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BEYOND THE FRAME

Feminism and visual culture, Britain 1850–1900

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London and New York

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THE 'WORLDING' OF ALGERIA

Feminism, imperialism and visual culture

Worlding

> The climate is delicious[,] the sea & distant mountains more beautiful than words & pencil can express & then the new vegetation & the new animals[,] the wonderfully picturesque town & people give one so much to do with one's 6^2 senses . . . I did not expect anything half so wonderfully beautiful as I find. I never saw such a place! . . . I can't draw [it in] the least. . . . The place intoxicates one.[1]

Visiting Algeria in the winter of 1856, Barbara Leigh Smith (Bodichon) put her first impressions on paper for her women friends. She illustrated her correspondence copiously, sending with this letter to Marian Evans pages of sketches (Figures 3.1, 3.2). The recipient was delighted, relishing the 'wonderful descriptions from Barbara Smith of the glorious scenery and strange picturesque life she finds in Algiers' and the exuberance with which the artist 'dashes down sketches with her pen and ink, making arrow heads to indicate the bark of Jackals!'[2] Confessing to an overpowering seduction, this letter registers a wonder at unexpected pleasures and sensory delight so often acknowledged by western travellers. Yet desire oscillates with denial; seduction with repudiation. As the writer admits, visual pleasure was accompanied by retraction: although Algeria is picturesque, it is impossible to draw or paint. Equally impressed by its mystery, strangeness and exoticism, the writer struggles with Algeria's intractability, its resistance to visual representation. Algeria is perceived not so much as oppositional to the west, but as beyond its frames of reference and visual representation, despite or perhaps because of the artistic compositions it offered.

This letter introduces the main themes of this chapter: an analysis of the dramas of feminist subjectivity played out in the North African countryside together with an interrogation of what will be termed 'pictorialising': a distinctly visual and pictorial perception of Algeria.[3] It also announces the irresolutions between desire and denial, seduction and repudiation, visuality and opacity, which are threaded through images and texts made in and about

Figure 3.1

Figure 3.2

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, Drawings included in a letter to Marian Evans [George Eliot], 21 November and 8 December 1856

Algeria by a group of friends associated with the British women's movement. These materials are widely dispersed and while a few figure paintings are known through titles or an occasional reproduction, many more landscapes may be traced. The exigencies of survival have prompted an attention to land and landscape. In picturing Algeria as a far-distant and inaccessible place of secrecy, opacity and illegibility, as a landscape of ruins, a colourful and strange location under the sway of Islam, these writings and images contributed to the staple themes of 'Orientalism'.[4] This is not to attempt a totalising interpretation of 'Orientalism' but rather to pursue a micro-study of historically specific and geographically localised dis/articulations between contending fields of force brought to bear in the colonisation of Algeria. There was no close fit between feminism, imperialism and visual culture, but rather tensions, complicities and departures. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concept of 'worlding', elaborated in articles and interviews in the mid-1980s, will open an enquiry.

In conversation with Elizabeth Grosz in 1984, Gayatri Spivak spoke of 'the notion of the worlding of a world on a supposedly uninscribed territory' and she continued,

> When I say this, I am thinking basically about the imperialist project which had to assume that the earth that it territorialised was in fact previously uninscribed. So then a world, on a simple level of cartography, inscribed what was presumed to be uninscribed. Now this worlding actually is also a texting, textualising, a making into art, a making into an object to be understood.[5]

An extended account in 'The Rani of Sirmur: an essay in reading the archives' (published in 1985) elaborated on 'worlding' as central to and formative of 'the planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project'. Spivak drew on an essay by Martin Heidegger which suggested that the work of art emerges in the conflict between earth and the world. Taking up the philosopher's assertion that this conflict is more than 'a mere cleft . . . ripped open' and his emphasis on 'the intimacy with which opponents belong together', Spivak explained the German word, *Riss*, not as a neutral interval or empty space, but in terms of 'the violent implication of a fracture'.[6]

Spivak's concept of worlding engages a double inscription: that which physically changes the land and the inscription of a visual culture which erupts from traumatic conflict. Landscape – that category of visual representation which transforms earth into world, land into visual culture – may thus be perceived as central to the western imperial project. A complex cultural concept, landscape restructures land for leisure and tourism as well as visual and spiritual refreshment, sensory pleasure and a pictorialising vision.[7] Equally important to the imperial project was the seizure, settlement and environmental alteration of land. Indeed, for Edward Said imperialism means '[a]t some very basic level . . . thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is

distant, that is lived on and owned by others'.[8] Most post-independence historians of Algeria have agreed that it was on land that the violences of imperialism and colonisation were enacted. Abdallah Laroui is emphatic on the effects of punitive property laws which provided modern interpretations of Roman law: 'By confounding pasturage lands and uncultivated lands, jointly owned and collective property, by unduly extending the limits of forest lands, the French administration confined the indigenous population to smaller and smaller territory.' Existing agriculture was decimated, the number of landless peasants increased, and indigenous populations sentenced to poverty and famine. European banks and corporations secured extensive control of land, introducing profitable farming: with prices and products geared to the French markets, great fortunes were made in wine and tobacco.[9]

In the decades of bloody and brutal war and resistance which followed the French invasion of 1830, land was devastated by burning and scorching, seized by force, confiscated, appropriated and reallocated. The military leader, Marshal Bugeaud, informed the French National Assembly in 1840: 'Wherever there is fresh water and fertile land, there one must locate *colons*, without concerning oneself to whom these lands belong.' Land policies had a profound impact on the already settled population: villages were torched to the ground, thousands died and many were slaughtered or burnt alive; Algerian women were raped, held hostage or auctioned as property to the troops. This policy was endorsed by Marshal Randon, Governor from 1851 to 1858, who decreed that 'we must leave the traces of our victory on the soil' to achieve the submission of 'these rough/uncivilised populations who resist everything, except for the real manifestation of force'.[10] Time and again it was declared that 'The Arabs must be prevented from sowing, from harvesting and from pasturing their flocks.' Land assets were stripped though cantonment, mineral mining, deforestation, the introduction of intensive agriculture for colonial markets, and the building of roads and railways. The highly complex forms of land ownership and property relations were destroyed, disposing of the beliefs that land was not a commodity. Land was assigned to private ownership by European corporations and individuals, like Bodichon. An inscription on a sketch made on her journey to the interior in 1866–7, 'Saida/The Property the Commandant offered to sell to Miss Edwards', suggests that land under military control was offered to an English traveller.[11]

The ecology and appearance of the region were drastically altered by the introduction of European plants, crops, animals and diseases as well as by the new transport infrastructures. Existing species were seriously depleted and soil structures were fundamentally changed by European systems of farming and cropping. Schemes to create vast inland seas to irrigate the Sahara Desert marked a high-point in colonial fantasies to 'tame the wilderness'. Barbara and Eugène Bodichon were active in the environmental alteration: using seed imported from Australia, they created extensive plantations of eucalyptus. Feminist ecologists have recently pointed out that eucalyptus can be actively

harmful, encouraging the depletion of species diversity, a reduction in local knowledge, deforestation, soil erosion, a decline in soil fertility and a decrease in water retention. Vandana Shiva states in *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*, 'The eucalyptus . . . when perceived ecologically, is unproductive, even negative.' While these conclusions were unavailable in the 1860s, they illuminate some of the problems engaged by the global dispersal of species.[12]

All these transformations were not easily, rapidly or totally achieved. The historian Mahfoud Bennoune emphasises the uneven development of colonisation between 1830 and 1880 as it met with fierce resistance and was hampered by the inadequacy and incoherence of French agrarian, commercial and financial policies.[13] Colonial policies were held in tension between the contending interests of Europeans, between diverse fractions in French population, and collisions between indigenous social groups. And just as colonial authority was nowhere absolute, unchallenged or homogeneous, neither was there secure suturing between visual culture and colonial society.

In Algeria as elsewhere, invading armies were quickly followed by surveyors, archaeologists, geographers and artists. It soon became the *mise-en-scène* of a flood of paintings, engravings, illustrated publications and photographs. The visual forms of painting and photography were introduced with French colonisation and the 'allure of empire', as Todd Porterfield has shown, generated innumerable landscapes, scenes of combat, the harem, the *hammam* and the slave market, lion hunts and desert caravans.[14] So celebrated were the battle paintings of Horace Vernet that *The English Woman's Journal* claimed the colony to be 'the scene of those picturesque and bloody wars illustrated by [his] daring pencil'.[15] In a recent overview, Roger Benjamin has pointed to the influence of Delacroix's example and the 'Gérôme paradigm', the impact of Fromentin's accounts of his travels as well as his paintings with their dashing horsemen, wild landscapes and urban scenes, and the promotion of Orientalist art by Théophile Gautier.[16]

Tutored amateurs as well as holiday-makers with no known propensity for sketching turned Algeria's sites into sights. Visiting in the early months of 1857, Bessie Rayner Parkes spent her time writing articles about the colony, plotting feminist ventures in the UK, walking and riding. She informed Mary Merryweather, '[i]f the weather would but dry, I should paint a great deal both in the old Moorish town and in the exquisite countryside.'[17] Even the radical Member of Parliament, John Bright, convalescing there in the winter of 1856, took drawing lessons, never having drawn before, and he sketched the places and monuments he visited. As the editor to his diary comments, 'The topic bursts into his diary unheralded and unexplained. . . . There is no evidence that he pursued the study of drawing after he left.'[18] Guidebooks were profusely illustrated and utilised a markedly pictorial language. Illustrated publications increased, as did maps and charts, archaeological reports and pictorial histories with full-page reproductions of fine art prints and paintings. In the 1890s an

English handbook on 'artistic travel' claimed that Algeria held 'everything that an artist could desire'.[19]

This 'pictorialising' not only placed Algerian land and peoples within European visual systems, but rendered them intelligible within them. Pictorialising made the imperial project possible. Algeria appeared to offer a seemingly endless visual spectacle. Like ores and agricultural produce, high art paintings, popular prints and illustrated publications were caught into a world market of commodities.[20] While they provided cultural capital, fine art and tourism also generated objects for trading and investment, things that had a social life.[21] Spivak emphasises that the new imperial cartographies were not simply two-dimensional surfaces. They had material form and substance. What emerges from the violence of the rift between earth and world is 'the multifarious thingliness [*Dinglichkeit*] of a represented world on a map'.[22] This emphasis on the materiality of the object recalls her earlier words to Elizabeth Grosz, that 'this worlding actually is also a texting, textualising, a making into art, a making into an object to be understood'.[23]

Spivak has no hesitation in identifying 'the planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project'. Her re-reading of Heidegger proposes that elite cultural forms were generated within the traumatic chasm between the already existing society and the new imperial order. In the colonial setting, the work of art was, therefore, not so much an expression of ideology as a product of cultural violence. Spivak's analysis breaks new ground in thinking the relations between visual culture and imperialism. Linda Nochlin compellingly argued that the barbarity of colonial conquest, imaged in numerous battle pictures, was transferred to paintings of native cruelty and destruction,[24] and W.J.T. Mitchell contended that the 'medium' of landscape, though inextricable from imperialism, 'does not usually declare its relation to imperialism in any direct way', representing instead 'something like the 'dreamwork' of imperialism' and disclosing both 'utopian fantasies of the perfected imperial prospect and fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and unsurpressed resistance'.[25] Spivak's theories on worlding suggest that violence was not so much a pre-condition, pretext or adjunct to visual culture. Rather, violence was integral to the making of landscape, for it was the 'planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project' which transformed earth into world.

'a texting, textualising': feminist subjects in the landscape

Algeria was advocated as 'a new field of exploration' to that novel tourist, the travelling feminist. *The English Woman's Journal* reported the adventures of the

> English ladies [who] have spared ten days of their valuable time to see this African colony . . . hurry back as fast as steam can carry them to 'the native coal-hole', their glorious England; to their district visiting, their parish schools, their societies, associations and what not.[26]

Algeria was recommended as a holiday location where 'English ladies can walk alone in the town and environs of Algiers with as great comfort and safety as at home'.[27] Feminist writings not only offered the colony as a land distinct and differentiated from 'home' and the metropolitan centre, but they provided practical advice: Bodichon's guidebook published 'a quantity of miscellaneous information of the kind especially useful to English ladies landing in the unknown territory of Algiers'.[28] Excursions, sight-seeing, sketching and enjoying the scenery were all recommended.

Algeria Considered pitched into a new and expanding market. Local competition included J.R. Morell's illustrated *Algeria*, Rev. J.W. Blakesley's *Four Months in Algeria, with Maps and Illustrations after Photographs*, Walmsley's *Sketches of Algeria during the Kabyle War*, several volumes by English ladies, and numerous accounts in French.[29] Its accounts of Algeria's history and geography, customs and costumes were liberally extracted from the writings of Eugène Bodichon. While citation was a familiar textual strategy, his publications were given an enhanced status: his 'long experience as a resident physician enables him to speak with authority'.[30] The last chapter rewrote the first-hand travel narrative to tell of the journeys, first impressions and exciting adventures of middle-class 'ladies'. Emphasis was placed on the hazards of the enterprise and the daring resourcefulness of the travellers, equipped with arms: 'The place is so wild, and the Arabs look so stern and unfriendly, that it is a positive comfort to know Hilda has a capital little pistol with her, and knows full well how to use it.' Like all travellers' tales in which Europeans encounter intemperate heat, 'barbarous' peoples, strange customs, savage animals, wild 'untouched' countryside and picturesque views, these stories are embellished with more than a dash of exaggeration.[31]

If the Orient promised men (sexual) pleasures unobtainable in the west, Algeria offered women an escape from social convention: drawings included with the letter cited at the outset of this chapter and made for private circulation (Figures 3.1–2) broke most of the visual and corporeal codes of feminine propriety. Colonial space promised to fulfil feminist desires for an unchecked liberty of movement. In territories secured by military force, 'safe' and 'civilised' became keywords, their guarantee the security of 'English ladies'. During the Indian National Uprising of 1857–8, white femininity became the sign of imperial and national stability: any dangers to the safety of British women were considered as threats to imperial control (see Figure 4.9). In the making of feminist arguments, these writers drew on imperial and nationalist discourses about femininity which were also being used to refuse women's rights: feminism, no less than colonial insurrection, was perceived as destabilising.

Images and writings usually featured the lone traveller. The feminist's bid for independence, like the western voyager's fantasies of solitude, was heightened

by minimising or omitting the guides who furnished itineraries, pointed out the sites and translated from Arabic.[32] By disappearing the chaperones, the western artist or writer became the sole channel through which travel was mediated into text. 'Alone' therefore sutured a feminist sense of self to the imaginative projections of solitude necessary for the westerner's dramatic encounter with what was perceived as the unknown and uninscribed. But in neither case were experience and vision unmediated. The protocols of visual and literary culture as well as the race relations of colonial society framed what western women could see, recount and paint.

The pleasures of walking and riding, viewing and sketching landscape were, along with artists' materials, suitable clothing and footwear, transported from Europe to North Africa. Sketchbooks and letters were filled with drawings of women whose outdoor activities as much as their costume of loose jackets or capes, unsupported skirts, broad-brimmed hats, and sturdy boots or shoes, identified them as feminists whose attire was to be differentiated from the tight bodices and full crinolines of aristocratic ladies (Figure 3.1). They imaged themselves striding across the countryside, gazing over promontories, sketching, adventuring on excursions, and racing on horseback over a beach (Figures 3.1–2). A picture (now lost) painted by Barbara for her sister Annie 'in recollection of Little Atlas', portrayed two female figures pausing at the side of a ravine in the mountains; the artist is on horseback, sketching.[33]

In her analysis of 'worlding', Spivak argues that the experience of landscape, of riding through, looking at and reporting on land, was central to the European concept of the sovereign self. Although Spivak is writing about masculine subjectivities shaped for the exercise of British imperial power in India, a saturation in sensation, scenery and self was equally formative for the female militant.

In the later 1840s and early 1850s a group of young women friends developed a feminist politics of landscape when the development of tourism was shifting the sex and class politics of travel. They shared sketching and study tours, admired the views, took walks and went swimming.

> we sent the car on someway & then bathed alternately, under the free air of heaven, in the most utterly crazy Dianalike way, with no Acteon save a Mountain Mutton or two . . . like grecian nymphs who never had any sense of propriety. I felt positively an ennobled human creature . . .[34]

This experience of landscape enhanced a sense of self as a working, writing, painting, seeing subject.

Five small pen and ink drawings now in Girton College Cambridge depict a female figure or figures in mountainous scenery. Although one was signed by Bodichon, the authorship of the others is uncertain. In 'Barbara Leigh Smith in the pursuit of art, unconscious of small humanity', the figure advances purposefully, carrying her sketching materials, oblivious of a small child standing in her

pathway. A storm rages in the mountains behind her, and the words 'lightning' and 'thunder' are inscribed on the top left and top right corners of the paper. Neither the tempest nor the child deflect the woman artist who strides out purposefully, her body thrust forward, her attire and deportment at variance to that expected of a young respectable middle-class woman. 'Barbara Leigh Smith in ye Breeze' portrays her standing on a promontory, clasping her sketchbook and gazing ahead at the mountains beyond, while in 'BLS absorbed' she stands on a rocky outcrop, contemplating the hills before her. Parkes is astride a mountain gorge, clasping her volume of *Poems* (first published in 1852). Remote mountains and 'sublime' scenery, whether in Britain, Europe or North Africa, set the scene for the projection of a feminist subjectivity which was self-motivated, physically active and creative.

Algeria offered a plenitude of visual delight and sensory pleasure which was readily turned into pictures. Pictorial views of the scenery are scattered through feminist writings on the colony. The guidebook emphasises the visual appeal of the location: '[t]he scenery of Algeria is very beautiful, and offers great attractions to the tourist and the artist', '[t]here is plenty to see and sketch in the environs [of Algiers]'. Views out of the windows of the house 'will furnish *me* with many a subject'. The eye-witness describes a 'picture which *I* saw some days ago', of 'the wild scene, the wonderful colour of the whole, [which] made as beautiful a little picture as *I* ever saw or conceived of' and of the 'ever varying compositions of olive, cypress, Moorish houses, aloes, cacti and before us groups of Arabs, *ad libitum* . . . backed by the blue sea'.[35] Bodichon's essay for the journal, 'Algiers: First Impressions', is a series of compositional vignettes: the town seen from the sea, views out of windows and from the terrace, extensive panoramas of the bay and surrounding countryside, all scenes familiar in French travel writing. Offsetting these sweeping vistas is the old city, '[e]nchanting and disgusting, dirty and poetical', into which the traveller 'must penetrate to see what is really African, Eastern, and *par excellence* Algerian'. Far distant from the modernisation under way elsewhere, the old city was best visited 'with the Arabian Nights in your hand, or rather in your head and heart, and you will be transported instantly to the times of the good Haroun Alraschid'.[36] But only fleeting glimpses can be given of 'flights of steps', 'dark alleys like tunnels', 'a beautiful square court, arched round about'. The sudden bursts of dark and light, the heightened juxtapositions between opacity and visibility, convey the recurring tensions between desire and denial, seduction and repudiation.

French travel writers also utilised a markedly pictorial language. Presenting their written descriptions in the form of letters and in the language of pictorial composition they readily employed terms like *esquisse* and *croquis* (sketch).[37] At the opening of Pauline de Noirfontaine's *Algérie: un regard écrit* of 1856, the author states her aim 'to trace in my notebook some random, unconnected and unframed sketches, just as one throws on one's palette thick and unmixed colours, unfinished and nebulous studies'. For Noirfontaine, too, Algeria offers

an inexhaustible storehouse of images; its ocular delights and pictorial offerings may be savoured by the sea or in the mountains where the traveller will arrive 'at the extremity of the plateau from where one would discover one of these pictures of local poetry that invite an artist to take up the brush'. As in 'Algiers: First Impressions', the city and the port are gathered into an extensive panorama, framed by the ever-changing surface of the sea and luxuriant vegetation. Noirfontaine lyricises Algeria's profusion of flowers and shrubs, as does Bodichon in her descriptions of 'bushes of myrtle, white scented heath (*circa arborea*), lavender, gum cistus, juniper and firs', and her watercolours of asphodels, acanthus and blue iris. Well-read in contemporary literature on the colony, Bodichon shared with her French contemporaries a distinctively pictorial way of seeing.

Un regard écrit, which may be roughly translated as 'a written look/glance', comprises six letters, all of which fashioned their author as a feminine subject for whom a painterly language best conveys her visual impressions and sensations. Distancing herself from professional practice ('it's the business of painters and designers to sketch the outlines of a beautiful landscape'), the writer is content 'to say things as I have seen them, as I have felt them, as they have offered themselves to me'. As a woman she can do no more than offer her own observations, since 'it is an accredited opinion that women only halt at the surface of things and are incapable of going deeply into anything', so wittily turning popular opinion to her advantage. Bodichon emphasises out of the ordinary visual pleasures and artistic compositions, a vision of North Africa through the frames of European landscape.

> I have seen Swiss mountains and Lombard plains, Scotch lochs and Welsh mountains, but never anything so unearthly, so delicate, so aerial, as the long stretches of blue mountains and shining sea; the dark cypresses relieved against a back-ground of a thousand dainty tints, and the massive white Moorish houses gleaming out from the grey mysterious green of olive trees; the foreground full of blueish aloes and prickly cacti . . .[38]

But the violence of colonisation could disturb this appreciation of Algeria's picturesque beauty. In an essay by Parkes on the conditions of working women, the closely argued prose abruptly gives way to an account of a solitary excursion in 'wild hills' and 'scented glens' to 'a ravine of the most beautiful and romantic description':

> It winds about among the steep hills, its sides clothed with the pine, the ilex, the olive, and with an underwood of infinite variety and loveliness. Wild flowers grow there in rich profusion, and under the bright blue sky of that almost tropical climate it seems as if anything so artificial and unnatural as our systems of industry could hardly exist for shame;

> yet in that very valley young female children are at this very moment, while I speak and you listen, winding silk for twelve clear hours a day!

The vision of 'untrammelled nature' is abruptly displaced by the sight of a French-owned silk-winding enterprise. A matter of national concern in France, the silk industry had been revived by Empress Eugénie's choice of flowered silks and these fabrics, selected by Mme Moitessier for her second portrait by Ingres, became extremely fashionable in the Third Republic.[39] Confronted with 'what perhaps in Europe might never strike the heart with equal vividness', the narrator abandons lyrical description for dry irony to conclude that 'our modern civilisation is in some respects a very singular thing when the kind hearts of a great nation best show their kindness to orphan girls by shutting them up to spin silk at a machine for twelve hours a day from the age of thirteen to that of twenty-one'.[40] The colliding forces of the text, intense visual, corporeal and sensory pleasures, pity for the native women, concern for their working conditions, measured criticism of imperial exploitation, are held together by a narrating subject who recounts her sensations and reflects that 'whenever in after spring days I walked over the wild hills and scented glens of Algiers' she will recall what she has seen.

The feminist subject slipped between Algeria and Britain. Parkes's essay, with its first-person narration, was published in the journal, having been delivered as a paper at the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in August 1861. A later paper by Bodichon described the excursions made by a group of 'English ladies [who] have spared ten days of their valuable time to *see* this African colony', and whose metropolitan modernity was juxtaposed to the historic queens, archaic sights and landscapes that are Algeria. The travellers will 'hurry back as fast as steam can carry them to 'the native coal-hole', their glorious England; to their district visiting, their parish schools, their societies, associations and what not'. But, she continues, two of them 'will often recall that beautiful picture, the blue sea seen through the ruined arches of Selena Cleopatra's aqueduct, as they walk together along the bald, blank, streets of London'.[41]

Such 'memorable views' might be steeped in pleasurable recollections of friendship and a productive exchange of ideas, a sense of autonomy, the novelty of tourism. They might be charged with differentiations between Britain's modernity and industrialisation and perceptions of Algeria as 'untrammelled nature', untouched, unspoiled, uninhabited. Equally they might be shot through with troubling sensations of difference and un/comfortable responses to colonisation. But most of all they were memorable as views, for what differentiated Algeria from the 'bald, blank, streets of London' was its pictorial disposition. The colony was perceived as artistically composed views: quick sketches of the scenery, glimpses out of windows, formal panoramas from high vantage points and extensive vistas of supposedly empty space. 'Worlding' involved 'pictorialising'.

Disavowing the violent dislocation of colonisation, this pictorialising fostered a two-fold disposition of land: into the artistically arranged landscape views of visual culture and into the new physical geographies of colonisation. Homi Bhabha's attention to the multiple significations of 'disposal' and 'the strategies that articulate the range of meanings from "dispose to disposition" ' is particularly helpful.[42] According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, disposal conveys several meanings in which power and regulation coincide, including the 'action of arranging, ordering or regulating by right of power or possession', 'action of disposing of, settling or definitely dealing with' and 'power or right to dispose of', where dispose may signify both making arrangements for and getting rid of. 'Disposition' may signify setting in order and arranging, to have at one's disposal, inclination, physical aptitude or constitution. Taking up these multiple significations in a discussion of colonial authority, Bhabha argues,

> Transparency is the action of the distribution and arrangement of differential spaces, positions, knowledges in relation to each other, relative to a discriminatory, not inherent, sense of order. This effects a regulation of spaces and places that is authoritatively assigned; it puts the addressee into the proper frame or condition for some action or result. Such a mode of governance addresses itself to a form of conduct that equivocates between the sense of disposal, as the bestowal of a frame of reference and disposition as mental inclination, a frame of mind.[43]

The seizure and cantonment of land, urban development, agri-business, European industries and their infrastructures all disposed of earlier forms of land use and ownership, while they disposed Algerian land into new arrangements. Ordered by a raft of laws and decrees, this 'regulation of spaces and places', which was as Bhabha suggests 'authoritatively assigned', changed the appearance of Algeria and the disposition of countryside, settlements and populations. Spatial reorganisation rendered the colony more accessible to view: roads and railways underpinned a flourishing tourist industry and tourist literature positioned readers and travellers as viewers.

This unsettling of land into landscape, into a category of western art, was achieved by the use of well-established procedures. Paintings, like letters and published accounts, depended on citationality and repetition. As Gayatri Spivak has put it, 'what is at stake is a "worlding", the reinscription of a cartography that must (re)present itself as impeccable'.[44] These artistic and literary protocols may be identified among the 'rules of recognition' distinguished by Bhabha as the characteristic procedures, forms and modes of address of colonial discourse, all of which call for common consent. In landscape painting, these 'rules' regulated the disposition of the scenery, provided points of view and offered authoritative frames of reference which allowed the strange to be presented within the familiar. Indeed, they are what enabled portrayals of land to be recognised as 'landscape'. In mid-century Algeria perceptions of land were thus

caught between, in Bhabha's words, a 'sense of disposal, as the bestowal of a frame of reference' and 'disposition as mental inclination, a frame of mind'. And yet neither western landscape nor colonial authority could remain untouched in this encounter. If Algeria was turned into pictures, the authority of western vision and western landscape was in this pictorialising process disturbed.

'a making into art, a making into an object to be understood'

The British community in Algiers included a number of artists who visited or settled in the colony. For some, like Fred Walker, a brief sojourn had little impact on exhibited paintings. Those who portrayed the country and its peoples preferred an exoticism factored from topography and description, at variance to the violence and sensuality favoured by their French counterparts. Paintings and watercolours visualised a recently colonised land, less for its colonisers than for an educated middle-class market in London. The British press provided detailed coverage and comment on events in North Africa and regular features on the pleasures of travel and tourism. Denunciations of French brutality stirred up an intense nationalism as well as a sense of imperial superiority. Although the British declined the Amir ʿAbd al-Qādir's appeals for assistance, his long resistance, imprisonment and exile prompted a romantic sympathy for him.

Paintings and watercolours give little indication of the profound changes taking place within Algerian agriculture, the countryside and the built environment, or the transformation of social organisation, cultural and religious life. The images considered here portray a land before or after colonisation, rather than a society caught up in and traumatised by its chaotic intervention. What is brought into view is scenery without boundaries stretching far into the distance, that seemingly 'uninscribed' land which, in colonial discourse, is available for exploitation. Equally what is pictorialised may be construed as the aftermath of intervention, when hersdmen tend their flocks on the scrublands and hillsides to which they have been exiled. In contrast to the crowded scenes painted by many of her contemporaries, in Bodichon's works the native population is marginalised or diminished to give an impression of vast swathes of uninhabited and largely uncultivated land. It is the vacancy of these views which lends them to Spivak's analysis of the 'worlding of a world on a supposedly uninscribed territory'. Drawing on and extending the conventions of European Orientalism, figure studies by Eliza Fox, Emily Mary Osborn and Gertrude Jekyll depicted Algerians at prayer, conversing, dancing, playing games and in repose (Figures 3.5–3.7).

For British audiences, Bodichon's regular exhibitions of Algerian landscapes provided a pictorial gazetteer of the colony. *The Illustrated London News* wrote of her exhibition of 1864:

> The drawings, like other series which have preceded them[,] represent scenes in Algeria, and comprise views of the towns and district about Algiers; of that angry sea, as it were, of hills and mountains, the homes of the hardy Kabyles; and of various points along the coast, with its azure Mediterranean and glowing golden shore; together with representations of forts, chateaux, villages and tombs; of the luxuriant growths of flowers, palms, aloes, prickly pears and giant plants of all kinds; and of the climactic phenomena and strange aspects of the sky from wind, rain, etc.[45]

But the artist's repertory was by no means as extensive or comprehensive as was here suggested. As a western woman, what Bodichon saw and could depict was as much shaped by the sexual and racialised formations of difference in the colony as by visual procedures. Some titles and works hinted at a particularity of place: Algiers, the Hydra Valley, the Plain of the Metijda, Point Pescade or the old walls of Mansoura. Others such as *Arab Tomb near Algiers*, *Cactus Grove*, *Interior Court of an Old Moorish House*, *The Province of Oran, Algiers* were decidedly imprecise and could work synecdochically. Tlemcen, the Gorge of the Chiffa in the Atlas Mountans, and the Roman aqueduct near Cherchel (see Figure 3.8) testify to a European predilection for locations already well known from guidebooks, tourist itineraries, antecedent imagery, colonial histories or archaeological reports. When views of Sidi Ferruch were exhibited in 1859 and 1861, reviewers explained that this was where the French had landed in 1830.[46] The proliferating repetition of sites was characteristic of travel culture; as Said has commented of Orientalism, it is 'after all a system for citing works and authors'.[47] Like many others, Bodichon screened out the *colonies agricoles*, although these settlements were extensively mapped in French histories and

Figure 3.3 Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, *Sisters Working in Our Field*, *c.* 1858–60

discussed in her own writing. She also neglected the mining areas featured in occasional engravings, preferring the bay and town of Algiers, perhaps the most represented scene in the colony.[48] By taking a distant view, her images like so many others strove to reconcile the visual disjunctions between French Algiers and the old city higher up the hill (Figure 3.3). The French attempted to reorganise the city of al-Jaza'ir by imposing a distinctive architectural style and a geometrical grid of streets and squares which demolished existing structures to 'establish a visual order that symbolised colonial power relations'. The city and its architectures became, as Zeynep Çelik has indicated, 'contested terrains in the confrontation between coloniser and colonised'.[49]

Bodichon's depictions of Telegraph Hill and the water tower near Algiers registered some of the changes taking place. An unusual subject in visual culture, the telegraph became (like the steamship) a sign of the proximity, convenience and modernity of Algeria. On her first visit Parkes counselled a correspondent to 'remember that tho' the distance between us is great, the steam communication makes it but little and they are talking of an electric telegraph over the Mediterranean! half an hour to London!'[50] Colonisation was transforming not only the landscape but also relations of space and time. In a compelling essay on time, space and the geometries of power, Doreen Massey has challenged David Harvey's views that the sense of increasing speed in the pace of life and the disappearance of spatial barriers, so that 'the world seems to collapse inwards upon us', were brought about by the expansion of capitalism and development of technology. For Massey, attentive to questions of gender and imperialism, 'time-space compression' was a distinctive and particularly local experience for the western traveller and colonist.[51]

While Bodichon occasionally depicted the fertile agricultural areas, her surviving works more commonly testify to a fascination with the desert, mountains and scrublands (Figures 3.4). Finished watercolours were enhanced by an

Figure 3.4 Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, *Near Algiers*, 1860s

elongated format and sketches were made across an opening to provide panoramas of seemingly uninhabited, uncultivated land. If an expansive view was a well-known aesthetic pleasure (as *The Art Journal* reviewer acknowledged when enjoying the 'undulating sweep of the arid and far stretching plain' in *Tlemcen, Oran*),[52] it also facilitated fantasies of possession and exploitation. Algeria was perceived as an uninscribed, uninhabited earth awaiting intervention. This fundamental principle of European military, commercial and imperial desire was restated in feminist papers as much as elsewhere. Echoing the imperialist sentiments of her husband that the Arabs were a feckless lot whose nomadic way of life laid land to waste, Bodichon applauded

> civilisation, cultivation and population, [which] year by year, win more and more land from the enemy; and there is no doubt that all this fertile plain will, by and by, be, as it was in the old time, the seat of numerous and prosperous towns, and waving cornfields.[53]

Readers of the journal would have been familiar with such perceptions, Maria Rye arguing for emigration on the grounds that 'the colonies, quite as much our own though they are thousands of miles away, remain year after year uninhabited wastes without man or beast.'[54] Matilda Betham Edwards's account of an excursion made with Bodichon in 1866 and 1867 similarly emphasised Algeria's wilderness:

> For the most part the country was uncultivated and uninhabited. There was no foliage excepting that of stunted olive, tamarisk and palmetto, and nothing to break the universal monotony but here and there a douar or Arab village consisting of a cluster of tents, held in by walls of wild cactus.[55]

That this emptiness was carefully staged in finished watercolours is indicated by sketches made when travelling. On a page of a very small sketchbook Bodichon noted with a few quick lines of a pencil the tents and fixtures of a settlement. Written notes signal a human presence – 'early morning', 'all asleep in the tents' – while the colour jottings point to future use in the studio. Yet surviving watercolours, donated by the writer to Hastings Art Gallery, suggesting that they date from this excursion, portrayed a space cleared of habitation or cultivation.

While the infrequency of figures may be attributed to Bodichon's artistic inexperience, there is in common with much Orientalist painting a general impression of a population arrested in time and space. The native figures are as immobile as the architecture they accompany. In *A Sketch in the Hydra Valley near Algiers* one man reclines beside a tree while another is seated on the ground; in *Roman Aqueduct, Algeria* a male figure stands still. Arrested in time and in space, they are quite unlike their counterparts in the artist's British

scenes: in *The Sea at Hastings* two fishermen busy themselves beside a boat while in *Oxen and Silver Birch* two woodmen are at work.[56] Exceptions include herdsmen tending their flocks (as in Figure 3.4), and there is nothing of the animated exchange taking place in the fruit shop portrayed by Jekyll (Figure 3.5). Osborn's *An Algerian Mirror*, shown at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1883, in which a woman seated at the edge of a pool, deep in the shadows of a garden, contemplates her likeness in its mirrored surface (Figure 3.6), conveys the simplicity of a culture in which time passes imperceptibly and the still surface of water provides a reflection. Corporeal atrophy could play into an imperialist discourse on indolence which was, as Anne McClintock indicates, a discourse on work in which productive labour was allocated to Europeans.[57]

In racialised contrast and gendered opposition, movement is assigned to western women. In Bodichon's *Sisters Working in Our Field* (Figure 3.3) two members of the Order of Charity of St Vincent de Paul are portrayed working the land, whereas in another watercolour they are exercising a distinctly European privilege of moving at leisure.[58] This activity jars against the stasis of native figures and their forced displacement. Catholic sisterhoods, as Reina Lewis suggests, were surrounded by controversy. To British (but not French) gallery-goers, nuns recalled altercations about Catholicism and the Anglo-Catholic revival. They could also represent Christian Europe mythically united

Figure 3.5 Gertrude Jekyll, *Fruit Shops, Blida* [1873–4]

in opposition to heathen Islam. In feminist discourse they offered exemplars of 'women's mission to women', embodying the feminine values of charity and moral supervision. Henriette Browne's paintings of the Sisters of Charity were greatly praised by Anna Blackwell. Bodichon applauded the hospital, nursing and prison visiting of the Algerian house of the international Order of Charity of the Sisters of St Vincent de Paul.[59] But not everyone was convinced. In her indictment of the silk-winding factory, considered earlier, Parkes was sceptical about the involvement of the Sisters who superintended the child workers, and for one contributor to the guidebook 'Algeria [was] over-run with all orders of nuns and monks, they spring up in every new settlement like mushrooms and do not enjoy a very good reputation.'[60]

Titles of exhibited figure paintings such as Fox's *Return of the Caravan* (RA 1867) or her *Arabs at Prayer* (Figure 3.7) suggest mainstream Orientalism, as do the depictions of weddings, funerals and religious rituals of Fox's *An Arab Marriage* (RA 1871) or Bodichon's *Talking to the Dead*. With their attention to costumes and settings, Jekyll's street scenes and Fox's figure studies (Figures 3.5 and 3.7) participated in a widely held interest in 'manners and customs'. Proliferating racial typologies and hierarchies filled the pages of historical accounts and travel writings published in Britain and France. *Algeria Considered* presented the population as a series of visual types: races could be *visually* differentiated, minutely discriminated. Writing of the centrality of visuality in attempts to control indigenous populations, Bhabha notes, 'the bind of knowledge and

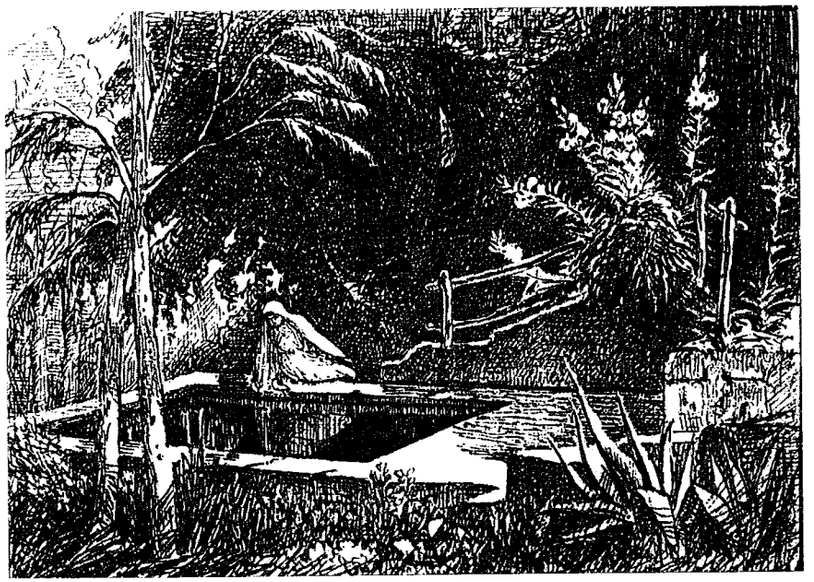

Figure 3.6 Emily Mary Osborn, *An Algerian Mirror*, 1883

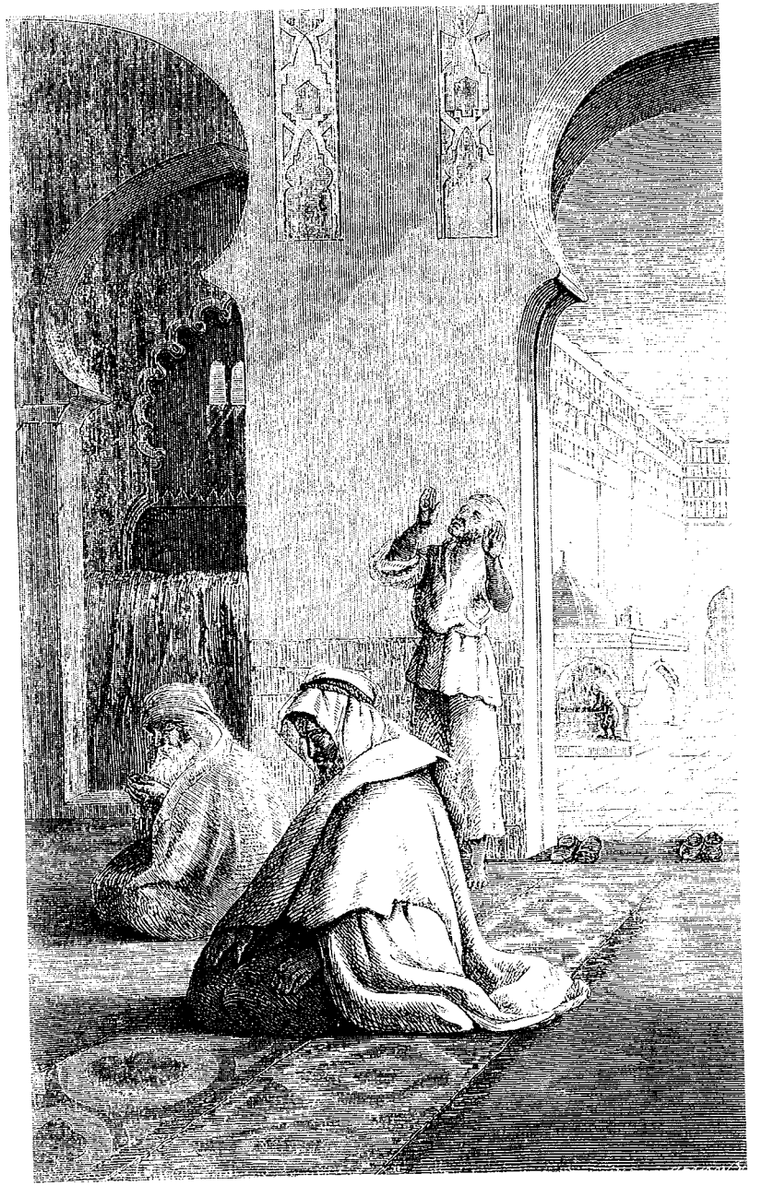

Figure 3.7 Eliza Fox Bridell, *Arabs at Prayer* [1863–7]

fantasy, power and pleasure, that informs the particular regime of visibility deployed in colonial discourse', drawing attention to the tensions between desire and denial in the proliferation of colonial stereotypes.[61]

Eugène Bodichon wrote extensively on the distinctions between Arabs and Kabyle, his views contributing decisively to a racialised division in French colonial theory and policy between the latter, characterised as settlers who were amenable to the French civilising mission, and the Arabs who were not.[62] Although Barbara Bodichon accepted the Arab/Kabyle distinction and the premise of visual contrasts between them, her account of the Arabs has none of her husband's fantastic descriptions, underwritten by his medical authority, of a people with large necks, hairy skin and big feet whose anatomy registered their unreliable and dogmatic nature. Her essay 'Algiers: First Impressions' is flooded with pictorial perceptions from views of the harbour and the old town to the visual delineations of race.

> When the traveller is fairly and comfortably installed in his hotel on the Place . . . nothing can be more striking and amusing than the motley crowd which he will see from his window: there a mass of Arabs, perfect in their national dress, the long classical woollen drapery, white and flowing, the linen head covering bound round by a fillet of camel's hair cord; their faces, long, handsome, and expressive, their feet bare, and their hands and arms in continual action as they discuss. . . . Near them stands the Kabyle, who has taken kindly to French civilisation, by his square face, his round head, and his blue eyes, you see at once he is quite a different creature from the Arab his neighbour. The Kabyle has bare legs and gaiters of skins, and what we remark of French civilisation is a sack, which he wears as a shirt. . . . Here stand a group of Spanish workmen in blue jackets and trousers . . . Moorish women all in white glide about like phantoms . . . a tall Negress, clothed in one long garment of dark blue cotton from head to foot, leaving her arms bare which are decorated as well as her feet with massive rings of gold.[63]

The jostling of races and cultures in Algiers, as well as the visual distinctions between them, was by no means limited to the travel writing but present in paintings, reviews, museum displays, exhibitions and scientific publications. This 'divisive deployment of the discourse of race' has been identified by Gayatri Spivak as a central strategy in 'worlding'.[64]

Algeria was visualised not only as an exotic location but also as a place of dereliction and decay. Bodichon's *Talking to the Dead*, a twilight scene with 'an intense feeling of quiet and solitude', pictured a woman mourning at a grave.[65] In *An Algerian Burial Ground* (with her sister Annie Leigh Smith),

> [w]omen and children, some veiled after the Eastern fashion, are huddled into a graveyard, itself a wilderness, overgrown with weeds,

> palms and cactus. A festival in memory of the dead, is as here represented, usually a holiday in which joy and sorrow . . . in smiles and tears.[66]

Images of mourning were also to be found in recurring landscapes of graveyards and views of *marabouts*, the tombs of the saints. Of *The Hydra Marabout, after Sunset* shown at the French Gallery in 1861, *The Athenaeum* commented on

> a solemn-looking country covered with shrubs, after the sun has gone down, leaving only orange bars in the sky; a ghastly white tomb stands in its lonely aisle of trees; the hills beyond look icy cold in their purple gloom.[67]

With only occasional scenes of mosques and tombs and no images of Koranic or Jewish education of the kind provided by Henriette Browne,[68] Islam's presence was minimised while other religions and popular cults which survived from the pre-colonial period were reduced to curiosities. The subject of Bodichon's *Negro Woman Sacrificing at St Eugène, Algiers* might have been lifted straight out of the guidebooks, which recommended 'Moorish women, with their attendant negresses . . . performing ceremonies savouring of sorcery and fetichism'.[69] Curiosity about these rituals was decidedly western: Parkes enjoyed viewing 'a pagan ceremony among the Arabs', and researching it in the library.[70]

When first exhibited, Bodichon's Algerian scenes were dismissed as untruthful. In 1858 *The Athenaeum* considered them to be 'glassy and grey in colour', conveying 'the effect not of heat but of cold'. The following year this paper judged her work 'raw, harsh and colourless', *The Arab Tomb near Algiers* having 'the fresh-grey bloom colour that an unpicked cucumber wears'. The artist was charged with disappointing the expectation that above all the Orient was colourful. Support came, not surprisingly, from *The English Woman's Journal* which hailed her studies as 'a faithful transcript of the country', its critic praising her 'boldness, truth and fidelity'. In 1861 Bodichon's solo show was well received. For *The Observer*, the 'principal charm' of her watercolours 'consists in their obvious fidelity to nature' and even *The Athenaeum* admitted that '[s]ingular as these appear, they have a truthfulness and consistency of expression which indicate their complete fidelity.' Some years later, Eliza Fox's figure paintings were similarly acclaimed as 'truthful'.[71] In analysing 'worlding', Spivak emphasises that the British in India claimed accuracy and authority for their maps. Challenged by photography's profession of exactitude, claims for the veracity of painting rested on Ruskinian discourses of truth to nature and for works by artist-travellers beliefs in the trustworthiness of first-hand experience.

Bodichon's landscapes relied not on detail but citation. *Roman Aqueduct near*

Cherchel, Ancient Julia Caesarea portrays the great bridge of a massive aqueduct built in the reign of Juba II, descendant of the royal house of Numidia (Figure 3.8). A daring piece of engineering, the aqueduct included a three-tier bridge of ten arches and a great bridge, pictured by Bodichon, 228 metres long and 26 metres high.[72] The artist considered the aqueduct to be of interest because of its associations with Cleopatra Selena, the wife of Juba II and daughter of Antony and Cleopatra.[73] For reviewers the portrayal of a crumbling ruin against the declining rays of a sunset evoked melancholy, *The Spectator* critic remarked:

> The profiles of the ruinous and deeply toned arches are strongly relieved against a sunset sky of greenish blue, falling into orange, and intersected by long bars of purple cloud. The solitary stork and the tall rushes gently blowing in the evening breeze, heighten the desolation of the scene.[74]

Far from the sublimity evoked by David Roberts's watercolours, this is a scene imbued with romantic sentiment. For British and French visitors alike, Algeria's history was in ruins, its monuments disintegrating: visiting Tipasa, one of its most famous sites, Richard Cobden noted the wreckage of the past scattered across the site.[75] In her now classic study of Orientalism, Linda Nochlin comments that '[n]eglected, ill-repaired architecture functions . . . as a standard topos for commenting on the corruption of contemporary Islamic society.'[76] Ruins, like disrepair, could suggest the dereliction of North African regimes and the corresponding need for firm western intervention to ensure, among other things, the preservation of an architectural heritage. This 'worlding' reduces Algeria to the vestiges of a glorious past, only the relics of which remain, so facilitating comparisons between ancient grandeur and recent decline. Visual precedents from imagery of the surviving monuments of Rome to the majestic painting by Hubert Robert of Le Pont du Gard (1787), which Bodichon may have seen at the Louvre, summon not the Ottoman empire

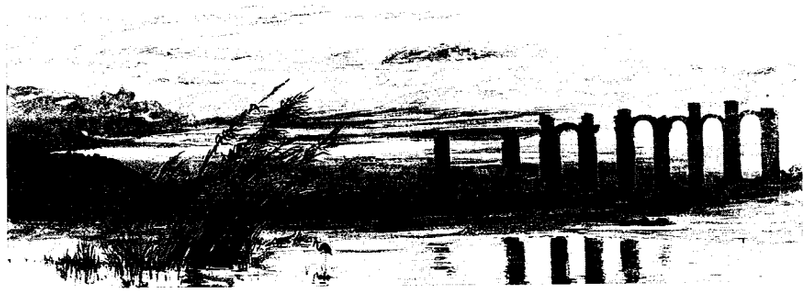

Figure 3.8 Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, *Roman Aqueduct near Cherchel, Ancient Julia Caesarea*, 1860s

whose three hundred years of dominion over Algeria ended in 1830; rather they (re)inscribe Algeria into a European history and artistic legacy. To portray Roman ruins was to locate the colony's far distant past, a move which not only disavowed the present but which demarked this land from the modernity of the west. But there was perhaps more at issue. Osman Benchérif considers that support for invasion and colonisation was justified as the repossession by Christian Europe of the ancient Roman empire in North Africa. In a long tradition of writing about the sacred mission of Christian Europe to restore the light of civilisation to the provinces of ancient Rome, Islam represents the forces of desecration and fanaticism.[77] In the broad spectrum of responses to Bodichon's watercolours, Roman ruins could well have evoked reflections on current events and the ancient past, as well as meditations on long-standing religious conflicts.

Like others before and after her, Bodichon drew on western pictorial conventions, making an eclectic and diverse use of the art of the past as well as contemporary British and French landscape painting. Through the laws of perspective and composition, the artist arranged land as landscape, invoking the weight and tradition of western art. Artistic precedents for the disposition of land into landscape may be included among the 'rules of recognition' defined by Bhabha as 'those social texts of epistemic, ethnocentric, nationalist intelligibility which cohere in an address to authority'. Bhabha argues that 'the acknowledgement of authority depends on the immediate – unmediated – visibility of its rules of recognition'.[78] In visual terms these 'rules of recognition' offered to make sense of 'a discontinuous and alien landscape'.[79]

Tried and tested compositional formulae recur. An artist with very little formal art education, Bodichon's unsophisticated technique exposes the making of landscape with particular clarity. Many watercolours rehearse well-known formats from the English watercolour tradition, examples of which she would have copied. Some use a pictorial format very loosely derived from the art of Claude Lorrain and his followers, in which the landscape is formally organised into contrasting bands of light and shade and in which trees or architecture frame or punctuate the scene to lead the gaze across and into the pictorial field. In *Roman Aqueduct, Algeria* a tall tree to the left introduces the aqueduct, a note of interest in the middle ground. Organised horizontally, a version of this arrangement could be pressed into service for the rendition of desert scenes and interior plains (Figure 3.4). Claude's landscapes had been reworked for more than a century to shape an allegory of the fluctuating fortunes of empire and a vision of an arcardia in which order was imposed on the mutability of the natural world.[80] These frames of reference also offered points of view: a high exteriorised vantage point for an extended panorama could facilitate imperialist fantasies of boundless possession. A lower viewpoint for towering mountains could inspire sensations of sublimity and awe. Other compositional frames extended accessibility: a path through a cactus grove, mimicking a winding trail through a woodland copse, invites the spectator to enter the

scene. Sweeping vistas of seashore and hinterland conjured memories of the glittering coastlines of the southern Mediterranean. Although the Bodichons owned at least two French Orientalist paintings, it was the work of the Barbizon artists – Corot, with whom she studied in 1864, and Hercules Brabazon, with whom she often painted – which shaped her compositions.[81] Algeria was visually encompassed within the artistic traditions of Europe. Such visual moves played into long-standing fantasies about the Maghreb: as a liminal area which could be a part of Europe, a boundary between two continents and/or Europe's other.

As well as visually pleasurable well-regulated pictorial fields, these visual formulae offered reinscriptions of history. Tlemcen (the capital of 'Abd al-Qādir), Cherchel and the Gorge of the Chiffa were imaged as picturesque tourist sites rather than as a centre of resistance, a town occupied by the French in 1840 or a site of brutal conflict. Johannes Fabian has drawn attention to temporal distance as a mechanism of alterity: he argues that the invocation of an earlier time differentiates and distances the other from the present of the western spectator or reader. This timelag involves a 'denial of coevality' as well as a disinclination to acknowledge the colonial present successfully located beyond the frame.[82] Colonial violence was thus disavowed by the formal ordering of space and time and by the still, contemplative figures which offered scale to a monument or distance to a view. It was not only that, as Bhabha has indicated, 'colonial domination is achieved through a process of disavowal that denies the chaos of its intervention', but that the aesthetic became a central mechanism of this disavowal, a refuge from the threat of the other.[83]

To represent North Africa within the western conventions of landscape was not only to (re)inscribe it but to frame it within a pre-existing pictorial order. In *The Truth in Painting* Jacques Derrida indicates that the placing of a frame entails much more than the making of a container, an edge or a border. Framing, he contends, is a field of force, a violent enclosing which subjects both the inner field and the boundary to the pressures of restraint, demarcation and definition.[84] Taking up Derrida's insights, it can be argued that landscape painting attempted a violent enclosing of land within the frameworks of western aesthetics and visual conventions. Not only was painting generated in and by conflict (this is the central argument of Spivak's appropriation of Heidegger) but landscape's pictorialising denied the trauma of colonisation. The aesthetic was of paramount importance in the 'worlding' of Algeria, for it was one of the mechanisms which produced the work of art as art, which made it 'into an object to be understood' as art. Derrida proposes that 'a discourse on the frame'[85] defines and regulates what is judged to be intrinsic or extrinsic to the work of art as well as producing and delimiting the domain of the aesthetic. In commenting on Kant's theories of aesthetic judgment, Derrida contends that 'the value oppositions which dominate the philosophy of art (before and since Kant) depend . . . in their pertinence, their rigor, their purity, their propriety', on the *parergon*.[86] From the Greek, meaning 'around' (*par*) 'the work' (*ergon*),

the *parergon* is 'a hybrid of outside and inside'; akin to a frame or framing device, it is both part of the work and yet separate from it. Yet Derrida goes further to suggest the *parergon* as a 'formal and general predicative structure, which one can transport *intact* or deformed or reformed, *according to certain rules*, into other fields, to submit new contents to it'.[87] This suggestion assists the proposition here that landscape painting in the colonial context entailed a double framing: the formal presentation which made the image into an art object for aesthetic contemplation, and the visual framings of land within western visual systems and artistic protocols, within those formal structures which could be transported 'into other fields'.

Public exhibitions in the nineteenth century demanded that the work of art be presented within a frame; watercolours would have been additionally bordered by a mount, perhaps edged with gold. Framing was one of the principal means for transforming the art work into a finished piece suitable for public display, and artists often took considerable trouble with framing and often had frames made up to their own designs.[88] Bodichon's Algerian watercolours were not easily packaged and their presentation troubled Parkes, commissioned to prepare them for show (and sale) at the French Gallery in spring 1861. She wrote to Bodichon,

> I moved heaven and earth to get them ready . . . 3 only turned up at the last minute. . . . I was frightened out of my wits; however Ellen Allen found them & got them mounted & framed in time.[89]

As Parkes recognised, these watercolours could not be offered for public view without the appropriate container. Wrapping round the work, the frame acted as a border between what may be said to be inside and integral to the work of art and that which may be said to be extraneous to it. The frame isolates and delineates the object from others while making it like them. The separation enacted by the double framing of these landscapes, within the containers necessary for exhibition and sale and within artistic conventions of western painting, may be construed as a movement of cultural violence which disavows colonial violence.

Yet framing is a process that is not always or necessarily achieved; disjunctions occur, Derrida writes, when 'the frame fits badly'. It could be destroyed by the very forces that imposed it. Derrida writes of a 'gesture of framing, which, by introducing the *bord*, does violence to the inside of the system and twists its proper articulations out of shape'. At the same time this field of force pushes the devices of restraint along (with) the borderlines to breaking point, so much so that the frames split: 'a certain repeated dislocation, a regulated, irrepressible dislocation . . . makes the frame in general crack, undoes it at the corners in its quoins and joints, turns its internal limit into an external limit'.[90] The frame is much more than a simple division between inside and outside. A distinct entity in itself, a third component in what is otherwise a binary

opposition, the frame moves between both fields: seemingly fixed and rigid, it is both highly mobile and subject to movement and fracture. The very force of framing, the epistemic violence of imperialism, causes its dislocation. The setting of a *bord* or border not only marks a limit, but also precipitates the overflowing of the boundary and of the meanings for the field delimited by the frame, thus *débordement*, a textual movement of over-spillage, dispersal and deferral. Framing could thus generate seepage, contamination, mutation, hybridisation as fields seemingly divided intermingled.

The framings of western visual culture worked as supplementary to produce landscapes that were neither Africa nor Europe, but comprised of an admixture of elements. Architectural motifs, such as the domed tombs of the saints of Islam, added to and displaced architectural fragments of ancient Rome. While pine trees and precipitous mountains are familiar elements in western landscape painting, the specific ranges and their disposition to the plains are geographically distinct. Aloes, asphodels, cacti, palms, rushes and bamboo hint at a Mediterranean or Maghrebi location, as do the herdsmen in local dress. These are hybridised landscapes forged in an encounter between several cultures and patched together from disparate, dissonant elements which in the logic of supplementarity jostle against, add to, replace and break into one another.

To identify these views as hybridised is to invoke Bhabha's powerful analysis of hybridity as 'the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities' and as a register of the precariousness of its authority.[91] Bhabha accounts for the agility of colonial authority, its indirectness and dispersal into adjacent cultural forms such as the imagery produced by British women in Algeria. The hybridised forms of Bodichon's landscapes are by no means unique to the artist. Rather their tensions are those of the genre of topography in the colonial context: at once a portrayal of a specific location so as to be recognisable to its audience and simultaneously an art object framed by 'rules of recognition'. Running through the literary texts and visual images considered here are equivocations of desire and denial, seduction and repudiation, visuality and opacity, irresolutions in the visual field between the familiar and the strange, home and away. The mutation of western artistic forms and framings may also indicate a disruptive force within visual representation which calls authority into question. For Bhabha hybridity breeds uncertainty – there are no guarantees that authority will transfer in the colonial context – and it proliferates difference to an excess beyond representation. And it is that uncertainty of representation with which this chapter began.

3 THE 'WORLDING' OF ALGERIA

1 BB to GE, 21 November and 8 December 1856, GEGHLC.
2 GE to S.S. Hennell, 16 April [1857], G.S. Haight, ed., *The George Eliot Letters*, London: Oxford University Press, 1954, II, 320.
3 The concept is developed from M.L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, 200–16.
4 Most recently considered in R. Benjamin, *Orientalism: Delacroix to Klee*, Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1997. See also Janice Helland, 'Locality and pleasure in landscape', *Rural History*, 1997, 8: 2, 149–64 and on 'an uneasy alliance between feminist and post-colonial critiques of European cultural authority', Z. Çelik and L. Kinney, 'Ethnography and exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles', *Assemblages*, 13, 1990, 35–59.
5 G.C. Spivak, 'Criticism, feminism and the institution' [1984], in *The Post-Colonial Critic, Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. S. Harasym, London and New York, Routledge, 1990, 1. It must be emphasised that Spivak has not presented 'worlding' as a unified concept. For a critique see Benita Parry, 'Problems in current theories of colonial discourse' [1987] in B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, H. Tiffin, eds, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, 36–44.
6 G.C. Spivak, 'The Rani of Sirmur: an essay in reading the archives', *History and Theory*, 24, 1985, 247–72. M. Heidegger, 'The origin of the work of art' [1935–6] in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter, New York: Harper & Row, 1971, 15–81, 63.
7 Nicholas Green, *The Spectacle of Nature*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990, 4–6. J. Urry, *Consuming Places*, London: Routledge, 1995.
8 E.W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Vintage [1993], 1994, 5.
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11 Private collection.
12 V. Shiva, *Staying Alive, Women, Ecology and Development*, London: Zed Books, 1988, 80. A.W. Crosby, *The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. N. Smith, *Uneven Development, Nature, Capital and the Production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1984.
13 Bennoune, 1988, 43–5.
14 T. Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire*, Princeton, 1998.
15 *EWJ*, March 1859, 64.
16 Benjamin, 1997, 7–31.
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