two local men standing next to the plant [See figure 79]. The figures appear to have been used as some sort of visual measuring device in relation to the height of a specimen, thereby acting as a decorative gauge for viewers. This is mirrored in North’s painting *A Remnant of the Past near Verulam, Natal*, with a small local figure standing next to the tree she depicts [See figure 80]. The pictorial similarities between Thornton’s, *The Temple of Flora*, and North’s paintings do not end there. In the illustration of the *Large Flowering Sensitive Plant* [See figure 81], accompanied by a poem by Erasmus Darwin, we see undulating mountains, often

repeated by North in her own paintings. Moreover, in this particular illustration hummingbirds are present; an animal that North also painted on numerous occasions. Reinagle's painting and Darwin's poem could easily have been one of the inspirational starting points for North's own interest in the bird. According to Jane Munro in the chapter 'More like a work of Art than of Nature': Darwin, Beauty and Sexual Selection', in *Endless Forms*, stuffed hummingbirds were present at the Great Exhibition of 1851 where the ornithologist John Gould displayed them in 'cases on revolving stands', suspending them 'amidst realistic foliage in poses that simulated flight' [Munro 2009: p.260]. Charles Darwin's *Descent* also includes discussions on the beauty and aesthetics of the hummingbird. North's painting 0047, *Flowers of the Datura and Humming Birds, Brazil* [See figure 82], depicts a hummingbird feeding from the newly opened flower head of a *Datura cornigera* Knightii plant sitting next to its nest in a manner strongly reminiscent of Reinagle. The hummingbirds in Reinagle's painting feed and fly simultaneously from the plant, a compositional trope that North repeats. North however, makes a greater attempt to show some of her plant's taxonomy in the Linnaean/Ehret manner through the depiction of a flower, bud, pod, and leaves. On this occasion, North's handling of the paint is controlled, with a range of applied marks. In painting 0025, of an *Inflorescence of the Blue Puya, and Moths, Chile* [See figure 83], North also depicts a plant with a hummingbird in a manner that is, again, similar to that of Reinagle with the birds feeding from the top of the plant.

The scene depicted in painting 0047 is set by a riverbed and, as such, is also compositionally similar to Reinagle's illustration of *The Night-blowing Cereus*

contained in Thornton's *The Temple of Flora*.⁴² Reinagle's illustration takes a visual liberty by including an English Manor House in its background. It appears that Thornton insisted on the illustrator painting the plant in a setting 'appropriate to its subject' rather than in relation to a 'mere garden or greenhouse' [Sherwood 2005: p.152]. This kind of fanciful compositional style was replicated by funerary postcards of the nineteenth century, used in both funeral homes and graveyard settings. By contrast North's painting 0047, sets the plant and birds in relation to their natural habitat in a scientifically realistic manner.

North's paintings of hummingbirds may also have had another influence, in the shape of the work of the North American painter Martin Johnson Heade. Johnson Heade, who is often included by historians as a member of the Hudson River School made a number of paintings that brought together hummingbird 'species from different regions in Central and South America' [Munro 2009: p.261]. In Johnson Heade's painting: *Cattleya Orchid and Three Hummingbirds*, of 1871 [See figure 84], he appeared to have included the habitat of the bird alongside native flowers. North's paintings are extraordinarily close compositionally and in terms of their applied drawing and paint application to those of Johnson Heade [see figure 85] with there placing of the birds upon a branch in a natural setting accompanied by a specific type of flora.

Johnson Heade's combination of Hummingbird and orchid drew Darwin to his work [Munro 2009: p.263]. Indeed, his paintings have been described as being a 'perfect illustration of Darwin's theory of natural selection [...] amplified by the

⁴² The compositional formula discussed here may have been introduced to North by Valentine Bartholomew who taught North and 'habitually set his vibrantly coloured flower studies in a landscape often in association with an architectural feature, such as the pedestal of a column' [Bracegirdle 1993: p. 3]. According to Elizabeth Bracegirdle, this was 'a useful cue'. However, North usually applied 'a real rather than imagined landscape', thereby bypassing the artificial juxtaposition set out by Bartholomew and Thornton, to place and paint plants in their homes [Bracegirdle 1993: p.3].

(importance) hummingbirds assume in Darwin's theory of sexual selection' [Munro 2009: p.263]. However, Johnson Heade may well have aligned himself more with American creationist theory than Darwin's theories in the making of his work. As Munro states in *Endless Forms*, Heade's views on Darwinism were at the very least uncertain. Johnson Heade, moved in social circles including some of the leading Darwinists in the United States, but 'he was also close to those who were vigorously opposed to his theories'. There is, in any case, little evidence to suggest that Heade 'was inspired to paint hummingbirds by anything more than his own artistic imperatives and love of the birds' [Munro 2009: p.263]. Johnson Heade and North's viewpoints on nature can therefore be seen to diverge to some degree.

Moreover, Johnson Heade's hummingbirds were not painted at first hand. They are 'fictionalized artifacts' that combine 'species which he [Johnson Heade] had seen in different countries with plants – generally orchids' [Munro 2009: pp.262-263]. Johnson Heade was therefore a composite painter and not a scientific illustrator. This composite style is not dissimilar to that used by Reinagle in *The Temple of Flora* which, supplements representations of nature with other, supposedly enervating or visually helpful sources of pictorial information, such as buildings and people.

Another likely influence on North's work is a preoccupation during the nineteenth century with the Ancient Greek painter Xenia's legendary excellence as a still-life painter. Xenia—the neuter plural of Xenion or "guest-gift" employed by Homer', which is also Greek for hospitality [Blasone 2010: no page numbers]—is purported to have made paintings so convincing that they fooled viewers into believing that the things they represented were real. An example of which is illustrated in a Xenia guest gift painting, displaying food in the form of a still life [See figure 86]. Xenian style still life painting from antiquity often included fruit, flowers,

vessels of wine or water, and drinking goblets. The delights of ‘modest dinner-tables’ were also celebrated in the ‘presentation of game-birds, and sea foods’ also later found represented in ‘Pompeian still-life paintings’ [Boardman 1995: p.740] and, according to Vitruvius, paintings coming from the area of Herculaneum [Boardman 1995: pp.740-1]. Xenia’s actual origins are contentious, however. Commentators are divided between those who believe that Xenia was an actual early Greek artist written about by Pliny the Elder (23-79) and those who see the name as referring to a style of painting associated with the work of a number of artists including Philostatus the Elder [Blasone 2010: no page numbers]. Pliny also discusses genre scenes by a Piraeicus or Peiraikos who ‘lived and worked in Greece during the fourth century BCE who was famous within his own times and was labelled rhyparographos or ‘painter of vulgar subjects’. Xenia’s name, which was used prevalently by the Greeks and Romans in reference to still life paintings [Blasone 2010: no page numbers], occurs in the writings of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, a Roman architect who died after 15 BCE (whose ‘professional competences were closer to the practice of fine arts’) [Blasone 2010: no page numbers].

According to Norman Bryson writing in *Looking at the Over Looked*, Xenian paintings ‘share a striking and defining feature with all later forms of still life painting’, which is the ‘absence or deliberate avoidance of the human figure’ [Bryson 1990: p.60]. The modern applied use of rhyparographos or rhopography in relation to still life and indeed later townscape painting, relates to the ‘depiction of those things which lack importance’, possibly due to the lack of the human presence, that are thus overlooked [Bryson 1990: p.61]. The genre of still life painting belongs to a long tradition involving ‘the learning of ‘craft’ to enable the artist to understand form as

well as the content of the image'. As such its format is often used as an 'exercise to flex a particular muscle which needs working' [Bryson 1990: p.12].

The Xenian approach to still life is retained strongly in relation to the kitchen pictures or bodegones of the Spanish artist, Juan Sánchez Cotán (1561-1627), whose painting *Still life with Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber*, c.1602 [See figure 87] [Bryson 1990: p.63], makes use of a conventional scientific application of geometry present as part of high art practice during the fifteen and sixteen-hundreds. This particular configuration would be repeated in the making of still life paintings of flora, fruit and vegetables placed upon plinths throughout the subsequent history of western art. Cotán's rhopography came to fruition during the seventeenth century as part of Spain's monastic culture, where fruit and vegetable still lifes took on great aesthetic importance [Bryson 1990: p.63]. This importance stemmed from a scarcity of fresh food which had come about as a result of Spain having become impoverished because colonialist 'gold had not been invested in any productive way'. According to Norbert Schneider in *Still Life*, this 'lack of food was reflected in the still lifes of Sánchez Cotán [...] where the composition is generally simple and avoids complexity' [Schneider 2009: pp.121-122]. According to Bryson, Cotán's paintings may have made deliberate use of simplicity, 'taking what is least important in the world-the discarded contents of a larder-and lavishing there the kind of attention normally reserved for what is of supreme value' [Bryson 1990: p.64]. If Bryson is correct, Cotán's still lifes may have given a realistic interpretation of fruit and vegetables, but would not have been perceived by Cotán simply as a visual record [Bryson 1990: p.64].

At this time, an interest in geometrical perspective had also developed in Spain. Cotán took this interest to an extreme through applied geometry, making use of the

sphere, the cone and the square as fundamental geometrical forms ‘almost for their own sake’ [Bryson 1990: p.66]. According to Bryson, Cotán’s precise application of geometry is topological, that is to say spatially flattening, in its effects [Bryson 1990: p.69]. In the complement to Curtis’s magazine and Thornton’s flower books there is a pictorial representation of a *Silver Rock Mellon* by a George Brook (1804-12) [See figure 88] that bears a striking resemblance to Cotán’s paintings, with a fruit similar to those depicted by Cotán placed on a plinth in front of a simple background. Like many others in Thornton’s books, Brook’s painting is more illustrative than topological in the strict scientific-botanical sense [Synge 1990: p.65]. By the same token, despite his careful use of geometry, so is Cotán’s. There are therefore, despite appearances to the contrary, clear grounds for differentiating between Cotán’s paintings and similarly simplified images characteristic of scientific-botanical illustration.

In his book *Secret Knowledge*, David Hockney asserts that Cotán, like Dürer before him, used optics in the making of his paintings. According to Hockney, in Cotán’s paintings ‘the objects are all on the same plane, because of depth of field problems’ that occur due to the applied use of a ‘hole-in-the-wall technique’ as witnessed in the photographic evidence obtained by Hockney c 2006 [See figure 89]. That is to say, Cotán can be understood to have placed objects closely together in such a way that they would all be in focus when viewed and transcribed through the use of a camera obscura or similar device. The framing of the objects as if surrounded by a ‘small window with a ledge’ being used to attain accuracy of representation at speed, thereby saving any food objects from decay [Hockney 2006: pp.106-107] (a technique which would have made huge sense given the lack of food during Cotán’s time).

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, artists continued to produce still-lives ostensibly similar to works of scientific-botanical illustration, for example, the Dutch painter of flowers, Jacob Van Huysum (1687-1740), who in 1730, was commissioned by English Parliamentarian Hugh Walpole to produce a *Catalogue Plantarum*. Huysum's paintings did not, however, conform precisely to the conventions of scientific-botanical illustration, since Huysum almost certainly followed the example of other Dutch flower painters who had 'created and refined a number of devices which helped them to achieve the illusion of a convex bouquet' [See figure 90] [Taylor 1995: pp.194-196]. During the seventeenth century, the Dutch were increasingly concerned with colonialist as well as scientific exploration and, therefore, developed systems by which to accurately depict and exploit their new findings. Holland was a Protestant Nation and during the seventeenth century adopted certain attitudes towards its own wealth including a spectrum of responses to affluence that ranged from 'high moralism, to anxiety concerning the role of consumption' along with the 'exuberant enjoyment of plenty' [Bryson 1990: p.15]. As a consequence 'the aesthetic principles of still-lives changed and finally shed all religious symbolism'. The 'semantic content of art was reduced to secular problems related to the world itself' and to the 'demonstration of middle-class virtues and values' [Schneider 2009; p.201]. Despite its highly realistic appearance, Dutch flower and still-life painting was, however, not so much an 'art of transcription' (as is conventionally supposed to be the case with regard to scientific-botanical illustration) as 'an art of illusion' [Taylor 1995: pp.194-196].⁴³ Dutch 'willingness to regard the

⁴³ Blunt and Stearn, writing in *The Art of Botanical Illustration*, state that 'the seventeenth century was probably dominated by England's contributions to botany whilst France and Holland dominated the development of flower depictions'. In France, some derivative works were produced via the traditions of the herbal proper, but also more refined works linked with the illuminated manuscripts in the works of Rabel, Robert and Aubriet. In Holland, flowers were becoming an increasingly prominent aspect of

painter's craft as founded upon empirical procedures which could be directly aided by an optical device, was 'perfectly in keeping with one of the main thrusts of Dutch seventeenth century science' and the refining of optical technologies [Kemp 1990: p.192]. Willem Kalf's still lifes such as *Still life with the Drinking Horn, of the Saint Sebastian*, of 1653, which depicts a large lobster on a table or plinth, with goblets and fruits [See figure 91] and Paulus Theodorus van Brussel's and the Jan van Huysum flower paintings held in the Dutch National Gallery, Amsterdam. All depict plinths that could have been a focus for an optical device used to aid still-life production. Hockney refers to the space defined by the extent of the plinth as a 'sweet spot' outside of which 'it is impossible to get the image into sharp focus' [Hockney 2006: p.103]. This use of a plinth as a stage for still-life objects would have allowed for those objects to sit neatly within a defined space as a means of procuring a realistic image. It did not, however, enable the kind of topological transcription demanded by botanical illustration.

The largely shadowless forms of seventeenth and eighteenth century Dutch still-life and flower paintings suggest a composite form of painting. The depiction of individual flower head and still life objects in Dutch painting often suggests multiple light sources, some of which are unrelated to the generalised lighting of the whole image and that are possibly made up. Foucault, in *Manet and the Object of Painting* states that 'the picture always represents' in addition to its subject, 'a certain light source which sweeps the canvas and provokes upon' the subject represented [Foucault, 2009: p.58]. This light source Foucault argues, gives rise to modeling, and presents a relief suggesting hollows etc.' That, Foucault himself attests, began in the

everyday life. The related craze of tulipomania can ultimately be understood to have degenerated into 'what can only be described as a stock exchange of flowers' [Blunt and Stearn 2000: p.127].

quattrocento. In making this claim, Foucault fails to take in to account the way in which artists actually make their images. Even images made using optics often involve a combining of views apprehended over time and therefore persistent shifts in light source and lighting effects. Furthermore, they also involve artful arrangements of light and shade on the part of artists that work compositionally but that are not wholly consistent optically.

What is more, Hockney states that multiple optical devices could have been used in the production of a single image. Here Hockney cites the work of Juan van der Hamen León, who grouped still-lives on a collection of separate plinths. This allowed the artist to concentrate upon the representation of one still-life composition at a time before combining those representations ‘to create the bigger picture’ [Hockney 2006: p.108]. Dutch painters of the eighteenth century ‘never saw the bouquets they painted, since the bouquets never existed’. They too were composites, containing individual pieces of visual information stitched together to create an illusory whole [Taylor 1995: pp.194-196]. Flowers were strategically placed so that complementary contrasts would occur ‘at strategic points near the front’ of the painting [Taylor 1995: pp.194-196]. Dutch paintings could not have depicted free-standing still-lives, as the objects they represented would have been arranged and lit selectively over time [Taylor 1995: pp.196-197]. Dutch painters regarded this practice as a part of their craft and as ‘founded upon empirical procedures’ in keeping with a contemporaneous view of science [Kemp 1990: pp.192-193]. The use of the camera obscura would therefore have been seen as ‘relatively free from the stigmas of mindlessness or even cheating’. Indeed, there is written evidence in the form of contemporary accounts that names Dutch painters who used a camera obscura [Kemp 1990: p.193].

Cotán's still-lives (and those of Dutch painters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) are both representative of a continuing artistic practice of creating realistic illusions of objects set within relatively shallow illusionistic spaces. Despite 'constant [...] fast-moving changes occurring in the spheres of ideology, economics, and technology' during the eighteenth century very 'little actual innovation' took place within this particular art practice [Bryson 1990: p.12], regardless of the high levels of skill required by artists and the myriad properties expected to be applied by this particular style of image making. Many began to feel that 'mere representation was somehow mechanical [...] a mindless trick played by someone with a steady hand and a great deal of patience' [Taylor 1995: pp.194-196].

Clara Peeters' (1607-21) paintings of flowers, fruit and table wares similar to the contents of a Xenia style painting, but far more lavish, and Ambrosius Bosschaert the elder's (1573-1621) flower paintings, which make 'each bloom [...] visible by an artificially disjointed composition and an uneven fall of light' [Taylor 1995: pp.194-196], are compositionally and stylistically very similar to North's own paintings of flowers. North was tutored by the Dutch painter von Fowinkel at a time when the Dutch style was still regarded as 'the realist art form par excellence' [Taylor 1995: pp.194-196] and the filling of the canvas with flowers by Dutch painters is mirrored in some of North's paintings. North's still-life paintings also demonstrate a possible indebtedness to earlier forms of painting. Painting 0615, *Collection of Fruits, Painted at Lisbon* [See figure 92], depicts an array of vegetables and fruits accompanied by a basket. There are evident references to Xenia style paintings through the depiction of figs and grapes that appear alongside the simple woven basket. The simplicity of the composition is also reminiscent of Cotán's representation of everyday objects placed upon a plinth. In Illustration 0700, *Foliage and Fruit of the Tamarind and Flowers*

and Fruit of the Pawpaw in Java [See figure 93], North makes use of a similarly simplified compositional arrangement; this time depicting tamarind and pawpaw fruit placed in front of a plain, roughly painted taupe background—as if to place emphasis upon the fruit’s botanical grouping. The pawpaw has a section removed from it to reveal the seeds inside, and to the left of the image (viewer’s right) we see an un-ripened fruit with an attached blooming flower as well as one still in bud. The seedpod is present too and the leaf structure is represented at the back of the grouping, still attached to the branch. This is not a conventional botanical rendering, as the style relies heavily on traditional forms of still-life composition. Nevertheless, it accommodates a rough schema similar to that of Ehret. In painting 0255, *Indian Rhododendrons and North American Honeysuckle* [See figure 94], an arrangement of flowers is represented in a rough bouquet. Again the objects touch the edges of the page and the three floral forms are beautifully depicted with good handling skills with the three-dimensional roundness of the flowers and leaves displaying artistic rather than botanical tendencies. The painting is sentimental in tone however and is reminiscent of chocolate box illustrations found in Victorian bell jar configurations as well as handmade, decoupage greetings cards.

‘Present’

According to Guy Brett writing in *Chilean Flora, Through the Eyes of Marianne North 1884*, tension between scientific and artistic ways of seeing is a fascinating aspect of North’s paintings. It is a tension, which Brett argues touches ‘upon deeper cultural contradictions’ [Brett 1999: p.33] within Victorian society. During Victoria’s reign it was perceived to be ‘unbecoming for a lady to earn money’ through drawing

[Lambourne 2005b: p.305], as the ‘accomplishment of drawing, although proper for a young lady to acquire, was not expected to lead to a professional career’ [Lambourne 2005b: p.306]. The various nuances placed upon the terms professional and amateur were important to the Victorians. A stigma was attached to professional pursuits by women that included not only the arts but also sport and music. Moreover, it was considered proper that works produced by amateur artists should be ‘less accomplished than work produced for financial gain’ [Lambourne 2005b: p.311].

The subject of painting for money did arise during one of North’s journeys. While in Brazil during 1872-73, North referred to the matter in her diary stating that a ‘chief of police [...] an educated man of good family [...] was extremely curious to know why I was traveling alone, and painting. Did the Government pay my expenses? I certainly could not pay them myself, as I was too shabbily dressed for that!’ North told the man that when she returned home she hoped to ‘paint a picture of the Organ Mountains, and to sell it for so much money that it would pay all my expenses’ concluding, ‘then at last he understood what I traveled for, for is not money the end of all things?’ [Huxley 2002: p.80].

During the 1950s, William T. Stearn professed in *The Art of Botanical Illustration* that it still seemed impolite to write about North’s paintings simply because of her presentation of a gallery to Kew Gardens. As a result, it seemed right to acknowledge North chiefly for scouring the ‘world for spectacular plants which she painstakingly and accurately recorded in oils in their natural surroundings’. Stearn indicates that at that time botanists regarded North ‘primarily as an artist, although she discovered and portrayed species new to science’; a point of view with which, ‘artists will hardly agree, for her painting is almost wholly lacking in sensibility’. Stearn goes on to describe the ‘disagreeable impression’ made by North pictures and

argues that this is ‘enhanced through her determination to display 832 paintings in a gallery barely capable of showing fifty to advantage’. Stearn also states that ‘her work, being painted in oils, is almost unaffected by light and remains perennially gaudy, whereas the choice little collection of miscellaneous water-colours formed by Sir Arthur Church and formerly on exhibition at Kew almost became a total loss through prolonged exposure to light’. Stearn favoured North’s sister: Catherine’s paintings, which he describes as ‘More amateur, but more sensitive’ [Blunt and Stearn 2000: pp.276-277]. Catherine’s explanation of North’s technique was that she ‘painted as a clever child would’ due to ‘very little training’ and went on to describe her as ‘impatient’ [Brett 1999: p.34]. Catherine also stated that North ‘was not a botanist in the technical sense of the term’ since her feelings were for plants and their ‘beautiful living personalities’, viewing them rather like ‘human friends’ [Brett 1999: p.33].

Sir Joseph Hooker received an apology from North concerning the quantity of paintings she was producing on Kew’s behalf. North stated, ‘I fear you do not think me too idle for not painting more on your list’. North also confessed to being very proud of Darwin’s interest and that he had encouraged her to visit Australia [Huxley 2002: p.13]. North’s technique stood in stark contrast to that of a favoured male botanical illustrator Walter Hood Fitch (1817-92), who was employed by both William and Joseph Hooker. Fitch was to illustrate Hooker’s field sketches of ‘Himalayan plants, which appeared in 1855’, and was described as an ‘incomparable botanical artist’ with an ‘unrivalled skill in seizing the natural character of a plant’ [Blunt 1990: pp.46-47].

The Australian illustrator, Ellis Rowan (1848-1922) was an influence on North’s work as a painter and a contact in Australia, where North visited her in the

1870s. Rowan, like North was a woman of privileged means and had met North on a previous visit to England. North had been so impressed by Rowan's endeavours that it prompted her to try to engage Sir Joseph Hooker's interest in her paintings [North 1882-1938: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters]. Like North, Rowan was a largely untrained amateur botanical painter who specialised in flowers as well as birds and occasionally insects. Rowan's work was said to cross 'the boundaries between art and natural history illustration' and her paintings were considered impressionist in style [Ellis Rowan 2006]. In *The Flower Hunter Ellis Rowan*, Patricia Fullerton claims that Rowan cited North as an influence upon her own work, stating that North 'may have encouraged Rowan in the techniques of oil painting', giving her 'ideas about placing flowers in their natural habitat' and encouraging her to 'show surrounding vegetation in a landscape background' that included 'atmospheric effects such as a brooding storm or a setting sun' [Fullerton 2002: p.5]. North may also have 'inspired Rowan with ideas of freedom to travel', giving her advice on the 'writing of her adventures' as well as 'how to house and promote her works for posterity' [Fullerton 2002: p.5]. Rowan wrote of North saying: 'I became her devoted admirer, and she became the pioneer of my ambition' [Fullerton 2002: p.5]. Rowan's 'love for the flora of Australia' combined with her energy to repeat North's endeavours, drove a desire to complete a collection of floral paintings that carried her into other colonies and some of the remotest parts of Australia' [Ellis Rowan 2006]. Rowan did not, however, stop at Australia. Like North she 'would travel the world in search of flowers' and is credited as having 'painted more species of Australia and the international flora than any other artist of her era' [Ellis Rowan 2006]. Rowan's paintings have been valued highly, with the Australian government paying five thousand pounds for a collection of her work in 1923 [Ellis Rowan 2006]. Like North, there is also an acceptance that

Rowan produced paintings that combined artistic and scientific modes of representation. Art historians have consequently placed Rowan, ‘in the category of a talented illustrator’, while ‘scientists quietly point out that her paintings lack the details of truly botanical art’ [Ellis Rowan 2006]. The reception of Rowan’s painting therefore echoes Wilfred Blunt’s view in *In for a Penny—A Prospect of Kew Gardens* that North’s paintings are artistically unattractive [Blunt 1978: p.185].

In *A Vision of Eden*, Anthony Huxley States that North’s work had become impressionistic during her time in Australia [Huxley 2002: p.13]. Painting outdoors would certainly have been difficult and North may have had to work in part with memories of her visual experiences. Paintings by Rowan are deeper in their colouration as witnessed in her painting of a Gynea Lily c.1887-1889 [See figure 95]. North’s interpretation of the same plant species represents more of the plant’s structure and has a constancy of colour, which makes use of a lighter palette [See figure 96]. North may have painted her Australian pictures in one sitting, which would account for the insipid colouration. North’s work is generally the more fluid of the two, with Rowan’s paintings often appearing a little gauche and stiff. North comments in her diary that ‘Mrs. R.’ had her own peculiar way of working on gray paper, adding that she ‘admired her genius and prettiness’ [North 1892b: p.149].

A set of screens by Ellis Rowan c.1890, and housed at the Botanic Gardens in Adelaide, are reminiscent of paintings by North in the upper atrium [See figure 97] and on the surrounds of the North gallery’s inner doors at Kew. Most of North’s pictures were painted on board. However the pictures that were painted for the atrium of the North gallery are on linen/canvas fixed with adhesive/ghesso incorporating ‘fish swim bladder’. Thick paint was placed on top of the gesso and there is evidence, yet again, that it was mixed directly on the support [Farley 2007]. It had been originally

thought that North's painting 212 (no title given), originally situated high in the atrium of the North gallery, before its removal to the Economic Botany building at Kew (possibly sometime during the 1980s), had been placed flush to the wall. However, this would have given the viewer looking upwards a false perspective. So it was almost certainly tilted downwards in the direction of the viewer. The painting was one of a series of pictures made specifically for the upper atrium of the North gallery that have now been returned as part of the restoration of 2008. The style of these paintings were thought to have been made deliberately crude because of their distance from the viewer, with the paintings' black backgrounds creating a striking visual contrast bringing the flowers represented by them forward for the viewer.

Rowan's screen exhibits the same theatricality as the paintings in the upper atrium of the North gallery. They are similar in style to screen paintings produced as part of the aesthetic movement of the 1890s, especially those of W.E. Nesfield [Calloway and Le Orr 2011: p.146]. Rowan's screens are resplendent with the morning glory plant [See figure 98], a flower North painted on more than one occasion. Rowan's choice of watercolour and gouache medium marries with North's habitual use of oil paint insofar as marks made by gouache can, like oil, be corrected easily through the application of further layers of paint. Rowan's screens therefore appear thickly painted as if in oils. The paneling used on Rowan's screens also repeats North's use of japanned framing within the North gallery.

The Hudson River School's founding member, Thomas Cole (1801-1848) arrived in the USA 'from England in 1818 at the age of seventeen' [Leja 2007: p.26]. He believed that '[i]f like nature, art was a divine task, morality, served by art and nature, was enlisted to assist man toward his divinity' [Novak 1997: p10]. Cole's career coincided with the upholding of the American landscape as an effective

substitute for a missing national tradition. America was old because the ‘forests and mountains spoke of America’s most significant antiquity’; one that remained in a pure and ‘uncultivated state’ [Novak 1997: p.20] and that placed America’s ‘independent nationhood’ at the forefront [Blayney Brown 2001: p.243] of its population’s imagination. ‘Cole had studied Turner in London’ and took his ‘motto [...] from Byron’. He also aligned himself with President Andrew Jackson’s Jacksonian politics, that were thought by some, to be ‘divisive and arbitrary’ and which were said by his opponents to have made him ‘a modern Cesar’ [Blayney Brown 2001: p.243]. The Hudson River School, not to be confused with the later Hudson Bay River Group, took its name from the Hudson River, which was itself named after Henry Hudson (1560s/70s-1611), an Englishman working for the Dutch East India Company who in 1609 sailed up the river that now bears his name [Hampson 2005]. The Hudson River School ‘flourished between 1825 and 1875’; at ‘a time of great nationalist sentiment’ in the USA as well as ‘the near dissolution of the country during the Civil War’. The school produced images of a ‘new world wilderness’ for a new breed of men [Hampson 2005].

Writing in *Nature* in 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), regarded as the father of transcendentalism in America,⁴⁴ suggested that a ‘devotion to and immersion in nature’ could achieve a ‘spiritual regeneration and union with God’ [O’Toole 2005: pp.12-13]. The artists who maintained the philosophy of the American Transcendentalist movement were the Luminists, whose paintings were ‘modest in size and apparent ambition’. They drew from the Dutch tradition and upon a ‘fragility of classic understatement’. This contrasted with the Hudson River schools often,

⁴⁴ Emerson was the leading force behind the establishing of ‘The Saturday Club’, a focus not only for friendship but also literary engagement. Ultimately, there were two clubs, the latter being known as the Magazine Club [Emerson 1918: p.10]. The Saturday Club also became known as the ‘Agassiz Club’ [Emerson 1918: p.30] and North was allegedly a member.

‘baroque rhetoric’ [Novak 1997: p.28]. Paintings by the Luminists also contain ‘paradoxes which, with extraordinary subtlety, engage in a dialectic that guides the onlooker towards a lucid transcendentalism’. The clarity of these, Luminist painted atmospheres is ‘applicable both to air and crystal, to hard and soft, to mirror and void’ [Novak 1997: p.29]. Moreover, they were made to ‘abolish the ego’—first ‘that of the artist, then the spectator’ [Novak 1997: p.29].

Cole’s paintings, like John Martin’s (1789-1854) envisaged rapture and a perceived ‘purity of the unmarked American landscape’. Cole claimed that ‘where the wolf roams, the plough shall glisten, on the gray crag shall rise temple and tower - mighty deeds shall be done in the now pathless wilderness’ [O’Toole 2005: p.14]. This attitude reveals that the occupants of the new land of America were not aware or accepting of the society and culture of its existing indigenous peoples. The naturalist Poivre was scornful of such attitudes referring to the ‘colonial conquests’ of America as an act of barbarity carried out by men ‘[w]ho call themselves so civilized, so soft and so Christian’ [Grove 2003: p.205].

European visitors such as the French writer Jean de Crèvecoeur (1735-1813), one of the first to expound on the expansive countryside and seemingly limitless frontiers of the New World, compared its ‘scenery to that of the ‘old world’. His letters were first published in London in 1782 and were of such great ‘interest to Europeans’ that they were then published in Paris [O’Toole 2005: p.13]. North herself wrote of the Hudson as ‘like a very mild Rhine minus the castles’ [North 1892a: p. 65]. The Rhine itself had been furnished with follies in the form of castles under the reign of Ludwig II (1845-1886), who ‘gave way to such extravagant medieval fantasies’, including ‘the vast castle of Neuschwanstien, started in 1868’ in its ‘mountainous setting of southern Bavaria’ [Blayney Brown 2001: p.236]. North

indicated that she preferred the Hudson River because it was in a state of nature and not littered with castles. Some ‘first-generation artists and naturalists’ thought America and her ‘lakes and rivers appeared less picturesque than the Rhine’ simply because Europe’s landscape contained ‘aging castles, aqueducts, peristyle temples, and other architectural remains’ [O’Toole 2005: p.13]. The American landscape was also criticized for its ‘lack of drama compared to the Alps’ [O’Toole 2005: p.13]. Early writers lamented the ‘lack of splendour’ in American topography and of the annoyance of not being able to make sense of ‘the undomesticated tangle of wilderness’ that would come to be regarded by American artists and its ‘general public [...] as a symbol of the independence of the American spirit’. The colonizers of America ‘celebrated the fact that whereas Europe was marred by the success and failures of man, America offered purity and freshness consecrated by God’s beneficence—a new Eden’ [O’Toole 2005: p.13], despite the perceived purity of the American landscape being marred increasingly by industrialization.

Despite these differences in outlook, there are philosophical comparisons to be made, between European and America landscape art [O’Toole 2005: p.13]. The paintings of the Hudson River School, with their depictions of vast landscapes, offer a decidedly awestruck vision of the new world [Blayney Brown 2001: p.128]. As such, they can be understood to coincide with an eighteenth-century European preoccupation with the aesthetic category of the sublime as given shape in the work of writers such as Edmund Burke (1729-1797) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). It was Edmund Burke who ‘identified [...] moments when the ‘sublime’ character of a particular scene imbued it with a special quality of beauty, which was at the same time both admirable and awe inspiring, but also capable of importing a frisson of fear’ (re frightening) [Meyer 1992: p.10]. They also chime with Phillipp Otto Runge’s

(1777-1810) thought, put forward in 1802 in relation to German painting, that 'everything tends towards landscape' and therefore 'looks for something certain in[...]uncertainty' [Blayney Brown 2001: p.126]. There was a 'convergence of formula' between British romantic nature painting of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and that of North America. This formula, which typifies most eighteenth and nineteenth-century landscape painting, can be witnessed through works of numerous artists, who 'answered the demand for magnificent, characteristic landscapes in the form of paintings' [Hoozee 2007b: pp.180-181]. Romanticism was to be at the core of art as well as science and religion in America. The Romantic conception of individual vision extended through sublime experience would spread like a contagion [Kirwan 2005: p.22]. For many American painters, science and art were both routes to God and they attempted to Christianize science through their work. It was 'hoped that art's interpretive capacities would reconcile the contradictions science was forcing on the nineteenth century' [Novak 1997: p.9]. The American artist would deal with 'religious, moral, philosophic and social ideas projecting them onto the American landscape', thereby developing a nationalistic iconography that placed the 'face of God in the landscape' [Novak 1997: p.15].

The term picturesque was translated from the Italian 'picttoresco' in the early eighteenth century becoming a 'heavily loaded aesthetic term' [Gage 2007: p.35]. This translation led to the 'publication of many guide-books to the picturesque regions of Britain'. Wordsworth had 'sought for many years to bring some order to' aesthetic notions surrounding the picturesque, and 'in an unpublished essay on the sublime and the beautiful' of around 1811 he rejected 'Gilpinseque methods of visual analysis out of hand' [Gage 2007: p.35]. In 1792, Gilpin had constructed an aesthetic treatise for artists entitled, *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty on Picturesque Travel*

and on Sketching Landscape in which he ‘expounded in the infinite variables in nature created by different conditions of light and shade’. He also urged artists to study these elements first hand. Moreover, Gilpin ‘recognized that nature was sometimes imperfect’ and required a painter’s ‘assistance to improve on it when needed’. These ‘necessary improvements’ were permitted, even encouraged, not only for the purpose of conveying or even improving the picturesque elements inherent in a scene’ but also by enabling ‘the illustration of other underlying ideas and principles’ [O’Toole 2005: p.12]. In Wordsworth’s view, this Gilpenesque intervention was an unnecessary tampering with the purity of nature. Nevertheless Gilpin’s views can be seen as highly influential on the later Hudson River School, since he propounded the creation of a topography of the landscape through the depiction of ‘nature without man’; a strong characteristic of early American landscapes [O’Toole 2005: p.68].

Changes in technique were very much evident at the height of Romantic painting. Changes that according to Blayney Brown in *Romanticism*, resulted in artists such as Delacroix, re-painting the foreground of his *Massacres at Chios* after seeing Constable’s *The Haywain* of 1824 after it had been shown at the Paris Salon. Delacroix’s imitation of *The Haywain*’s ‘shifting lights achieved through broken colour and flickering brushwork’ [Blayney Brown 2001: p.175] extends the ‘emotional conviction’ that makes Constable a Romantic [Blayney Brown 2001: p.179].

The sublime, along with the picturesque, ‘imbued the art of landscape with some of the dignity’ that was denied it by academic conventions upheld by the English Royal Academy [Meyer 1992: p.10]. Both the picturesque and the sublime were strongly linked to romanticism. The earliest instances of the sublime related to the Picturesque and romanticism can be witnessed in the paintings of John Robert

Cozen (1752-97), who also had an early influence upon the work of Turner (1775-1851). Cozen's *Entrance to the Valley of the Grande Chartrenise in Dauphine* of 1783, [Blayney Brown 2001: pp.128-129] can be understood to have interpreted Burke's 'mountain sublime with unparalleled intensity of feeling and economy of form and subtly of palette'. It was an aesthetic approach that 'built on the tonal and compositional elements in the watercolour medium of his father Alexander Cozen' (1717-86) [Blayney Brown 2001: pp.128-129].

Burke wrote [Blayney Brown 2001: p.128] that we should remember it is not 'the mountain itself that is sublime' but 'rather the state of the soul' [Kirwan 2005: p.22]. Burke's theory was disliked by the British painter Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) because it was perceived to be only about a 'single blow' to perception and thus, simply 'one great idea' [Kirwan 2005: p.17]. It was British writers who did the most to develop and promote ideas associated with the sublime. It was also the British who applied this new emotional response to landscape 'when it first appeared in art' [Blayney Brown 2001: p.128].

Invocation of the sublime was pushed to an extreme by the painter John Martin (1789-1854), whose images of Biblical disaster 'played on the hopes and fears of his popular audience, who were widely infected by Millenarian belief in an approaching apocalypse then current in Nonconformist Churches' [Blayney Brown 2001: p.248]. Martin's paintings were to influence the later works of Cole [Lambourne 2005b: p. 395]. Martin developed the themes of 'transformation, prophylaxis, and destruction' in his work from the early 1820s onwards [Trumble 2007: p.319]. In *The Deluge* of 1834, a fundamental tension was exposed between 'proponents of new theories about the geological formation of the earth and more orthodox thinking enshrined in holy writ' [Trumble 2007: p.321]. Martin's art 'relied upon landscape and architectural

settings of vast scale' and often 'stretched the boundaries of history painting almost to breaking point' [Trumble 2007: p.319]. While 'others reverted to an inner world' [Blayney Brown 2001: p.132], Martin's paintings were built up 'from raw data, through tiny, cold details of rocks and waves and people, up to the barren hotness of geological [...] drama' [Trumble 2007: p.320] as witnessed in the painting *The Great Day of His Wrath*, of 1851-3, by Martin. Martin's work focused on finding and producing material not only through the necessary study of nature [See figure 99] but also the notion that nature should be studied 'in the open air'. Despite differences in aesthetic affect, this allies Martin's painting to that of Constable. According to Blayney Brown in *Romanticism*, Constable was keen to state that while painting *Boat-Building on the Stow* of 1814-15, he 'attempted to bring together the sketch and the picture' thus suggesting that 'he had painted the work entirely on the spot' despite the painting having the 'unmistakable air of a studio about it' [Blayney Brown 2001: p.181].

According to James Kirwan in *Sublimity* [Kirwan 2005: p.17], Burke's ideas on the sublime showed 'little deference to reason or morality'. The Burkian sublime was 'naturally overpowering' and 'left no room for the operation of reason' later imputed to the sublime by Kant. The Burkian sublime was antipathetic to the religiosity of the British philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) [Kirwan 2005: p. 18]. A religious, or at least spiritual, element was however prevalent in relation to paintings of the sublime by Casper David Friedrich (1774-1846). Consider here, for example, Friedrich's painting *Cross in the Mountain* of 1808 [Blayney Brown 2001: p. 123], a companion painting to *The Abbey in the Oakwood*, of 1809-10 [Blayney Brown 2001: p.138], which presents us with an image of 'man before God and Nature' that makes an explicit connection between sublimity and high-minded Christianity [Blayney

Brown 2001: p.228]. As such, the painting proposes ‘the elevation of nature to a kind of religion, and of landscape to equal or surpass history painting’ [Blayney Brown 2001: p.123]. Initial viewings of *Cross in the Mountain* were carefully stage-managed, with the painting having been placed in the ‘artist’s austere painting room’ deliberately ‘darkened to suggest [...] meditative gloom’ [Blayney Brown 2001: p.124]. Friedrich’s painting has a hybrid quality flipping uncertainly as it does between landscape and surrogate altarpiece [Blayney Brown 2001: p.132]. Friedrich’s use of the sun as a metaphor for God in *Cross in the Mountain* [Blayney Brown 2001: p.125] adhered to the non-use of depictions of the magi in English painting of the time. English painters instead preferred to use ‘the torturing of white light into colours by refraction’ that was to become the ‘emblematic sign of Christ’s Passion’ and that came about through a ‘precocious English plea,’ towards ‘Newtonian laws of light and colour’ [Gage 2001: p.169]. Friedrich’s Lutheran faith had imbued him with an uncompromising view of individual destiny; one in which he must find his own path to God [Blayney Brown 2001: p.138].

Despite this, Friedrich’s paintings contained a persistent sense of nihilism or alienation that contrasts markedly with the often, enervating aesthetics of his British counterparts [Graham Dixon 2010]. Dahl said of all his followers none had ‘yet understood how to re create that silent sense of the spirit of nature that was characteristic of Friedrich’s art’ [Blayney Brown 2001: p.145]. In Friedrich’s *Monk by the Sea* of 1809 [See figure 100], an abstract quality is present and its painterly application looks more like a watercolour than an oil painting. *Monk by the Sea*’s luminosity is also reminiscent to that of certain paintings by Cozens. It is a moody painting, with a sky that is large, soft, pregnant, and looming with portent floating like a thought.

In Friedrich's painting *Der Watzmann* of 1824-25 [See figure 101], another mountain landscape, we find compositional choices similar to those of North. Painting 270 by North, entitled *A Distant view of Kinchinjunga from Darjeeling* [See figure 102], is strikingly close in its colouration and composition to Friedrich's *Der Watzmann*, with its cool mountains and lush textured foreground, and Romantic drama. Indeed, many of Friedrich's compositional choices are close to North's. Consider here, for example, topographical scenes such as Friedrich's *The Riesengebirge* of 1830-5, a mountain landscape in a region of Saxony reminiscent of the Swiss Alps [Blayney Brown 2001: p.148]. The colouration of this particular painting, with its strong violets, reds and ochre's, is reminiscent to paintings of mountain landscapes by Holman Hunt; which North enjoyed. In Friedrich's painting, however, the 'planes of the earth and sky represent the bodily and the infinite'; which are recurring metaphorical themes in his work [Blayney Brown 2001: p.145]. Friedrich's detailed painting and layers of transparent colour were made possible by the use of linseed oil and turpentine. North's paintings are, by contrast, rather explicit in their painterly application and have no transparent colour. North's direct and rather dry use of paint means that Friedrich's layered paint effects would have been impossible to re-create, since the consummate skill of a painter would have been required to painstakingly apply colour application after colour application.

North's use of a formal compositional arrangement like a proscenium arch to frame landscape vistas which she uses in her painting again, and again, appears in some of Friedrich's paintings. Barbara Gates in *Kindred Nature* describes North's technique as 'leaving out the middle distance, to better render' a sense of the painted vastness [Gates 1998: p.177]. In North's paintings 230 and 270—the former of *Rungaroon in Darkeeling India* and the latter, of the *Kinchinjunga, Darjeeling*—we

find images that correspond to this compositional system. It is one that combines the colouration of *Der Watzmann* with the dramatic composition of Karl Friedrich Schinkel's painting *Das Felsentor* of 1818 [See figure 103]. We see it in paintings by North, of Tenerife and the Himalayas, as well as of the Sierra Nevada, and views of Kyoto, which depict vistas with a foreground that masks the landscape giving it an apparently natural framing system.

Friedrich confessed to being a studio painter who, unlike North, preferred 'working from memory and imagination' [Blayney Brown 2001: p.132] There is evidence, however, that Friedrich produced composite works, choosing to conjoin sections, seen and imagined, within the same painting [Graham Dixon 2010].

In Germany, a fascination with the Gothic was coupled with a reinvigorated interest in medieval and Germanic mythical tales related to the dark forests of Germania. The painter Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841) chose 'the Gothic [...]' both as a patriotic expression and for its echoes of organic forms, hinting at nature's processes of renewal' [Blayney Brown 2001: p.228]. His painting of *A Medieval City on the River*, 1815, [See figure 104] is compositionally similar to Constable's Salisbury Cathedral, but is also reminiscent of the Italian painter Canaletto's architectural vistas of Venice and London with regard to its rather mechanical application of paint. A large and commanding Gothic Church is represented with its spire piercing a brooding sky like an antenna. Schinkel's painting presents us with a pictorial expression of 'sturm and drang' comparable with that associated with the writings of the poet Schiller (1759-1805) [Graham Dixon 2010]. After 1817, there was hostility towards 'more archaic stylistic trends' within Germany and a resurgence of neo-classicism. At Goethe's instigation, the author Heinrich Meyer of the Weimar friends of Art coined the term 'neo-German religious patriotic art' to signify the

German Gothic art of the early nineteenth century [Blayney Brown 2001: p.228]. Friedrich became one of the targets of this hostility since after the Napoleonic invasion and the consequent War of Liberation he too had added patriotic dimensions to his subject matter [Blayney Brown 2001: p.228].

Schinkel's paintings 'failed to outlast the particular conditions of war time Prussia'. They were associated with a resistance to French domination that had passed. The Classical style was to become 'an equally appropriate expression' of 'German resurgence' [Blayney Brown 2001: p.236]. Cole espoused 'the artistic dilemma' of the reverse transition from the 'Neoclassical ideal to the frenzied gloom of the Gothic Rival'. As a result his paintings often present us with 'Gothic fantasy reminiscent of Caspar David Friedrich' [Lambourne 2005b: p.394]. 'Friedrich's methodology was [...] strikingly similar to that of the Americans' [Novak 1997: p.263] and he is now regarded as 'the single European landscapist whose sensibility most closely matches those of the Americans' [O'Toole 2005: p.17]. Friedrich's influence can be witnessed in the works of Homer Dodge Martin (1836-1897), whose choice of cool blue and violet coloured mountains and sky echoes tonal devices used by Friedrich; devices that were similar to those used later by Holman Hunt and then North [O'Toole 2005: p.26]. Moreover, the strong religious convictions associated with the Hudson River School painters are strongly aligned with those of Friedrich. Both 'became mutually agreed on attributes' that were deemed 'necessary to create sublime or beautiful elements in landscape' [O'Toole 2005: p.16].

Americans were eventually to become concerned with 'man's impact on nature'. Herman Herzog (1832-1932) was one of the first American artists to engage with the idea of 'man as intruder in the woodlands, in direct confrontation with wildlife as a part of his basic survival'. Herzog's works also includes an

accompanying vision showing ‘man’s effort to tame, or rather harness nature in order [...] to make his existence comfortable’ [O’Toole 2005: p.116]. It was the shifting of the Industrial Revolution to America that ‘posed the greatest threat to the natural environment’. Industrialisation went against Cole’s original dreams of a future America. It is here that we find ‘the machine in the garden’ abandoned mills and waterwheels alongside ‘discarded machinery, slowly returning to nature’, finally bestowing on the American landscape ruinous elements characteristic of so much European art [O’Toole 2005: p.128]. It was at this time that George Catlin (1796-1872) recorded indigenous American Indians before their culture was further ‘threatened and overwhelmed by the white man’ [Lambourne 2005b: p.396]. Americans became implicated in the process of simultaneously ‘worshipping and destroying the wilderness’ that they had found away from Europe and its troubles [Lambourne 2005b: p.396]. For many artists in Europe, including North, the landscape there, a became the subject of an ‘increasingly complicated, fragmented world’ [O’Toole 2005: p.18]. Constable had dedicated ‘his life to explaining forgotten memories and past times’ compelled ‘to immortalize the Stour Valley as it had appeared at the beginning of the century’ when ‘it was a true centre of rural life’ [Meyer 1992: p.138].

The Hudson River School was perceived as ‘preserving the last evidences of the Golden age of wilderness’. In *Nature and Culture*, Novak cites a J.F. Cropsey speaking in 1847 of the ‘axe of civilization’ that ‘is busy with our old forests’ and ‘artisan ingenuity’ that is ‘fast seeping away the relics of our national infancy [...] [w]hat were once the wild and picturesque haunts of the Red Man, and where the wild deer roamed in freedom, are becoming the abodes of commerce and the seats of manufactures. [...] Yankee enterprise has little sympathy with the picturesque, and it

behooves our artists to rescue from its grasp the little that is left' [Novak 1997: p.5]. Industrialism was rapidly 'eradicating the primordial wilderness' at this juncture, and visible changes were occurring in American art through shifts in 'painting techniques and stylization' [Novak 1997: p.18]. In part these changes took place through the introduction of new European art techniques that incorporated impressionist mark making first developed by the Barbizon School of landscape painting in France [Art Encyclopedia 2010a:]. The most prominent exponent of American impressionism was Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), who 'introduced many wealthy American patrons to impressionist painting' [Lambourne 2005b: p.409].

There had been three generations of Hudson River School artists who persisted in painting landscapes, often in the same physical location. They observed the same landmarks and 'constantly engaged in making comparisons and contrasts' [O'Toole 2005: p.12]. There was '[d]ramatic and unprecedented growth' in the USA between 1830 and 1880, which led to the accumulation of great wealth. This led to an increased demand for art which led, in turn, to an oversupply by artists, who were competing for commissions [Lubin 2007: p.94]. Landscape painting 'followed a trajectory similar to that of genre painting in the decades before and after the Civil War'. It told American's stories of their landscape and 'reassured them of the greatness of their nation and the omnipotence of the God who had bountifully provided them with such an incommensurably ravishing land' [Lubin 2007: p.105].⁴⁵

During North's visit to the USA in 1871, she visited the Johnstone gallery in New York where many of the Hudson River School painters exhibited. After seeing *The Four Ages of Life* by Cole and paintings by Mullers and Cromes (1768-1821), she declared in her diary '[e]very picture was a gem' [North 1892a: p.71]. North's

⁴⁵ The Hudson River School also produced painting in pairs and series 'inspired by the 'seventeenth century European Landscape painters' Poussin and Claude [O'Toole 2005: p.15]. North stated that she was an admirer of Claude's landscapes [Ponsonby 2005a].

painting 0191, *Autumn Tints in the White Mountains, New Hampshire, United States* [See figure 105], is visually reminiscent of the work of James McDougal Hart (1828-1901), whose painting *Mountain's Falls*, [See figure 106] reveals his 'turbulent, wild view of a rugged mountain waterfall [...] more threatening than benign' with its 'single scraggly pine on the left' that 'bends its skeletal branches toward the water' [O'Toole 2005: p.28]. North's painting is reminiscent to Hart's applied painting technique that is itself, reminiscent of much later 1950s, natural landscape illustrations that appear as templates for painting by number sets that were used into the 1970s. North's cascading American river is crudely painted possibly in response to Hart and it is the only painting in her gallery to make use of paint in this way.

The work of Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900) is closest in style to many of North's works. North wrote of him as 'the first of living landscape painters' [North 1892a: p.67]. Church's paintings were only comparable to those of Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902) who represented the most spectacular aspects of natural scenery, such as 'icebergs, exploding volcanoes, and the tropical forests of the South Americas' [Lambourne 2005b: pp.393-394]. Church's paintings were perfection to North, and revealed a truth in their workmanship [North 1892a: p.71]. Church also wrote travelogues [Novak 1997: p.71], a practice that North would adopt after her 1871 visit to the USA, and after visiting Church. North's painting, 0187, *View of Both Falls of Niagara* [See figure 107], was painted after viewing a painting of the same subject by Church exhibited at the Johnstone gallery in New York. North's painting of Niagara Falls depicts a rainbow seen through the cascading waters, echoing the composition of Church's Painting [North 1892a: p.71]. North's painting is so close in form that it could be read as a homage to Church. North writes of having 'three paintings in oils'

by Church in her bedroom during her stay at the artist's home in 1871, including the 'the horse shoe falls of Niagara' [See figure 108] [North 1892a: p.71].⁴⁶

North visited Church again in 1881. Katherine E. Manthorne states in *Fern Hunting among These Picturesque Mountains: Frederic Edwin Church in Jamaica*, that Church 'on business in the city [New York] heard that British botanical artist Marianne North was in town' and '[i]n her words, he "came off at once to see me at nine o'clock, making me promise to go home with him the next day to see his new house [Olana] and Mrs. Church up the Hudson"' [Manthorne 2010: p.45]. Manthorne suggests that 'Church's spontaneous invitation to North raises the issue of gender politics at Olana and the artist's relationship with accomplished women generally' because it reveals that 'Church was relatively open to strong women' [Manthorne 2010: p.59]. While at Olana, North wrote of sleeping in a Chinese bed with Jade carvings [North 1892b: p.209] in a room where the doors and architraves were also painted as in the North gallery [Manthorne 2010: p, 59]. North writes of Mrs. Church contriving to make their own 'collection of curiosities look like the natural parts of a comfortable living-house' with 'exquisite Persan (Persian) rugs, bronzes, carvings, porcelain etc' [North 1892b: p.193].⁴⁷ North indicated that Church looked through all her 'paintings with real interest, which pleased her for she declared 'I still think him the greatest of living landscape painters' [North 1892b: p.208]. Church's offered professional observations on North's work, commenting that it contained 'images of vegetal chaos simultaneously typical of the appearance of the region and expressive

⁴⁶ John Vanderlyn (1775-1852) 'claimed to have been the first artist to paint the Niagara Falls' [O'Toole 2005: p. 125].

⁴⁷ During North's visit to Church's home, she described none indigenous animals to the United States: A 'white ass from Damascus' and 'a grey South American Donkey', which had been imported into America for his children to ride upon [Huxley 2002: p.40].

of a state of mind'. He also compared North's work to that of Johnson Heade [Manthorne 2010: p.47].

Church also volunteered information about locations for painting. North states that Church was disappointed by Mexico's vegetation but still wanted her to go to New Granada where the 'spurs of the Andes were so high that each of the valleys between them had a different flora' [North 1892b: p.209]. North had previously visited Church's studio, seeing tropical studies that made her even more 'anxious to go and see those countries' beyond the USA's southern border [North 1892a: p.68]. Church's *Heart of the Andes*, of 1859, was said to make 'the spectator feel that he was "actually surrounded by a foreign scene"'. Church had followed the German scientist, Alexander von Humbolt's (1769-1859), journeys to 'Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Mexico' [Lambourne 2005b: p.396].

North and Church may have been aware of the lithographs made to depict the botanical work of the German botanist Carl Friedrich Phillipp von Martius (1823-1853), who, as professor of Botany at Munich University and Director of the Royal Botanical Gardens there, was a specialist in palms. It was reported that Martius did not travel on the various expeditions during which the palm plants in question were found and did not produce the images that depict his life's works. Nor do they appear to have any other designated illustrator. Eduard Friedrich Poeppig was the official botanical collector of the palms, and it may be the case that either he or an assistant produced the illustrations that were to be used as official images of their findings. Alexander von Humbolt (1769-1859), had written about Martius's illustrated works [Lack 2008: pp.398]. The works apply the device found in colonial photography and in the illustrations found in Dr. Robert Thornton's *The Temple of Flora*, which places persons next to a tree in order to extract information pertaining to a plant's size.

Church's *The Heart of Andes* panoramic qualities are thought to have been influenced by Humbolt's work [Lambourne 2005b: p.432]. The Martius illustrations are decorative and not specifically botanical illustration, but, rather like the work of Thomas Baines, they are topographical with detailed foliage; a technique that North would also replicate. The Martius illustrations allow for important foliage to be visible and readable to botanic experts. The winding landscapes are Romantic in their depiction and the composition is like those of the German Romantic Movement, such as in paintings by Casper David Friedrich and Schinkel [See figure 109]. The works includes waterfalls, a firm pictorial favorite of Church, placed within a specific context and the illustrations often include fauna and people indigenous and non-indigenous in jungle locations. This format is again similar to North's landscape compositions. There is less drama in North's works as they appear more pragmatic in their depictions of animals and people in comparison to the often Rousseauian drama depicted by the Martius prints.

After the opening of the North gallery at Kew, Church 'acquired a copy of the catalogue [...] for his library'. Later, in 1927, his daughter, 'Downie visited the gallery, and it was said to have 'triggered fond memories of the artists long ago visit'. Downie stated that they '[s]aw at last the truly wonderful collection of paintings of "nature" presented to the gardens by North' and recalled North showing them lovely paintings of Borneo and her 'two live Kangaroo mice' from Australia which North was 'taking home to the Zoo' [Manthorne 2010: p.63]. North's particular presentation of her paintings within her gallery mirrors a tradition within American painting that presented sample works as paintings containing 'more than one image' [O'Toole 2005: p.147]. Thomas Birch (1779-1851) presented 'landscape vignettes' within one frame with 'identically sized horizontal ovals depicting seasons' and the framing,

which uses gold mounts, [O'Toole 2005: p.56] is again similar in style to North's framing methods. Other artists such as William Trost Richards (1833-1905) and Regis Francis Gignoux's (1816-1882), with his American scenery sampler of 1861 [See figure 110], also presented sampler paintings that provided 'the ultimate comparison and contrast in that they reveal [...] each artist's interest in the diversity of subject matter provided by nature'. They also conveyed the individual's ability to make different landscapes with 'various aspects of the sublime, beautiful and picturesque' [O'Toole 2005: p.147]. This system was made fashionable by the writings of Ruskin and the demand for minute detail that resulted in the breaking up of a work into 'a number of vignettes', again like a sampler work, that often emphasized the 'use of violent colour' [Meyer 1992: p.131]; all of which North employed in her rather large scale vignettes in simple frames, helping to maintain Humbolt's panoramic principle. The idea of a panoramic, multiple imaged representation of the world of nature, was also commensurate with a Burkean philosophy on nature; that is to say on something that 'causes an astonishment in which "the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it"' [Kirwan 2005: p.17].

The American Romantics presented a 'connection between history painting, landscape art, and the popular panorama' and a 'visual encyclopedia of travel fact' [Novak 1997: p.23]. North's own use of travelogue set pieces and an implied encyclopedic panorama employed all the expected outcomes of an American art philosophy. However, any connection between North and history painting is a tenuous one, as she did not emulate history paintings. The influx of new peoples into America in the twentieth century no longer allowed for the 'old artistic influences from France and England' [Lambourne 2005b: p.411]. Despite the traces of an English light and

Turneresque colouration, Mark Rothko (1903-1970) would later present the contemplative elements of a 'dialogue with nature' taken from a previous American 'transcendental unity' [Novak 1997: p.29]. Furthermore, it would also be the century of Jackson Pollock (1912-1956), who continued the Hudson River School agenda of grand scale landscape paintings and of its own all American history. The influences of these artists would begin to increasingly cross the Atlantic in the reverse direction from the New World to the Old [Lambourne 2005b: p.411].

'Future'

Today, botanical exhibitions display scientific-botanical drawing alongside botanical illustrations and botanical paintings with distinct tendencies towards the conventions of fine art practice. The opening exhibition at the Shirley Sherwood gallery adjoining the North Gallery at Kew Gardens, which was held in 2008, is an example of this contemporary tendency. Non-standard botanical images in the exhibition included Rosie Sanders' (b.1944) *Arisaema ciliatum*, which displays the plant's flower heads, with some accompanying leaves in an un-conventional composition. The painting is not topological in the conventional scientific-botanical sense and when viewed at close quarters it is painterly rather than precise in style. Sanders, was a student at High Wycombe School of Art [Sherwood and Rix 2008: p.166]. This educational background is shared by many of the botanical illustrators and painters whose work was included in the exhibition, including Camilla Speight, Dasha Fomicheva and Pandora Sellers. For many years now, botanical illustrators and painters have had two consumers for their work: one is the botanist, who expects exactness from an image, and one that could still easily be placed within a traditionally printed botanical

florilegium, (which was always the expected end product of a botanical illustration) [Arnold 2007: p.164]; the other is the art lover, whose requirements are different to those of the botanist, since they require the image, first and foremost, to be aesthetically appealing and/or decorative. As when scientific-botanical illustrations are placed within a domestic setting their meaning shifts; they become art by default. The Shirley Sherwood exhibition also included some works from the Marianne North gallery. Due to the gallery's refurbishment all of its paintings had been taken off the walls so that restoration work to the fabric of the building could begin [Farley 2007]. North was at last included within a display that contained images whose status as scientific-botanical illustration was decidedly uncertain.

The work of Pandora Sellars (b.1936) is similar in many respects to that of North. Both women break with the established conventions of traditional scientific-botanical illustration. The way in which the various elements included in Sellars' compositions have been arranged on the flat page exhibits a strong feel for pattern and design often absent from traditional scientific-botanical illustration. Sellars trained as a designer, studying at Cheltenham School of Art and Manchester College of Art. She was also an art teacher from 1972 as well as a designer and freelance botanical illustrator [Sellars 1990: p.165]. Sellars has, like North, made paintings of lilies (lilies of different kinds are replicated, again and again in the North gallery). North's painting 684, *Foliage, Flowers and Fruit of the Sacred Lotus* [See figure 111], is similar in its compositional arrangement to that of Sellars' illustration of the *Nymphaea Capensis* made in 1995 [See figure 112]. Both illustrations show an upward thrusting plant that places its leaves like fans in mid air against a leafy background. Both also show varying degrees of schematic detail, of bud, flower, leaf, (seed head or pod, in the case of Henderson and North). In each case there are also

formal similarities to Peter Henderson's illustration, of the *Sacred Egyptian Bean* (a lily) in Robert Thornton's *The Temple of Flora* [See figure 113]. However, Sellars work has more in common with Henderson than North. Despite its overtly decorative effects, Sellars work remains distinctly topological in a scientific-botanical sense.

At a previous exhibition held at The Mona Bismarck Foundation, Paris in 2007, some of North's paintings were shown alongside the work of the botanical illustrator Margaret Mee (1909-1988). Mee trained as an artist at Camberwell School of Art, under the tutelage of Victor Pasmore (1908-1998) [Barber 2011: p.70]. Like North, Mee's career as a botanical illustrator did not begin to flourish until she was in her late forties to early fifties. Ray Desmond, previous Head Librarian and Archivist at The Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, claims that there are marked similarities between North and Mee's work [Desmond 1998: plate 24, no page number given] as witnessed in Mee's illustration of a *Philodendron* in 1992 whereby Mee has created a scene that is encapsulating and includes the background flora surrounding the specific illustrated plant. This configuration is in keeping with topographical illustrators, such as Baines and the accompanying illustrations to Martius' palms. However, Mee's illustration is rigorously painted and despite apparent distortions due to the topological presentation, very rhythmic, like a North painting of a similar subject matter [See figure 114]. Desmond states that both women 'occasionally added a bird or small animal to their compositions, but that Mee's precision was much greater than that of North's' [Desmond 1998: plate 24, no page number given]. Mee did include flora and fauna in her illustrations but as part of an existing scientific tradition. Mee's work does however, seek to include animals in as realistic a position within a set composition as possible, thereby making her images look natural and not forced. The

similarities between North and Mee's work are simply in terms of the choice of subject matter rather than technique.

The exposure of North's work within these two exhibitions reveals North's divergence from as much as they confirm her place within an established botanical lineage. North did not produce conventional botanical illustrations from a strictly orthodox scientific-botanical point of view; her outcomes are dislocating and disruptive. This is still the case, despite the inclusion of botanical illustrations with distinctly decorative-aesthetic leanings within exhibitions of scientific-botanical illustration. While modern forms of decorative aesthetic-botanical illustration still function scientifically—that is to say they have a doubled scientific-decorative function—North's paintings most decidedly do not. Nor do they function convincingly as art. North's inclusion in these contemporary exhibitions does come about because of a technical likeness that encompasses the work of North, Sellars, Mee and others, scientific-botanical illustration requires the use of certain visual linguistic elements that North did apply comprehensively.

The Mexican painter Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) was active during the 1930s and 1940s. She produced still life paintings that, like those of North, drew influences directly from traditional still life paintings, as witnessed in Kahlo's *Still Life with Watermelons*, of 1953 [See figure 115]. Kahlo's paintings also looked towards the botanical art by Hermenegildo Busto of the 1870s [Barson 2005: p.59]. Kahlo was not a classically trained painter. Like North, she often applied her paint crudely and certainly without conventional painterly finesse. Kahlo, [again] like North made paintings that included representations of fruit, flowers and animals in landscape settings. However, Kahlo was self-consciously attempting to develop a primitivist ethos related to Mexico's visual traditions and political struggles. Kahlo was also

painting at a time when various techniques were being used by the avant-garde, to distance themselves from conventional forms of artistic accomplishment, and Kahlo is considered an artist based very much upon context, rather than the end result of any given artwork.

Kahlo's appropriations of fruit and animals are usually symbolic and her often strange juxtapositions of objects allegorical. North brought together representations of animals and plants so that viewers could place the plants within their natural context and to indicate which animals were feeding from them. Neither plants nor animals in North's paintings have any considered symbolic or allegorical significance as witnessed in her painting numbered 0770, of a *View from Collaroy, New South Wales, looking towards the Liverpool Downs*, no date given Where North presents a crude painting of birds foraging in a tree looking over an Australian landscape that could be compared and considered comparable to Kahlo's own methods in applied technique [See figure 116]. Despite their shared amateurishness, Kahlo is thought of as a genius of originality, while North most decidedly is not. Kahlo unsettles our sense of normality through surrealistic juxtaposition, as witnessed in Kahlo's painting, *Self Portrait with Bonito* [the bird], of 1941 [See figure 117]. While, as visually odd and unsettling as they sometimes seem, North's paintings on the face of it do not. Nevertheless, North's paintings do break with convention and established context. Indeed other similarities are contained in North and Kahlo's paintings of flowers and hummingbirds [See figure 118], a firm favourite subject of North's and witnessed in Kahlo's painting of *Still Life with Hummingbird*, of 1941, which is also technically painted in a very similar manner to North's flower painting 0409, *Old Dutch Vase and South African Flowers*, no date given [See figure 119].

Marion Arnold in *South African art Peeling back the Petals*, explains one expects to see art in art galleries, botanical art in herbaria, and illustrations in books [Arnold 2007: p.164]. But North's paintings in general and her gallery in particular, carve out distinctly aestheticised spaces within otherwise scientifically delineated contexts. Her paintings seduce viewers into seeing reality even though they 'look more like other art works than like nature' [Arnold 2007: p.164]. She is in many ways as much of a surrealistic conjoiner of the unexpected as Kahlo. But her immediate historical context militates against the applicability of such a reading.

During the mid nineteen seventies and eighties, 'many feminist artists [...] were influenced by post structuralism, psychoanalysis, and subaltern theory'. This distanced their work from many aspects of earlier women's art, connected strongly as it often was to a dominant male order. They criticised the celebration of innate femininity and the retrieval of traditional female culture, for confining women to separate biological and cultural spheres. Furthermore, they doubted the subversive potential of the feminine, fearing that women would be placed on the 'negative side of language'. They also 'criticized the emphasis on personal experience' as being 'narrowly individualistic' [Reckitt and Phelan 2001: p.11]. North's paintings would not, therefore, be an obvious choice for subaltern thinkers to champion; not least, because of North's political positioning within history and because of her wealthy, well-connected family. North's major subject, the flower, is arguably the most feminine of forms to paint. However, the North gallery could be described as a form of belligerence, as she audaciously believed that she could create a space that contained a personal studio, and a gallery for her work, all within a scientific, male run institution.

In *Place Matters*, Morgan quoted Dea Birkett, in an article from the New York Times in 1992, pointing out that the North gallery, ‘is still the only permanent solo exhibition by a female artist in Britain’ [Morgan 1996: p.101]. Birkett also argued that ‘North’s vibrant style,’ with its “strong female imagery, suggests a nineteenth century Georgia O’Keeffe” [Morgan 1996: p.101]. O’Keeffe’s work was, however, more formalistic than illustrative, having been influenced by Kandinsky (one of the founder members of the Bauhaus art school in Dessau, Germany). Kandinsky’s *On the Spiritual in Art* of 1914 was a theoretical treatise which offered ‘artists the intellectual foundation for a complete break with traditional conventions’ [Cornell Richter 2001: p.42]. O’Keeffe was inspired by this and combined its influence upon her work with ideas taken from Chinese and Japanese Daoism, which had manifested itself through the influence of dada in New York during the 1920s [Cornell Richter 2001: pp.40-42]. O’Keeffe believed she could combine these influences to inform a new impetus in western art [Cornell Richter 2001: p.42]. Moreover, O’Keeffe wanted to ‘find a visual language for emotion’ and ‘her remarkably precise handling of colour was motivated by a desire’ to allow ‘the full purple feeling of satisfaction’ becoming ‘diffused into the bruise of blue as the feeling fades,’[Cornell Richter 2001: p.44] O’Keeffe’s large figurative flower pictures, exhibited a complexity of applied colour that resulted in her work being considered as ‘something living and ever in motion’, giving ‘many of her paintings the aura of portraits’ [Reckitt and Phelan 2001: p.25] as witnessed in O’Keeffe’s painting *Dark 1* of 1924 [See figure 120], which is a pictorially abstract and surreal composition that within its pattern displays a leaf [centrally] that could be read both as a eye or simply as a leaf.

There are superficial formal similarities between North’s work and that of O’Keeffe’s insofar as both women sort to capture the ‘portative element of flowers’

[Reckitt and Phelan 2001: p.26]. Moreover, both women sought to capture the sublime in an encapsulated form. However, there are marked differences between the work of both women. In contrast to O'Keeffe, North's paintings were made under the tremendous strain of her travels and, as such, were accused of being stilted [Huxley 2002: p.13]. O'Keeffe's work deliberately made use of flowers as metaphors for sexual organs. They also predicated 'upon sexual desires' regardless of sexual orientation. O'Keeffe's paintings therefore invite us to see things as we 'may not have seen them before' [Kieran 2005: p.164]. North's paintings do make use of the sexualised language of flower parts developed by Linnaeus, but are only sexual in a descriptive rather than a metaphorical or allegorical sense. North's work is not however, intentionally, about the sexualised gaze, or explicit sexualisation.

Chapter Six

The Use of Photography and the Composite Image in Relation to the Paintings of Marianne North

As Martin Kemp makes clear in *The Science of Art Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat*, during the nineteenth century within Europe, the story of visual representation changed dramatically after the invention of photography in the 1820s. After the invention of photography, manual forms of visual representation such as painting and drawing were no longer wholly dominant. They also had to justify their identity as practices distinct from photography.

While this shift was a seismic one in many ways, it is nevertheless important to acknowledge that photography itself did not emerge from nowhere and that its early forms grew strongly on exiting pre-photographic modes of representation. In the chapter ‘Thomas Jones, Building in Naples,’ in *British Vision*, Mark Evans cites Lawrence Gowing who argues that ‘the fundamentally modern pictorial syntax’ that was created by painters in the 1780s provided ‘the critical shift in artistic norms that led to the invention of photography’ [Evans 2007: p.187]. Furthermore, ‘theoretical aspects of optical and geometrical space’ became ‘widely discussed in the literature on the arts and sciences’ long before photography’s invention [Kemp 1990: p.221]. Holman Hunt also claimed that photography had been sent by providence to ‘show painters their shortcomings’. Holman Hunt also considered ‘it the task of painters to depart as merchants of nature’ and ‘bring home precious merchandise in faithful

pictures of scenes' that were interesting from the point of view of 'historical considerations or from the strangeness of the subject itself' [Hoozee 2007b: p.181].

With the increasing popularity of photography as a visual medium during the nineteenth century, visual artists began to depart from artistic conventions established during the Renaissance in order to differentiate their practice from photography's mechanically produced vision of reality. German topographical artists, for example, began to abandon 'the theory and practice of linear perspective' as it 'ceased to play a vitally creative role in the forefront of painting' [Kemp 1990: p.221]. This change took place because photography almost overnight occupied the space that had previously been taken up by realist painting. At the same time, the invention of commercial photography allowed artists, to use the camera as a device that could transcend its mechanical base and 'enter the realm of 'natural magic' [Kemp 1990: p.165]. The picturesque, 'traditionally a highly refined art, full of [...] tricks of the trade necessary to create depth, structure and drama, from untidy natural phenomena' consequently became the stock in trade of an emerging art photography [Tromans 2008: p.102].

Photography was a source of visual information throughout North's lifetime. It had been said that 'photography was born as the golden age of botanical illustration drew to a close' [Ewing 2002: p.9], despite later claims by Sacheverell Sitwell in *Great Flower Books 1700-1900*, that '[t]here is [...] no reason to think that the fine flower book is ended' because the medium of photography 'can never [...] equal the drawn and coloured portrayal by the human hand' [Sitwell 1990: p.25]. During the 1870s and 1880s, photographic flower studies were made that 'began to appear in salon exhibitions that were reviewed enthusiastically in the periodicals' of the time [Ewing 2002: p.15].

These pioneering photographs of flowers, or ‘natures gems’ as the Victorians loved to call them, were among the first subjects to be photographed that achieved recognition as something approaching art [Ewing 2002: p.7]. In formal terms, these photographs of flowers are not dissimilar in composition and style to ‘the early nineteenth-century flower paintings of Pierre Joseph Redouté’ (1817-1824). Indeed it has been acknowledged that Redouté’s work had a marked influence upon this type of photography [Ewing 2002: p.9]. During the late nineteenth century, ‘the artistic photographer’ and the ‘amateur’ alike began to photograph ‘small inanimate objects’ many of which constituted still lifes [See figure 121] [Ewing 2002: p.15]. Works by amateur flower photographers such as the Reverend D.T.K. Drummond’s photograph, Untitled, from 1860, and cited in figure 120, depicts a very clear image of a Posey of flowers [Ewing 2002: p.16]. Many of these works utilised compositional styles similar to those employed by North in some of her flower paintings, although no direct link between the two can be made.⁴⁸

Writing in 1877, Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) stated that he ‘had a low estimate of photography as art’ because he believed that it is ‘the artist who is truthful and it is photography which lies’, concluding that ‘in reality time does not stop, and if the artist succeeds in producing the impression of a movement which takes several moments for accomplishment, his work is certainly less conventional’ than ‘the scientific image, where time is suspended’ [Elsen 1980: p.11]. Despite this, Rodin used the camera ‘to provide a new insight into his works’ as earlier painters and sculptors had done through the use of mirrors lenses and camera obscuras in the studio and in the natural environment [Ayers 1985: p.68].

⁴⁸ In *A Vision of Eden*, Anthony Huxley comments that North used her brush as the modern botanical traveler uses a camera, concluding that in some of her groupings the more contrived scenes achieved effects ‘which a camera never could’ [Huxley 2002: p.12].

Photography as a visual practice is part of an extended lineage that evolved within art practice related to the use of optics that has its origins in antiquity. Devices similar to the camera obscura, involving a darkened room or box with a small hole to focus light, were certainly in use from the time of Aristotle and came closer to forming the basis for modern photography, with the addition of lenses from 1589. The use of the camera obscura and then the camera lucida altered the marks made by artists. Hockney refers to the use of optics in relation to Ingres' (1780-1867) portrait drawing of Madame Louis Godinot in 1829, which he argues was made with the aid of a lens since the lines of the drawing appear traced rather than to have been 'groped for' [Hockney 2006: p.23]. Hockney believes that Ingres drew 'the head-first' and, by 'making a few notations on the paper', fixed the 'position of her hair, her eyes, her nostrils and the edge of her mouth' [Hockney 2006: p.23]. In this way, argues Hockney, the artist was able to construct a point-to-point reference of key elements essential to proportion [Hockney 2006: p.23]. The image produced by a camera can also be easily traced using the same method, enabling the artist to 'fast forward' the 'normal measuring process that takes place in the head of a good draughtsman' [Hockney 2006: p.28]. Despite this, art historians have 'been reluctant to study the implications' of the visual evidence that supports the use of photographic material by makers because 'it is not quite proper for their favoured artists to resort to what has become regarded as a form of cheating' [Kemp 1990: p.196]. Hockney states, however, that artists are 'secretive about their methods – they are today, and there's no reason to suppose they were any different' in the past'. Hockney argues that artists want their methods or 'signature marks' to be secret not just because of cultural taboos on the use of optics, but because they do not want them 'replicated by others' for professional/commercial reasons [Hockney 2006: p.14].

The line between photography and art was further blurred by the fact that while some early photographers looked towards art as a source of inspiration, some painters became photographers, thereby bringing an distinctively artistic compositional bias to their photographic work. Early maritime photographs by Gustav Le Gray (1820-1884), for example, have been compared to Gustave Courbet's (1819-1877) paintings of seagoing ships [Cadoche no date given]. The work of the English photographer Roger Fenton (1819-1869), who exhibited his work at the Great Exhibition of 1851 [Howarth Booth 2007: p.247], was perceived to offer 'a new model of clarity [and] breadth' to landscape pictures [Howarth Booth 2007: p.248]. In Fenton's photograph *The Valley of the Shadow of Death*, of 1855 [See figure 122], the viewer is presented with a beautifully composed and tonally graduated photograph, which despite its subject matter (the killing ground of the Light Brigade at Crimea after the fact) shares many of the qualities of the picturesque [Lyles 2007: p.220]. Fenton's works are also visually similar to Hudson River School paintings as witnessed in his photograph *Double Bridge on the Machno* of 1857 [See figure 123], which depicts a river running through a landscape similar to many compositions placed within paintings of the Romantic Movement, as well as paintings by Frederic Edwin Church, who is known to have utilised photographic images to help 'hold onto various and direct impressions' [Novak 1997: p.70] related to his landscape paintings. According to Hockney, photography has been used by painters because it can do two things: 'it can bring into focus objects with minute detail, better it seems than the human eye' and it can show 'sharpness and blurring of light' that is useful to an artist in relation to mark-making, especially in relation to compositional 'distortions and discontinuities' in marks [Hockney 2006: p.185]. Such marks are, Hockney argues,

often ‘difficult to explain’ unless optics or photography ‘had been used in some way’ [Hockney 2006: p.131].

Landscape photography was readily available in the United States during the late nineteenth century. From the 1860s onwards, the US government had started to use photography for expedition purposes as part of the discovery of new land. In the 1870s, the photographer Timothy H. Sullivan (1840-1882) used a cart to carry not only laboratory equipment but also mules to carry the rest of the bulky kit needed to take and produce photographic images [Cadouche no date given]. The photographs produced by Sullivan are clear, pristine images of nature that could quite easily be used as a starting point for the linear and tonal balances required by a painting or drawing. Many photographers in the USA, including British born photographer Edweard Muybridge (1830-1904) and William Henry Jackson (1843-1942), produced images that were almost Luminist in quality. Andrew J. Russell’s industrial photographs set within the American landscape are reminiscent of both impressionist and Luminist works. Engravings were made through the use of photographs [Cadoche no date given]. Printing and lithography were also important factors in relation to the production and reproduction of early photographic images. Illustrations based on photographs that had been sent from far away or interesting locations nearby, and were often touched up to be presented in magazines. Indeed, the touching up process was so extreme in some cases that the resulting images appear to be a half-way-house, between photography and art illustration [Cadoche no date given].

According to Kemp writing in *The Science of Art*, ‘[t]here was no essential difference’ between ‘the box-type camera obscuras’ available to professional and amateur artists during the early nineteenth century and the cameras used by [...] Daguerre (1787-1851) and Fox-Talbot (1800-1877) in the invention of photography’

[Kemp 1990: p.190]. It is therefore almost certainly because of this technical continuity that nineteenth-century painters such as Manet (1832-1883) and Degas had no concerns about using ‘photography to produce paintings’. This use of photography extends beyond the still realist images of impressionism to the increasingly abstract non-realism of modernist painting. There is now, for example, evidence that Picasso used postcards carrying ethnographic photographs of African natives bought from the Trocadéro in Paris, (where ‘non-western artifacts were stored and displayed’) [Taylor 2004: p.28] as a visual reference for his painting *Demoiselles d’Avignon* of 1907. Which deliberately includes references to African styled masks placed upon two of the women depicted [See figure 124].

The photographs, which appear to have informed the making of *Demoiselles d’Avignon* compositionally as well as stylistically, were only found after Picasso’s death alongside countless sketchbooks showing drawn variations of compositional ideas and alterations to the theme of Picasso’s painting [Richardson 2007]. This discovery goes some way to dispelling the myth that Picasso arrived at *Demoiselles d’Avignon* simply through the creative imagination. If a high art painter like Picasso resorted secretly to these methods then it seems likely that amateur painters would have few qualms in doing so, especially when they need to make a lot of paintings very quickly and decisively, as North did for the timely completion of her gallery.

The use of optics and photographic imagery in relation to botanical illustration is referred to in Keith West’s *How to Draw Plants* in the chapter entitled ‘Basic Equipment’. West states that ‘[i]n some situations it is necessary to turn to the camera as an aid’ [West 1999: p.123]. In situations where it ‘would be criminal to pick’ plants to draw or when a ‘detailed study is [...] impractical’ or when ‘lack of time’ may be of concern, a photograph can be taken and a simple line drawing can be ‘carried out in

situ' [West 1999: p.123]. However, West stresses that 'photographs should be used only where there is no other sensible means of access to the necessary information', and that the painter should not use a photographic image of a plant 'taken by anyone else' [West 1999: p.123]. West also cites concerns over the use of colour prints or colour transparencies, as '[t]ransparencies record colour much more accurately but are too small to work from' [West 1999: p.140]. West gives further insight into the working practices of some botanical illustrators, citing how they overcome the use of small transparencies by way of 'a device consisting of a miniature screen, housed' in a cabinet similar to a camera obscura. Here, a 'slide is back-projected' so that a person can 'sit close to it and work directly from the enlarged image' [West 1999: p. 140]. West concludes that photographs are 'poor substitutes for living plants' while accepting that the availability of 'good quality prints backed up by notes, sketches and voucher specimens, may be sufficient for many purposes, and as an aid towards illustration', especially when further informed by 'experience and botanical knowledge' [West 1999: p.143]. West's comments are revealing in that they draw attention to a now open acceptance of the use of photography as part of flower drawing as well as perceived limits on that use.

Between 1875 and 1877 North visited Japan, where a passion for painted photographs and photographic engravings had begun as early as 1869 [Cadoche no date given]. From the mid nineteenth century onwards the Japanese had embraced the use of the 3-D Stereopticon that made use of pairings of photographic images sometimes employing garish colouration [Cadoche no date given]. The often, strong colouration of these early painted photographs echoes that present in North's paintings as well as some Pre-Raphaelite art. North bought photographs as a young woman on her travels to Milan where referring in her diary to a collection of

photographic representations of paintings by Leonardo da Vinci, which she found ‘most interesting’ [North 1893: p.37]. In later letters North divulged that she collected other photographic images in the form of portraits. [North 1878: Burnell letters A15/3, (MN/1/1)]. North, therefore, like other bourgeois Victorians not only had access to photographs, she also possessed photographs of artworks and may well have seen photographs that had been altered/assisted as the result of artistic intervention. The nineteenth century was the beginning of the scrapbook and picture postcard made ‘possible by montaging disparate photographic elements against each other’; and by the end of the century such practices were widespread [Taylor 2004: p.8].

The artistic technique of collage-montage is characteristic of much of the progressive art of the twentieth and twenty-first-centuries. As Brandon Taylor in *Collage*, indicates, the practice of visual quotation and copying from other visual sources by artists—that is to say, the making of ‘[c]omposite imagery’ was, not ‘unknown before the twentieth century’ [Taylor 2004: p.8]. During the seventeenth century, for example, Rubens freely added improvements to the drawings of others, regardless of modern attitudes to originality [Taylor 2004: p.8]. High art has persistently co-opted composite methods in order to bring together, popular (low) forms of visual culture and high art. Consider here, for example, Francisco Goya’s *The Third of May* (c.1810-1812). Goya took popular cultural and political prints that would be immediately recognisable to the everyday Spanish populace, using them as a visual reference for the events depicted in *The Third of May*, which show the execution of a group of Spanish citizens by French soldiers [Bulger 2010]. The image has an immediacy suggesting that Goya was a first hand witness to events. Goya was, however, almost certainly not present. Goya can be understood to have used already widely recognised images with political meaning to shortcut the need for laborious

description, while giving a sense of the reality of the events he represented. Goya's painting therefore involves a kind of visual sleight of hand used for the purposes of critical truthfulness.

In *Secret Knowledge*, Hockney states that the very idea of the use of visual aids and the making of composite images 'horrifies the layman' because it can be understood as attacking the very 'idea of innate artistic genius.' Hockney believes that modern day perceptions of artists can be traced back to impressionism where '[t]he popular conception of an artist' was as a heroic individual, like Van Gogh, 'struggling, alone to represent the world in a new and vivid way'. Impressionist artists were perceived as having worked in a way that did not rely upon the studio tradition where '[a]rtists had large workshops, with a hierarchy of jobs' [Hockney 2006: p.14]. The impressionists presented themselves as moving outside of the studio tradition to work outdoors as realists close to their chosen motifs. However, in actuality, the impressionists continued to use studios, often combining the results of their outdoor work with imagery taken from their imagination or other sources. Manet's *Déjeuner Sur L' herbe* of 1863, for example, is clearly composed of images from differing sources 'with its recumbent figures framing a separate background' [Taylor 2004: p.7]. The combining of separate elements to make larger composite images was explored by artists prior to the nineteenth century in Dutch still life and flower paintings [Hockney 2006: p.113] often in relation to the combining of scarce or fragile natural resources used in still-lives.

As previously discussed, Thornton, also produced composite images in *The Temple of Flora*. As a botanical illustrator, the composite use of images would have been an indispensable part of North's practice. North was not adverse to using others' imagery [North 1882-1938: MN/1/4: Kew. North Gallery MF], even though '[h]er

fame rested primarily on her paintings' being thought of as original images of 'exotic natural objects in faraway places' [Morgan 1996: p.100]. In a letter dated simply, 'Tuesday 82' North writes to William Thiselton Dyer (then director at Kew Gardens) while preparing her gallery and still painting images to be placed upon her gallery walls, that, 'I do not hope to get live specimens only some painted ones'. North wrote of studying an 'Isabella' but clearly hoped for help regarding a live specimen, stating that she had been 'in the flat for [...] ten days' in order to 'finish off the next set of frames' and that she wanted to work from home if possible [North 1882-1938: MN/1/4:Kew. North Gallery MF].

She also wrote of comparing specimens to images in the 'new Encyclopedia Brit'. Furthermore, North wrote of the painted doors of her gallery being placed under her sofa at the time [North 1882-1883: Hemsley Letters, Vol 2.c.]. In another letter to William Botting Hemsley, (who compiled the North gallery catalogue, on North's behalf) [The *Chronicle* 1882], North again raised the issue of accessible illustrations, asking Hemsley for an illustration of a 'Hoza/ Hoya/ Heoza' [North 1882-1883: Hemsley Letters, Vol 2.c.]. North also asked for help regarding a cupucin plant stating 'what I should like to know best is what the fresh fruit looks like, for I only coloured the ones in the painting from what you & Sir Joseph said it must be like—I have never myself seen anything but the "Capucin nut" off the tree'. A 'W. Estridge' showed North a drawing he had made of the Cupucin, leading North to exclaim that his drawings, 'ought to do' as 'his book is expected next week' [North 1882-1938: MN/1/4:Kew.North Gallery MF]. Sheffield states that North had tried to get a "mummified plant" to draw at one point [Sheffield 2001: p.86]. Allowing a person such as North, to access imagery at Kew could have been perceived by Hooker to be in the garden's best interest, if only to help complete the North gallery as soon

possible. On the 20 April (no year given) North wrote to Hooker about the pending adjustments to the hanging of her pictures within the North gallery. North was clearly still making works for the space, because she asks Hooker '[w]ould it hurt that *Deudrobium Superba* to spend a day in my studio? If it came in a tin box? I can make room for a couple of orchids in weeding out the smaller top pictures, I should enjoy painting them, but the greenhouse is too sloppy in the morning, & too crowded in the afternoon-if there was a quiet corner there I would come to them please say no if it is best for the plants' [North 1882-1938 MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters]. This documentary evidence brings North's supposed scientific objectivity very much into question. It makes clear that North was not and could not be so rigorous in insisting upon exact information and exact depiction, despite improvements in 'glasshouse construction and heating in the earlier part and middle of the nineteenth century'; improvements that 'made possible the successful cultivation of plants from the warm moist tropics' for 'the production of fine books' [Synge 1990: p.53]. North's schedule in completing the paintings for her gallery may have pushed her towards the borrowing and copying of images made by others. At the time, North requested loans of coloured paintings and/or prints from Kew, such as that of the 'orange *Datura*' cited in a letter on the second of March. North also enquired about images of a 'Dahlia Nuperials' and 'red *Ceriousby Specsiosissi cactus*'. In her request letter she admits that she was 'in a great hurry'. On the fourth of March, North sent a thank you letter to Kew for letting her have a number of flower drawings, adding that she also wanted a 'white *tigridia* too' and asking if 'it had been drawn anywhere'. In the same letter North writes of 'a potato flower' adding 'you need not trouble about that, I can get a copy out of Gerrads herbal' [North 1882-1883: Letters to Hemsley Vol 2.c.]. North's endeavours clearly relied upon her good relationship with Kew Garden and

their assistance with sample specimens, illustrations and perhaps even photographs [North 1882-1938: MN/1/4:Kew.North Gallery MF]. Sheffield argues that North did not use photographs, citing a letter to J.D. Duthie who had ‘offered to send her photographs and native drawings to ease her work’ to which North replied ‘that although such items were most excellent in their way [they] would be of little use to me, as I have my own way of doing things & only care to paint from nature’ [Sheffield 2001: p.97]. Clearly such high-mindedness was set aside during the completion of the North gallery and it may well have been the case that North wished to conceal her actual working methods in order to preserve her image as an objective painter of the truth in situ.

In a letter to Hemsley that refers to the naming of tree and plant specimens within her gallery, North refers to her paintings of India, writing, ‘I send you the old photograph & two Indian sketches in answer to the last part of your note, thinking it better to give you such scraps, than the promise of paintings while I may never have time to make’ [North 1882-1883: Hemsley Letters, Vol 2.c.]. It is therefore plausible to think that North might have used photography to help mediate her paintings.

In North’s painting 0355, *Morning Glory, Nata* [See figure 125], a living plant is represented that appears to be in situ. It is reminiscent of Dürer’s Large Turf, sprawling as it does from edge to edge of the canvas almost trying to escape the frame. However, the painting contains strange applications of tone and shade and the colouration is off key. What is more, the placed highlights are sharp, similar in style and application to a painting that has been made with reference to a photograph. In his book, *How to Draw Plants*, West states that ‘one should be aware of the likely effects of working in direct sunlight’ when taking photographs of plants, as ‘deep shadows contrast over-strongly with the lighted surrounds, so that if exposure is correct for the

lighter portions, the shadows will appear on the print as indecipherable black areas', and 'if shadowed parts are correctly exposed sun-splashed pieces will be burnt into white splodges' which do appear on North's painting of a *Morning Glory, Nata* [West 1999: pp.141-2]. Marion Arnold in *South African art Peeling back the Petals*, goes on to assert that when representing light, tone and shade in paint colour is usually employed to 'activate areas of foliage, to emphasize the significance of growth points and to convey surface undulations on leaves and petals' [Arnold 2007: p.169]. North's rendering does not conform to this protocol. Some areas are too stark in contrast to others. They do not appear natural, but partially bleached-out and thus awkward to the trained eye. In contrast to this line of argument, Sheffield considers, in an idealizing patch of purple prose, that the painting's stark colour contrast can be explained by the subject being bathed in 'early morning light' that picks out the dapples of 'this delicate bloom' [Sheffield 2001: p.116]. Hockney states that 'it is perfectly clear' when artists have used optics directly and others have not, since after the 1500s, almost all artists seem to have been 'influenced by the tonalities, shading and colours found in the optical projection' [Hockney 2006: p.17]. Those not using optics, he points out, are obvious to the eye insofar as their work is more laboured and more even in terms of its tonalities [Hockney 2006: p.17]. It might be added that North seems to have emphasised what Arnold refers to as the use of 'the fall of light and shadow created from a specific light source' and not from a natural light source signifying a concern with 'form existing under general light conditions in non-specific time' [Arnold 2007: p.169]. Even under tropical conditions, the play of light on form is rarely, if ever, as stark as North portrays it. In short, North would appear to have drawn upon the instantaneous qualities of the photograph rather than the outcomes of natural observation over time.

Further to all of this, the framing of some of North's paintings seem photographic in their delineation of the subject. In Kew Library Archives, many of North's paintings held in carefully stored boxes look cropped like photographs. Body sections of elephants depicted in some of the paintings are cut off abruptly [See figure 126], suggesting clumsy composition on North's part or perhaps, more likely, the use of photographs as a visual reference. Often, the paintings display poor colouration that could be explained by the use of photography. Experiments with colour photography began as early as 1877 [Cadoche no date given]. Throughout the nineteenth century however most photographs were monochrome. Despite this limitation, monochrome photographs can still be used effectively to plan compositional layouts and provide information about the tonal modeling of forms. Such photographs also 'capture, a complete story' or 'even an incident' that can be easily translated into paint [Bester 1999: p.143]. Sheffield states that the Victorians discussed 'the truthfulness of images captured on canvas or plates'. Cameras, it was argued, produced images without artists, thus capturing a truth 'unknown in art'. A photograph, it was believed could not 'lie, conceal or be misunderstood'. This truth would have been invaluable to North and her work, since high art forms required an educated, interpretative eye and hand and as Sheffield states these images 'required no skill to create' [Sheffield 2001: p.195]. Contrary to Sheffield's view, there are strong circumstantial grounds for believing that North might not only have used photographs in the making of her work but that she would also have felt the need to conceal that use.

Ironically, North was reluctant for her own paintings to be copied by others. In her letters, North discusses formal questions and requests, often made to Joseph Hooker, about whether the public were permitted to take copies of her paintings, and

if so in what manner should a application be made [North 1882-1938: M/N/2/3 North Gallery Letters (134)]. One particular applicant was very ‘anxious to obtain an order for two friends’ to copy North’s works for the ‘purpose of studying Botany’ and hoped that their application was not out of order. Hooker’s response was clear: North did ‘not wish her pictures copied at present’ [North 1882-1938: M/N/2/3 North Gallery Letters]. North did agree to later requests by friends as testified through a D. Hardy’s application on the nineteenth of April 1886, which states that a Mrs. Gregory and a friend of North’s wished one particular painting to be copied by Hardy. North herself gave Hardy written permission, attesting to the personal nature of the transaction. In May of 1887, another request came forward to copy North’s work. On this occasion there are no notes to indicate how this request was dealt with. On May 13, 1887 North wrote to Dyer from her home in Alderley, about a request for one of her paintings of Darjeeling to be used as a frontispiece for a book. North was ‘highly honoured & delighted’ but expressed that she was not entirely happy with the aesthetic outcomes of her work stating ‘I do not wish my bad work to be copied [...] by even worse painters than myself’ [North 1882-1938: M/N/2/3 North Gallery Letters (140)].

Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879), photographed North during a visit to her Sri Lankan (Ceylon) home in 1876, and 1877. Cameron appears to have started taking photographs in 1839, and there are a ‘half-dozen or so albums of prints’ that Cameron, ‘assembled and presented to various members of her family and friends’ before 1864—a date often assumed to be the starting point of Cameron’s photographic exploits [Ford 2003: p.78]. North, stated that, ‘I had long known her glorious photographs, but had never met her’ and that ‘[s]he had sent me many warm invitations to come when she heard I was in Ceylon’ [Sri Lanka] [Ford 2003: p.78].

North described the Cameron house as standing upon a small hill that was then ‘jutting out into the great river which ran into the sea a quarter of a mile below the house’. According to North, it was surrounded by ‘coca–nuts, casuarinas, mangoes, and breadfruit trees; tame rabbits, squirrels, and mynah – birds ran in and out without the slightest fear, while a beautiful stag guarded the entrance; monkeys [...] and all sorts of fowls were outside’ [Ford 2003: p .79]. North also described the walls of the room as being covered with ‘magnificent photographs’ while others were ‘tumbling about the tables, chairs, and floors’ with ‘quantities of damp books, all untidy and picturesque’ [North 1892a: p.315]. North’s sister Catherine wrote of her bringing photographic material back to the UK after spending time at Cameron’s home, [North 1893: p.315] alongside sketches and pictures that may not all have been made by her. North made a number of paintings at the Cameron house and at the time of her visit, Cameron was taking photographic portraits of Tamil workers, including *A Group of Peasants* and *A Group of Kalkutra Peasants* of between 1875-9. Cameron had previously taken photographs’ of local workers, in England, but according to Colin Ford in *Julia Margaret Cameron: Nineteenth Century Photographer of Genius*, the ‘sunlight in Ceylon [Sri Lanka] was consistently brighter than in even the southernmost part of England and this inevitably meant that she was able to use shorter exposure time. Therefore, her sitters did not have to keep still for such a ‘punishingly long a time’ and as a result ‘the pictures are relatively sharply focused’ [Ford 2003: p.78].

In the North gallery there is a pair of paintings 240, *Some of Mrs. Cameron’s Models, with Cocoanut and Teak Trees, Kalutara, Ceylon* (Sri Lanka) [See figure 127], which represent a view of a river with tall trees near its banks looking out from the verandah of a house. In painting 248, *Bombay Pedlars on Mrs. Cameron’s*

Verandah, Kalutara, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) [See figure 128], Indian peddlers sit upon a lawn in front of the Cameron house making the appearance of selling silk scarves. There is a tiled verandah roof with Greek styled pillars framing the garden, which appears to be set on a hill looking down to a river. The view of the garden and river is the same in both paintings 240 and 248, but in painting 240 the house roof and pillars have been replaced with trees, and there are no peddlers present. This suggests that North may have used a photograph as a starting point for both paintings creating an image upon which could be elaborated upon imaginatively. In painting 240, low-grade foliage is present, along with fauna in the form of two rabbits and a deer. A local boy is also present walking in front of the vista carrying an urn in a Greek manner. The stance of the boy depicted in the pair of paintings is similar to that of one captured standing next to North in a photograph of her taken by Cameron [See figure 129].

In a series of photographs by Kew Garden photographer, Andy McRob, taken while on assignment to catalogue and confirm some of the sites and vistas present in North's paintings, including in Jamaica, Tasmania and Sri Lanka, McRob found that the vistas were in fact similar, if not the same, as the paintings back in the North gallery at Kew. However, aspects of the visual information presented in North's Sri Lankan paintings did not conform exactly to photographs taken at the old Cameron residence [McRob 2007]. McRob took photographs all around the Cameron residence and tried to take shots of the river view from the back of the house. However, the view was obscured by the progressive growth of rubber trees over the years. Furthermore, the pillars on the verandah, at the back of the house did not marry with the ones depicted by North in painting 248 [McRob 2007]. McRob could only find pillars fitting into a round-square-round format, while all of the pillars in North's

painting were round. McRob checked the whole of the house but only found the same round-square-round pillar format. In North's painting a tiled roof accompanies the pillars of the house, but at the house itself it is a stone archway that accompanies the pillars. The only area that did have a tiled roof was a series of buildings at the back of the house, which appeared to have been either servants' quarters or utility rooms; and the pillars photographed there were square. In North's painting, pillars are depicted on the right side of the painting. The only three pillars that North could have depicted in this way are on the front porch of the house, and these pillars are situated on the left side of the porch [McRob 2007]. Because the house is positioned upon a hill, it did comply with the view in the Verandah painting. It was also evident that the view from the back of the Cameron house corresponded with the river view directly behind the vegetation both in paintings 240 and 248 [McRob 2007]. All of this field observation indicates that North's paintings at the Cameron house were not completed directly in front of the motif, but were assembled from differing viewpoints.

The presence of various viewpoints in North's three paintings indicates that she was quite capable of combining differing bits of visual information. Painting 240 is almost identical to painting 248 and the flora depicted along with the view of the river is the same, thereby suggesting that it was of the same view. However, North appears to have replaced the pillars in 248 with large trees in 240, using their round trunks as visual surrogates for the pillars that appear in 248. The innumerable photographic prints at the Cameron house, and four portraits taken of North by Cameron in January 1877 [Ford 2003: p.79] could have been used to inform North's paintings. In the portrait of North with a servant boy there are round pillars similar to those in painting 248 by North. While they do not comply with the actual pillars McRob witnessed at the back of the house [McRob 2007] they are in the same configuration as those in the

painting. Ford states that Cameron made this study of North, at work at her easel on the terrace of the Cameron's house [Ford 2003: p.79]. He also states that Cameron, upon North's visit, was inspired to produce her 'nearest photograph to a landscape' in 'a group of estate workers (or possibly itinerant peddlers) close to the verandah of her home' [Ford 2003: p.79]. North made a reference to Cameron's photographic studies of local people [Ford 2003: p.78] an example of this body of work can be witnessed in her portrait of A Group of Kalutara Peasants of 1878 [See figure 130]. According to North, Cameron took a fancy to one local man through photographic studies she had taken of him and retained the man as a gardener despite there being no garden [North 1892a: p.315]. As a formation of three, the pillars in the Cameron photograph form a perspectival view, with North at an easel poised, brush in hand, and ready to paint. A local boy is in his own clothing and holds an urn. There is also a small window to the back of North, with shutters, and the structure of the building is not grand. It appears to be a domestic building with a window to a small guest room perhaps. The vista in the picture is unreadable, but some vegetation is present and there appears to be a large tree. Other than this all of the elements in the Cameron photographs correspond to the three Sri Lankan paintings by North. The tiled roof depicted by North in her paintings could then be that to the servant quarters, or utility rooms, at the back of the main house.

It is, therefore plausible that North combined painting of actual views with images appropriated from photographs, utilising appropriated imagery to make a composite image of the Cameron verandah. North's use of a compositional arrangement in her paintings similar to that of Cameron's photographic portrait of her, complies with this theory, particularly since neither assuredly represents a view at the rear of the Cameron house. The view of the river that appears in the North paintings

would appear to have been set far to the right of the view in the photograph. The peddlers are therefore placed into an imaginary space in the painting as they hover between the ground space of the lawn, and the floor of the building. The application of this kind of perspective being used indicates ‘not the situation of the objects, but the situation of the spectator’ [Hockney 2006: p.196].⁴⁹

In North America, wagons and mules were used to transport photographic equipment, as part of the production of Landscape photography. Moreover, Photographs have been collected historically, by botanists, as archival photographs of flora in the Economic Botany Collection at Kew dating back to 1830s. This huge collection contains thousands of images made specifically for Government commissions and the production of postcards for the British Empire [Kay 2007]. Within the collection there are countless photographs taken by botanists in support of their research. One of these photographs, taken by a James Bickwill between 1875

⁴⁹ During the interview with McRob conducted for this study, McRob questioned the veracity of the view represented by North at the Cameron house. During the interview a visual comparison of McRob’s photographs and North’s paintings was made. It was concluded that because the house was positioned upon a hill it was possible that the view from the back of the house was the one represented in North’s paintings. The inclusion of peddlers in North’s painting, does suggest that North took a view from the back of the house, as peddlers were never usually allowed to sit on the front lawns of colonial homes. McRob had wanted to go through the forest of rubber trees to investigate further, and to try and get a clear photograph of the possible view of the river at ground level, but was put off by the presence of cobra snakes in the undergrowth. McRob went to the extreme of climbing onto the rooftops of the buildings in order to get a better view of the river from the house. In this way he hoped to put North’s paintings into context, but felt it was still impossible to do so because of the intervening vegetation. McRob questioned North’s Sri Lankan paintings of the Cameron house chiefly because other vistas painted by North had been visually correct in their depictions. North’s reputation was, after all, based on supposedly truthful rendering. McRob concluded that North appeared to have combined three separate viewpoints to make her Cameron house paintings. While leaving on the train, McRob saw, in passing, a stationmaster’s house that he believes could have given a possible view of the river [McRob 2007]. The final possibility was the inclusion of the tiled roof from the servants’ building, at the back of the house. McRob was asked if he thought photography might have been used to make a montage. North was after all a guest of Julia Margaret Cameron at the time, one of the world’s leading photographers of the day. McRob thought not, as wet plates were used by photographers at that time, which were time consuming. He gave the example of people having to stand still for long periods of time, while being photographed. McRob was asked if he thought that North, may have used photographs on other occasions to produce her work and if they could have come in the form of images taken by others, or as photographic picture post cards. McRob did not think this was possible either, as it would have taken a wagon to carry the camera equipment, and believes this was not plausible for the times in which North was painting, as sketching was more effective. McRob was also asked if there were, to his knowledge, any photographs in Kew archives taken at the time North was traveling and painting, he believed there were none [McRob 2007].

and 1887, depicts an Assam tea plant, showing the form of the plant in such sharp detail that it could quite easily have been used to inform sketches, in relation to line and texture. In Kew's Herbarium, photographs of plants are attached to letters printed on very thin paper dating from as early as 1840. These images are plant portraits. They are kept alongside dry specimens accompanied by details of the location where the plant was found. There are also photographs related to specialist horticulture that were commissioned for Kew by both William, and Joseph Hooker [Kay 2007]. A photograph taken by Joseph Hooker is kept within the C wing of the Economic Botany photographic collection at Kew [Kay 2007]. The photograph, which depicts a barrel cactus, *ferocactus cylindraceus* assp *lecontei* [See figure 131], was taken in 1861 while Hooker was on a field trip to South Utah in the USA. The photograph shows cacti in a desert landscape with two horses. Two men are present in the background of the image alongside a carriage/wagon probably used to carrying the camera equipment as well as Hooker's field tools. Painting 0185, of *Vegetation of the Desert of Arizona*, by North, depicts a desert in America and cacti that are similar in appearance to the Hooker photograph. Hooker's albumen print of Utah cacti, a well composed, clear depiction of a landscape and its flora made available at Kew Museum for public use [Kay 2007], could have been accessed for the making of specialist drawings.⁵⁰

Another photograph, taken at the same time as Hooker's by a James Chapman (1831-1872), shows an almost identical composition to Hooker's, and resembles a watercolour field sketch in Kew's collection by the artist Thomas Baines, which was

⁵⁰ McRob is correct in his assumption that early photographers would have had to haul photographic equipment around in a wagon in order to take a field photograph. McRob's assertion that North did not participate in the actual photographing of landscapes could be upheld on the basis that there was an already fiercely competitive colonial photographic market. North would merely have had to acquire photographs from others. North did have photographic material to send to Hemsley. This raises the question of whether North employed a photographer or did, indeed, take some images herself.

painted on December 29, 1861. Baines, and Chapman worked together in South Africa, and both produced published works related to their travels, Baines in South West Africa in 1864, and Chapman in the African Interior in 1868, which included a joint exploration of the Zambezi [Kay 2007].

Numerous ‘visual images on their journey to the Victoria Falls came in the manner of sketches by Baines and photographs by Chapman, who personally managed to produce about 200 glass plate photographs, making him one of the earliest European explorer – photographers in the interior of southern Africa, while Baines produced a number of sketches and paintings as a result of the expedition’ [Bester 1999: p.137]. Chapman’s attempts at making photographic images of the Victoria Falls failed. But Baines was ‘able to make ‘magnificent’ sketches’ and ‘represented the final and ultimate failure of Chapman’s photographic work on the expedition’ [Bester 1999: p.141]. Nevertheless, Photographs were being taken in an assortment of awkward locations during the Victorian period alongside the making of paintings.

North’s works of a composite nature should perhaps be treated as painting rather than as scientific-botanical illustration, since they depart markedly from any wholly objective engagement with nature. North’s paintings are like photographs insofar as they place the viewer in a certain relationship with the world that enables the viewer to accept what they depict as real. But this in the end is a conceit. At the same time, they are paintings whose mixing of means would only be openly acknowledged as art during the twentieth century. Recent restoration of North’s paintings reveals that the actual painting surfaces contain fragments of foliage from her travels [Farley 2010]. However, this is not proof that North painted her pictures entirely in situ or in front of the motif at all, since there is always the possibility of

cross contamination as North's paintings materials would most likely have been contained in a traveling companion set or in her portmanteau. The evidence does not rule out the possibility that North's paintings may have been started in one location and finished in another. Or that they were initiated in the field and then embellished, perhaps with appropriated images, from other sources.

Chapter Seven

North's Relationship to Darwinian Science and Environmental Change

The orders of natural history and natural philosophy—that would later be ‘defined as the realm of physics’—had initially been ‘[d]riven by [a] desire to unite man and nature under God’ [Roscoe Hartigan 2007: p.66]. Science’s increasingly atheistic tendencies, particularly in the wake of Darwin, overwrote that desire. North’s own connections to science did not come about simply because of a wish to carry out empirical investigation, however. They also grew out of accessibility to science via middle-class liberal thinking and its particular ‘applications of common sense’ [O’Gorman 2000: p.149]. As a consequence, North was able to look beyond the conventions of quasi-science.

The development of science and manufacture, that enabled the Industrial Revolution, created concerns within liberal bourgeois society. According to Hoozee in his chapter ‘Observation of Landscape’, in *British Vision*, during the early nineteenth-century artists such as John Constable (1776-1837), and David Lucas (1802-81) harboured personal concerns with regard to the impact of industrialisation on the rural landscape. With both men displaying an ‘inner distress and turmoil’ about the new modern life [Hoozee 2007b: p.184]. The Napoleonic wars had caused a recession and Lucas noted that Suffolk rural workers had become restless because of this and the newly introduced ‘mechanization on the farms’. Lucas also ‘feared the ways from liberal measures like the 1832 reform bill, the first step towards creating democratic voting procedures’ and he brooded over ‘the decline of the church’

[Hoozee 2007b: p.184]. These changes of ‘social significance’ were also attached to nature across the globe within the context of colonialist expansion, not only by the British, but the Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Dutch. By the ‘late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, environmental anxieties and policies’ grew, and were articulated by the application of philosophical as well as ‘practical concepts’ [Groves 2002: pp.49-50].

The ‘first [...] appearance of mills, mines and furnaces’ were often in ‘mountainous areas of the British Isles’ such as Cromford, near Matlock in Derbyshire. These changes to the countryside were easily associated with current late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century preoccupations with the sublime [Gage 2007: p.38]. Moreover, they were associated, not least through the work of the painter Joseph Wright of Derby (1734-1797), with aspects of classical mythology. Because of this, many tourists deliberately underwent discomfort, for a visit to a furnace or a mine that was being passed off as part of a recollection of ‘ancient or modern mythology’ [Gage 2007: p.38]. Chambers dissertation on oriental gardening of 1772, imagined that the Chinese concealed ‘cavities, on the summits of the highest mountains’ containing ‘foundries, lime-kilns, and glass-works’, and that these billowed thick smoke, giving one the impression that the mountains echoed the sublimity of volcanoes since they were also accompanied by a large flames [Gage 2007: p.38]. The painter Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg, (1740-1812) painted *Iron Works, Coalbrookdale* in 1805 [See figure 132], which makes use of ‘theatrical effect’ as well as classical style and proportion to depict a ‘spectacular industrial site’ with its new factories and glowing fires. John Sell Cotman (1782-1842), the watercolourist, also painted Coalbrookdale, [Barringer 2007: pp.77-78] which depicts the smudgy atmosphere created by the chimneys which visitors were attracted

to because of the very contrast between ‘the natural beauty of the landscape and the sublime horror of industry’ [Barringer 2007: pp.78] [See figure 133]. Turner demonstrated a profound fascination for scientific and industrial innovation showing unnaturally coloured skies due to the impact that industrial pollution had on the weather. [Gage. 2007: p.39].

During the later nineteenth century, North also had concerns with regard to environmental change. These concerns stemmed from her personal experience and knowledge of the British landscape’s ‘unprecedented wave of Industrial development’ as a result of the invention of steam power, which North had observed on travels with her family as a young woman. As a result of her travels, North would have been aware of the marked differences between ‘towns and cities of the Midlands and the North’ [Gage 2007: p.37]. North wrote of the industrial changes within the North of England, comparing it unfavourably to unpolluted Norfolk. Gawthorpe, Lancashire, set in the North west of England, belonged to her step-sister Janet’s family, and North recalled the nearby river Calder being ‘spoilt by the numbers of factories’ that threw ‘their surplus dyes’ into it changing the colour of its water to ‘orange to scarlet or purple’ [North 1892a: p.8].⁵¹

By the nineteenth century trees had become a vital part of British mercantile expansion. ‘English Oak was essential to shipbuilding and therefore important to the defence of Britain’s growing Empire and its commerce [Gage 2007: p.45]. During the French wars, and up until 1815 there was a fostering and appreciation of British woodlands, which began, largely, because of a then, ‘urgent need for timber’ [Gage

⁵¹ According to Groves writing in *Green Imperialism*, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, ‘aesthetics and moral critiques’ were made in relation to industrialization in England. Moreover ‘[c] hanges in the social significance attached to nature’ took place within the context of colonial expansion and owed its late eighteenth and early nineteenth century environmental anxieties and policies’ to the foundation of Philosophical as well as practical concepts which were fully developed by the mid eighteenth century [Groves 1995: pp.49-50].

2007: p.45]. Representations of trees became very characteristic of British art and during the early eighteenth century Constable excelled, in his *Study of the Trunk of an Elm Tree* (c.1820-23) [See figure 134]. Depictions of single trees become a 'repertory of many artists' and individual trees were perceived to have had a relationship with both Pagan and Christian symbolism [Gage 2007: p.45]. Moreover, the appreciation of trees as a picturesque subject was part of the sublime landscape of many artists outside of Europe and the UK. In the US for example, the Hudson River School painter Asher B. Durand used techniques characteristic of European landscape painting to represent the internal forests of the American terrain [O'Toole 2005: p.73].

North's own painting of trees was very much in keeping with an established picturesque approach to the depiction of landscape. Trees were very important to North and her work, and she frequently mentioned their destruction and use as an industrial resource throughout her diaries. In Jamaica, during 1871-2, North cites the harvesting of bamboo plants describing how they were 'crushed and made into a coarse kind of paper'. North lamented this process because she believed no one cared about the destruction of these plants [Ponsonby 2002: p. 22].

The site at Kew, which Hooker originally identified for the building of the North gallery is situated behind the lodge house and would have involved the cutting down of some trees. North objected, stating 'you would [...] cut down some noble trees who took some 80 years to grow- to make way for a building which will only take one year to grow! Is that fair on the trees?' [North 1879-1876: MN/1/4: Kew. North Gallery MF]. North had already noted the colonial destruction of trees, on her early travels to the US stating that '[i]t broke one's heart to think of man, the civiliser, wasting treasures in a few years to which savages and animals had done no harm for

centuries' [Huxley 2002: p.13]. North described the felling of the Wellingtonia tree or the vernacular big tree of California, which she painted on her travels there [See figure 135]. These trees often grew to 325ft high and could 'ascertained to be about 1,300 years old' [North 1879-1876: MN/1/4: Kew. North Gallery MF]. Colonialist exploitation destroyed forests both for their wood and to clear the way for plantation. In Tenerife North referred to this destruction stating that 'palms and other trees had been cleared [...] to make room for the ugly terraces of cacti, grown for the cochineal insect to feed on' and that 'the rotting plants left unburned by lazy cultivators' caused fever amongst the locals [Sheffield 2001: p.132].

North's fascination with trees is reflected by the various samples of wood used to make up the dado in the North gallery, which, she stipulated, should be documented correctly. North insisted on the correct use of all the names of the woods present and that there should be no names 'used by those who know no spelling' [North 1882-1883: Hemsley Letters, Vol 2.c.]. North also commented that 'more educated white invaders' had not even gone to the 'trouble of [...] giving them names at all' and 'show in that at least an inferiority to the aborigines' [North 1882-1883 Hemsley: Letters, Vol 2.c.]. Even today, the woods present in the Borneo section of the dado still have no names, because they were not readily available to the conservation team at the time of the North gallery's most recent restoration. These names will now only be catalogued but not placed upon the dado in keeping with present conservational standards [Farley 2011].

As previously stated North's approach toward painting is comparable in some ways to that of the Pre-Raphaelite painter Ford Maddox Brown, and in particular Brown's *An English Autumn Afternoon* of 1852-55 [See figure 136], which depicts a view from the artist's home in Hampstead, London. Brown's painting represents

different, clearly identifiable types of trees and their foliage in manner that is not dissimilar in its attention to detail to North's own paintings of trees (or for that matter topographical works by Baines). Ruskin attacked this particular Maddox Brown painting, describing it as an 'ugly subject' [Woods 2000: p.83]; a comment commensurate with Ruskin's dismissal of the overabundant detail of scientific illustration. Maddox Brown's green and lush London landscape is crammed with detailed information with no smudgy inexactness present. This detail suggests that Brown may have adjusted his painting style in response to the then newly fashionable medium of photography, which at that time, with the exception of colour, captured place, line, and tonality, with a precision usually absent from painting. Maddox Brown's painting is in a oval format accommodating a panoramic view that could easily have been made with the assistance of a camera obscura or other optical device; especially since the distant views represented by the painting bring individual nuances of tree foliage into unexpectedly sharp focus.

A similar depth of field effect can be found in relation to some of North's paintings. In her paintings 0390, *Vegetation on the St. John's River, Kaffraria* (a picture she painted on her return home to the UK) [See figure 137], 0453, *Yellow-Wood Trees and Creepers in the Perie Bush* [See figure 138], and 0470, *Screw-Pines, Palms, Tree-Ferns, and Cinnamon Trees on the hills of Mahé* [See figure 139], for example, North did not pull forward any one particular plant specimen, but instead decided to give each plant equal consideration. They are therefore placed into a compositional grouping and individually painted in such detail that botanists can 'identify each individual tree' [Ponsonby 2005b]. North's utilisation of this particular technique therefore enabled her to adapt her scientifically unorthodox style for botanical readings.

The ostensibly amateurish quality of North's tree paintings could easily be misread as un-assured practice. North was trying to represent trees in detail as scientifically readable subject matter without the discrimination between forms usually employed by artistic landscape painters. Although by no means as skillful as Maddox Brown, this approach nevertheless correlates with Brown's own use of small brushstrokes in rendering similar subject matter. In contrast to Maddox Brown's Hampstead painting, however, North's representations of trees do not have a central focus that allows the viewer to become 'part of the scene' rather than a detached spectator [Merleau Ponty 2006: pp.348-349]. Moreover, North's reworking of Pre-Raphaelite style can be understood to adhere to the conventions of science insofar as she applied a system of objective size and shape that takes for granted what has to be explained in relation not only to 'determinate sizes and shape' but also texture through the use of mark making [Merleau Ponty 2006: pp.348-349]. North's approach towards representation was a conventional choice rather than just a conveying of 'mental images' that enabled her to play with the space she represented in order to disallow the trees to 'progressively diminish in size' [Merleau Ponty 2006: pp.348-349] as an artist might. North thereby deliberately disobeys the laws of art practice in relation to compositional shading and distance in order to display scientific exactness, thereby making her images appear rather strange from a conventional artistic point of view.

North's approach to painting can be understood to extend Maddox Brown's own application of no 'sentiment, grandeur or decorative appeal' [Trenherz 2007: p.244]. Conversely, realist painters such as Ruskin and some of the Pre-Raphaelites incorporated some aspects of scientific drawing into their own practices, influenced by the science of the day. Indeed, these applications were extended in the UK through

the work of painters outside the immediate Pre-Raphaelite circle such as Christopher Dresser, (1834-1904) who introduced a stylized botanical drawing that was to become the basis of 'Dresser's own industrial practices as a designer and was advocated in his teaching for the government's schools of design' and can be witnessed in his work, *Demonstration Drawing* of 1855 [See figure 140]. Whereby, Dresser analysed 'the structure of the parts of the plant and flower and their functions' as a designer rather than as a replicator of Ehret's schema [Cruise 2011: p.182]. Even Ruskin, alongside John Brett (1831-1902) and Albert Moore (1841-1893), indulged in the correct application of flora in their paintings, with Ruskin advocating a form of botanical drawing that was not topological in its application, and yet adhered closely to natural appearances [Cruise 2011: pp.75-76].

North enjoyed a close friendship with the celebrated naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-1882). Towards the end of his life, Darwin asked his daughter, Mrs. Lichfield to invite North to come and meet with him because he wanted to see her but could not climb the stairs in her London home [Huxley 2002: p, 151]. North wrote of visiting Darwin's home, Bromley Common, describing it as sitting within a pretty village and as a 'most unpretentious old house', where Darwin 'used to walk up and down, wrapped in the great boatsman's cloak' which features in his portrait by 'John Collier (1850-1934). North stated that he 'seldom went further for exercise, and hardly ever went away from home: all his heart was there and in his work' [North 1892b: pp.214-215]. North also stated that '[n]o man had a more perfect home, wife, and children, they loved his work as he did', and for 'all his great spirit he was very much a spoilt child and proud of his age' [North 1892b: p.215]; North states that, because of this, Darwin 'seemed no older than his children' because he was 'so full of fun and freshness'. During North's visit Darwin 'sat on the grass under a shady tree, and

talked deliciously on every subject [...] for hours' including the paintings North had made during her travels in Australia [North 1892b: p.215].

Darwin had advised North to visit Australia, saying that she 'ought not to attempt any representation of the vegetation of the world' until she had visited the continent, whose own vegetation was, 'unlike that of any other country' [Huxley 2002: p.151]. According to North, Darwin's reaction to her paintings showed 'in a few words how much more he knew about the subjects than anyone else, myself included, though I had seen them and he had not' [North 1892: p.215]. Despite this potentially awkward display of authority, North added that Darwin still 'had the art of making others shine'. Indeed, North described him as being 'most unselfish and modest, and always trying to give others rather than himself the credit of his own great thoughts and works' [Huxley 2002: p.151]. On leaving the Darwin home, Darwin insisted on packing North's 'sketches and putting them into the carriage with his own hands' even though he was seventy-four years old [North 1892b: p.215].

North's last meeting with Darwin was less than eight months before he died. According to North, Darwin was 'working till the last among his family, living always the same peaceful life in that quiet house, away from all the petty jealousies and disputes of lesser scientific men' [North 1892b: p.215]. North said of Darwin that he 'was the one person she would have liked to open her gallery' [Moon 2002: p.238]. As if in memory of this wish, North's sister, Catherine, editor of her three volumes of diaries, included a personal letter Darwin had sent to North in the diaries. The letter, dated August 2, 1881, pertains to Darwin's appreciation of North's work. In it Darwin makes reference to the plant '*Raoulia eximia*, a native of the middle Island of New Zealand, and allied to the *Gnaphaliums*'. Darwin concludes that it might be of the 'genus *Porites*' and writes touchingly, 'I am glad that I have seen your Australian

pictures, and it was extremely kind of you to bring them here' stating further that 'I am often able to call up with considerable vividness scenes in various countries which I have seen', but that they 'must be a mere barren waste compared with your mind'. Darwin ended the letter with 'I remain dear Miss. North yours, truly obliged' [North 1892b: p.216].

In June 1858, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution was almost usurped by Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913), who had by then independently produced an outline of his own ideas on evolution and natural selection; an outline which according to Ray Desmond, read like an abstract of Darwin's own work'. The geologist Charles Lyell consequently urged Darwin 'to be the first in print' and as a result Darwin began to organise 'a plethora of notes into chapters [while] pondering the best method of publication'. As Desmond describes, Darwin was characteristically 'anxious not to be seen to be dishonorable to Wallace, while at the same time desiring credit for so many years [of] labour' [Desmond 1998: p.207]. On July 1, 1858 both Darwin and Wallace presented separate papers at the Linnaean society in London. However when both were subsequently published in the society's journal that August they 'made little immediate impact on the scientific world' [Desmond 1998: p.208]. According to Desmond, the President of the Linnaean Society 'had no idea he was chairing an historic occasion' and, consequently, his review of the Society's activities for the year May 1858 to May 1859 declared blandly that it had not been 'marked by any of those striking discoveries which at once revolutionise, so to speak, the department of science on which they bear' [Desmond 1998: p.208]. Darwin had intended to present a longer abstract of his research in the Journal of the Linnaean Society, but he was unable to condense the work. The finished book, which Darwin published on November 24, 1859, *On the origin of Species and Varieties by means of*

Natural Selection, is now regarded as one of the most influential in the history of science.

Charles Darwin's theories were based squarely upon the revolutionary insight that within nature there are random biological mutations, which continually lead to the emergence of new varieties. Darwin refers directly to this phenomenon in 'Hybridism,' chapter eight of *Origin of Species*, where he refers to the '[d]istinction between sterility of the first crosses and of hybrids', stating unequivocally that 'sterility various in degree', was 'not universal,' [Darwin 1999: p.202]. Here, Darwin also refers to the laws governing 'sterility of hybrids' asserting that sterility was 'not a special endowment but incidental on other differences' and moreover, that 'hybrids and mongrels compared independently of their fertility' [Darwin 1999: p.202]. In doing so, Darwin thereby, challenged 'the view generally entertained by naturalists' of the day [...] that species, when intercrossed, have been specially endowed with the quality of sterility, in order to prevent the confusion of all organic forms' [Darwin 1999: pp.202-203]. Indeed, Darwin questioned this conventional understanding of the natural order still further by stating 'the importance of the fact that hybrids are generally sterile, has I think, been much underrated by some late writers' and that 'on the theory of natural selection the case is especially important, inasmuch as the sterility of hybrids could not possibly be any advantage to them, and therefore could not have been acquired by continued preservation of successive profitable degrees of sterility'[Darwin 1999: p.202]. Darwin then concludes, 'I hope, however to be able to show that sterility is not specially acquired or endowed quality, but is incidental on other, acquired differences' [Darwin 1999: p.203]. In doing this Darwin therefore offers a direct and incendiary challenge to conventional scientific wisdom, proceeding as Carl Zimmer puts it, in *Evolution the Triumph of an Idea from Darwin to DNA*, on

the basis of ‘the single most important idea in the history of biology,’ and one that would permanently alter humanity’s perception of its place in the natural order’, that changes in nature take place ‘gradually but perpetually over vast gulfs of time’, and are ‘driven [...] thanks to the laws of heredity, without any need of direct divine intervention’ [Zimmer 2003: p.4].

This questioning of the notion of a divinely inspired natural order can, of course, be understood to have arisen, as Michel Foucault has argued, in the wake of a much earlier shift towards scientific rationalism within European discourse. This new arrangement according to Foucault writing in *The Order of Things*, ‘brought about the appearance of a new problem, unknown until then, as in the sixteenth century, one asked oneself how it was possible to know that a sign did in fact designate what it signified; from the seventeenth century, however one began to ask how a sign could be linked to what it signified’ [Foucault 1996: pp.46-47].

The rise of this scientific view can therefore be perceived as a point of entry into a new world, which, according to J.J Clarke in his book. *Oriental Enlightenment The Encounter between Asian and Western thought* ushered in a ‘cultural instability’ and a ‘frenetic search for alternative paradigms’ [Clarke 1997: p.31]. Moreover, its implicit challenge to unsceptical belief ‘put an end to the universalism projects both of mediaeval Christendom and of the Renaissance, that opened up the exciting yet alarming prospect of theological and philosophical pluralism’ [Clarke 1997: p.31]. Darwin’s own theories on evolution may then be seen simply to have drawn upon an existing set of possibilities as a means of sweeping away, in intellectual terms at least, the last vestiges of an ultimately static, god-centred universe.

However, Darwin’s theories had ‘moved far beyond the cosy notions that fortified most Victorians’ views about the perfect adaption between animals and

plants and their environment' [Browne 2003: p.7], and can be seen not only to have erased any remaining traces of the pre-scientific world by removing the material necessity for a creator God, but in doing so to have revealed persistent insecurities within establishment thinking over the blasphemous potential of scientific thought. Furthermore, his signaling of a loss of faith extended within both the realms of religion and the social order, since, many Victorians believed that the natural world 'mirrored the social stability they thought they saw around them' [Browne 2003: p.7]. Darwin's new evolutionary theory, was thus perceived to be a pervasively unsettling and dislocating force within society, perceived as dangerous because for people who interpreted the bible literally, it threatened 'dearly held religious beliefs about a six day process of creation' [Zimmer 2003: p.xxi]. Indeed, even Joseph Hooker was at first highly skeptical of his theories because of their implicit atheism, He was 'reluctant to adopt Darwin's radical concept' instead preferring 'for practical purposes to follow the prevailing orthodox opinion that species were 'definite creations'' thereby judging variability in a species rather than mutability as being 'a part of the scheme of nature' [Desmond 1998: p.202].

Darwin's radical de-centering of the existing epistemological universe can, therefore, be understood to set the scene for the subsequent emergence of a Nietzschean anti-philosophical nihilism that was part of the intellectual climate surrounding the emergence of the Duchampian *ready-mades*. 'Nietzsche's (1844-1900) concept of nihilism is a notion that in the modern world all traditional values and beliefs have been discounted' and that 'the highest values devalue themselves,' since their 'aim is lacking' [Clarke 1997: p.32]. This goes beyond sceptical doubts about human knowledge that have always preoccupied philosophers and artists alike, by seeking to identify itself 'as a crisis at the heart of western civilization'.

Moreover, it is ‘an historical condition which is peculiar to modern Europe’ brought about by Europe’s own cultural history, which can be traced back to the rise of modern science and Christianity [Clarke 1997: p.32]. Darwin would therefore appear to have foreshadowed this concept, as his theory stripped away ‘conventional comforts as a guarantee of progress’. Darwin’s ‘mechanism only ascribes local adaptation to environments that change in a directionless way through time, thus imparting no goal or progressive vector to life’s history’ [Zimmer 2003: p.xv]. Moreover, this ‘spiritual vacuum’ created by the decay of old certainties subsequently led more conservative thinkers not only towards an agnostic and atheist belief structure but many towards an oriental path of spiritual belief [Clarke 1997: p.131].

Darwin’s theory and the potential for an association with Nietzsche’s thinking, was, therefore, historically misused by many within new scientific, spiritual and political movements. However, on hybridism, Darwin severely undermines any such misinterpretations by asserting that ‘[n]o one has been able to point out what amount of difference in any recognizable character is sufficient to prevent two species crossing’, since, in his opinion ‘[i]t can be shown that plants most widely different in habit and general appearance, and having strongly marked differences in every part of the flower [...] can be crossed with ease’ [Darwin 1999: p. 212]. Moreover, Darwin goes on to contend that ‘[f]irst crosses between forms known as varieties, or sufficiently alike to be considered as varieties, and their mongrel offspring, are generally, but not quite universally fertile’. On this basis, he then draws the conclusion that ‘the facts briefly given in this chapter do not seem to me opposed to, but even rather to support the view, that there is no fundamental distinction between species and varieties’ [Darwin 1999: p.228]. Darwinian natural selection therefore ‘offers no solace or support for [...] traditional hopes about human necessity or

cosmic importance' [Zimmer 2003: p.xiv] and his healthy scepticism does not 'need to be extended to the point of nihilism' [Zimmer 2003: p.x]. Rather, Darwin's theory proposes that changing environments should, in principle, create 'favourable variations' for offspring, who 'on average become better adapted to local conditions' [Zimmer 2003: p.xv]. Darwin can therefore be seen to posit the notion that random mutation works not in splendid isolation but always in relation to mutable conditions, thereby allowing weak species in one context to survive as wholly fit for purpose in another. Variable contexts can therefore be understood to play a major part in natural selection and those characteristics enable them to adapt to changing circumstances and conditions can be considered more likely to survive than those who do not.

North was a part of a network of complex scientific work that was inclusive of British scientific research. North acknowledged hybridity in her diaries as apart of a recollection of a visit to the 'Veitch's hot-houses' in London in 1881, during which she accompanied the Asa Grays, when staying at Kew while working 'on the flora of the United States'. In her diaries North refers to all of the 'wonderful hybrid orchids, with the parent plants, and the clever man who hybridized' them.⁵² North did therefore have at least a basic understanding of the mechanisms implicated in Darwin's work on hybridity [North 1892b: p.213]. In relation to North's religious beliefs, Sheffield states that 'one of the freedoms North had without question, was freedom from religion [Sheffield 2001: p.94]. Further to this, North wrote to Dr. Burnell in 1878, referring to herself as a heathen [North 1878: (MN/1/1) Letters to Dr. Burnell]. She also called herself a positivist and 'objected to any kind of priest craft'

⁵² North wrote of seeing her own find, '*Nepenthes Northiana*', in the 'pitcher-plants' section while with the Asa Gray's. This indicated to North that after seeing her painting of the plant at her Kensington exhibition someone at Kew had sent a plant hunter to Borneo in search of it [North 1892b: pp.213-214]. There is also a reference contained in the North letters, indicating that Veitch '[s]ent a collector [...] to get the species' of *anthomania* as proof that the plant was 'as real and potent as bibliomania itself' [North 1882-1938: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters].

[Sheffield 2001: p.95]. Sheffield states that North recounted ‘a native of India’ who was a ‘complete religious sceptic’ and who ‘was full of reasons and arguments’. North wrote ‘I have seldom listened to more sensible talk and he was delighted to get a listener who could sympathise with him’ [Sheffield 2001: p.95]. While the full extent of North’s actual understanding of Darwin’s theories on hybridity remains in question, it is, therefore, nevertheless possible to view North as someone whose attitudes towards religion were very much in line with the atheistic implications of Darwinian thought.

According to Richard Kendall writing in *Endless forms: Charles Darwin Natural Science and the Visual Arts*, in the chapter, ‘Monet and the Monkeys: The Impressionist Encounter with Darwinism’ a connection between art and Darwinism arose through applications of Darwinist ideas by artists. Alongside the Pre-Raphaelites, Ruskin and scientific painters such as North, some of the impressionists also applied ideas related to Darwinian theory through their work. Kendall states that ‘[t]he impact of Darwin’s ideas on the intellectual life of France coincided with the emergence of impressionist painting and its own turbulent public history’ and that ‘this parallel has [up to now] never been acknowledged’, and this despite a ‘demonstrable awareness of evolutionary issues in artistic and literary Paris during these years’ [Kendall 2009: p.293]. Kendall concludes that a ‘[c]loser study of the Impressionist milieu extends this picture’. At the impressionists’ early exhibitions ‘critics of several persuasions detected an affinity between art and evolutionary thinking’ [Kendall 2009: p.294]. Further to this, in ‘the 1860s, after the appearance of *Origin*, both Cézanne and Monet mixed with members of the scientific community who would become partisans of evolution in France’ [Kendall 2009: p.294]. Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), absorbed influences from Darwin’s mentor, Charles Lyle and

(like Ruskin before) painted rocks for their geological structure [Kendall 2009: p.297] and set them within his landscape paintings such as *Rocks* painted between 1867 and 1870 [See figure 141]. Monet possibly acquired knowledge of Darwinism through his friend Georges Clemenceau, (1817-1903), who was a materialist and non-believer [Donald 2009: p.25]. Clemenceau was a ‘most decisive influence on the direction’ of Monet’s late work’s and encouraged him to to ‘produce a large cycle of water-lily pictures to be presented to the French nation’ [Kendall 1993: pp.14-15].

Monet, like Millais and Holman Hunt before him, insisted on painting ‘outdoors under the open sky’, singling out the ‘play of light in the clouds, the tints of earth, sky and water’ as witnessed in one of his many paintings of water-lillies made between 1909 and 1926 [See figure 142]. Unlike the Pre-Raphaelites, his was to become a painting of ‘sublime chaos’ very much akin to that represented by a Darwinian view of nature. Kendall states that this shift in Monet’s work ‘towards even more elemental themes’ was an expression ‘of scientific and philosophical thought’ [Kendall 2009: p.308] (also found in the works of William Gilpin (1724-1804), Constable and in British enlightenment landscapes). Moreover, Kendall states that Monet ‘developed a sophisticated knowledge of horticulture, consulting botanical journals and corresponding with leading authorities on exotic specimens’ [Kendall 2009: p.308]. The painter and sculptor, Edgas Degas (1834-1917) was also enlightened by Darwinist theory, but his interests were more anthropological [Kendall 2009: p.303].

The relationship between Darwin’s ideas and North’s painting is arguably more direct than that between Darwin and the impressionists. Not only was North directly acquainted with Darwin, she also shared in an aesthetic view of nature commensurate with Darwin’s own. Moreover, North was not seeking to appropriate Darwinian ideas

for artistic purposes, but to be part of a scientific project that worked in support of his thinking.

The Australian landscape can be described as a site of hybridisation not only with regard to the immigration of human inhabitants from elsewhere, but also the immigration of flora and fauna as part of the impact of early European colonization. During the nineteenth century, the Australian landscape became increasingly prominent in the European imagination partly as a result of Darwin's work there in collating data alongside that which he had gathered from the Falkland and Galapagos islands, as well as St Helena, Mauritius and St Vincent; data which enabled Darwin to include as part of the construction of his theory of evolution a conception of 'rarity and a fear of extinction' [Grove 2003: p.9]. Australians had very real concerns about the effects of colonization on their environment. The possibility of climate change through industrialisation and its impact upon the wider natural environment had been established through the work of Stephen Hales (1677-1761),⁵³ who 'underlined the ability of man to affect the constitution of the atmosphere' and whose research linked John Woodward (1665-1728) and his work on 'transpiration', which was published in 1696, to these effects [Grove 2003: pp.156-159]. Poivre, the great French pioneering early environmentalist whose work was a mixture of rigorous scientific empiricism and the romantic ideals of Rousseau (1724-1804) [Groves 2003: p.9] was also influenced by the Newtonian rationales of Stephen Hales.

⁵³ As part of colonialist expansion, administrative staff of the East India Company tended to combine their administrative duties with science and medicine; indeed, many were skilled surgeons. The physicians and surgeons employed by these commercial bodies were placed in consulting positions, and employment with the trading companies gave them the status of professional and state scientists long before these posts existed in Europe. During the eighteenth century there was also an 'urgent need to understand unfamiliar floras, faunas and geologies, both for commercial purposes and to counter environmental and health risks'. Many of the men concerned were custodians of early botanical gardens. This privilege would give these custodians a greater say not only in how the flora were recorded, but also on how botanical illustrators produced drawings as scientific draughtsman [Groves 2003: p.8].

Poivre placed importance upon the farming and environmental practices of local peoples, also establishing a relationship between deforestation and climate change [Grove 2003: pp.168-189], particularly with regard to a ‘fear of rainfall decline’ [Grove 2003: p.198]. Poivre’s observations of a connection between European agricultural practice and the reclaiming of forest to provide further farmland, lead him to deduce that not leaving areas of woodland at ‘intervals between clearings’ resulted in direct ‘climatic results’ as the rains ‘follow the forest exactly’, making cleared land, due to its exposure, vulnerable to violent wind in a manner that destroys all crops [Grove 2003: p.186].

Poivre’s work on deforestation⁵⁴ was later to influence Darwin and his theory of evolution with its embedded conceptions of rarity and extinction. It is through writings and experiments by Woodward, Hales and Poivre that we see early attempts to deal with man’s relationship to nature, not only in terms of how to manage newly acquired colonial land, but also how to prevent long term damage to the environment.

This earlier research impacted upon the work of Joseph Hooker, who personally ‘witnessed the advance of European weeds in Australia and New Zealand c. 1840’, opining ‘that many of the small local genera of Australia and New Zealand’ will ‘ultimately disappear, owing to the usurping tendencies of the emigrant plants of the northern hemisphere’ [Crosby 2006: p.165]. As Sheffield has indicated, in her diaries North refers to the introduction of foreign plants to New Zealand where ‘[t]he air was thick with thistledown’ and the ‘native weeds were being stifled by Scotland’s royal flower’ [Sheffield 2001: p.132]. Nineteenth-century concerns surrounding the effects of colonisation on colonised landscapes were not confined to New Zealand and

⁵⁴ Poivre’s specialist knowledge of Indo-China, in which he took particular interest in the ‘indigenous population of China and more especially South India’, included knowledge of ‘developed irrigation systems’ for ‘tree planting customs [...] designed to reduce the blast of overhead dry-season sun’ [Grove 2003: p.198].

Australia. Darwin, teased the Asa Gray's, (who collated information for him surrounding the phenomenon of naturalized floras of European species in the American landscape) [Crosby 2006: pp.164-165] about advancing European weeds that had become a real concern in America, especially since the Spanish had first entered the panhandle of the Texan high plains, as early as 1541 [Debo 1995: p.42]. The appearance of weeds had been noted by settlers in 'California, via Mexico as early as 1824' [Crosby 2006: p.153]. In 1833, Darwin noted a change from 'cross herbage' to a 'carpet of fine green verdure' in Buenos Aires, attributing it to 'some change in the soil' possibly as a result of 'animal manure, and grazing', a view that was in keeping with that of the local people [Crosby 2006: p.161].

Darwin's had an interest in the Island of Madeira, south west of Lisbon, because of the 'numerous species of insects' as well as 'flightless or unusually large' birds that could be found there. According to J. Donald Hughes, writing in, *An Enviromental History of the World*, settlers to the island attacked the 'forest, hewing down trees for export and starting fires to clear land for agriculture' [Hughes 2002: p.1]. As a result, 'many non-native species were introduced, some initially and some by accident' [Hughes 2002: p.1].

Hughes adds that on the nearby Island of Porto Santo, 'rabbits swarmed everywhere, eating everything', while the introduction of 'cats, mice and rats destroyed birds'. At the same time, 'showy garden flowers' and 'aggressive weeds', which were 'sometimes the same plant', were 'introduced by the hundreds' [Hughes 2002: p.1]. North's diaries corroborate these environmental changes to environments. During her journey to Brazil in 1872-3, North witnessed environmental damage off the coastline of the Island of St. Vincent when her ship stopped to coal there, stating

in her diaries, ‘I did not land on that treeless island, which looked like a great cinder itself’ [Huxley 2002: p. 59].

Nineteenth-century fears surrounding environmental tampering were not misplaced. Today ‘most of the weeds of the southern third of Australia (where most of the continent’s population lives)’ and where the climate is ‘most nearly European’ are of European origin, according to Alfred Crosby in, *Ecological Imperialism The Biological Expansion of Europe 900-1900* [Crosby 2006: p.163]. Australian landscapes were exposed to the ingress of plants and animals from around the British Empire. North wrote of seeing ‘miles of pasture’ in Australia that contained a *Cryptostemma Calendulacen*, which North thought looked like dandelion. The plant’s seed had apparently been ‘[b]rought over from the Cape only a few years before and now grew everywhere, but it did no harm’ since ‘[t]he cattle ate it’ [Huxley 2002: p.168].

North wrote about cattle-ravaged land and European gardens in Australia during her travels there between 1880 and 1881. North took lodgings with her friend Ellis Rowan whose own paintings of flora had been described by Governor Sir Walter Davidson (1859-1880) as, ‘a delight and instruction to future generations [...] before many of those beautiful birds become extinct [...] and the flowers disappear beneath the heels of civilization’ [Ellis Rowan 2006]. North wrote of Rowan as introducing her to ‘quantities of the most lovely flowers - flowers such as I had never seen or even dreamed of before’ [Huxley 2002: p.171]. After staying at Rowan’s lodgings, North then went on to visit Albany, where she described the house and garden of a magistrate ‘which led right on to the hillside at the back’ and of the abundance of differing species in such a small area’ which were marvellous [Huxley 2002: p.171]. This sort of hybridized garden was observed by North again, when visiting the home

of the Australian Prime Minister. She describes how she was able to find ‘twenty–five different species of wildflowers in ten minutes, close to the house’ and the garden as being ‘cut in terraces descending into the real virgin forest, with fine gums and banksias left standing amongst the imported flowers’, declaring that ‘[o]ne could hardly see where the wild and the tame joined’ [Huxley 2002: p.167]. The colonizers of Australia clearly wanted to be surrounded by plants and animals familiar to them and which reminded them of their former European homes.

The early history of the ‘European-settled Australia [...] is a story of the settlement of pastoral runs by tough, rough men, and of their construction of grand houses in the young cities and in the bush’ [Kerr Forsyth 2006: p.2]. Women, who had initially come out to the colony as wives of the officer class or as female prisoners, carved out an existence for themselves which included the making of gardens in an attempt to create their own social and cultural space. These strong women constructed a landscape out of a frontier land according to ‘their own vision of an English Arcadia’ [Kerr Forsyth 2006: p.2]. Edward William John Hopley’s (1837-1903), *A Primrose from England* of 1855 [See figure 143], depicts an event, which attests to the homesickness of colonisers for indigenous European plants. Dr. Nathaniel Ward (1791-1868) devised ‘a glazed case which he used successfully to create mini-climates, enabling him to transport tea plants from Shanghai to the Himalayas, and London’. In Hopley’s painting we witness a primrose having been taken across to ‘Australia in a covered glass case’. According to Lambourne, ‘when it arrived there in full bloom, the sensation it excited as a reminiscence of [...] the old country [...] was so great that it was necessary to protect it by a guard’ [Lambourne

2005b: p.421]. These ‘feelings of nostalgia coexisted with a realization that [...] Australia lay rich’ in new, and exciting vistas [Lambourne 2005b: p.421].⁵⁵

North also complained of the flora of Deloraine Tasmania, as being ‘far too English’, since it contained ‘hedges of sweet-brier, hawthorn, and blackberry, nettles, docks, thistles, dandelions’. North wrote ‘It is curious how we have introduced all our weeds, vices and prejudices into Australia, and turned the natives (even the fish) out of it’ [Huxley 2002: p.171] and that ‘all the native plants (if there are any) were burnt up’ [Huxley 2002: p.177]. This arrangement of distributing European plants into the Australian landscape allowed for continuity within farming methods and food sources. Indeed, the sustenance garden had come ‘before gardens were laid out for purely aesthetic reasons’, later resulting in the pursuance of gardening for horticultural trophies [Kerr Forsyth 2006: p.6]. Seed dispersal and accompanying weed distribution across the Australian colonies was supported by the arrival of European animals into the landscape, especially sheep. In this regard, Crosby argues, weeds ‘were of vital importance’, as they not only acted ‘like skin transplants’ that ‘aided in healing the raw wounds that the invaders tore in the earth’, they also ‘saved newly bared topsoil from water and wind erosion and from baking in the sun’, enabling it to be used as a source of ‘essential feed for exotic livestock’ [Crosby 2006: p.170]. This did not, however, stop some Australian farmers from using native species to the point of extinction. North witnessed in Newcastle, Australia that the local farmers were using an indigenous Australian plant, *Eucalyptus Macrocorpa* to feed their flocks. North declared: ‘they enjoyed the crop so much that they had gradually

⁵⁵ European colonialist hopes of financial gain brought about European immigration to the new colonies. However, ‘the unique exception was Australia, whose immigrants for many decades arrived not to seek their fortunes but because they were compelled to go there’. Britain’s motive for settling Australia as a penal colony was to ‘relieve its festering problem of large numbers of jailed poor’ [Diamond 2005: p.388].

eaten it all up', going on to describe the farming community as 'carefully saving the seed of this one that they might sow them and raise up more food for sheep' [Huxley 2002: p.174]. Hooker perceived that the invasion of non-native species into Australia would one day turn it into another Europe [Crosby 2006: p.162]. However, this has not in fact become the case. Australia was saved from wholesale Europeanisation by its 'hot, arid, and entirely un-European interior and by the tight grip on existence that characterizes organisms living in the environments that shaped them' [Crosby 2006: p.162].

North herself often appears to have been confused about the role of forced environmental changes on colonised landscapes. North swung between comments decrying the environmental effects of colonisation and an aesthetic appreciation of its outcomes. In one instance she writes, 'I went rather out of my mind' at the sight of '[t]he ruthless killing of miles of 'noble trees' [Moon 2002: p.238]. On another occasion North describes 'Wynberg, seven and a half miles round the western side of Table Mountain', where she found 'groves of European fir-trees, oaks, and fruit orchids,' with the 'ground under them covered with white gums' and 'Australian gums, wattles and casuarinas' that were 'in full bloom and perfectly at home there' [North 1892b: p. 218]. In 1871, in Arlington in the US, North described the 'little houses built for the accommodation of sparrows—the birds had been imported from England to get rid of a caterpillar which had been infesting trees and eating up everything' [Huxley 2002: p.44].

North did not therefore totally question the deliberate movement of plants or even animals from their local habitats. Brenda Moon's assertion that North 'was acutely conscious of the need for conservation and especially for the conservation of trees' [Moon 2002: p.238] is therefore in need of a certain degree of qualification.

North did not fully understand the biological implications of the changes to the environment that were taking place during her own time, not least the potential to unsettle future scientific discoveries due to the possible taxonomical misplacing of flora. This ignorance was displayed during a visit to Brazil in 1871-1872, where she met Dr. Lund, who lived close to the stalactite caves of Corvelho. North tells us that Lund had ‘made several collections of natural curiosities and plants’ and that his garden’ was ‘full of rare plants’. North wrote of Lund having ‘collected and planted by himself’ a ‘rare blue potederia’, which North painted one morning. North stated that ‘the doctor had persuaded’ this plant ‘with considerable difficulty to grow on the lake’ and that he was ‘most delighted with it’ describing it as ‘one very great wonder’ [Huxley 2002: p.72]. North did, however, question some anomalies she found when painting on location. In Brazil, North states that ‘along the high banks overlooking the Rio das Velhas,’—which ‘eventually runs into the Rio San Francesco, and enters the sea above Bahia’—she found, in ‘the fresh clearings [...] many new and gorgeous flowers, as well as some old friends, including the graceful amaranth plant of North Italy’. North wrote ‘[h]ow did it get to the places so far apart?’ North then states that she ‘longed more and more for some intelligent botanical companion to answer her many questions’ [Huxley 2002: p.68].

Chapter Eight

Marianne North and Nineteenth-Century Western Colonialism

In his critique of the film *Gunga Din*, Bertolt Brecht questions the relationship between Western colonisers and colonised Orientals. Addressing a scene showing occupying British forces fighting a local tribe that had '[a]ttacked a body of British troops stationed in India', Brecht explains: '[t]he Indians were primitive creatures, either comic or wicked: comic when loyal to the British and wicked when hostile. The British soldiers were honest, good-humoured chaps and when they used their fists on the mob and knocked some sense into them the audience laughed.' Moreover, Brecht states that '[o]ne of the Indians betrayed his compatriots to the British, sacrificed his life so that his fellow country-men should be defeated, and earned the audience's heart-felt applause'. Brecht also states, '[m]y own heart was touched too: I felt like applauding and laughed in all the right places. Despite the fact that I knew all the time that there was something wrong, that the Indians are not primitive and uncultured people but have a magnificent age-old culture, and that this *Gunga Din* could be seen in a very different light e.g. as a traitor to his people.' Brecht concluded that 'I was amused and touched because this utterly distorted account was an artistic success and considerable resources in talent and ingenuity had been applied in making it' [Richards 1986: p.144]. A contemporary post-colonialist vision of history as one of domination and displacement were clearly not at the forefront of the production of *Gunga Din*. Today, as Homi Bhabha makes clear, the foregrounding of that vision allows us to confront 'the concept of culture outside objects d'art or beyond the

canonization of the idea of aesthetics, and ‘to engage with culture as an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value’ [Bhabha 2006: pp.246-247]. In his critique however, Brecht highlights a continuing interpretative tension/contradiction between knowing criticism of the prejudicial aspects of a visual text and the continuing ability of that text to draw us aesthetically into its particular narrative vision of events. Edward Said, stated that this is ‘[o]ne aspect of the electronic, postmodern world’ because of its ‘reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed’ [Said 2003: p. 26]. Moreover, Said states that television, as well as films (that would include *Gunga Din*) and other forms of media, have ‘forced information into more and more standardized molds’ [Said 2003: p.26]. Said believes that this standardisation of the Orient as well as its continued cultural stereotyping by nineteenth-century academics had/has lead to an ‘imaginative demonology of the “mysterious Orient”’ [Said 2003: p.26].

Another related form of tension/contradiction can be discerned in relation to the actual development of societies and cultures under colonialism. Britain’s colonization of India was inescapably one involving prejudicial relations of dominance. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, an undeniably hybrid society began to develop in India, ‘where company employees married Indian women and adopted Indian customs’, thereby leading to a ‘cultural fusion’ that ‘appeals to our modern sensibilities’ [Fergusson 2004: p.39]. Moreover, the customs of food, and language in British culture today [Fergusson 2004: p.39], which arguably grow out of that state of cultural fusion, can now be perceived as a positive cultural phenomenon in relation to a post-colonial discourse thereby producing a counterbalance to cultural Imperialism.

Both of these tensions/contradictions are arguably apparent in relation to North’s own writing. Indeed, North’s diaries are abound with such

tensions/contradictions. She was by contemporary standards in many instances politically incorrect, while also being fascinated by and commenting positively on localized signs of difference. North ‘benefited from the administrative machinery of British imperialism’. North’s close connections with both William and Joseph Hooker, ‘gave her access to garden sites in the British colonial dominions wherever she went’. North therefore enjoyed the privileges of being not only a British subject ‘but of having what amounted to diplomatic connections’ [Gergitis 2006: no page numbers given] As Susan Morgan makes clear in *Place Matters*, ‘North traveled, painted, and wrote very much by the grace of, and in the service of, men in power in her country’. Indeed, Morgan argues this may explain why there was a ‘notable lack of criticism [...] of her travels on the part of those men’ [Morgan 1996: p.122], who were themselves part of the same cultural discourse. Consequently, North can be understood to have assumed the role of an ‘objective collector and detached observer with [a] well-trained eye’ in the ‘role of a man’ [Morgan 1996: p.121] often writing as though she were a curious and somewhat detached diplomat.

On *The Victorian Web*, Helena Wojtczak, has accused North of scarcely mentioning ‘the indigenous peoples of the area through which she travels’ in her ‘*Recollections of a Happy Life*’ stating that ‘[s]he either erased the native presence or pictorialized it in ways that reflected her position as a privileged viewer’ [Wojtczak 2005: no page numbers]. North does, refer to local people throughout all three volumes of her recollections. For example, while in America during the 1880s, North wrote of African Americans as “nigger” “gentlemen” on ‘the train,’ wearing ‘full evening-dress coats, rings on fingers, goldchains, with their hair oiled and straightened as much as possible, and the full extent of possible dandyism’. At the same time, North describes how the men, ‘were extraordinarily polite, lending their

newspapers, and giving up their seats to any lady looking for one'. However, she concludes, afterwards they were 'sitting with their feet above their heads and talking the grossest slang with some Irish roughs, or the news-boys'. North thought they were 'ex-Chicago swells, or billboard - makers' [North 1892a: pp.64-65].

Furthermore, during 1870, while North was in Canada, she deliberately went in search of indigenous culture in the 'Indian village of Loretta' visiting the Chief's house. North confesses to being perturbed because the chief 'though said to be of pure blood, looked more like a well-bred Frenchman'. North then writes of visiting 'some of the less civilized' and yet 'more interesting people', and made 'friends with one young man' whom she described as having 'long lank hair and high check-bones'. North insisted upon being taken by this young man to the local school, where North found the children to be 'a sight worth seeing' because there were 'plenty of genuine Indian faces among them, mixed up with French' who sang her 'several wild Indian hymns with soft-sounding words'. North concludes that she was impressed because the school mistress informed her that the children's song 'had never been written down'. North compared the Native Americans' nomadic lifestyle to that of the 'way of our own gypsies [...] at home' [North 1892a: p.55]. Here, North shows sensitivity to the cross-cultural hybridisation of people and cultures that had by then begun to take place in Canada.

While in Japan between 1875 and 1877 she writes, 'I much preferred my quiet life in Kioto [Kyoto] among the purely Japanese people and picturesque buildings, to that in one of the European settlements' [North 1892a: p.222]. Alongside that, she also writes somewhat disparagingly about the Japanese people, stating that they were 'like little children, so merry and full of pretty ways, and very quick at taking in fresh ideas' but 'they don't think or reason much'. Furthermore, they 'have scarcely any

natural affection towards one another' as '[e]verybody who has lived long among them seems to get disgusted with their falseness and superficiality' [North 1892a: p. 224-5]. North ends this examination with '[o]ne never sees a mother kiss or caress her baby' the 'poor little thing is tied on the back of a small sister [...] and tumbles about with her all day' and 'people only laugh if one pities it' [North 1892a: p.225].

Comparably tense/contradictory observations of local cultural identity can be found in relation to North's painting. North's paintings contain ethnic representation in her landscapes and urbanscapes, and a breakdown of her imagery can be perceived as producing 'analytically interesting and coherent' [Rose 2001: pp.60] reports of people's attitudes at the time they were painted. In a sketchbook work by North that appears to have been quickly painted, and numbered 002, (no title given) a local village scene is depicted [See figure 144]. A local person is included sitting upon a wall at the side/front of indigenous homes peppered along a mountainous ridge. In the distance a vast expanse of mountain range is presented in what could be described as, Holmanesque colours. Furthermore, the composition appears to have been cut off awkwardly, as one cannot see the whole of the house in the foreground of the picture, (viewer side left) and one person is cut in half. The spliced appearance of this painting again brings into question the possible use of photography. However, it could simply be a poorly composed sketch, where North had misjudged the positioning of the houses. Nevertheless, the painting is highly aestheticised. North's rendering of the mountain range is similar in style to Friedrich, while at the same time applying an overall Holman Hunt like approach to colouration. In another painting of a beach scene, held within the North gallery, we find a local woman represented by a few daubs of paint, cooking in a hut. Flora is represented in the form of a palm tree (viewer side right). In painting 0483, *Emile's Palm House, Prailin, Seychelles* [See

figure 145], we find that North has again included local homes on a beach, where children play or toy with a turtle, and women prepare food in the background. North's aestheticised representations of 'fruit with animals, animal types, birds, landscape' can therefore be seen to comply with a colonialist representational code [Rose 2001: p.60] insofar as they uphold an idealized vision of the place of the colonised subject.

The figures that populate North's paintings are not rendered in any detail. They do not have discernible personalities; they are merely furniture attached to her architectural renderings and the placement of flora and fauna. The fact that North's paintings of local people were generally lacking in detail does however suggest technical limitations on her ability to produce good or clear representations of the human figure rather than a deliberate abstraction of the identity of the *other*. North may have simply copied the illustrated topographical works of others available to her at the time. However, Sheffield states that North 'saw native peoples within her natural landscapes' as a 'positive rather than negative gesture towards them' [Sheffield 2001: p.126]. Said argues that 'no one is likely to imagine a field symmetrical [to Orientalism] called Occidentalism' [Said 2003: p.50]. Despite the fact that in order to read history, one must take into consideration the occident in relation to the Oriental, even though the Orient had been demarcated by the west as Said argues, since the time of Homer's Iliad [Said 2003: p.50].

Some of North's paintings depict colonialist industrialization. In image 0079, *View of the old Gold Works at Morro Velho, Brazil* [See figure 146], North paints a mill with local people working the site, the image is reminiscent not only to colonial photography, but also American Luminist and Hudson River Group paintings of industrial encroachment upon nature. In image 0609, *Tea Gathering in Mr Hölle's Plantation at Garoet, Java* [See figure 147], we find a tea plantation replete with

workers set high into the hilltops with mountains in the background. Both paintings present a rosy picture of workers being productive in good weather surrounded by a beautiful landscape, disguising the fact that the working practices represented required long hours and extreme effort without much reward. Paintings such as North's were, of course, subject to the 'compulsions of empire' which required the unfamiliar to be represented to a British audience who knew nothing of tea plantations or cotton, reducing the images to some sort of grid that would filter the 'Orient into Western consciousness' so that it might be 'contained, studied, admired, detested, pitied, mourned' [Nair 2000: p.226]. North's art and writings could therefore be accused of reinforcing as well as revising 'the dominant discourse of Orientalism at the time' [Martin Varisco 2007: p.156]. Said argued in *Orientalism* that '[s]omething patently foreign and distant' acquired a status that reflected 'more rather than less' in relation to the familiar [Said 2003: p.58]. Since he argues '[o]ne tends to stop judging things either as completely novel or as completely well known;' creating 'a new median' or category that emerges that allows for one to see 'new things, things seen for the first time, as versions of a previously known thing' [Said 2003: p.58]. That in essence is not about receiving new information, but is a 'method of controlling what seems to be a threat to some established view of things'. Said concludes, '[i]f the mind must suddenly deal with what it takes to be radically new [...] the response on the whole is conservative and defensive' [Said 2003: p.58]. North's gallery displayed a foreign world to its western audience. North's personal response to how she painted the surrounding scenery, to which she was exposed whilst abroad, reveals a Burkesian view of sublimity. North therefore faced her fearfulness, on such expeditions and was defensive through her approach to painting what she saw as a recollection of truth, thus revealing her westernness.

North was enthusiastic about her travels and findings. She relished her journeys but her work exposed her to colonial suffering. No matter how much she disliked many high ranking colonial officials, historically she has to be considered a politically incorrect painter and historical character. North's paintings contained the old Western versions and events of history that are not only perceivably colonial, but conservative in their representations of topographical scenes and people. North's work, which was novel in its day, became dated and stale. However, today North's paintings and gallery can now be re-read through the mediations of post-colonial theory, becoming novel once more simply because they are part of a historical canon within history that has been neglected and derided. North's work as an occidental can now be contrasted with the history of the Subaltern to produce new readings that either reinforce or contradict previous readings of the Oriental/Occidental.

Edward Said, according to Daniel Martin Varisco, in *Said and the Unsaid Orientalism*, argued that the colonial past, can be understood as being caught in a 'web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism [and] dehumanizing ideology' [Martin Varisco 2007: p.298]. Said's work has for more than two decades enabled racial, sexual, social, and economic, minorities to stake a claim in their own 'political positioning, rather than feel obliged to assume the transcendent values of the dominant discourse of criticism' [Martin Varisco 2007: p.14]. Moreover, Said concludes that 'any account of Orientalism would have to consider not only the professional Orientalist and his work but also the very notion of a field of study based on a geographical, cultural, linguistic, and ethic unit called the Orient' [Said 2003: pp. 49-50].⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Orientalism [...] in the Christian west, [...] is considered to have commenced its formal existence with the decision of the Church Council of Vienne in 1312 to establish a series of chairs in "Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac at Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Avignon and Salamanca" [Said 2003: pp. 49-50].

Despite the undeniable value of Said's argument, as Daniel Martin Varisco has pointed out in *Said and the Unsaid, Orientalism*, Said's seminal work on the subject of colonialism is a male-orientated book because the author is male and 'the vast number of writers and other individuals either analysed in depth or mentioned in passing are men!' [Martin Varisco 2007: p.156]. Moreover, as Martin Varisco also points out 'women were almost exclusively excluded from Said's guilds of Orientalist power' [Martin Varisco 2007: p.156], adding '[t]he fact that he [Said] was also privileged' and lived within a 'profoundly male-dominated world' is relevant to the explored relationship between the other and westerners [Martin Varisco 2007: p.298]. Martin Varisco concludes that we should not only be sensitive to the possibility of male orientation in Said's work but guard against masculinist forms of 'bias and distortion' alongside unrealistic representations of 'real people and their real history as well as the imaginative discourses that invade all histories understanding' [Martin Varisco 2007: p.301].

Said stated that '[n]o scholar or thinking, [...] is a perfect representative of some ideal type or school' [Said 2003; p.263] and he certainly did not believe in a 'limited proposition' whereby, 'only a black can write about blacks, a Muslim about Muslims, and so fourth' [Said 2003: p.322]. According to Emily M. Weeks, writing in *The Lure of the East* [Weeks 2008: p.23] '[c]riticisms leveled against British society once glossed over' and then exposed by Said and later, Bhabha, awaited revelation through 'personal narratives, experiences and idiosyncrasies, long ignored in favour of an examination of broader imperial designs' [Weeks 2008: p.23]. Weeks points out, however, that 'critics [...] preoccupied with the politics of their subject matter soon discovered that such polemical interpretations and assumptions could not so

easily be made.’ What was ‘once touted as brilliantly incisive’ within Said’s writing has come to be ‘regarded as a deeply flawed interpretive tool’ and as an ‘inappropriate means by which to judge an expressive end’ [Weeks 2008: p.24]. Weeks, asserts that Said is not only ahistorical with regard to issues of class as well as ‘specific political economics and local social circumstances’ but again, ‘gender blind’ [Weeks 2008: p.24]. Said’s work can therefore be understood to ‘predetermine conclusions and preclude more subtle analyses of often very different artists and pictures [...] that are not complicit with Said’s framework’ [Weeks 2008: p.25].

Despite Said stating that a field can change even in the most traditional disciplines [Said 2003: pp.49-50] post-colonialism is now an established discipline and can now therefore be perceived as a traditional discipline. This suggests that a subject like North could be re-read seriously through a more focused form of critical analysis. Women were undeniably among the producers of the broad discourse of Orientalism just as they were surely among its consumers. Women wrote about their travels in the Orient, imagined an Orient in their writing, and painted this imagined Orient. As part of this wider feminine contribution, North’s writings could be cited as ‘a sign of the intersecting discourses of race and class, continually rearticulated throughout the colonial period’, and, what is more, a sign ‘whose meanings can only be unpacked’ within the ‘discourse of colonialism’. Like painting or illustration or topography, they imply a close mapping of the ‘ideological functions served by such production’ [Nair 2000: p.229]. Moreover, Said argued that political interests tied England to India, holding British work to a sustained contact with concrete realities, and ‘maintained the cohesion between representations of the past and the spectacle of the present’, North’s present [Said 2003: p.264].

In the case of North, it was her relative freedom that ‘enabled her to define herself outside her culture’; a freedom that absolved her ‘from living older cultural roles’ and was thus a freedom that allowed her to invent, new roles [Morgan 1996: p.121] for herself. As Morgan indicates, North’s creation of herself was in keeping with the conventions of a serious naturalist, who was ‘independent, physically intrepid,’ had great stamina and was ‘indifferent to creature comforts and traditional social customs’ [Morgan 1996: pp.122-123]. In addition to which, Morgan states that real ‘[i]ndependence for Victorian women’ was ‘a matter of class, family, and money’; consequently the ‘specific hermeneutic link between North’s representation of her economic and class privileges and her culturally accepted self-representation as a nondomestic woman can be located within the enabling ideological practices of late Victorian British botany’ as well as the ‘vision of personal female liberation’ set within a ‘Victorian imperial enterprise’ [Morgan 1996: pp.122-123]. As Morgan states, it would therefore ‘require an ideological blindness indistinguishable from complicity to try to separate issues of gender from those of class in North’s writings’ [Morgan 1996: p.121]. To which she adds the point that ‘[t] here could [...] be no simple transference of life–in–Britain to colonial India’ because ‘[a] part from the physical impossibilities of such an enterprise, Englishwomen became part of a complex grid of power, [...] which blurred more familiar distinctions’; because ‘there was the need to assert femininity in order to ‘buttress the masculine nature of the colonial project’ [Nair 2000: p.225].

In her diary, North states that ‘Mrs. Agassiz and I agreed that the greatest pleasure we knew was to see new and wonderful countries’ and that ‘the only rival to that pleasure was the one of staying at home’. Adding, ‘[o]nly ignorant fools think because one likes sugar one cannot like salt; those people are only capable of one

idea, and never try experiments' [North 1892a: p.48]. Morgan attests that North saw herself as culturally advanced, a Bohemian who had 'thoughts on the most serious things which would perfectly dumbfound most of one's best friends' [Morgan 1996: p.121]. North '[t]he liberated feminine subject' has been 'continually presented as indifferent'. However, North was also indifferent towards dress and to the most 'basic physical comfort'. North often travelled 'for days on horseback during monsoon season, often eating anything and sleeping anywhere' and indeed 'sometimes neither eating nor sleeping at all'. Therefore, according to Morgan [in *Place matters*,] North appears 'rebellious toward and in opposition to many of the forms and basic shibboleths of Victorian "civilization" especially those of her class' [Morgan 1996: p.120]. North's writings are 'abound with comic and contemptuous sketches of the British upper class abroad', and find her calling them 'the great people in the usual state of amiable limpness' who were generally 'lolling on their verandahs and never looking around at the beautiful world.' North wrote to Dr. Burnell about the matter stating that 'when summer comes and the country house dressed up parties, are put as counter temptations to wandering away quietly with my easel and old portmanteau to unseen wonders the other side of the world, I think both you and I can guess which will carry the day' [Morgan 1996: p.120].

North 'consistently presented herself as a woman who had done what she had wanted with her life' and 'followed her own advice' by doing exactly what she thought was best for herself [Morgan 1996: p.103]. However, Morgan argues that '[L]ike many a supposed free spirit, the North of the book' is also 'trapped in the ideology of her culture'. Like other Victorian woman of her time, she too had to deal with 'domestic and social obligations'. As we have seen, in the biography of this thesis, as a younger woman North looked after her father and it was only after his

death, that she began to travel and paint seriously. North's work, therefore suggests, an 'interdependence of conformity and rebellion'. Moreover, Morgan states, North is 'not [...] an outsider at all but a specific type in Victorian ideology, a representative of the new kind of ruling class' which 'lead Britain into its dominant future' [Morgan 1996: p.121]. North's family had been connected to early colonialist trade and commerce [Porter 2000: p.149] and North was a celebrated figure, in her own times. Indeed, *The Times* newspaper would always report her exotic travels, because they were of great interest to people [Farley 2011]. In light of this fame, North's private letters were being constantly read to other people; something which North complains of, in a letter from Sarawak to a Mrs. Shaen dated 1876, stating that it is 'somewhat hard to write anything new to one who seems to read all my letters to everyone else' [North 1875-84: letters to the Shaen family].

Unlike North, many of the women living in colonial circumstances were there because of marriage or obligation, and rank and class. This in turn meant that some women dealt with 'incommensurable demands' of domestic life that forced them into a decision of survival that was often associated with their class first and their gender second [Bhabha 2006: pp.247-250]. North wrote of these colonized women's social isolation, and 'terribly lonely lives'. Indeed, many of these women lived 'far away at different out-stations on the various rivers' and North wrote of them settling 'disputes among strange tribes' and therefore hardly ever 'seeing any civilized person to speak to' [North 1892a: p.237]. In one letter to Mrs. Shaen, North wrote of 'a brave little woman' and of the cakes and puddings that she made because a 'table did not look right without a pie on it' [North 1875-84: letters to the Shaen family] and of '[p]oor little Mrs. R; at the antimony-mines' who 'really cried at losing sight' of North when she left, because she had been 'the one white women she had seen for so long' [North

1982a: p.251]. These women are described with what we would now term as culture shock, and who suffered from the loss of children either through unknown tropical diseases or travel homeward bound [North 1892a: p.237].

While North's identity as a woman is a readily identifiable one in relation to the prevailing discourses of Western colonialism, it is far from being a typical. In 1876, 'Sir William' [Hooker] wrote letters of introduction for North enabling her to stay with Charles and Margaret Brooke, the 'Rajah and Rani of Sarawak' [Singapore/Malaysia] [North 1892a: p.236]. Margaret Brooke, formerly Margaret de Windt, had married Charles Brooke (1849-1917), who declared himself Rajah of Sarawak and was according to North, dedicated to his adopted country. Ponsonby, in *Marianne North at Kew Gardens*, describes Brooke as a man who believed his mission was to preserve Sarawak from the exploitation and influence of the Europeans. He therefore held 100 soldiers and about 20 men known as the officers and his band played every night. At the same time, croquet was on Tuesday and other activities such as 'lawn tennis [...] constitutional walks and occasional dinner parties' were also held [Ponsonby 2002: p.46].

Despite all of these distractions, it was a 'monotonous life' for the Rani [Ponsonby 2002: p.51] since women's roles in life and in art were severely circumscribed by 'the willful leisure' to which they were condemned. The lifestyle emphasized 'separate spheres of male and female colonialists' evidenced in the recording of events in women's writing and painting [Nair 2000: p.226]. Indeed, when visiting the Brookes, North was subjected to an atmosphere where the guests and the music, which the band played, were always the same [Ponsonby 2002: p.51]. Margaret Brooke's own life accounts were effectively a 'series of vignettes about her encounters with other famous [...] personages' including Charles Swinburne [Morgan

1996: p.213]. However, Morgan states that Margaret Brooke placed ‘herself apart from the rest of the colonial women’ partly because she did not want to be, “pure” English and, therefore, did not belong, partly because she was also an arch-colonialist, and as head of state, made others her inferior subjects [Morgan 1996: p.210]. According to Morgan there were ‘many moments in Margaret’s two books which are not ambivalent about Brooke rule’. Morgan writes of the repeated feminine voice of Margaret whose own ‘testimonials to the greatness of the Brookes’ reign over the peoples of Sarawak’ show that she came to admire the way in which her husband governed his country [Morgan 1996: p.209]. Margaret’s accounts of her life therefore contained ‘contradictory cultural positions of social superiority and exclusion from society’. North herself wrote of the Rajah’s extraordinary attitudes to his colonised people, citing an incident where a fine mastiff dog that he owned bit a man who was a ‘Muhammadan’ and who thought it was an unclean animal. The Rajah therefore ‘had it tried and shot on the public place by soldiers with as much ceremony as if it had been a political conspirator, and never kept any more dogs’ [North 1892a: p.237]. Brooke therefore appears to be immersed in his act of arch-colonialist, as North stated ‘[h]e did not wish to hurt his peoples’ prejudices, for the mere selfish pleasure of possessing a pet’ [North 1892a: p.237]. Furthermore, North indicates Brookes’ assertion of his own power extended to the minting of ‘copper coins and printed postage–stamps with his portrait on them’ [North 1892a: p.237].

During North’s visit to Sarawak, Margaret placed North in ‘a most luxurious room’ at the palace where she could ‘escape by a back staircase into the lovely garden’. [North 1892a: p.237]. North’s description of the Palace was that of ‘a brick built structure’ placed on a hill that was cool and comfortable. It contained an excellent Library as well as many other European Luxuries that included a bathroom

[Ponsonby 2002: p.51]. North's own descriptions of the Rani are of her giving North 'entire liberty, upon her visit to their home.' Indeed, North was not made to accompany Margaret on the 'somewhat monotonous constitutional' she took every afternoon; walks during which Margaret would cross 'the river to the one carriageable road, tramping nearly to its end and back, always dressed to perfection, and escorted by the Rajah or some of the officers. Margaret apparently timed these walks and did take North on one occasion, 'for a row before the splendid sunsets were over' [North 1892a: p.240].

North's shabby travelling attire was subject to Margaret's attentions, and she declared that one could see North's 'undraped knees' and that they were not only visible but 'risqué' [Ponsonby 2002: p.51]. North admitted that her 'dresses were becoming very ragged', and sent for 'a bit of undyed China silk' for a new garment to be made [North 1892a: p.240]. North however showed her displeasure of the Brookes' hospitality too, by ignoring rigorous etiquette and disappearing during formal dinners. She even created arguments that always seemed to erupt during nights when curry was on the menu.⁵⁷ North also made fun of Margaret's living arrangements in Sarawak and was openly competitive with the Brookes in relation to expertise in botany [Ponsonby 2002: p.54].

Furthermore, North persuaded the Rajah to send her 'off out of the way to his mountain-farm at Mattange' when he was visited by 'the new consul of Labuan' [North 1892a: pp.242-243]. North was comfortably all alone there with 'two Malay servants in a deserted bungalow' but she enjoyed the surrounding scenery [North 1875-84: MN/1/2 letters]; while there, everyone collected flora for North, including

⁵⁷ The North family, were used to eating exotic foods and North refers to such occasions in her early diaries regarding Middle-Eastern local dishes [North, 1893: p.95]. Curry was readily available in England from 1809 onwards. North may therefore have encountered the dish earlier than her visit to Sarawak, [Sweet 2001: p.107].

the North pitcher, and orchids. However, North states that the orchids had been pulled up for her most ruthlessly [North 1892a: p.238]. In *Kindred Nature* Barbara Gates, states, North's work at the Brookes' palace gave her opportunities to explore the previous botanical findings of others and to make 'useful correction to previous observations'. During her stay North cites a plant known as the 'mangosteen' that was thought not to flower. After hunting the plant down, she writes of its flowering, and of, personally seeing the 'whole trees full of blossoms, with rich crimson bracts and yellow petals'. North was therefore careful to remind her readers that only her own 'observations, tested and validated with utmost scientific care, would do' [Gates 1998: p.99]. On leaving Sarawak North noted that Margaret was not sorry about having 'the rare chance of a country woman to talk to' despite North's eccentricities [North 1892a: p.237].

Between 1876 and 1877, North visited Julia Margaret Cameron at her house in Ceylon [Sri Lanka]. On her arrival North wrote that Cameron had 'made up her mind at once' that she 'would photograph me' and 'for three days she kept herself in a fever of excitement about it' [North 1892a: p.315]. Cameron had 'virtually invented the close-up through 'taking a series of soft-focused portraits' [Lambourne 2005b: p.78]. Cameron dressed North up 'in flowing draperies of cashmere wool' let down her hair and made her 'stand with spiky cocoa-nut branches running' into her head. With the 'noonday sun's rays dodging' between the leaves as the slight breeze moved them, Cameron told North 'to look perfectly natural' with the thermometer standing at ninety-six degrees [North 1892a: p.315]. According to North, Cameron then placed her against 'a background of breadfruit leaves and fruit, nailed flat against a window shutter' and told her to look natural. This injunction failed, 'and though she [Cameron] wasted twelve plates, and an enormous amount of trouble, it was all in

vain she could only get a perfectly uninteresting and commonplace person on her glasses, which refuse to flatter' [North 1892a: p.315].

Cameron's portrait of North represents her as a Middle-Eastern Virgin Mary or a local woman from the Middle East despite the fact that the clothes she used were almost certainly local to Ceylon [Sri Lanka] It is therefore consistent with Orientalised portraits made by colonisers and the 'adaption of Eastern dress' by some 'western travelers up to the early decades of the nineteenth century'. As such, the North portrait by Cameron could be described as an 'interpretation rather than mimicry' [Riding 2008: p.48]. This 'genre developed and diversified during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Britain' with individuals projecting 'different identities, whether delusory, transitory or contradictory' - a 'cultural cross-dressing in art and in life' [Riding 2008: p.48]. Such portraits display an interest in the hybrid standing of people who had travelled abroad and their interest in cultures that could be crossed [Weeks 2008: p.22]. Edward Said in *Orientalism*, concedes that there is 'nothing especially controversial or reprehensible about such domestications of the exotic' because 'they take place between all cultures' [Said 2003: p.60].

Nineteenth-century European portrait painting included occidentals being portrayed as an Orientals in elaborate dress. The general purpose of these portraits was to establish a 'distinct experience' [Riding 2008: p.48]. Many 'were conceived specifically for public display' and/or for 'wider distribution through the ever-expanding possibilities of eighteenth and nineteenth-century print and media culture'. Holman Hunt was a part of this culture and his work was made into lithographic prints to sell to a wider public [Riding 2008: p.54]. Holman Hunt painted 'himself in Palestinian costume [See figure 148] despite the fact that he never adopted Eastern dress when travelling'. Other British artists, such as John Frederick Lewis, painted

themselves as indigenous persons, Lewis disguising himself as a ‘Ottoman gentleman in Cairo’ *In the Bezestien El Khan Khalil*, or the *Carpet Seller*, of 1860 [See figure 149] [Riding 2008: p.48].⁵⁸ Holman Hunt’s portrait, by contrast cannot ‘be interpreted as a gesture of solidarity with the Arab people’. Instead, ‘his self-fashioning as an Oriental [...] demonstrates the importance Holman Hunt placed on his role as artist/explorer’ [Riding 2008: p.48]. The portrait displays Holman Hunt holding a paint palette covered in oil paint and in front of him is a table upon which sits two long portraiture brushes. His appearance is one of an artist taking on the local clothes of a land in which he is travelling, while his Victorian long red flowing beard and gesturing arms persist in reminding us of portraits of Rembrandt. These portraits could however, be accused of displaying a rather limited vocabulary and thereby presenting a form of self-imposed post colonialism [Said 2003: p. 60].

Cameron’s photographic portrait of North was unashamedly theatrical and was part of a tradition that placed the idea of performance to the fore in the form of role-playing in Oriental costume [See figure 150]. This act was ‘emblematic not only of familiarity with the Orient as mediated through European theatre, art and literature, but also of the more interactive theatrical experience that developed within eighteenth-century urban culture called the masquerade’ [Riding 2008: p.52]. This experience had filtered down to Victorian portraiture via another earlier female traveler, Lady Montagu, who was responsible for the then fashionable women’s literature on the Harem [Riding 2008: p.57]. Her descriptions of Ottoman dress and her *letters* of 1763 accompanied by portraits painted of her in oriental attire were copied and adapted by female masqueraders’ [Riding 2008: p.52]. North’s own

⁵⁸ Frederick Lewis took photographs of himself for this portrait. As Weeks has stated, these photographs are so uncanny in their resemblance to the portrait that ‘it is curious this connection was not made by any of Lewis’s contemporaries’ [Weeks 2008: p.22]. These photographs display a ‘sharp division between foreground and background’ that, like many of North’s paintings, appear awkward in their execution.

comments on the Cameron portrait are self-effacing and slightly disparaging. They are certainly not those of a woman engaged wholly comfortably in indigenous cross-dressing. North was not given to conjuring up an imagined life for her art, nor did she seek to produce insistently voyeuristic or intrusive paintings of oriental subjects. Said contested that '[t]he methodological failures of Orientalism cannot be accounted for either by saying that the *real*/Orient is different from Orientalist portraits of it, or by saying that since Orientalists are westerners for the most part, they cannot be expected to have an inner sense of what the Orient is all about'. Said concludes that these propositions are false because he asserts that to 'suggest that there is such a thing as a real or true Orient' is to make 'an assertion about the necessary privilege of an "insider" perspective over an "outsider" one' [Said 2003: p.322]. Something that North did engage with in her landscapes of the other. North presented pictures of urbanscapes and industrial sites set within the countryside, which can be read as surveys of a painter looking towards the topographical works of other more serious illustrators and painters deliberately sent around the world for very specific information on Oriental landscapes for colonialist benefits.

During the 'nineteenth century the British surveyed cities and landscapes across the Middle East in circumstances that frequently had military connections' [Tromans 2008: p.104]. Topographical works were therefore 'more likely to be connected to military or engineering projects than to the art world'. The makers of these works consequently combined 'two types of artist' [Tromans, 2008: p.102] the cartographer and the landscape painter. In 1885, Holman Hunt made a map-like sketch of Jerusalem from the Dome of the Rock. Early British painters of the Oriental landscape were also 'in direct collusion with military operations in the way that [...] T.E. Lawrence's [...] archeologically motivated 1914 survey of Negev was to be'

[Tromans 2008: p.104]. These pictures often took the form of either watercolour paintings or prints because topographical artists were expected to return with works completed whilst on scientific expeditions [Hoozee 2007b: pp.180-181] and these forms of image making were easier to carry back. Rossetti criticized these oriental images and their makers, because the work all looked alike and were therefore 'equally uninteresting' [Tromans 2008: p.20] to him.

Topographical painters, who were regarded as high artists first, such as John Frederick Lewis, David Wilkie and Frederic Leighton, produced topographical landscapes and representations of urban space that often included the presence of local people busy working or at leisure within 'a healthy, communal [...] shared culture' [Tromans 2008: p.170]. These works are full of movement and life that other British and European artists found inspiring and challenging. Indeed, Some of these pictures have now become a pictorial testimony to lost architectural detail, as in the case of Lord Leighton's paintings of a Mosque in Damascus in 1873, which burned down in 1893 [Tromans 2008: p.171]. Lewis's own depictions of urban space were produced for increasingly 'ambitious development projects, particularly in Cairo' and therefore feature old buildings as focal points [Tromans 2008: p.170]. As Said makes clear, the urban work of these topographical artists played an inestimable role in 'the imagination, economy, political life, and social fabric' of a colonial actuality that was formed at the heart of a colonised metropolitan life [Said 1994: p.8].

Other British topographical painters took a more active interest in wilder landscapes. The British illustrator, Thomas Baines accompanied Livingston on his explorations of the Zambesi on a tour that was aimed at demonstrating the suitability of the river for colonial 'commercial traffic' [Fergusson 2004: p.156]. Baines worked primarily in watercolours and pencil in the field due to its immediacy when 'some

incident, person, animal or impressive landscape made an impact upon him'. Baines used oils when establishing a 'documentary character' because the medium was a 'good material for illustrating a biography' [Brandon 1999: p.xv] of events. However, Baines would only produce finished paintings in oil from previous sketches that had interested him. His methodology would include first producing a polished watercolour made from the sketches and then, when desirable, painting in oil, working it like an artisan in a studio into a formal composition that highlighted 'graphically important details' [Brandon 1999: p.xv]. Baines never intended his pencil sketches to 'be polished and finished works of art in themselves'. They were simply rough images [Brandon 1999: p.xv]. Baines' paintings however, are worked up conclusions taken from these sketches that form the basis of a lavish folio edition that he created after his dismissal from Livingston's party [Lambourne 2005b: p.435].

In contrast to Baines, North's chosen method of working in oils, often without the assistance of preliminary sketches, almost certainly restricted her choices of location and event, because in order to complete a work in oils she would have been compelled to return to a more conducive working environment. Sketches have been located on some of the backs of recently restored paintings once hanging in the North Gallery [Farley 2010] indicating that North did sometimes make sketches in pen first annotating them with colour references in situ. However, these would appear to have been untypical of her working methods.

Baines' paintings often include the reactions of animals either to the presence of man or to naturally occurring dangers, as in his painting *Elephant in the Shallows of the Shire River, the Steam Launch Firing* of 1859 [See figure 151]. Moreover, his views also revealed the great natural wonder of nature. In *Herd of Buffalo opposite Garden Island, Victoria Falls* of 1862-5 [See figure 152], for example, we find a

dramatic depiction of the waterfall, with a herd of Buffalo coming to the end of a ravine [Lambourne 2005b: p.435]. North's paintings, by contrast do not include highly dramatized imagery of this sort. While painting 0374, *Looking up Stream from the mouth of the St. John's River, Kaffraria*, North includes a river with a ravine and a mountain opposite, but there is no accompanying narrative incident. North's topographical landscape painting is therefore rather more obviously scientific in approach than that of Baines. Despite these differences in technique, North's paintings can be compared to Baines' to some extent. North's work bears similarities to Baines' foliage detail and style. In paintings 0389, *Cycads, Screw-pines and Bamboos, with Durban in the distance* [See figure 153], and 0384, *Kaffir Plumtrees overhanging St. John's River, Kaffraria*, we find a style of painted foliage and trees that can be readily compared to that of Baines. Both painters shared a similar approach to the grammar of drawing, that of the close topographical mapping of the landscape required by scientists and colonial developers alike.

North herself produced pictures of urban subjects, though, her paintings are not as detailed or as carefully painted as Lewis's *Courtyard of the Artist's House Cairo*, of 1841-51 [See figure 154], which collates extensive detail about the buildings in view. Despite this, her work still encompasses the same feel and initial drive to capture the essence and difference of the subject as witnessed in Lewis's drawing *Interior of Hagia Sophia* of 1840-1. North visited temples during her travels and often applied the awkward perspectives seen in other artists' works. In painting 0241, *Tomb of Ali ud Deen and Neem Tree, Delhi* [See figure 155], she projects a Leighton/Lewis style tableau containing recessed spaces [Tromans 2008: p.170] in which a lone figure sits within a composition reminiscent of Lewis's paintings of urban settings in Cairo.

The colour applied by North is rich in oranges and yellows. In paintings 0321, *Mosque of Delhi from the Lahore Gate of the Citadel*, and 0323, *Mosque of Lahore from the Palace* [See figure 156], North presents a classical, clearly delineated topographical layout of urban space that includes musicians playing on the roof of a nearby building (viewers right) and women conversing in a courtyard. In North's painting 0228 of the *Taj Mahal at Agra, North West India*, Bainesesque foliage cuts off the view of the monument, with only the important minarets and domes being present. North includes local women walking up the path and one other working some palm leaves on the floor. The painting involves strong tonal and colour contrasts between the foreground and background. Therefore, the composition [again] suggests that it may have been taken from an urban topographical photograph. In short, North's paintings not only combine cartographic and landscape painting influences, but often do so in what might be seen as a stylistically unclear or uncertain manner.

North's work was informed strongly by the paintings of Edward Lear who produced topographical paintings 'in search of picturesque subjects' and as we have seen, North, produced books of travel recollections [Lambourne 2005b: p.105]. North was a life-long friend of Lear whom she visited a number of times at his home in San Remo. On one visit in 1879 she relates in her diaries that he entertained her in the busy streets, by stopping to 'deliver each Joke' so that North thought 'the Italian's must wonder who the old pair of lunatics were'. He also made North taste such local delicacies as 'pellucid periwinkle soup, mulberry jam' [Ponsonby 2002: p.76].

North had watched Lear paint the *Quarries of Syracuse and Thermopylæ*, to which Lear added a rendering of a fig tree found in North's garden in Hastings as part of the foreground of the painting. He also applied a group of ravens to another painting, all of which were drawn from 'one old specimen with a broken leg, which

was fastened to an apple tree opposite his windows' at North's home [North 1892a: p.29]. This composite approach to painting by Lear is cited in North's diaries as taking place prior to May 1854 [North 1892a: p.29], placing it within the same time frame of the making of his well-known painting, *The Temple of Apollo at Bassae*, of 1854-55 [See figure 157]. Lear had returned to England from travels abroad armed with preparatory watercolour sketches for the painting to which he added an 'oak tree and rocks' directly onto the foreground of seven-foot canvas while in Leicestershire [Lambourne 2005b: p.105]. Later North would apply a similar composite technique as a way of communicating a sense of place

Lear associated with Holman-Hunt, who he referred to as his 'PRB Daddy', taking a brief course in 'Pre-Raphaelite instruction' from him in 1852 [Tromans 2008: p.105]. Lear's 'views of Beirut and Damascus' and his '1865 painting of *Jerusalem* [...] all seem to carry echoes of Hunt's influence' [Tromans 2008: p.106]. According to Bracegirdle, Holman Hunt's influence upon Lear extended to 'the use of a bright palette on a white ground' when painting *The Mountains of Thermopylae*, a painting Lear worked on in consultation with Holman Hunt during their time together in 1852. During the same year, Lear stayed at the North cottage. Bracegirdle concludes that it therefore seems reasonable to assume that Lear might have introduced North to Holman Hunt's ideas [Bracegirdle 1993: p.9] on painting. Indeed, Bracegirdle makes the point that North's paintings are closer to Holman Hunt's colour palette, than that of Lear's [Bracegirdle 1993: p.9].

North embarked upon a trip to India after Lear's own trip there and it was at this juncture in 1872 that she began to take travel painting seriously. Lear received many commissions for his Indian paintings even toward the end of his life [Lambourne 2005b: p.431]. Lear like North, was apparently 'overwhelmed by the visual variety'

of India and Sri Lanka, confessing in correspondence that he was ‘nearly mad from sheer beauty & wonder of foliage!’ Lear wrote, ‘O new palms!!! O flower’s !! O creature’s !! O beasts!!’ and that ‘anything more overpowering amazing cannot be conceived!!’[Lambourne 2005b: p.431].

Both North and Lear painted the Himalayas, and many of North’s paintings apply a topographical birds-eye view typical of Lear’s work that leads the eye down into a landscape or towards a town in the distance, or that looks down and across a water scene. This approach by North can be witnessed in paintings 0649, *Village of Tosari, Java, 6000 Feet Above the Level of the Sea*, 0010, *The Baths of Cauquenas in the Cordilleras South of Santiago, Chile* [See figure 158], and 0824, *View of from the Sierra of Theropolis, Brazil*. Lear’s earlier paintings of Beirut, Damascus and Petra also reveal elements that North was committed to compositionally. In Lear’s painting *Beirut* of 1861, we find a large blue mountain in the background, that is again reminiscent of Friedrich, but is a motif that North applies again and again in a manner reminiscent of Lear, especially in her paintings of the Himalaya’s.

Lear’s *Petra*, of 1859 [See figure 159], was described as one of ‘the most dramatic general views made by a Victorian artist’ [Tromans 2008: p.106]. It is an illustrative painting that captures geological formations in detail while conveying a strong sense of monumentality. The painting depicts mountains in a style reminiscent of that of Hudson River School painters. Lear’s Petra painting can be seen to ‘carry echoes’ of Holman Hunt’s influence in relation to its colouring [Tromans 2008: p. 106]. Lear’s smooth application of paint with its soft contours rather than fractured slabs, is very similar to that used later by North. Lear’s use of colour is similar to that of North in her sketchbook painting, number 50, (no date given) which applies the same rich colouration and a view into a landscape from a distance [See figure 160].

Lear often utilised sacred sites in his works, placing a cemetery at the top of his composition of *Constantinople from Eyüp* of 1858, where the viewer's eye is lead from the top of a hillside down toward the city of Constantinople [Istanbul] in the distance [Tromans 2008: p.106]. He would sometimes place a significant European feature into a painting of an oriental scene; for example, a European built road in his *View of the Pyramids Road, Giza*, of 1873 [See figure 161]. Like Lear, North also placed local landmarks within a landscape in order to indicate place to an audience. In painting 0063, North applies this system by placing the *Avenue of Royal Palms at Botafogo, Brazil* [see figure 162], with its palm lined avenue of 1872-3, being used as a visual indicator whilst, seemingly applying Lear's use of parallel lines converging on a vanishing point [Tromans 2008: p.106]. This applied system is very close to Lear's use of a similar pictorial device in his *View of the Pyramids Road, Giza*, 1873.

It is therefore possible to see North's painting style as one that in addition to combining scientific-cartographic and artistic landscape painting influences, also drew from the likes of Baines, Lear, and Holman Hunt, a sense of the importance of pictorial drama as well as an acceptance of the dramatic possibilities of the combination of representations taken from different sources. North's painterly practice, like her writing and her position as a woman as part of the Western colonialist enterprise, is therefore very much open to interpretation as a combination of sometimes contradictory forces.

Conclusion

Certain groups of people tend to go for conceptual art whilst others can't see the appeal at all. In the recent past Victorian architecture was held to be hideous, repulsive and ugly, yet now we do all we can to save what are regarded as some of the remaining architectural glories from that period [Kieran 2005: pp.210-211].

North's travels came to an end after visiting the Seychelles (where North was photographed at her easel [See figure 163]) and Jamaica in 1885. On finding herself quarantined during a small-pox outbreak, North developed delusions that the 'inmates were playing tricks' on her, and that they might 'rob and even murder' her [North 1893: p.309]. North states in her diaries that her 'nerves broke down from insufficient food and overwork in such a climate'. Despite this self-knowledge, North was still in fear for her life and wrote of 'hearing things said behind the low divisions', which had apparently not been said at all [North 1893: p.309].

On her return to the UK, North collected herself sufficiently to complete the work on her gallery, commenting in her diary that '[e]very painting had to be re-numbered so as to keep the countries as much together as possible' [North 1893: p.330]. North's gallery was decorated in the French continental style and with the use of a then modern English muted colour scheme. Ferguson, a supporter of Ruskin, designed a simpler façade for the gallery exterior in keeping with the muted aspects of the interior. In the design of her gallery, North adopted an approach that, according to Théophile Thoré writing in 1863, was very characteristic of British visual culture at that time [Hoozee 2007a: p11]. Thoré proclaimed that 'British individuality asserted itself' as a trait that was apparently 'lacking in French artists, who almost always obey

some higher authority, tradition or prejudice'; a view that runs very much contrary to later modernist appraisals of British art as a 'marginal tradition' [Hoozee 2007a: p.11]. Robert Hoozee, writing in *British Vision*, states that the Academy had only a limited impact on the British, who allowed for self-indulgences as well as individuality within their works, thereby asserting a localised sense of British artistic character [Hoozee 2007a: p.12].

North had no children and her life's work was her legacy. North felt that her gallery and its works would be useful for the public to visit and ponder over. In her letters to Hooker, North wrote that 'no one can tell how soon death comes & it would be a great happiness to know my life has not been spent in vain that I can leave something behind which will add to the pleasure of others & not discredit my fathers old name' [North 1879-1896: MN/1/4:Kew.North Gallery Letters]. North also stated that she intended to access the gallery's studio room, built so that North could 'walk in & paint occasionally', when she could no longer 'wander over the other side of the world' [North 1879-1896: MN/1/4: Kew. North Gallery Letters].⁵⁹

North gave over the running of the gallery completely on the June 7, 1882 (1882/3). North wrote to Hooker concerned with getting the 'matter settled before that day' as it would 'save all the unpleasantness'. Kew wasted no time in taking over the day-to-day business of running the gallery, suggesting perhaps that the relationship between Kew and North had not been that smooth [North 1879-1896: MN/1/4:Kew.North Gallery Letters MF]. *The Daily News* recorded the opening of the North Gallery in June 1882, stating that '[s]ome notables in the scientific, artistic, and

⁵⁹ North kept a key for her studio and had permission to use it for the remaining years of her life. The studio was also to be used by other artists, who were able to avail themselves of a quiet room in which to work at Kew (after acquiring permission to do so). North wrote of another key being held by the house-keeper, appointed to live in a small flat attached to the gallery [North 1882-1938: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters].

social circles were present' [*Daily News* 1882]. The paper states that the opening was not 'attended by [a] preliminary flourish of trumpets', that little had 'been made in the matter' and that 'very few persons' were probably [...] aware [...] that for some time past there has been springing up in the pleasure grounds near the Botanic Garden's a handsome red brick building'. The paper stated that Fergusson in a 'public spirited impulse, declined all remuneration for his plans as well as for his services in supervising the details of the construction' [*Daily News* 1882].

After North had finished the work on her gallery, she 'tried to find a perfect home in the country with a ready-made old house and garden' which she could organise in her 'own fashion' [North 1892b: p.330]. In 1886, North found her new home in Alderley, Gloucestershire: a house rented from a General Hale, [North 1892b: p.331] which North described as 'far from the madding crowd' of 'callers and lawn tennis' [North 1892b: p.330]. North managed to produce some paintings of the surrounding English countryside. In sketchbook painting 024, there is a landscape where we find the inclusion of a garden, which is, perhaps, North's own garden in Alderley [See figure 164]. North was vocal in her detestation of tennis and badminton and she took great pains in making a planted terraced garden out of 'the dead level of the lawn-tennis ground' that occupied part of the grounds of her house on arrival [North 1892b: p.331]. North says in her diary that she 'yearned to find a quiet place' after her 'strength had gone' and 'she no longer had a desire to visit the once longed for tropics' [Ponsonby 2002: p.121]. Lack of strength or no, North was soon boasting that her new garden was becoming 'famous among those who love plants', adding that she hoped 'it may serve to keep my enemies, the so called "nerves", quiet for the few years which are left me to live' [North 1892b: p.330]. North's established garden at Alderley contained many plants from around the globe and, according to Laura

Ponsonby in *Marianne North at Kew Gardens*, '[e]veryone provided her with specimens'. This everyone included Kew, who gave North specimens of 'all kinds of unusual plants', her 'nieces, who brought 'alpines' from Switzerland, and the famous garden designer Gertrude Jekyll who gave North contributions from her own garden [Ponsonby 2002: p.121]. North utilised the plants she found ready to hand in her garden. Rather than cutting them down, she adapted to what was before her [North 1892b: p.334]. Alderley was a paradise for birds as well as plants. North wrote of the laws provided in the village to ensure their further preservation [North 1892b: p.332].

At this time, North received a thank you note from Queen Victoria, concerning her gift of a gallery to Kew. This note was sent to North via Sir Henry Ponsonby. North told Hooker in a letter dated April 23 that '[t]he more I think the more I like to have that from the Queen! [...] She could have given me nothing which I would have valued more' [North 1882-1938: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters].⁶⁰

North was visited in her new home by the Asa Gray's, and Joseph Hooker, North's sister recalled that 'the spare rooms were seldom empty'. However, in the autumn of 1888, North became very ill, and, according to Susan Morgan, writing in *Recollection-Being the Autobiography of Marianne North*, she was afraid that she was going to die. As a matter of expedience, North sent the manuscript of her diary to John Murray, the famous Victorian editor. The original diary is now held with the North family papers at Rougham [Morgan 1993: p.xxi]. According to her sister Catherine, North was 'never quite free from physical discomfort' from this point

⁶⁰ In the letter from Queen Victoria, dated August 28, 1884, sent from Osbourne House by Henry F. Ponsonby, it was stated that '[t]he Queen regrets to learn from her ministers that her Majesty's Government have no powers of recommending to the Queen any mode of publically recognizing your liberality'. The letter concluded that 'Her Majesty is desirous of making in a personal manner her sense of your generosity, and in commanding me to convey the Queens thanks to you, I am to ask your acceptance of the accompanying photograph of her Majesty, to which the Queen has appended her signature' [North 1882-1938: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters].

onwards. Weariness, the ‘enemy of voyages’, was ever present and constant noises never ceased [North 1892b: p.336].

North had become increasingly deaf over the years, becoming decidedly worse after her homecoming. As a result, she was ‘separated [...] painfully from the pleasure of daily intercourse with those around her’ [North 1892b: p.336]. Even in the countryside, North still heard what Catherine described as disembodied human voices whose ‘words were often taunts’, upon which Catherine blamed her sisters deafness [North 1892b: p.334].

North was nursed carefully and even managed to rally for a while, but her life had become a constant suffering by this stage of her illness. During a visit from her favourite nephew ‘the unkind voices fled, and the relief of this was immense’ [North 1892b: p.335]. However, it is at this juncture that North writes of bleeding while out walking [North 1892b: p.335]. North’s sister attributed her illnesses to ‘a long exposure to all sorts of bad climatic influences’ [North 1892b: p.335]. North’s diaries end with her stating that ‘[n]o life is so charming as a country one in England, and no flowers are sweeter or more lovely than the primroses, cowslips, bluebells, and violets which grow in abundance’ [North 1892b: p.330].

North died on August 30, 1890, and was ‘buried in the quiet green church yard at Alderley’ [North 1892b: p.335]. *The Times* newspaper posted an obituary by Joseph Hooker on September 8, 1890. Hooker’s testimonial to North was one that declared, ‘it would be impossible to overrate’ the usefulness of her work, and the scientific importance it levied [1890]. North’s sister Catherine nevertheless seems to have thought that North’s death was a timely one. Catherine questioned that if North’s life had lasted another ten years would she have ‘been content to sit down and wait for old age in the lovely green nest she had prepared for herself?’. Catherine also

makes reference to North's kindness due to her keeping 'more men employed upon her [...] garden than were really needed for its work [...] because [...] giving them work was the best way in which she could help those poor people whose lives were so hard' [North 1892b: p.336]. To which Catherine added a further comment that North's kindness was often overlooked due to 'her rule of life', making North 'often seem indifferent to other people's wider schemes and charities' [North 1892b: p.336]. North's inheritance enabled her to enjoy her life the way she saw fit, and it was a life based upon individuality. Catherine's own description of her sister was of a person 'intolerant of "Rules" in all things (except perhaps music)' [North 1892b: p.336]. North was certainly scornful of the rules set within art [North 1892b: p.336]. North's love of nature utilised art, but ignored it as a serious subject and turned it into something useful to her that would ultimately end up as part of a composite scheme.

In her postscript to the North diaries, Catherine cites five plants named after her sister. However, according to Huxley writing in *A Vision of Eden*, only four plants now bear North's name. They include, *Crinum northianum* from Borneo, the pitcher plant *Nepenthes northiana*, from Sarawak, *Northea seychellana* from the Seychelles, and the *Kniphofia northiae* from South Africa [see figure 165] [Huxley 2002: p.6]. Excluded from this list is the *Areca Northiana*, [North 1892b: p.337] which now bears a different name. As a final tribute to North, Catherine stated that '[t]he long hard journeys were over, and, alas, with them was gone the greater portion of that indomitable strength which had seemed never to flag'. North had been triumphant 'through poisonous climates', often 'under incessant work, fatigue, bad food, and all those hardships which few women, travelling absolutely alone, would have dared to face' [North 1892b: p.330]. Catherine acknowledged that North was respected and that 'good men everywhere were ready and eager to help her', and that North's work

was always her first point of focus [North 1892b: p.331]. Catherine concludes that North ‘travelled, not to pass the time, as [...] globetrotters do’, but to create ‘a monumental work’, but in finishing her work North had to fight ‘bravely against increasing weakness’ and that when it was done her strength was gone, and ‘the restful life she had dreamed of in her pretty Gloucestershire garden was not to be’ [North 1892b: p.331].

A community celebration day ‘inspired by the work of Marianne North’ was held at Kew Gardens on Sunday October 11, 2009. The day was a celebration of progress on the North gallery restoration programme during Kew’s 250th Anniversary Year and was supported by the National Heritage Lottery Fund [Community Celebration 2009]. The programme of events during the day included activities that ran from 11am to 3.30pm, including a World Tea Party held in the Temperate House where visitors could taste teas that North may have encountered upon her travels, Rangoli demonstrations by volunteers from the Shri BAPS Swaminaryan Madir, Neasden and interactive Henna Painting on offer in the glasshouses [Community Celebration 2009]. The celebration day was planned as an inclusive event and a celebration of multicultural Britain as well as of the life and work of North. The aims of the celebration day therefore diverged markedly from Joseph Hooker’s view that the mass of the general public should be discouraged from coming to Kew on the grounds that they compromised its standing as a scientific institution.

Within the North Gallery itself, a talk was given about Hindu sacred plants represented by paintings in the gallery, alongside a demonstration of a traditional South Asian form of floor decoration. There were also handmade banners of batik silk inspired by the exotic travels of North and plants in Kew Gardens. These silks were provided by the Marjory Kinnon School and the Feltham Arts association together

with the artist Sofie Layton [Community Celebration 2009]. Yurts were placed around the garden in close proximity to the North gallery where one could paint plants as part of a workshop that encouraged participants to transform a piece of nature into an artwork that had been inspired by North's intense colour palette. Paper or canvas was not used, but 'bark leaves, wood and other natural materials'.

Visitors to the celebration day were invited to engage with contemporary technology as part of an Animation Special that enabled viewers to bring North's works into the present day, allowing them to come to life. This activity was accompanied by a workshop for families that made use of actual images from the gallery [Community Celebration 2009]. Another instructive talk, this time given by the Kew Conservation Team on the restoration of the North gallery, took place in the adjoining Shirley Sherwood gallery. The main event of the day however, made use of the 'unique site-specific' North gallery as a place for the Puspallata Dance Academy from Osterley to perform traditional Indian dances that were inspired by North's travels in South Asia and that made references to Marianne's experiences taken directly from her diaries [Community Celebration 2009] [See figure 166].

The celebration day at Kew crossed time by bringing people living in Britain today together with a display from the 1800s. North's world can therefore, be seen to have been, transported into the sphere of a post-colonial history. The onset of postmodernist attitudes ushered in by the Duchampian *ready-made*⁶¹ led not only to the questioning of limits imposed on the production of art, but also an acceptance that

⁶¹ Despite the contemporary artworld's acceptance of collage-montage as a dominant artistic technique, the legacy of the Duchampian *ready-made* does not sit easily within conventional forms of visual display. Although there is still some historical speculation, it seems likely that Duchamp did not in fact exhibit *Fountain*, his seminal *ready-made* of 1917—a male urinal turned on its back and signed 'R. Mutt'—publically. Nevertheless, conceptions of *Fountain* continue to reverberate in the artistic and art-historical imagination. Today, one can see a facsimile of *Fountain* sitting awkwardly in Tate Modern, but the key strength of the work lies in its ability to operate as art without the need to display an actual object.

art exists only as a construct in relation to wider artworld discourses. Collage-montage and the *ready-made* have become an integral part of the critical production of art the world over. This includes contemporary art associated with a critical understanding of cultural difference and colonialist relations of dominance. The appropriation of techniques associated with modernist and postmodernist art by non-western artists has altered the boundaries within which artworks sit. The art world can no longer be regarded as wholly western, in application or thought.

North's colonial position is still problematic, however, despite our now being able to re-read North in the light of contemporary theory. Arguably, we are all marked one way or another by the taint of colonialism, and the celebration day certainly did not attempt to absolve or 'forgive ignorance and demagoguery' [Said 1994: p.35], but instead allowed the past to be exhumed and analysed respectfully. Kew appears to have attempted to place North at the centre of a post-colonial event, drawing upon modern forms of display and curatorial thematics that include, gender, ethnicity, and race. Writing in *Limina* Monica Anderson argues that '[w]hile it is certainly true that North's mapping of the world through her art and her journey appear at first sight to replicate familiar patterns of imperialism/colonialism, it is also possible to see a broadening of the drawn boundaries of the given cultural maps in her visual and textual associations' [Anderson 2003: p.68]. North's own history arguably contains, what Said has described as a 'subjective core' of human experience, one that is 'accessible to analysis and interpretation' [Said 1994: p.35] that should not be overwritten simply because her life and works are marked by colonialism. North was a female painter of the nineteenth century, whose life, because of the rise of feminist theory in the twentieth century, has now been added to the feminist canon. North was not a feminist, however. She did not write feminist manifestos or pamphlets and she

did not fight the good fight. North did, however, utilise and build upon other women's hard fought positions to enable her own work in the context of her own times. In *Chilean Flora Through the eyes of Marianne North*, Guy Brett states that the North project sits 'outside the professional contexts of both science and art and that it reflects a 'tension between scientific and artistic ways of seeing' [Brett 1999: p.33]. Brett goes on to state that the North gallery exists within 'several worlds simultaneously' [Brett 1999: p.33]. North was important in relation to certain traditions within English history surrounding the status of amateurs because she managed, largely as a result of her eventual financial independence, to avoid 'the demands of increasing specialisation and rigid intellectual identities' [Brett 1999: p.33]. This avoidance of specialisation and intellectual rigidity allowed North to go beyond what was conventionally part of a Victorian woman's life to find another far less ordinary.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund UK conservation programme, appears to have breathed new life into the North gallery. New projects are ongoing that include an opportunity for visitors to sponsor an individual painting for a set number of years, as a means of maintaining the North gallery's current restoration program [Farley 2010]. If the North gallery restoration does bring new audiences to its door, the Shirley Sherwood gallery may have helped in this regard. Designed by Walters & Cohen and physically linked to the North gallery via a passage-way, it is a westernized metal Zen box with a central white cube interior display space. New audiences for North's work may now access the North gallery through an engagement with exhibitions held within this new space. Kew, have also developed an interface within North's old studio space in her gallery. It seems that North's wish for an interactive space for people to engage with and learn is not yet over.

The North gallery has, then, (despite moving in and out of fashion) survived. The longevity of the North gallery is to be applauded, especially in light of the twentieth century's culling of Victorian culture as part of modernism, which saw the destruction of many important Victorian buildings. Matthew Sweet writing in *Inventing the Victorians*, states that The Bloomsbury Group of the early twentieth century produced a 'persuasive and witty debunking' of previous 'nineteenth century worthies' [Sweet 2001: p.xv] and their viewpoints have, along with others, tended to obscure the Victorians' development of a modern world [Sweet 2001: p.105]. At the beginning of the twentieth century, formalist design and architecture provided a visual blueprint for the future one that would no longer replicate anything from the past. In looking towards this projected future, there was derision of 'Tudor rusticity', 'Georgian stateliness' and the 'bourgeois pomp of the Neo-Classical style'. Art critic Herbert Read declared that 'none of these styles can for a moment be considered in relation to the city of the future' [Read 1992: p.502]. All of which was in keeping with Wilfred Blunt's criticism in 1978 that the North gallery was a '[w]himsical [...] '[m]useum piece' [Blunt and Stearn, 2000: p.277].

The British artist John Piper and his friend and colleague the poet John Betjamen, would affirm their personal enthusiasms for traditional architecture. [Spalding 2009: p.101]. Both men published work in *Architectural Review* and the *Shell Guides* [Spalding 2009: p.3, 107 and 442] in an attempt to shift people's perceptions and relationships towards their architectural heritage [Spalding 2009: p.109], ultimately contributing to the development of English Heritage Tourism. Piper had an interest in British romanticism [Spalding 2009: p.78], and would be one of the founding members of the British Neo-Romantic Movement in existence between 1935 and 1955 [Spalding 2009: p.495]. Many establishment figures labeled the

movement antiquated and decorative [Spalding 2009: p.345]. The confirmed modernist Ben Nicolson was moved to call Piper a traitor [Spalding 2009: p.346] because of his preoccupation with traditional styles, rather than purely formalist ones. The Neo-Romantics would re-establish an interest in the architecture as well as the paintings and designs of the past that would later be re-established in the 1960s and the later 1980s as part of Victorian revivalism. Further to this, by the late 1960s the man and woman on the street ‘were beginning to share [...] evident dissatisfaction at the “new world” of architectural modernism [...]. Young designers were also exploring ‘nostalgia’ as a theme to work with’ and ‘magazines like *Design* urged architects to show more consideration for the environmental ramifications’ in their work [Sandbrook 2006: p.634]. As a consequence, local authorities became interested in preserving and renovating Victorian properties and slums, rather than raising them to the ground. Planners were beginning to think about ‘the virtues of the individual and the eclectic’ [Sandbrook 2006: p.634].

North’s idea of a self-contained gallery was not a new one. The German scientist Alexander von Humbolt (1769-1859) had envisaged the need for ‘panoramic works’ of nature that would ‘raise the feeling of admiration for nature’ and ‘increase the knowledge of the works of creation’ [Novak 1997: p.71]. Humbolt believed that works of this sort should be contained in museums where the doors are ‘thrown open [...] to the public’ and that are ‘erected in [...] large cities’. North’s polyptych gallery conforms to Humbolt’s idea of a ‘panoramic building, containing alternating pictures of landscapes of different geographical latitudes and from different zones of elevation’ [Novak 1997: p.71].⁶²

⁶² North’s gallery was described by the *Daily News* of 1882, as an ‘instructive collection’ and its catalogue ‘finished for the use of students who may wish to paint pictures of specimens in the grounds outside’ and that the studio within the gallery was ‘elegantly furnished for the use of students who may wish to paint pictures [Daily News 1882].

Frederic Edwin Church was influenced by the idea of panoramas, as were many other members of The Hudson River School, including Thomas Cole and Albert Bierstadt. The panoramic manner played a formative role in forging a uniquely American phenomenon with regard to the depiction of nature on a grand scale [Lambourne 2005b: p.152]. Church's painting *The Heart of Andes* [See figure 167] went some way to explore Humbolt's panoramic visions of nature. Lear owned a copy of the painting, stating that it 'hangs always before me' declaring Church to be 'the greatest landscape artist after Turner' [Lambourne 2005b: p.432]. William Holman Hunt also proclaimed to have 'seen the future': 'a global destiny' in which 'painters committed to telling the whole truth about nature' would go out into the world 'two by two' as 'Christ had sent out his disciples to preach'. Lear was to have been one of these messianic artists, signaling a desire to join Holman Hunt's quest [Tromans 2008: p.105]. Nothing came of this particular venture, however, despite Lear's work exhibiting distinctly panoramic tendencies [Tromans 2008: pp.106-107]. This idea was to re-appear during the twentieth century when, as part of the British Neo-Romantic Movement, John Piper sought to develop a vision of something significant that went beyond the ordinary as it appeared and that would 'contain the whole world' [Spalding 2009: p.160]

North not only constructed a Humbolt-like gallery, in which to encourage contemplation, she also made panoramic-style paintings. Consider here, for example North's sketchbook painting 0290, no date given [See figure 168] which, because of its extreme elongation, is perhaps better described as a diorama when compared to the truly panoramic works of Church's the *Heart of Andes*, or Lear's *Jerusalem*, of 1865, [See figure 169] and Holman Hunt's *Bethlehem from the North*, of 1892-3 [See

figure 170] North's topographical paintings also allude to these applied formats and can be compared to paintings 167, 169, 170, accordingly. In North's painting, 0024, of a *Sea-shore near Valparaiso, Chile* [See figure 171], a shore line is depicted that includes water and mountains and vegetation, similar to Church's *Heart of the Andes*, North's applied painting technique appears softer, [like a Church] the sea winds itself around the mountains but is cut off compositionally, while alluding to a vaster landscape. The space set within the painting is arguably deliberate, and is therefore in keeping with Church's outcomes. In painting 0524, North has painted *View of Icod, Tenerife*, (no date given) [See figure 172]. The painting looks across at a town near to the sea, with nearby, farmland, mirrored in Holman Hunt's *Bethlehem from the North*. A format typical of topographically applied compositional systems, used by many artists including Thomas Seddon (1821-1856), who painted his *Jerusalem and the Valley of Jehoshaphat from the Hill of Evil Counsel* in (1854-5), through to David Bomberg's (1890-1957), *Jerusalem, Looking to Mount Scopus* in 1925. Holman Hunt, who painted this picture two to three years after North's death, arguably applied this system to even earlier works of his own, such as *The Scapegoat* (1854) [a firm favorite of North's] and in his paintings *The Plain of Rephaim from Mount Zion Jerusalem* in 1855-60 and *Nazareth* of 1855-1860, which both include views of a townscape from above. Both North and Holman Hunt's paintings apply the same compositional system of looking across a terrain of vegetation towards a townscape, where towers stand high above lower placed housing, with a clear blue sky above. The terrain in North's painting contains fields delineated, and leading down into the town, in the same manner, Holman Hunt has used a delineated, patternation, of what appear to be, olive groves.

In North's painting, 020, of a *View of the Lake Donner, Sierra, Nevada*, (no date given) [see figure 173], a landscape is presented similar to Lear's terrain landscapes, depicted in his painting, *Jerusalem*, 1865. North presents a terrain with a central cutting through a rugged mountainous rockscape. Whereas Lear's painting depicts a similar looking central cutting through a rugged rocky, landscape. Lear's painting contains a bright blue sea placed into the far distance, whereas North has placed a clear blue view of a lake. The colouration used by North in her painting is similar to Lear's too, with its Linden green grass, and lichen scrappily placed in both paintings over a cool stone with blue flecks. Creamy highlights are also placed in comparison with a taupe shadow. All of these paintings try to contain a vast landscape, which often include mountains, the sea and local vegetation, or more often than not, all three elements

The word panorama was 'derived from two Greek words' which together signified the notion of an 'all-encompassing view' and was 'originally intended to describe vast stationary 360-degree paintings'. However, it was to be 'rapidly applied to virtually any painting displaying a broad scene' [Lambourne 2005b: p.154]. As such, the panoramic view was to affect the 'universal visual perceptions' of the Victorian age [Lambourne 2005b: p.151]. Humbolt's vision initiated 'a craze for 'panoramic' views that swept around the world' during the nineteenth century, with many of the artists of the day, including Thomas Girtin and Phillip Reinagle, (Reinagle had provided paintings for Thornton's *The Temple of Flora*,) producing panoramic views [Lambourne 2005b: pp.152-153]. The North gallery extended these visions but on an infinitely vaster scale and in a far more profoundly fragmented manner. On their own, North's experiments with diorama style images do not

conform wholly to Humbolt's vision. The North gallery does and goes substantially beyond it.⁶³

Today, artists habitually seek to place us in the midst of immersive visions through video installations and the use of various forms of interactive technology. However, any attempt to compare the North gallery directly to these contemporary immersive visual experiences as a form of prototypical installation art would be misguided. In *Installation Art*, Claire Bishop defines a work of installation art as something into which the viewer physically enters, and which can be described as theatrical, immersive or experimental [Bishop 2010: p.6]. Bishop then goes on to add that the 'sheer diversity in terms of appearance, content and scope of the work produced today' under the title of installation art as well as the 'freedom with which the term is used, almost preclude it from having any meaning'. The term installation, she argues, has now 'expanded to describe any arrangement of objects in any given space' that could also include 'a conventional display of paintings on a wall' [Bishop 2010: p.6]. There is, however, Bishop continues, a 'fine line between an installation of art and installation art', adding that this 'ambiguity has been present since the term first came into use in the 1960s' as a derivative of the term 'installation shot' used in photographic arrangements or ensembles [Bishop 2010: p.6]. On the face of it the North gallery does appear to comply with the accepted concept of the art installation. North's work is not, however, an art installation. Because the term installation art is a modern concept with connections to the conceptual art movements of the 1960s which sought to 'throw out aesthetic process altogether' and to condemn art as being

⁶³ North wrote in her letters that she gave the gallery and the paintings she made in different parts of the world for 'the purpose of being exhibited to the public at all hours when the gardens are opened to them & that the authorities will undertake the care of them, & to reprint the catalogue of the paintings (when the first edition I gave is exhausted)'. North requests that she be allowed 'to add to the collections of paintings & finish the decorations of the gallery, vestibule, & verandah' [North 1882-1938: MN/2/3 North Gallery Letters].

‘contaminated by elitism and crass marketeering’ [Appignanesi and Garrett 1995: p.44]. The North gallery is ‘a singular totality’ into which the viewer physically enters [Bishop 2010: p.6] which does link it going forward to installation artworks of our own time. The North gallery is however an ‘installation of art’—a secondary position, more in keeping with the tradition of cabinets of curiosity.

The problematic uncertainty of North’s place in relation to nineteenth-century artistic and scientific practice and the fact that her gallery’s significance can be read in a variety of ways has been echoed by problems related to the display of North’s painting outside the North gallery. There has been a tendency to decide North’s paintings by housing them in institutions such as the British Library and the Natural History Museum where they can be viewed safely as scientific documents. Major art museums in the UK, including Tate Britain (which houses the national collection of British art), have no examples of North’s painting in their permanent collections. The Shirley Sherwood Gallery (a new white cube gallery space adjoining the North Gallery) included some of North’s paintings in its first exhibition, *Treasures of Botanical Art*, during the renovation of the North gallery in 2008 [Farley 2008].⁶⁴ This new space is in effect an adjunct to the North gallery, which continues to defy any simple or straightforward classification as either an artistic or scientific focus for visual display.

The undoubted aura of the North Gallery has attracted its own set of pilgrims. Over many years, they have placed greasy finger marks on the decorative paintings

⁶⁴ The exhibition combined items drawn from Kew Garden’s Archive and Library and the Shirley Sherwood collection. The Shirley Sherwood gallery publicity sheet of March-December 2008 states that the aim of the exhibition was to ‘show the scope of the two collections and the range of botanical art as a whole’ and to provide ‘an overview of the most significant artists from c.1700 through to contemporary artists’. The sheet concluded that the exhibition highlighted the ‘relationships between works of quite different periods that came into being to serve different purposes’ [Sherwood Gallery 2008].

within the gallery as well as upon North's effigy, confirming Benjamin's conception of a continuing link between art and ritual [Benjamin 1992: p.217]. The North gallery and its aura—its particular presence in time and space—have had a significant impact on the showing of North's work. The contents of the North Gallery were never meant to be dismantled and displayed elsewhere. North gave explicit instructions regarding this matter. These instructions have created difficulties with regard to the showing of North's work outside of the confines of Kew. At The Mona Bismarck Foundation in Paris in 2007, North's work was exhibited in space adjacent to one containing the work of the contemporary Botanical painter Margaret Mee. The exhibition could not use any of the paintings from the North Gallery, only paintings by North held within the Kew Archive and Library. The curators of the exhibition were forced to display facsimiles of paintings by North held in the North Gallery, decorating the exhibition space in imitation of the North Gallery's interior [Farley 2008].

Only a very few of North's painting were exhibited as part of the opening of the Shirley Sherwood gallery in 2008. At the time, most of the paintings held within the North Gallery were undergoing restoration as part of the gallery's general refurbishment. The paintings were re-hung after the walls of the gallery had been treated for mould [Farley 2008]. When North's paintings were exhibited within the Shirley Sherwood gallery it was clear how much they depended on the aura of the North Gallery. Outside the gallery and in limited numbers, they lost much of there former presence.

North's work can be viewed as amateur in the literal sense of the word. She was a lover of plants and topography 'who collected for collecting sake and who evolved from amateur-wealthy, often aristocratic men and women with means, who indulged in travel and collecting and who in the eighteenth century, often carried out

scientific experiments' [Huxley 2010: pp.86-87]. By the nineteenth century, a distinction had developed between 'collectors who collected for study', who were usually professional and natural scientists, and a 'destructive army of amateurs', who were described as 'fad collectors' [Huxley 2010: p.91]. North's position is that of an enthusiastic collector who sometimes hunted down specimens for professionals such as Joseph Hooker. Her inconsistent knowledge of the environment meant that she was part of a destructive and disruptive element that emerged along with colonial expansion.

North was not a professional natural philosopher, despite her many connections, which included Charles Darwin. North agreed with Darwin's conclusions surrounding God and nature, as well as his theories on hybridity. However, North's view of science was a decidedly amateur one that often failed to comprehend its full implications. During the late nineteenth century, natural science was transforming into modern science. During North's lifetime, the space allowing for the involvement of keen amateurs was coming to an end.

From the '1800s collecting had become an organized and respectable profession and was firmly tied to the expanding empires' [Huxley 2010: p.91]. European museums and collections were growing exponentially and eclipsed the private collections of individuals. William Hooker's Museum of Economic Botany was forced to compete with large institutions rather than private collections. North's gallery, by contrast exemplified the earlier concept of the self-contained collection of curiosities.

For the most part, during the nineteenth century the cult of the cabinet of curiosities and of amateur collectors was weakened by the growth of museums and other forms of public display [Huxley 2010: p.91]. North's gallery was seen to be out

of step with the times. North, the polymath, was identified with amateur collectors of natural history in the eighteenth century rather than their replacements, the scientific specialists of the nineteenth century made up of professional rather than amateur botanists, mineralogists, zoologists, entomologists and paleontologists [Huxley 2010: p.91]. More accurately, North was betwixt and between amateur and professional, and her gallery somewhere between open public institution and closed private collection. Throughout much of the twentieth century '[m]odernist principles dominated the major architectural schools, and almost every architect in the country [UK]' took their lead from the Swiss architectural pioneer, Le Corbusier, who was 'unquestionably the most influential urban planner in the world' [Sandbrook 2006: p.622]. As a consequence, the eclecticism of the North Gallery was seen as radically out of step with the times. It is only during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries that the rather more complex nature of the North gallery as a site of display has emerged.

All modern techniques of art making have been rigorously excluded from the North Gallery. North chose not to display photographic materials alongside her paintings. Within the gallery, North is represented by the rather antiquated form of a bust rather than a photograph. No photographs are present to compare and contrast with her topographical paintings. North presented her gallery as if it was an antiquated space. Internally, the gallery is highly decorated in accordance with the domestic fashions of the late nineteenth century: Chintz mixed with Chiniserie and Japonisme. Externally, Fergusson's design is in keeping with Ruskin's love of plainness as well as Fergusson's personal interest in vernacular Asian architecture. The North Gallery was simultaneously a private domestic and public space. North wanted to be perceived as an extraordinary woman. She presented her life's work within a structure that alluded to past styles while maintaining its presence within her

own time as a focus for images of domesticity and colonialist expansion. North's work traded on history, exoticism and tradition. She placed her work within Kew Gardens rather than in a privately built gallery, thereby projecting her work as a legacy for future generations.

North's decision to place her work within the confines of a scientific institution was a considered one. North intended her paintings to be read scientifically. North was serious about the work she made and believed that it had a serious scientific function. Over time, however, North's paintings have come to be seen more as artworks than exact scientific illustrations. North's paintings were perceived to be contentious during her own lifetime. They did not fit easily with the rigid conventions of botanical illustration even at the time she painted them.

North's legacy was/is, in her ability to have made the 'exhibited an extension of the exhibitor' [Anderson 2003: p.69]. North presents us with 'another kind of order' it is one of challenging irregularity [Anderson 2003: p.68]. Her work was un-decidable in the nineteenth century and it still is today. This un-decidability arises from the fact that North chose to combine a myriad of drawing languages in her painting. North was not an artist, nor was she a professional botanical painter. She was an amateur without extended formal training. In making pictures, North disregarded the established scientific and artistic rules of making. North thought nothing of combining differing artistic and scientific modes of representation, because she did not perceive them as being utilised for different purposes. North's lack of academic training meant that she was not fully adept in the language of image making and its expected outcomes.

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