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Albert Moore

and the

Science of Beauty

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Abstract

Albert Moore and the Science of Beauty

This dissertation investigates the work of Albert Moore (1841-1893) and is based on his sketches at the Victoria and Albert and British Museums and his working principles described in his biography by Alfred Lys Baldry (1858-1939). These working principles were based in part on the work of the interior decorator and theoretician David Ramsey Hay (1798-1866) whose ideas were described in his book *Science of Beauty* and incorporated in the training given by the Schools of Design that Moore attended. Hay's work was related to the work of the palaeontologist Richard Owen (1804-1892) who, in 1848, proposed a theory of an archetype based on ideal Platonic forms, and in 1852 Hay described mathematical rules of beauty for the human figure based on the proportions of classical works of art thought to represent the Platonic idea of beauty. Moore's classical figures referenced this aesthetic classical ideal rather than the conventional heroic narrative of early nineteenth-century Neoclassical works. Moore was also influenced by the International Exhibition at South Kensington in 1862 which presented art and science as a single experience, introduced Japanese art to a wider audience and positioned the classicized nude as an example of modernity.

It argues that Moore, and to some extent the other members of the Aesthetic Movement, were influenced not only by French aesthetic ideas but also by the Neoclassical theories of Hay and others and their scientific approach to achieving beauty through the use of mathematical proportions based on musical intervals, the Neoplatonic ideas of beauty that parallel Owen's work on the archetype and Japanese art seen at the International Exhibition of 1862.

Albert Moore: Theory and Practice

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Albert Moore (1841-1893) was an important artist of the Aesthetic Movement which, although it had no coherent manifesto did conduct a significant experiment in the exploration of how art could function without a narrative or subject. One of Moore's earliest champions was Algernon Swinburne (1837-1909) who praised his art as 'the faultless and secure expression of an exclusive worship of things formally beautiful'. A few years later Sidney Colvin (1845-1927) wrote, 'Mr. Moore stands almost alone in the power of finding out for himself and in common nature the sources of this ideal loveliness and of thus forging a new and stronger link between art and truth.'[1] Robyn Asleson in her monograph *Albert Moore* describes how his group of admirers would go 'like sheep' to observe him at work and Simeon Solomon, a neighbour of Moore, 'was constantly in and out of his studio.'[2] By 1879 he was sufficiently well known to be the subject of satire, a skit in the *Examiner* describing him as '*the* coming man' and his pictures, 'however weak, must be treated with the greatest tenderness and spoken of […] in the subdued tones of awed respect.'[3] By 1886 Cosmo Monkhouse went so far as to write that he had a 'claim to stand in the 1st rank of living English artists'.[4] However, he also received critical reviews such as the one a year after his death in which his invention was described as 'extremely limited' and his art no more than 'decorative'.[5]

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[1] Sidney Colvin wrote in 'The Royal Academy. Third Article', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 18 May 1874, p. 11 and Algernon Swinburne wrote with William Michael Rossetti in *Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition, 1868* (London: John Camen Hotten, 1868), pp. 31-32.

[2] Asleson quotes from a biography of Thomas Armstrong and the other members of the group included Randolph Caldecott, William Eden Nesfield, the painter Thomas Reynolds Lamont, the architect Joseph Wallis, the illustrator Henry Blackburn, William Blake Richmond and William De Morgan, see R. Asleson, *Albert Moore* (London: Phaidon, 2000), p. 88.

[3] 'Is Life Worth Living?', *The Examiner,* 14 June 1879, p. 769. The article goes on describe his 'attachment to one young girl' which would be praised if she were his 'betrothed' but is 'scarcely so much to be praised when she is only his model'. It has been speculated that his public, open relationship with his model was the real reason he was never made an Academician.

[4] Cosmo Monkhouse, 'Albert Moore', *Magazine of Art*, 8 (1885), pp. 191-96. There are many other positive reviews such as 'The Royal Academy. Third Article', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 18 May 1874, p. 11, 'The Royal Academy. Second Notice', *Examiner,* 6 May 1876, p. 521, 'The Royal Academy. Second Article' *Pall Mall Gazette*, 14 May 1881, p. 11, and a defence of Moore by J. Comyn Carr in 'Modern Taste', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 11 December 1874, p. 3.

[5] 'Review of Albert Moore: His Life and Works', *The Times,* 22 November 1894, p. 7.

I would like to pick up on this word 'decorative' as it was often used to describe his work and it highlights a divide between narrative art and 'art for art's sake' and also between the type of art that was taught at the Schools of Design and the 'fine art' that was taught at the Royal Academy School.[6] Of all the painters of the Aesthetic Movement Moore had the most single minded commitment to subjectless art of pure form and colour and in its obituary *The Times* describes him as 'the contributor of one clear note to the complex harmony of modern art'.[7] The phrase 'one clear note' referred both positively to his single-minded focus and negatively to the 'monotony of his work' and it is this focus on a particular technique and subject that makes him an interesting artist to use in order to analyze the artistic and cultural changes of the mid-Victorian period.[8] His work is remarkably consistent from about 1865 to the end of his life; the compressed, often intensely decorated space resists narrative interpretation and he often draws attention to the paint surface although his classical figures date his work to the mid to late Victorian period.[9] His style was a unique combination of ornamentalist design, fresco techniques, Japanese elements and figures based on classical exemplars of beauty. His unusual, methodical working practices shed light upon his personal approach to art, which unfortunately he never wrote about, and by examining them closely with his working drawings and contemporary cultural and pedagogical influences we can start to uncover the reasons for his single-minded approach, the source of his decorative ideas and the basis of the seemingly contradictory elements in his work. In order to do this I look particularly closely at the 1860s as it was then that his mature style emerged and the formative influences are most clearly seen. I consider a range of influences other than the

[6] For example, in the *Pall Mall Gazette* the word 'decorative' was used in reviewing Moore's work on 17 May 1871 ('a decorative piece'), 2 May 1874 ('decorative fitness'), 8 May 1884 ('two decorative delicate figures'), 1 May 1886 ('a lovely piece of decorative art'), 3 May 1890 ('a strong decorative bent'), 30 September 1893 (his obituary written by 'A Pupil', probably Baldry), and a letter from John Hebb on 22 March 1895.
[7] 'Obituary', *The Times*, 27 September 1893.
[8] *The Times* obituary of 27 September 1893 also describes him as the possessor of a 'very beautiful, if slender, talent' and 'the monotony of his work stood in the way of its success'. In its review of Alfred Lys Baldry's biography of Moore, *The Times,* 22 November 1894, states 'his invention was [...] extremely limited'.
[9] As early as 1873 a reviewer could describe Moore's work as 'the pseudo-classic type, which was more in vogue a few years ago than it is now'. (*The Examiner*, May 3 1873).

conventional ones associated with the 'art for art's sake' movement, in particular the influence of the mathematical and scientific ideas of David Ramsey Hay (1798-1866) and people that influenced his work, such as Richard Owen (1804-1892).[10]

I start by looking at his working principles as described by his student and biographer Alfred Lys Baldry (1858-1939), in combination with an analysis of his remaining sketches held by the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) and British Museum as these tell us a lot about his approach and what might have influenced it. Baldry describes his working principles in detail, taking nineteen pages to outline a sequence of steps from preliminary sketches to finished painting and although we can confirm most of Baldry's description from the sketches that remain they also raise new questions.[11] Rather than follow the conventional analysis of Moore within the context of the Aesthetic Movement I look at three interconnected themes — the work of Owen on archetypes, Hay's ideas relating to ideal body proportions, and the International Exhibition at South Kensington in 1862 which introduced Japanese art to a wider audience and which helped introduce the classical nude as an acceptable subject. There are many other themes that are discussed in detail in Asleson's monograph, for example, his architectural work with William Eden Nesfield (1835-1888), and his relationship with Simeon Solomon (1840-1905) and James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903).[12] The influence of colour theory on Moore is another theme that needs further research, particularly the interesting comparison between the theories of Hay and George Field (1777-1854), and their relationship with those of Michel Eugène Chevreul (1786-1889) and others in France.

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[10] The conventional analysis is well covered in Asleson's book and elsewhere. Asleson examines what we mean by 'art for art's sake', the writings of Walter Pater (1839-1894), Colvin and others and the influence of Swinburne and Dante Rossetti (1838-1882) in Britain and Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), Théophile Gautier (1811-1872) and Victor Cousin (1792-1867) in France.

[11] Alfred Baldry, *Albert Moore: His Life and Works* (London: George Bell, 1894), pp. 69-87.

[12] Asleson argues that Whistler was heavily influenced by Moore and 'the ideas propounded in the "Ten O'Clock" Lecture are so highly suggestive of Moore's own practice and persona (and in several respects so contrary to Whistler's), that one suspects the audacious American of speaking on behalf of his less demonstrative friend'. (p. 172).

The V&A holds over 70 sketches, drawings and full-size cartoons by Moore and a close analysis of these reveals new aspects of his working practices. For example, the pouncing holes in many of Moore's cartoons show his understanding of fresco techniques and wall decoration. Some of them show a grid that is either squared up or curvilinear or both and the holes are placed both along the body outlines and along the grid lines. I shall consider these grids in the light of the art training methods of the period, the working practices described by Baldry and the known sketches, drawings and cartoons in Chapter 2: Moore's Working Principles.

The classical figure is central to Moore's presentation and I argue that it represents not just a classical theme but a Platonic ideal of beauty based on Hay's theory of proportions as taught at the Schools of Design. Figure painting was regarded as an important differentiator between fine art and design art and it was therefore an identity issue for Moore as well as a moral and gender one. Moore often combines the classical figure of fine art with the flatness of decorative wall painting and repetitive ornamental design elements. The link between decorative art and classical figures was made by Hay who analysed the classical figure mathematically and linked its proportions to musical intervals. I discuss the role of the classical figure in Moore's art in Chapter 3: Moore's Use of the Figure.

Richard Owen was an influential early supporter of the idea that there are archetypical patterns that act as models for the allowed form of species and in his 1848 book *On the Archetype and Homologies of the Vertebrate Skeleton* he proposed an archetypical skeleton (see Fig. 5 top right) as the original source of all vertebrate structures.[13] He described this 'as answering to the *ιδέα* of Plato, deemed by that philosopher to be superadded to matter and mind, and which he defined as a sort of models, or moulds in which matter is cast, and which

[13] R. Owen, *On the Archetype and Homologies of the Vertebrate Skeleton* (London: Richard and John E. Taylor, 1848), p. 175. Owen is better known today for his opposition to Darwin's views, as the founder of the Natural History Museum and as the inventor of the term *Dinosauria*.

regularly produce the same number and diversity of species' and although Darwin's publication of *Origin of Species* in 1859 conflicted with Owen's ideas of Transcendental Anatomy, the influence of Neoplatonic idealism continued.[14] Owen adopted the motto 'The One in the Manifold' to express his concept of how each individual is an example of an idea in the divine mind and his earlier theories fed into the general revival of interest in Platonist philosophy during the 1850s and 1860s which influenced the work of the design reform movement.[15]

Nearly all of Moore's mature work had a classical theme and this had long been associated with the highest genre of history painting. However, Neoclassical history painting typically represented an elevating idea with a moral message taken from a classical narrative with idealised figures.[16] Moore's paintings use the classical figure to create an aesthetic experience rather than a moral one. Moore's idealisation was based on nineteenth-century theories of beauty which were based on classical proportion and the Platonic idea. The controversy in the 1860s surrounding Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) undermined the idea that human beings had been created in God's image and replaced it with a mechanistic descent from apes. This encouraged a reinterpretation of the classical in aesthetic terms and a move away from its moral and heroic status.[17] The Platonic ideal became a shibboleth for those seeking religious certainty as scientific theories undermined religious beliefs that depended on contingent facts about the world and its history. Idealisation had been seen as a route to beauty from the classical period but it was now seen as reaching out to a hidden world of Platonic ideas through a scientific process of mathematical proportions. This world

[14] Owen (1848), p. 172. The debate concerning the nature of evolution was more complex and involved many more scientists, for example, well known figures such as Louis Agassiz (1807-1873) and William Whewell (1794-1866) broadly supported Owen's views.

[15] N. Rupke, 'Richard Owen's Vertebrate Archetype', *Isis*, 84 (1993), p. 248.

[16] Joshua Reynolds, the first President of the Royal Academy, laid out the rules for producing fine art in his series of fifteen lectures (the *Discourses*) between 1769 and 1790 which, like the French *Académie*, involved rigorous academic training and the study of the Old Masters, see B. Taylor, *Art for the Nation: Exhibitions and the London Public 1747-2001*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 20-28.

[17] This particularly applied to the heroic male nude, see A. Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality, and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 137.

was one of archetypes, ideas in the mind of God, and our physical world a mere contingent explication of this ideal. This was a far cry from Reynolds' moral certainties and elevated history painting and from John Ruskin's 'truth to nature' which saw nature as the actual physical presence of God.[18] I discuss the work of Owen and its relevance to design theory and Moore's work in Chapter 4: Dinosaurs and Owen's Archetype.

Hay was a Scottish decorator who was part of the design reform movement and who wrote extensively on aesthetic theory. He developed a 'Science of Beauty' based on harmonic proportions and musical intervals linked through a Pythagorean system to ratios of primary and secondary colours.[19] He believed he had uncovered mathematical rules of proportion that underlie all beautiful forms and he showed how these could be constructed as a geometric framework around a classical figure or building. He proposed his system as part of a teaching programme and he used it to show how the proportions of the *Medici Venus*, the *Portland Vase* and the Parthenon were all explained by his rules.[20] Hay's ideas became embedded in the teaching practice of the Schools of Design through Richard Redgrave's (1804-1888) 23 stage course adopted by Henry Cole (1808-1882) in 1852, the year Moore started at the York School.[21] I discuss the influence of design school training and design theory on Moore's work in Chapter 5: Wallpaper and Hay's *Science of Beauty*.

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[18] 'Truth to nature' is a phrase often associated with Ruskin but rarely used by him. It occurs in *Modern Painters,* 2 (Massachusetts: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), p. 145 in the context 'we shall be able to show that not only in *truth to nature*, but in all other points, Turner is the greatest landscape painter who has ever lived'. (my italics). However, the sentiment is expressed in much of his writing, for example, 'the trees and flowers seem all, in a sort, children of God', *The True and the Beautiful in Nature, Art, Morals, and Religion* (New York: Wiley & Halstead, 1859), p. 395. Ruskin's religious views changed significantly over the course of his life.

[19] D. R. Hay, *Science of Beauty, as Developed in Nature and Applied in Art* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1856), see the chapter on beauty based on numerical ratio, pp. 15-27 and the chapter on colour pp. 67-81.

[20] The Parthenon proportions are analysed in D. R. Hay, *The Natural Principles and Analogy of The Harmony of Form* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1842), pp. 36-42, the *Medici Venus* in D. R. Hay, *The Natural Principles of Beauty, as Developed in the Human Figure* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1852), pp. 29-37 and the *Portland Vase* in Hay (1856), pp. 82-84.

[21] C. Frayling, *The Royal College of Art: One Hundred & Fifty years of Art & Design* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1987), pp. 40-41 and Barbara Whitney Keyser, 'Ornament as Idea: Indirect Imitation of Nature in the Design Reform Movement', *Journal of Design History*, 11 (1998), pp. 127-44.

Chapter 2: Moore's Working Principles

Baldry summarises Moore's working principles as, 'He was a man of methods, an assiduous follower of an exact system, a sincere believer in rational principles, but he never became mechanical. He was a realist, and worked on simple technical lines, but his realism never degenerated into unselective literalism, and his technical simplicity never led him into crudities.'[22] This 'exact system' is described by Baldry, demonstrated by his sketches and is partly derived from his training and family background. Moore was an artist steeped in the traditions of nineteenth-century painting. His father was a well known artist and four of his brothers became artists, one of whom, George Moore, became a Royal Academician.[23] His initial training was at home and then at the York School of Design from 1852 to 1856, the period when Cole and Redgrave introduced a prescriptive training programme for all the Schools in the country.[24] The content of this programme and its potential influence will be discussed later.

Moore's early paintings, such as *Study of an Ash Trunk* (1857, exhibited Royal Academy 1858, Ashmolean Museum, Fig. 1), show he was also influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites but their lack of depth, all over detailed decorative organic forms and lack of subject show that he was not trying to adopt a Pre-Raphaelite approach but to adapt some of their techniques to his own. During the late 1850s and early 1860s he undertook a number of architectural projects and his surviving sketches show his flat, linear style and well balanced compositions based on figures wearing classical dress (for example, Fig. 10).[25] He was also developing a form of history painting that culminated in *Elijah Running to Jezreel Before*

[22] Baldry (1894), p. 87.
[23] Robyn Asleson's book on Albert Moore provides a detailed description of his family, artistic training and position within the community of artists, see Asleson (2000).
[24] Frayling (1987), p. 41.
[25] Moore carried out architectural projects for Shipley Hall, Croxteth Hall, Combe Abbey, Thursford, Austin Friars, Rochdale, Claremont and the New Queen's Theatre, see Asleson (2000), pp. 45-70.

Ahab's Chariot (1861, private collection), his first history painting to be exhibited at the Royal Academy.

From about 1865 onwards many of Moore's paintings had a classical theme, often a single female figure wearing classical drapery in a semi-classical setting, frequently with Japanese elements, for example, *Azaleas* (1867-8, Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Fig. 16). However, unlike the work of Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema (1836-1912) and Frederic Leighton (1830-1896) there was no attempt to construct an authentic classical setting and anachronistic accessories were common.[26] Alma Tadema's classical scenes could be seen as giving an entertaining insight into another world which parallels that of the British Empire but Moore used the classical for other purposes. *Azaleas* shows a full-size single female figure dressed in yellow and cream drapery with her face in profile but with her body turned towards us, barefoot with her right leg raised introducing a note of action and movement into an otherwise static picture. It is clear from the anachronistic Japanese carp bowl and flower pot that we are not intended to read any message into the subject. The upper half of the painting surrounds the woman with a decorative pattern of azalea flowers. Many of his paintings contain a strong decorative element and a flattened space suggesting his design training. The painting was reviewed by William Michael Rossetti (1829-1919) and Swinburne and Swinburne wrote that it was the 'faultless and secure expression of an exclusive worship of things formally beautiful'.[27]

The classical elements are based on works Moore could have seen, for example, the woman's dress is similar to that of the figures on the east pediment of the Parthenon and we

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[26] Moore introduced many anachronistic elements such as violins, and Japanese carp bowls and fans but some, such as azaleas and shuttlecock were known to the ancient Greeks. Azaleas were reported by Xenophon to have made a Greek army ill in 400 BC when they ate honey made from its flowers, see George Grote, *History of Greece*, 9 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), p. 113, and 'Ancient Greek drawings represent a game almost identical with battledore and shuttlecock' *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2005), p. 964.

[27] W. Rossetti and A. Swinburne, *Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition, 1868* (London: John Camen Hotten, 1868), pp. 31-32.

know that these were used at the York School of Design and that Moore studied at the British Museum (see Chapter 3).[28] The hair style and hair band appear to be based on other Greek statues, such as the caryatids from the south porch of the Erechtheion. Asleson points out that the *Building News* singled out *Azaleas* as the 'only decorative painting' at the Royal Academy Exhibition and one that 'ought to have been hung with the architectural drawing' and she associates the vestiges of his 'system of line arrangement' on the full-size drawing at the V&A with his 'understanding of architectural design'.[29] This understanding led to a close relationship with architects including William Nesfield and the numerous architectural projects previously mentioned and we know that his family expected him to become an architect.[30] This system of line arrangement can also be explained in terms of decorative design principles and theories of beauty based on mathematical proportions that require an arrangement of lines to measure and control the forms.

Classical art was associated with beauty and perfection and so by arranging figures that do nothing in a non-existent world Moore is denying the viewer the distraction of the mental activity of story telling and forcing a confrontation with these elements. Of course, objects such as figures, flowers and vases can be identified but they resist any narrative interpretation so we must engage with the painting as a construction of forms and colours. It is therefore important to understand the way that Moore carefully constructed the forms and created the colours as they are the essence of his work. Moore's paintings are often associated by art historians with classical works that might have been influences. However, as he tried to avoid creating a historic setting it is unlikely that he intended such references to

[28] Asleson (2000), p. 22. We know he was admitted as a student to the Print Room of the British Museum in 1859 where there are many engravings of Greek works of art.
[29] Asleson (2000), pp. 98-99.
[30] R. Asleson, 'Nature and Abstraction in the Aesthetic Development of Albert Moore' in E. Prettejohn (ed.), *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 124 and Asleson (2000), p. 13.

create a context for interpretation.[31] It is only in his last few paintings, such as *The Loves of the Winds and the Seasons* (1893, Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery) that he moves from abstract beauty to an allegorical representation.

Moore produced his oil paintings using a unique sequence of steps that Baldry describes as 'curiously elaborate and complete'.[32] Moore would first make many preliminary sketches over and over again until the main layout of the subject was settled. These were made on 'some odd scrap of paper' and this step appears to be where he created the overall composition and the main forms. There are many examples of these small sketches, typically 30 x 20 cm, at the V&A and British Museum (Fig. 3). Baldry does not mention sketches produced to record accessories but we know he produced them as we have, for example, the sketch of Assyrian horses from the British Museum (Fig. 13, compare with Fig. 14). A system of 'line arrangement, congruous with the leading lines of the sketch' was then made and this enabled the position of the figures and other elements to be determined as well as the distribution of colour.[33] Baldry mentions later that 'He always had two sets of prominent lines, and sometimes three, crossing one another at an angle' and these enabled him to fix the position of all the details and the accessories.[34] Moore then produced a series of black and white chalk on brown paper nude studies about 30 cm high (Fig. 3 is an example of a drapery study). These were always 'faithful representations' but he would next produce black and white sketches to which he made improvements. The similarities between Moore's nudes

[31] For example, Richard Green points out in *'The Moore Family Pictures'* the similarity between *The Elements* (1866, private collection) and Pompeian wall painting, Elizabeth Prettejohn in *Art for Art's Sake* between *The Venus* (1869, York Art Gallery) and the *Venus de Milo* and Robyn Asleson points out in *Albert Moore* the similarity between both *The Marble Seat* (1865, whereabouts unknown) and *Study for a 'A Greek Play'* (1867, V&A) and the Parthenon east pediment, the similarity between *Apricots* (1866, Fulham Public Library) and Pompeian wall painting, between *A Musician* (1865-6, Yale Center for British Art) and a wall painting from Herculaneum called *The Music Lesson*, between *A Garden*(1869, Tate Gallery) and a Stabiaen wall painting called *Spring* and between the figures on *The Portland Vase* and both *The Toilette* (1886, Tate Gallery) and *A Summer Night* (1884-90, Walker Art Gallery), see R. Green, *'The Moore Family Pictures'* (York: York City Art Gallery, 1980), p. 32, and Prettejohn (2007), p. 126 and Asleson (2000), pp. 69, 79, 87, 92, 108 and 184-85.

[32] The following is a summary of Chapter V 'Working Principles', Baldry (1894), pp. 69-87 and the quotation is from p. 69.

[33] Baldry (1894), p. 73.

[34] Baldry (1894), p. 81

(Fig. 7) and Hay's archetypical nude (Fig. 9) are described in Chapter 5 when I return to this question of idealisation and improvement and the influence of theories of beauty and the Platonic ideals on Moore.

Baldry says 'he enlarged his nude studies' and it is clear from his drawings at the V&A that this was done by 'squaring up' (Fig. 7 shows the squares and leading lines and Fig. 2 shows a detail of the feet and vase).[35] A pricking was then made and 'the lines of the cartoon were transferred to the canvas by a pounce of charcoal dust' and the outlines filled with colour.[36] This can be seen by closely examining the numerous sketches at the V&A. The sketches confirm Baldry's description of Moore's working practices although they raise many new questions. For example, the sketch for *Birds of the Air* (*c*. 1878, V&A) has three sets of unevenly-spaced sweeping lines as well as precisely spaced squaring up lines (Figs. 7 and 2). Moore appears to base the sweeping lines on the outline of the body and uses them to help position the curtains, drapery and plant stems in the final painting (Fig. 8). The lines do not rigidly constrain the objects, for example, the curtains do not line up exactly with the sweeping lines but they create an underlying framework that helps position every component.[37]

Some of the sketches examined have pouncing holes covering the surface, sometimes with holes or groups of holes marked with a circle or rectangle (Figs. 4 and 22). A technique used in the Renaissance was to transfer the image to another piece of paper by punching the

[35] Many, but not all, of the full-size sketches at the V&A are covered in a regular square grid.

[36] Many of the full-size sketches are also covered in holes, some along the contours of the body and accessories, some along the freehand sweeping lines and some across otherwise blank areas. There is no sign of charcoal dust on any of the sketches or cartoons although this could have been removed by brushing. Pouncing is a technique that was sometimes used to transfer a full-size cartoon to a wet plaster wall as part of producing a fresco. Cennino Cennini refers to pouncing but only to transfer from parchment to cloth and to transfer to a plaster wall he simply says 'Then compose the scenes or figures with charcoal' after drawing vertical and horizontal lines (not squaring up), Cennino Cennini, *The Craftsman's Handbook,* trans. by Daniel Thompson, Jr. (New York: Dover Publications, 1954, trans. 1933, first published as *Il Libro dell'Arte* in the fifteenth century), p. 43. However, pouncing was used in the Renaissance to transfer cartoons, see Carmen Bambach Cappel, 'Michelangelo's Cartoon for the "Crucifixion of St. Peter" Reconsidered', *Master Drawings* 25 (1987), pp. 131-42.

[37] Note that it is a full-scale sketch for a smaller version called *Birds of the Air* based on *Birds* (1878, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery). The smaller version was painted for a specific commission from the Glaswegian collector Alexander Ballantyne Stewart , see Asleson (2000), pp. 145-46.

holes through both, and the copy could then be used for pouncing without destroying the original. Baldry points out that 'He transferred to a number of separate canvases the figures from his cartoon, drawing them in outline with thin colour over the dots made by the pounce' and there are some cartoons that have larger holes than others (compare the holes in Fig. 20 with those along the outline of the body in Fig. 22).[38] We can also see another form of armature not mentioned by Baldry — the vertical line running through the vase in Fig. 2, the head in Fig. 4, and the boy's body and leg in Fig 21 and 22. These lines have pouncing holes and so were transferred to the final canvas and must therefore have been an important part of his working practice, possibly used to line up elements from multiple sketches to achieve an overall balance.

Baldry emphasizes that a repeated picture such as *Beads* and *A Sofa* was 'not a mere copy' and each was 'studied from nature'. As Moore only went direct to nature to produce the small sketches it is unclear what Baldry meant as in the next sentence he says Moore used 'the same figure cartoon' for both paintings but 'went direct to nature in each case'.[39]

Moore produced the drapery studies separately so that the body could be accurately transferred to the canvas and the complexity of the drapery decoration worked on independently. He first made a number of small sketches of the drapery from life (Fig. 3) and when satisfied with the arrangement a full-size black and white drawing was produced, often on tracing paper pinned to the original life sketch.[40] The sketching took about half of the sitting period and the second half was spent rapidly painting a coloured study over one of the prepared canvases. Later he changed this procedure and took photographs of the model and

[38] Baldry (1894), p. 75.
[39] A close examination of the holes of the full-size sketches at the V&A using a magnifying glass shows that some are very small (see Fig. 22) and appear to have been used once and other sketches have much larger holes (see Fig. 20) suggesting they could have either have been used multiple times or deeper holes were made using a tapered instrument suggesting the penetration of multiple layers.
[40] This explains how he aligned the drapery and figure even though they were drawn on separate occasions. It could also explain why there are fewer full-size drapery drawings as the tracing paper was more likely to have been discarded.

spent the entire session painting a more complete oil sketch. These sketches were sometimes worked up into a picture for the Academy or the Grosvenor.

Starting with *Shells* (1874) he developed a new technique to improve the finish of the surface — during the drapery stage the main painting was primed in white lead over the pounced colour sketch and the picture painted again on the fresh surface in much more detail.[41] The painting was then covered in white lead again to provide a brilliant white smooth surface on which to work. Each priming was thin enough however to allow the underpainting to show through. The drapery cartoon was then transferred to the main canvas and the final design was outlined in detail in silvery grey. This use of a wet white ground was claimed to be used by the Pre-Raphaelites to achieve their luminous surface and clear colours and it had the advantage of an association with the fresco techniques of the Old Masters. However, Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893) complained that the technique was unworkable although William Holman Hunt (1827-1910) claimed it could be done with care but was extremely difficult.[42]

Moore always used a novel approach to apply the colour which allowed him to work on each section of the canvas rapidly yet still see the overall colour scheme. Tracing paper was placed over the entire painting to enable a complete colour cartoon to be painted. Each part of the painting was then worked on by cutting away that part of the tracing paper so the final painting could be done without needing to retouch or even overpaint and the colour could be judged in the context of the overall colour scheme. Colours were mixed in advance and he began with the main highlights painted in full colour. Over this, while it was still wet, he painted a very thin darker layer to create the half tones and because of this wet-on-wet technique the selected area had to be finished the same day or the highlight colour had to be removed.

[41] Asleson (2000), p. 121-22.

[42] Scientific analysis of many Pre-Raphaelite paintings does not confirm the technique was used and the only painting where the evidence is unequivocal is Brown's *Jesus Washing Peter's Feet* (1851, Tate Britain), see J. Townsend, *Pre-Raphaelite Painting Techniques* (London: Tate Publishing 2004), pp. 60-61.

The above summary shows Moore's interest in harmony, balance and proportion and the use of a decorative technique that is associated with Renaissance and classical fresco painting. In fresco terminology, he would pounce a full-size sketch onto the surface, paint a *sinopia* in grey and then work on an area, or *giornata*, that could be completed in a day over the *intonaco,* which is wet paint rather than plaster. As has been pointed out many of his early works were wall paintings for churches and following his visit to Rome in 1862 he painted a small fresco called *The Four Seasons* (1863-4, whereabouts unknown) which he exhibited in London at his own one-man show where it was seen by Frederic George Stephens (1828-1907) who commented 'in dealing with the exceptional process of fresco, the artist has imparted to his work a freedom no less than the gravity of high Art'.[43] Such classical techniques were well known to Victorian artists and new Roman wall paintings in *buon fresco* were being uncovered at Pompeii and Herculaneum.[44] Moore therefore effectively combined decorative design techniques with fine art classical figure painting.

[43] F. G. Stephens, 'Fine-Art Gossip', *Athenaeum*, no. 1895 (20 February 1864), p. 271.
[44] There was enormous interest in the excavations because of the plaster body casting carried out by Giuseppe Fiorelli, Professor of Archaeology at Naples University, between 1860 and 1875, see 'Pompeii', *The Times*, 17 June 1863, p. 5 and A. Cooley, M. Cooley, *Pompeii: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 192.

Chapter 3: Moore's Use of the Figure

The classical figure was associated with the highest genre of painting but any artist who included a nude had to follow certain conventions to avoid being accused of impurity and sensuality.[45] Moore's figures were usually female and thinly draped or naked yet he was regarded as a pure painter whose figures were elevated above any implication of sexuality. Alison Smith argues that the classical associations emphasised formal beauty rather than sensuality and the vertical format emphasised 'shape and contour above character and narrative'.[46] I look more closely at Moore's classical associations and their relationship to Platonic idealism as described in the theoretical work of Hay and how these created a context in which the representation of the potentially sensual figure was acceptable.

Hay's work formed the basis of the training at the Schools of Design yet figure painting was associated with fine art and the Schools stipulated that no one entering them could make fine art his profession. However, they were often used as a stepping stone; for example, two of Moore's brothers used the York School of Design in this way to get into the Royal Academy School.[47] There were also other ways an artisan could receive figure drawing training, for example, in 1848 the York artist William Etty (1787-1849) started a local class in York for studying from the male nude that was independent of the York School of Design. We also know that when Moore entered the York School figure drawing was on the curriculum although the teaching of figure drawing had been controversial from the beginning.

The history of figure drawing at the Schools of Design is complex but in 1852 when Moore joined the York School of Art he would have been taught within Redgrave's programme

[45] The Victorian attitude to sex is commonly seen as one of repression but Michael Foucault rejects this simplistic notion and suggests sexual behaviour was organised through mechanisms of definition and regulation, M Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Part 1* (La Volonté de Savoir, 1976; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998), pp. 3-8.
[46] Smith (1996), p. 117.
[47] Asleson (2000), pp. 11-13.

which did involve figure drawing.[48] A 'Rustic Figure and Draped Model' class was also introduced in 1851 to supplement the life class and during the 1850s the students at York 'had to make the Elgin marbles their principal objects'.[49] In 1856 Moore went to London but initially to Kensington Grammar School where he was 'one of the cleverest and most intellectual of the scholars'.[50] From the start he excelled in 'mathematics, generally achieving the highest place in the class' and his family 'expected him to become an architect'. This knowledge of mathematics, geometry and perspective and the engineering aspects of architectural design would have made him sympathetic to Hay's theories of beauty based on mathematical proportions. Moore exhibited two watercolours at the Royal Academy in 1857 and enrolled at its School in 1858 although he expressed frustration at the steps required before he could

[48] See Frayling (1987), pp. 17-25. In summary, following the creation of the first School of Design in 1837, the Royal Academicians on the Committee of Instruction decided it should not conflict with the Academy's School and within a month agreed 'drawing from the human figure should not be taught'. However, Benjamin Haydon (1786-1846), a significant proselytiser for the Schools creation, was so incensed he 'toured the Mechanics' Institutes and the boardrooms of Britain with a series of outspoken lectures on the advantages of teaching the 'Higher Arts' to artisans'. Benjamin Haydon said, '[…] if any school of design, though exclusively devoted to manufacture be founded, without provision in its code of instruction for the knowledge of the human figure, the very elements of taste and beauty in manufacture will be omitted in the basis.' see *Lectures on Painting and Design*, Lect. 1., 1 (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1846), p. 116. In 1838 William Dyce was appointed Superintendent and professor following his successful tour of design schools in Europe and his first act on joining was to introduce a life class although 'strictly for the purpose of ornament'. The Government then authorized £100,000 to be used to part fund schools throughout the country and in 1842 the first schools in the major cities, including York, were created. A structured course was introduced in 1843 by Charles Heath Wilson (1809-1882) that included drawing the figure but the School reiterated its policy of not allowing people to attend who intended to become artists. Nevertheless the figure class run by John Rogers Herbert, ARA (1810-1890), became the most popular but an argument with Wilson led to a student rebellion in 1845. Wilson reorganised the Figure Class so that all those attending were certified as a genuine 'decorator or industrial designer' as he considered this 'dangerous and injurious instruction' had led them to look at it as a more elevated branch of study rather than a supplement to ornament. As a result, in 1845 Herbert was replaced by John Calcott 'Old Clothes' Horsley (1817-1903) who was strongly against all nude painting. Partly as a result of Richard Redgrave's complaint to the Prime Minister the old Council was dissolved, and Dyce came back to resign within months and be replaced by Henry Cole (1808-1882), who in 1852 introduced Richard Redgrave's systematized programme of 23 stages. Redgrave's programme is described in the *Third Report of the Department of Science and Art* (London: George E. Eyre and William Spottiswode, 1856), pp. 222-23, written in Moore's final year. The figure stages were Stage 8, drawing the human figure or animals forms from the round or nature, Stage 9, anatomical studies, Stage 15, painting groups, Stage 16, painting the human figure from casts, Stage 17, painting the human figure in colour, and Stage 19, modelling the figure or animals. In total York sent nine works in these categories for exhibition and two medals were awarded although the name of the student or students is not stated.

[49] Asleson (2000), p. 12. We know the School also had casts of the *Venus de Milo* and *Venus de Medici*.

[50] Asleson (2000), p. 13.

attend the life classes and stayed only a few months before joining Leigh's School of Art which was the only local private school that provided life classes.[51]

In 1862 The International Exhibition was held at South Kensington and its exhibits were described as 'the most beautiful and wonderful that have ever been brought together' and they combined the latest technical advances with design and fine art amongst which was an exhibition of French painting which *Blackwood's* praised, singling out Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres's (1780-1867) *The Spring* (Musée d'Orsay, Fig. 10), a nude female figure, and Jean-Hippolyte Flandrin's (1809-1864) *Nude Youth Sitting by the Sea* (1836, The Louvre).[52] It has been suggested that the exhibition influenced British art as it was followed by a proliferation of nude figures during the 1860s.[53] Moore attended the exhibition and his first publicly exhibited full length nude was the male youth in *The Marble Seat* (1865, whereabouts unknown, Fig. 17). As in this painting, most of Moore's female figures were fully clothed and dressed in the style found in ancient Greek sculpture, a few figures wearing diaphanous robes, found in late Greek art, although he did also paint at least seven nudes.[54] His use of titles, such as *The Marble Seat* or *A Wardrobe* indicates his desire to abstract the subject away from the figures and Colvin later commented 'whatever subject is chosen, is merely a mechanism for getting beautiful people into beautiful situations'.[55]

[51] Asleson (2000), p. 20. James Mathews Leigh (1808-1860) was William Etty's only pupil and had attended life drawing in Paris. Moore was recommended to the Royal Academy School by Richard Burchett (1815-1875), Headmaster of the Central Training School for Art at South Kensington and friend of Henry Cole and Richard Redgrave and known for his expertise in the scientific principles of drawing.

[52] 'Pictures British and Foreign: International Exhibition', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 92, American Edition 55 (New York: Leonard Scot, 1862), pp. 353-71 and 'The International Exhibition', *Fraser's Magazine* for *Town and Country*, 66 (London: Parker, Son, and Bourn, 1862), pp. 631-46.

[53] See E. Prettejohn, *Beauty and Art: 1750-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 131. Also see A. Smith, 'The Nude at Public Exhibition, 1866-1870', in *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 101-62.

[54] As there is no catalogue raisonné the seven nudes are based on Asleson's book and are *The Marble Seat* (1865), *A Wardrobe* (1867), *Venus* (1869), *White Hydrangea* (1885), *A Yellow Room* (1885), *A Summer Night* (1894-90), and *A Bathing Place* (1890). Studies for *A Bather* exist but the painting was never completed due to ill health.

[55] S. Colvin, 'English Painters of the Present Day', *The Portfolio* (1870), p. 5, quoted in Baldry (1894), p. 7.

His life drawing skills were used in the two history paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy, *Elijah Running to Jezreel before Ahab's Chariot* (1861, private collection) and, on his return from Rome, *Elijah's Sacrifice* (1863, Bury City Art Gallery). He had first exhibited *Elijah's Sacrifice* with three others in a one-man show in his studio; these included *A Girl Dancing* (unlocated), *Dancing Girl Resting* (1863-4, private collection) and *The Four Seasons* (1863-4, fresco, whereabouts unknown). The latter picture created 'a decided sensation' and is the one that Colvin later said was 'the work by which Moore first drew notice upon himself'.[56] However, it was the 1865 Royal Academy exhibition that established Moore as a leading artist with *The Marble Seat* and it was Whistler's admiration of this painting that led to their lifelong friendship.[57]

The Marble Seat is a significant painting regarding the representation of the nude and may have been influenced by Moore's trip to Italy where he saw Greek and Roman sculptures. Greek sculpture and vase painting of the fifth century BC often shows naked men and clothed females.[58] Although the classical setting potentially 'elevated the subject beyond any implication of sexuality' Moore still took a risk in Victorian England by showing a naked youth in the company of clothed females.[59] The painting shows three female figures on a marble bench, one lounging in a pose reminiscent of one of the figures on the east pediment of the Parthenon (*c*. 435 BC, three goddesses attending the birth of Athena, British Museum) and the other two seated and reminiscent of the seated figures in three goddesses with Dionysus (*c*. 435 BC, east pediment Parthenon, British Museum). The seated figures are also similar to those in Simeon Solomon's *Sappho and Erinna in a Garden at Mytilene* (1864, watercolour, Tate Gallery) and the idea of the power of the female gaze is also picked up in Solomon's

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[56] Asleson (2000), p. 41 and Sidney Colvin, 'English Painters of the Present Day. II. — Albert Moore', *Portfolio*, 1 (1870), p. 4.
[57] J. Sandberg, 'Whistler Studies', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Mar., 1968), p. 59.
[58] N. Spivey, *Understanding Greek Sculpture: Ancient Meanings, Modern Readings* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), p. 39. Naked female figures were produced in the fifth century BC but were associated with bathing *hetairai* (female companions) and the goddess Aphrodite.
[59] A. Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality, and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 101.

Habet! (1865, private collection, on loan to Bradford Art Galleries and Museum). On the left of the painting a naked boy serves the women, indicated by his use of a kylix, a drinking vessel designed to be used whilst recumbent. Although, Solomon's pictures support a narrative reading which is encouraged by their titles and their display of strong emotions, Moore's picture is completely lacking in narrative reading and the title gives us no further clues, it is simply a moment of the day, three women wait for wine to be poured, there is no emotion expressed and no allegorical significance. Moore may have been influenced by Solomon's drawings of nude youths, as suggested by Asleson, but it is clear that they had different artistic intentions.[60]

The painting of the nude was a specific subject that was fraught with problems regarding impropriety but the representation of the naked female figure was not always criticized. W. Burges wrote in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, '"La Source" (79), by Ingres, is a sufficient answer to the old cant cry in England of French impurity. A naked girl was never yet painted so free from the least suspicion of impurity, and yet looking like flesh and blood. Quite opposite in every respect but that of skill is Cabanel's "Nymph and Faun" (202).'[61] Contemporary reviews indicate that what was regarded as offensive about the painting by Alexandré Cabanel (1823-1889) was the impure action and physical form of the female nude compared with the largely static painting and slim figure by Ingres (see Figs. 11 and 12).[62]

Moore's *The Marble Seat* shows a static scene but one which questions many Victorian sexual assumptions. For example, it was normally assumed that the gaze was owned by the male and the desired object of the gaze was the female figure but Moore inverts this by showing three female figures gazing at a naked male who does not return their gaze. Two of

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[60] See footnote 9, Asleson (2000), p. 214.

[61] W. Burges, 'The Foreign Art Galleries at the International Exhibition', *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Review,* 13 (1862), pp. 267-74 (p. 268).

[62] This can be deduced from the contemporary critical reaction to a similar pair of paintings, the slender *Thetis* by G. F. Watts was 'praised for being natural' while the 'large hips and nipped waist' of Landseer's *Lady Godiva's Prayer* was condemned as being 'literal' and 'unnatural', the term 'unnatural' implying she was a prostitute, see Smith (1996), p. 109.

the female figures are in close physical contact although not as close as in Solomon's *Sappho* painting so the nature of their contact is unclear. The youth is separate from the female figures and is subservient to them and they are self-contained in their own pleasures. In a Greek context the naked male was shown for the sexual pleasure of the male viewer so although Moore has inverted the conventional Victorian association of the gaze it is not because he is following Greek conventions. In *Fraser's Magazine* William Rossetti pronounced it 'the most conspicuously successful picture, whether classical or otherwise, in the whole exhibition' and he pointed out that, 'The treatment of a mythologic, a Greek, or a Roman subject, has ceased to be regarded as a specialty proper to the votaries of academic "high art", and is taken up by some of our younger painters in a spirit, to a great extent, unconventional and hopeful.'[63] Rossetti is stressing the point already made that Moore is not referencing the academic conventions of the classical nude but using the nude in a new way that could be described as in a spirit of modernity. The *Athenaeum* was also positive and talked about 'his wealthy invention and scope of artistic power' but *The Times* in its review of the Exhibition was ambiguous as it thought Moore's paintings should not have been 'exposed to the exhibition ordeal' as they were 'executed in a spirit in direct antagonism with everything about them'.[64] Although Moore largely escaped direct criticism he was aware of the problems associated with the nude as he later wrote about 'the unfortunate prejudice which exists against this kind of picture'.[65]

The young male nude could have been inspired by Flandrin's *Young Man by the Edge of the Sea* at the International Exhibition of 1862 but as it is combined with draped females it is more likely to be taken from Greek vase painting and sculpture. Alison Smith points out that the male nude 'underwent a renaissance in the 1860s' as heroic action was subordinated to

[63] W. M. Rossetti, 'The Royal Academy Exhibition', *Fraser's Magazine*, 71 (June 1895), pp. 743-44.
[64] 'Royal Academy', *Athenaeum*, no. 1959 (13 May 1865), p. 658 and 'Royal Academy Exhibition. Fourth Notice', *The Times* (24 May 1865), p. 6.
[65] Letter to Leyland, 2 December 1868, quoted in A. Smith (ed.), *Exposed: The Victorian Nude* (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), p. 94.

ideal beauty partly as a response to the Darwinian controversy of 1859.[66] The nudes that Watts and Leighton exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1865 and 1866 may in turn have encouraged Moore to paint *A Wardrobe* (1867, Johannesburg Art Gallery), which shows a naked woman with no classical associations, an idea so shocking that the purchaser insisted on calling it *Venus at the Bath*.[67]

If the painting had a clear moral message then even contemporary sexual liaisons could be referred to, as in Augustus Egg's *Past and Present, No. 1, 2 and 3* (1858, The Tate Gallery) but the nude, like Ingres's *The Spring* and Moore's *A Wardrobe*, had to be classicized and idealised with no action suggesting sexual activity.[68] In 1869 the Royal Academy showed Moore's *A Venus* (1869, York City Art Gallery) and although it had no moral message it was enthusiastically reviewed by Colvin. Other commentators were more critical but not about the sexuality of the image but the opposite, the visible coarse canvas weave was thought too masculine for the subject and one critic described it as 'repellent' because while others were 'over alluring' this was 'only somewhat too repulsive' because the figure was 'neither marble, paint, nor flesh, but stucco'.[69] Rev. Richard St John Tyrwhitt, champion of 'chaste nudities' made a Greenbergian point, 'We hazard the conjecture that he painted it on such coarse canvas on purpose that the nude figure may look like the picture of a woman, rather than like a woman.'[70]

In 1871 Robert Buchanan wrote 'The Fleshly School of Poetry: Mr D. G. Rossetti' as a criticism of Rossetti's and Swinburne's poetry and indirectly all artists in the Aesthetic

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[66] Smith (1996), pp. 135-42. She refers to such examples as Frederick Walker's *Bathers* (1865-67), Simeon Solomon's *Dawn* (1871) and Frederic Leighton's *Daedalus and Icarus* (1869).

[67] Asleson (2000), p. 104. Baldry (1894), p. 33 states that *A Wardrobe* was exhibited at the Academy but this is contradicted by his own Appendix (p. 102) and by A. Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904* (London: Henry Graves, 1906), p. 278. It appears to have been sold directly to a private patron.

[68] A nude could be classicized, like Moore's, by the pose or by classical allegorical associations, like Ingres'.

[69] J. B. Atkinson, 'The London Art Season', *Blackwood's Magazine*, 106 (August, 1869), 224.

[70] Asleson (2000), p. 105 and Richard St John Tyrwhitt, 'Pictures of the Year', *Contemporary Review,* 11 (July, 1869), p. 360.

Movement, for their sensual, coarse and immoral work.[71] By selecting thinly draped and nude figures Moore did leave himself open to the 'Fleshly School' criticism but we should also consider the artists' response to criticism. In Rossetti's case the criticism could have helped lead to his mental breakdown. In the case of Darwin who published *The Descent of Man* the same year it was of great concern as he had delayed publication of *Origin of Species* (1859) for fifteen years because of concerns regarding public criticism. This was common; we know, for example, that Rossetti's father had also been dissuaded from publishing by Darwin's friend Charles Lyell.[72] When Darwin eventually published he went to great lengths to try to ensure he could not be accused of impropriety, for example, he bowdlerized the text to avoid being accused of moral depravity.[73] Although many critics thought he had successfully negotiated this sensitive subject, in the July 1871 issue of the *Edinburgh Review* Darwin's work was positioned alongside the Aesthetes, and he was criticized for 'sexual abandon' and Swinburne for 'bestial delights'.[74] Darwin's experience shows us the difficulty faced by both scientists and artists and the care that had to be taken to negotiate the prejudices of the commentators. Moore's subjectless classical figures in their tightly constrained formal, decorative setting were never accused of impropriety and I maintain that this was partly because they were associated with Neoplatonic theories that were actively discussed at the time.[75]

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[71] Buchanan wrote the review under the pseudonym Thomas Maitland in *Contemporary Review*, October 1871, see B. and J. Dobbs, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: An Alien Victorian* (London: MacDonald and Jane's, 1977), pp. 180-84. Rossetti was deeply disturbed by any criticism and generally had good control of the critical reaction to his work as most of the critics were friends, see E. Waugh, *Rossetti: His Life and Works* (London: Duckworth, 1975, first published 1928), p. 153.

[72] P. Horne, 'Autocensorship in the Age of Victoria: The Case of Gabriele [*sic*] Rossetti and Charles Darwin', *The Modern Language Review*, 89 (1994), pp. 341-50. The article concerns D. Rossetti's father Gabriele, who was dissuaded from publishing a poem by his patron Charles Lyell Snr., father of Charles Lyell Jr., the author of *Principles of Geology*. Geologist Lyell was a friend of Darwin and was one of those who dissuaded him from publishing in the early 1840s because of his concern about its degrading and brutalizing effect (see p. 346).

[73] Gowan Dawson, *Darwin, Literature and Victorian Respectability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 36-41. Darwin engaged in many ploys such as using euphemisms and putting potentially shocking or salacious details in footnotes in Latin, it being assumed that it would then only be understood by university educated males.

[74] Dawson (2007), p. 45.

[75] I am not suggesting Moore modified his painting to avoid accusations of impropriety as Baldry claims Moore was not influenced by the critical reaction as he 'read too little of it to know what the critical opinion about his work really was, and honestly despised and ridiculed the little that was forced upon his attention', see Baldry (1894), p. 89.

We must ask, therefore, who did influence Moore? It is clear from the lack of narrative and the anachronistic elements in some paintings that Moore was not trying accurately to recreate a classical scene or make a moral point. These aspects of Moore's work are usually interpreted within the parameters of the Aesthetic Movement, for example, in 1867 Colvin wrote that painting appeals to sight and 'perfection of forms and colours', so this should be the 'prime object of pictorial art'.[76] Swinburne expressed this even more clearly when he wrote art can never be the 'Handmaid of religion, exponent of duty, servant of fact, pioneer of morality'.[77] The Aesthetic Movement and the phrase 'art for art's sake' are typically traced to the writings of Baudelaire and Gautier. However, it is not clear that Moore's work should be treated in the same way as the work of the other Aesthetic Movement artists as both the French writers and the group around Rossetti were associated with a decadent culture that did not involve the reclusive Moore.[78] To view Moore exclusively in terms of Aesthetic Movement principles ignores an alternative theoretical foundation based on the design reform movement, the writings of Hay and Christopher Dresser (1834-1904), and the writings of Charles Bell (1774-1842), Joseph Henry Green (1791-1863) and Owen on Transcendental Anatomy. I have argued that these associations were one of the reason Moore avoided accusations of impropriety.

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[76] S. Colvin, 'English Painters and Painting in 1867', *Fortnightly Review*, 2 (October 1867), p. 465.
[77] A. Swinburne, *William Blake, A Critical Essay* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868), p. 93.
[78] Asleson points out that 'like Gautier and Baudelaire, Solomon and Swinburne delighted in affronting the conventional mores of 'philistine' society through their pursuit of an amoral cult of beauty', Asleson (2000), p. 79.

Chapter 4: Dinosaurs and Owen's Archetype

The modern distinction between art and science did not exist in the early part of the nineteenth century and art theories and scientific theories often overlapped and interpenetrated each other. A key connecting concept was 'nature' as both science and art depended on nature for information and inspiration. John Ruskin emphasised the importance of 'truth to nature' and the Pre-Raphaelites often represented the eccentricities of nature, for example, by using their friends as models without idealising them. The artists of the Aesthetic Movement were more concerned about the inner reality and looked beyond the physical appearance to what could be called the Platonic ideal.[79] I will look at Owen's theory of the vertebrate archetype, a scientific theory based on the detailed examination of skeletons over many years but which involves an idealisation that I compare with the artistic idealisation used by Moore.

Baldry emphasises that Moore's aim was 'to make a faithful representation of the type of nature that was before him. Any attempt to modify or improve upon the physical characteristics of the model in such sketches as these he entirely condemned'.[80] Laws of form were being discovered in nature and the 'conviction grew that science had rediscovered and corroborated the ancient Greeks' use of beautiful proportion in art'.[81] We also know from Baldry that Moore carefully selected his models as examples of the look he wanted to convey but his paintings are not portraits and his figures appear generalised and idealised.[82] Although at the sketch stage he condemned 'any attempt to modify or improve upon the physical characteristics of the models' at the cartoon stage he amended the drawings based on his

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[79] For example, Dante Rossetti could be seen as combining 'truth to nature' in so far as his models can be identified with representations of the Platonic idea of beauty in works such as *Sibylla Palmifera* (1869) also titled *Soul's Beauty* and *Lady Lilith* (1869) also titled *Body's Beauty*.

[80] Baldry (1894), p. 73.

[81] Keyser (1998), p. 133.

[82] Based on the similarity between the faces in many of his paintings he seemed to use the same model over a number of years which is supported by the article previously mentioned, 'Is Life Worth Living?', *The Examiner,* 14 June 1879, p. 769.

‘knowledge of what was best in both nature and art’.[83] We need to understand better how he arrived at this knowledge of what was best.

The 1850s were a time when scientists and artists were both looking at nature to better understand God’s creation and both fields of study were discussed in the same periodicals and fine art was presented at the same exhibitions as steam engines. For the artist therefore the ideas presented by scientists were important concepts for better understanding the world around them. The most important exhibition of the 1850s for science, industry and the arts was the Great Exhibition and after Joseph Paxton’s (1803-1865) building had moved to Sydenham Hill a group of dinosaur sculptures was commissioned from sculptor Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins (1807-1889) who was advised by Sir Richard Owen. Hawkins also drew the ‘progress of man’ frontispiece for Huxley’s *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature* (1863), comparing the skeletons of various apes to that of man. This idea of ‘the progress of man’ illustrated as a linear sequence of animals or humans had been used the previous year by Moore for his *The Progress of Architecture* inset in his frontispiece for Nesfield’s *Specimens of Medieval Architecture* (1862, Fig. 18).

Owen was taught comparative anatomy at Edinburgh University by John Barclay who took the novel approach of placing human anatomy in the context of the whole animal kingdom.[84] This meant that from the beginning Owen thought of all animals as part of a single God-given pattern. By the mid-1840s most natural scientists thought that species were created according to a divine creative plan rather than ad hoc divine interventions, with the exception of man who was thought to have been specifically divinely created. In 1836 Owen was appointed Hunterian professor of comparative anatomy and physiology at the Royal College of Surgeons which led to him becoming a member of London’s influential intellectual

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[83] Baldry (1894), p. 73.

[84] Jacob W. Gruber, ‘Owen, Sir Richard (1804–1892)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn (Jan 2006) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21026> [accessed 19 March 2008].

elite. He had spent twenty years examining vertebrate bones and by looking at similarities of form rather than function he designed a generalised skeleton that he claimed represented the archetypical vertebrate (Fig. 5 top right).[85] Owen, for example, compared the wings of a bird and the forelimbs of a horse rather than, as others had done, the similar function of the wings of a fly to the wings of a bird. Owen believed his idealised archetype lay behind all the various descendent forms according to changing functional demands but he did not describe this as a process but 'one of the most beautiful and marvellous instances of the harmony and simplicity of means by which the One Great Cause of all organisation has effected every requisite arrangement under every variety of development'.[86]

In 1856 Owen was appointed superintendent of the natural history department of the British Museum and started a series of paleontological lectures to lay audiences around the country. He had by this stage of his career argued himself into a position that Charles Darwin's publication of *Origin of Species* (1859) would undermine and later replace. However, to understand his relevance to art theory we must ignore the arguments around whether species were fixed or evolving and focus instead on his theory of archetypes and ask why it was appealing at this time. Owen wrote that he selected instances 'with a view to guide or help the power of apprehending the unity which underlies the diversity of animal structures; to show in these structures the evidence of a predetermining Will'.[87] In other words he was looking through the diversity of nature as demonstrated by the enormous variety of vertebrate skeletons to see an underlying form that represents their common structure.

[85] Owen (1848), p. 81.
[86] Owen (1848), p. 148. Although Owen did not believe in the process of evolution, that is one species changing gradually into another, his work involved finding common patterns and features across hundreds of species and this provided the evidence for which evolution later provided the theory. For example, Owen's work on serial homology identifies homologous, that is similar bones across a wide range of species, for example, 'the humerus with the femur, the two bones of the forearm with the two bones of the leg' (p. 165). The difference is that while Owen saw this as evidence for an idealised model or archetype that encompasses all these forms an evolutionist sees it as evidence for a common ancestor.
[87] Owen (1866), p. vii.

One of Owen's colleagues at the Royal College of Surgeons, Joseph Green spoke of Owen's archetype in 'terms of an artist's mental ideal, embodying the highest, most perfect development of, for example, the female form'.[88] Moore's work exemplified this Transcendental Anatomy in so far as he worked from individual 'specimens', his models, directly from nature, but, as Baldry says, he then idealised them.[89] Baldry explains that he included 'all blemishes and imperfections' in the initial sketches and 'reserved for another stage the amendments that his knowledge of what was best in both nature and art taught him to be necessary'.[90] Although Baldry does not explain exactly what this step involved we can see from his sketches and his finished work that the figures do not look like individuals but like generalised figures even though we are able to recognise the same model again and again. This is indicated by Baldry when he writes that he 'studied Nature's perfections instead of her peculiarities; and made beauty his aim rather than spectacular effect' which suggests that, despite the above quote about including 'all blemishes', he may have idealised even when sketching.[91] This is indicated by the fact that even in his small sketches there are no 'blemishes and imperfections'. Baldry also says he gave 'serious consideration' to 'the finest examples of Greek art' and many commentators have pointed out the similarity between his female faces and the *Medici Venus* (Roman copy of Greek statue probably second century BC, Uffizi Gallery, Florence) and the *Venus de Milo* (probably second century BC, Louvre Museum, Paris). Like these works his figures' faces are rounded with full chins, small full lips, large pointed noses and relatively small eyes with thick wavy hair pulled back from their faces. We can also compare Moore's figures (Figs. 7 and 8) with Hay's (Fig. 9), who wrote in detail about the match between his ideal female form and the *Medici Venus* and *Venus de Milo*).[92]

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[88] Rupke (1993), p. 246.
[89] To what extent Moore generalised his figures is complicated by the fact that Baldry tells us that he selected his models carefully as perfect beauties.
[90] Baldry (1894), p. 73.
[91] Baldry (1894), p. 70.
[92] Hay (1852), pp. 29-37.

As a further check on the extent to which Moore idealised his figures and faces we can look at similarities and differences between paintings, for example, the model for the seated figure in *The Shulamite* (1864-6) is the same as the left hand figure in *Apricots* (1866) and the female figures in *Shuttlecock* (1868-70), *Battledore* (1868-70) and *Shells* (1874) look like the same model. The problem is illustrated by *Reading Aloud* (1884) as although the three female figures have different coloured hair and slightly different features they could all be drawn from the same model and idealised in slightly different ways.

There is also a deeper link which involves a parallel between Moore's choice of the classical figure and Owen's archetype. Earlier in the nineteenth century the classical figure was often associated with Neoclassical history painting with its morally elevating narrative but Moore's classical figures avoid narrative and instead invoke ideas of ideal beauty. In an analogous way Owen saw his archetype as an ideal type and a model for species 'in the mind of God'. In a letter to his sister explaining why he had adopted his archetype skeleton as his crest Owen wrote 'It represents the archetype, or primal pattern — what Plato would have called the "Divine Idea"'.[93] Plato linked beauty in music with mathematical proportions and Hay developed a 'Science of Beauty' based on proportions of form that were also based on musical intervals. Hay and other theoreticians turned to the ancient Greeks both because it was thought they had discovered the ideal proportions of beauty and because the study of ancient philosophy could help their analysis. By 'Mid-century design reformers saw themselves as reconciling ancient wisdom with modern achievements' and although this was typically applied to plant forms ('art botany') Moore's particular training enabled him to apply it to the human figure.[94]

[93] Letter from Richard Owen to his sister Maria Owen, 7 Nov 1852, quoted in Rupke (1993), p. 245. Owen's contemporaries did point out that his archetype did not exactly match the concept of a Platonic idea as it was the simplest model of a vertebrate rather than the most complete.

[94] Keyser (1998), p. 128. Keyser also mentions other early theoreticians such as Victor Cousin (1792-1867), Charles Bell (1774-1842), and Joseph Henry Green (1791-1863) as well as mid nineteenth-

Chapter 5: Wallpaper and Hay's *Science of Beauty*

'Decorative' was used both as a term of criticism and a term of praise, for example, Baldry praises Moore when he describes him as 'a decorator' and adds 'The ultimate aim and object of all art that deals with either form or colour is to decorate'.[95] But a review of Baldry's biography in *The Times* said it 'does not follow he was in any sense a great man, […] or his art other than decorative'.[96] The distinction between these two uses highlights the different approach of the School of Design and the Royal Academy School and as Moore was trained in both he epitomises the division. The distinction is based on class, on the one hand artisans engaged in trade and on the other intellectuals engaged in 'fine art'.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) described art that represents nothing as 'free beauties' and he gave as an example wall-papers which he compared to music not set to words.[97] However, in the early nineteenth century artists worked within a convention in which the highest genre of history painting was required to be morally elevating and tell a story. In the 1840s theoreticians, such as Hay, proposed intellectual, classical rules of beauty and 'fine art', which because they had been mathematically coded, could be mechanically applied to the creation of ornament for industrial goods. Certain types of industrial decorative design, such as for mass produced wallpaper and fabric, needed to conform with the requirements of new printing machines that repeated a pattern across a surface and a theory of mathematical proportions seemed appropriate to this new task. Mechanical limitations demanded a simplification of drawing and the removal of shading and small dies encouraged minute patterns of floral and geometric effects. The creation of the School of Design in 1837 led to a

century teachers at the Schools of Design such as Richard Redgrave (1804-1888), Owen Jones (1809-1874) and Christopher Dresser (1834-1904).

[95] Baldry (1894), p. 3.

[96] *The Times*, review of *Albert Moore: His Life and Works* (22 November, 1894).

[97] I. Kant wrote, 'So designs à la grecque, foliage for framework or on wall-papers, etc., have no intrinsic meaning; they represent nothing — no object under a definite concept —and are free beauties. We may also rank in the same class what in music are called fantasias (without a theme), and, indeed, all music that is not set to words.' in *The Critique of Judgement* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2004), p. 52.

curriculum that included the teaching of this type of linear simplicity, flatness and close repeat and by mid-century it was formalized in books such as William Dyce's *The Drawing Book of the Government Schools of Design* (1842-43, see Fig. 6). When Moore attended the York School of Design between 1852 and 1856 Dyce's book was used and the influence can be seen by comparing Fig. 6, which shows three pages from Dyce's book with a similar design used by Moore in *Birds* (1878, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, see Fig. 8) as a combination of page 26, bottom left and page 29 top right. The sweeping lines on page 29, bottom left, are also similar to those used in the sketch (see Fig. 7). In addition, the palmette or anthemion on page 36, top right, is similar to the motif used by Moore, although the symbol was a common decoration in the classical period.

The Government originally set up the School of Design in London in response to a general concern about the negative effect poor British design was having on industrial competitiveness. The Government's objective was therefore commercial; it wanted the Schools to produce designers who could help companies produce goods that would compete on a world market. The Schools were therefore always anxious to train artisans rather than produce fine artists. In 1843 the Council decreed that 'no persons studying to become artists, as distinguished from ornamentalists, will be admitted to the School of Design'.[98] The critical distinction between training an artisan and a fine arts student was life drawing classes and the attitude of the Schools of Design to life drawing has already been discussed.[99] The attitude of the public and commentators to decorative art was also undergoing a change partly brought about by design theories based on intellectually respectable classical and scientific references.

One of the writers on design theory was Hay who published a number of books culminating in *The Science of Beauty* and who lectured at the School of Design in South

[98] Frayling (1987), p. 23.
[99] Not the only distinction, in 1847 Hay wrote to *The Fine Art Journal* complaining of their review in which decorative art was classed as 'low' because 'it is a purely mechanical work constructed by the compasses and ruler', letter to the *Fine Art Journal*, 17 April 1847, p. 384.

Kensington. His theories were adopted by the School and were still being taught in the 1900s.[100] In his earlier book, *The Harmony of Form*, Hay argued that 'the sciences and arts are connected' and that beauty depends on the 'proportions and peculiarities' of form that are 'in all respects analogous to sounds'.[101] He links sound, colour, and form and he pointed out that the harmony of sounds had been well studied and the harmony of colours had been 'reduced to something like a system by Sir Isaac Newton', but 'the harmony of form has been left out of those enquiries' and it was therefore a matter of opinion, except with regard to architecture where 'the ancients have in some measure supplied the want of general principles'. His objective in studying form was to educate public taste and the ideas were well received with one reviewer commenting, 'we find ample evidence of a philosophic and original thinker.'[102]

Hay built up form from basic structures such as three types of line, angle and curve and three primitive shapes, the circle, triangle and square. He then applied ratios to these based on musical theory, the ratio 5:4 corresponding to the third, and the ratio 2:3 corresponding to the dominant.[103] From these basics he built up more complex shapes and then applied these shapes and ratios to 'the most perfectly harmonious production in architecture that exists', the Parthenon.[104] He showed how it corresponds to his musical ratios and even gave the musical chord corresponding to the building and in *Principles of Beauty* he applied a similar method of ratios to the human body (see Fig. 9).[105] A major aim of Hay's research was the elucidation of the aesthetic principles underlying Greek art.[106] Although the attempts to reconstruct the Polykleitos canon did not take place until after the discovery of the copy of the *Doryphorus* in 1863 the association of Greek art with mathematical rules that

[100] R. C. Denis, 'Hay, David Ramsay (1798–1866)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press (2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12712> [accessed 27 March 2008].
[101] Hay (1842), pp. 3-6.
[102] 'The Natural Principles and Analogy of the Harmony of Form by D. R. Hay' review in *The Monthly Review*, February 1843, p. 283.
[103] Hay (1842), pp. 14-42.
[104] Hay (1842), p. 36.
[105] D. Hay, *The Natural Principles of Beauty, as Developed in the Human Figure* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1852).
[106] Ian Gow, 'The Northern-Athenian Tea Pot', *The Burlington Magazine*, 131 (1989), p. 354.

led to beauty was known at least from the early Renaissance and Haydon mentions the Canon as a standard of beauty in his 1846 lecture.[107]

Moore 'certainly knew' of Hay's theories and if we compare Hay's perfect female form (Fig. 9) with Moore's work (for example, figure study, Fig. 7) we can see many similarities.[108] As has been pointed out both have similar faces to the *Venus de Milo* and both have small breasts and proportionally smaller heads compared with, for example, Ingres *The Spring* (Fig. 11). Both Moore's sketch and Hay's diagram are carefully marked with structural lines. The lines have different purposes as Hay is showing the mathematical proportions of various points of the body and Moore is using the sweeping lines to position major elements of the drawing but both are using the lines as an armature to constrain, control or measure the otherwise free artistic sketch.

The use of a grid has been discussed by Rosalind Krauss in the context of modern art, for example in the work of Mondrian, and she discusses how the grid functions 'to declare the modernity of modern art' by introducing 'antinatural, antimimetic and antireal' elements but Moore is engaged on a different project from the artists of the early twentieth century.[109] Moore's use of abstraction is antinarrative and it was often described as decorative but his paintings are not 'antimimetic'. For Moore the grid is hidden and its effects are to control alignment and proportions, it is not a symmetrical frame that compresses the surface into meaning. Moore does not abandon nature but constrains it, generalises it and decontextualizes it.

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[107] A. Stewart, 'The Canon of Polykleitos: A Question of Evidence', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 98 (1978), p. 122. The other classical association between proportion and the human body is Morris Hicky Morgan, ed. of Vitruvius Pollio, *The Ten Books on Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914) <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Vitr.+3.1.1> [accessed 4 April 2008], Book 3, Chapter 1, Sections 1-9. Vitruvius describes how 'nature has designed the human body so that its members are duly proportioned to the frame as a whole' and describes how a circle and a square can draw around 'a man placed flat on his back, with his hands and feet extended', the 'Vitruvian Man', and he then analysed the mathematical proportions of the body, for example, 'the foot is one sixth of a man's height'. 'there is in the works of the ancients no standard proportion. This is quite a mistake: Polycletes, says Pliny, made a figure called the Canon', Haydon (1846), p. 277.

[108] Asleson (2000), p. 95.

[109] Rosalind Krauss, 'Grids', *October*, 9 (1979), pp. 50-64.

Hay describes three ways that form addresses itself to the eye: the expressive combination of form in architecture addresses judgement, the more artistic combinations of the sculptor tell a story that can excite feelings to the highest pitch and finally the most comprehensive effects are produced by the combination of expression, form and colour. These most comprehensive effects remind us of Colvin's statement that 'the only perfection of which we can have distinct cognizance through the sense of sight is the perfection of forms and colours; therefore perfection of forms and colours - beauty, in a word - should be the prime object of pictorial art'.[110]

Following a visit by William Dyce to France and Germany to learn how their design schools trained artisans a prescriptive curriculum was produced based on theoretical ideas described by Hay and others. In 1849 Redgrave gave lectures on the importance of the study of botany to the ornamentalist. Botany provided decorative exemplars but it was also important because of the 'fitness of purpose' of plants.[111] Redgrave maintained that artists should express nature by studying not its outward form, as John Ruskin argued, but 'if he seeks out the mode of development of vegetable growth, he will find that regularity and symmetry are the normal laws, while all that is irregular is accidental and extraneous' and he concludes 'nature is developed in strict geometrical and numerical rhythm'.[112] Redgrave also recommends returning to nature as a model, 'if the Greeks avowed that nature, as in the honeysuckle and ammonite, was their model, we may well return to such a source'.[113] This point is emphasized by Baldry as a part of Moore's working principles, 'Of this system the beginning, middle, and end, were one and the same thing, study from Nature.'[114] Redgrave goes on to describe how Sir Christopher Wren studied the structure of a shell as inspiration for

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[110] S. Colvin, 'English Painters and Painting in 1867', *Fortnightly Review,* 2 (October 1867), pp. 265, 473.
[111] Frayling (1987), p. 38.
[112] G. R. Redgrave (ed.), *Manual of Design, Compiled from the Writings and Addresses of Richard Redgrave, RA* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1890), pp. 18-27.
[113] F. M. Redgrave, *Richard Redgrave, C.B., R.A., A Memoir, Compiled from His Diary* (London: Cassell, 1891), pp. 361-62.
[114] Baldry (1894), p. 71.

'a new construction for a spire' and Baldry goes on to describe how Moore used the 'delicate gradations' of shells as inspiration for his colour schemes. The analysis of the underlying forms of nature and the use of nature as a model link the work of Redgrave and Moore with Owen's archetype.

Dresser gave lectures in London on botanical drawing in 1852, the year Moore started in York. These lectures were influenced by Redgrave, John Lindley *The Symmetry of Vegetation* (1852, published 1854), and Owen Jones *The Grammar of Ornament*, and Dresser maintained that 'the basis of all form is geometry'.[115] Despite severe criticism from John Ruskin, in 1852 Richard Redgrave drew up a detailed curriculum that was imposed on the regional schools until at least the end of the century. It provided a standard system that enabled universal examinations and competition and for example, individual works of art to be specified nationwide for each particular stage. Figure drawing was included in the curriculum and design was taught as a language with a grammar, a syntax and a usage. Redgrave and Dyce gave lectures deprecating over-elaborate designs used for curtains, wallpapers and carpets that incorporated naturalistic flowers in favour of linear and geometric patterns.[116] Moore's interiors in paintings such as *Jasmine* (1880), and *Red Berries* (1884) used geometric patterns and abstract designs for the furnishings and wallpaper combined with naturalistic flowers in vases thus combining the elements of ornamental design as taught at the Schools of Design with fine art.

The musical basis of Hay's theories must also have appealed to Moore as music played a great part in his life.[117] Moore shows musical instruments in *Dancing Girl Resting* (1863-4, private collection) and *A Musician* (1865-6, Yale Center for British Art), and *A Quartet, A Painter's Tribute to the Art of Music, AD 1868* (1868, private collection) is specifically and

[115] Frayling (1987), p. 38, Dresser wrote the quote in his personal copy of Jones's *The Grammar of Ornament*.
[116] Frayling (1987), p. 42.
[117] Asleson (2000), p. 94

unusually titled as a tribute to music. Whistler's *Symphony in White, No. 3* is closely related to Moore's *The Musician* and is the first of Whistler's pictures to be exhibited using a musical title and Prettejohn suggests that three paintings by Leighton, Whistler and Moore on music, 'order their composition on principles of rhythm analogous […] to musical intervals.'[118]

Hay blended Green's Transcendental Anatomy with Cousin's aesthetics to produce 'a mathematical theory of beauty of abstract colour and form' which 'lived on at the Schools of Design' and formed the basis of Redgrave's training programme.[119] A close study of Moore's sketches shows that every aspect of his painting was controlled by sinuous underlying armatures and even his naturalistic figures were tightly constrained by the same 'architectural' framework. Moore's recreation of the same subject in different colours shows that he was not mimetically representing the colour of a scene but applying colour, inspired by nature, to achieve a beautiful effect.

[118] Prettejohn (2007), p. 111.
[119] Keyser (1998), p. 135. Joseph Henry Green was an anatomist who added to the Transcendental Anatomy debate but its leading British exponent was Richard Owen.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The 'art for art's sake' movement is typically traced back to the writings of Baudelaire and Gautier but I have shown there is an alternative British theoretical basis. This is associated with the work of Hay and others and the Neoplatonist ideas associated with the work of the Transcendental Anatomists such as Owen. This theoretical foundation was translated into a practical training programme and we know that Moore attended the York School of Design where Hay's and similar theories were taught and we also know that he was good at mathematics and at one stage was expected to become an architect. This would have inclined him to be sympathetic to a formal, mathematical theory of beauty based on proportions. Moore's paintings also used classical figures but for a different purpose than history paintings as they were not used to make a moral point or tell a story. Moore's aestheticism is compatible with Hay's approach to the classical as the source of knowledge concerning a science of beauty based on proportions. Hay's work was related to the work of Owen who in 1848 proposed a theory of an archetypical skeleton based on ideal Platonic forms, and in 1852 Hay described mathematical rules of beauty for the human figure based on the proportions of classical works of art thought to represent the Platonic idea of beauty. Moore was also influenced by the International Exhibition at South Kensington in 1862 which presented art and science as a single experience and positioned the classicized nude as an example of modernity.

Moore's paintings are unusual in that they are developed using a strict process that is similar to the one used to produce decorative wall paintings. It also involves an underlying grid or armature of control, almost like an architectural drawing, that acts as an unseen force constraining the elements by bringing them into line across the surface. We also know that Moore idealised his figures in a way that corresponds to Greek examples of beauty, such as the *Venus de Milo*. Finally, many of Moore's paintings have an intensely decorated surface

consisting of patterned wallpaper, carpets, and fabrics and this pattern consists of small, repeated decorative elements similar to those taught by the Schools of Design and shown in, for example, Dyce's *The Drawing Book*.

Luna Ennis, writing some time after Moore's death, describes his art as 'beauty for its own sake, abstract art crystallized into a decoration with music as its theme'.[120] This is a succinct summary of many of the themes I have mentioned. Moore's lack of narrative prevents the viewer from 'telling a story' and what is left, although figurative, is abstract and decorative. The source of his decorative ideas was related to the type of training given at the Schools of Design yet his figures placed him firmly in 'fine art'. The theoretical underpinning of the training at the Schools of Design was based on the work of Hay and others who thought that beauty of form was based on rules of proportion analogous to those of music.

[120] Luna May Ennis, *Music in Art* (Boston: L. C. Page, 1903), p. 191 writing about Moore's *The Quartet*.

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