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Exploring Tropical Nature in British Guiana

- RBG, Kew's Collections Revisited -

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**Thesis submitted to the University of London
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

2013

I declare that all the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Sara Manuela de Albuquerque

Abstract

This thesis explores the collected materials associated with Everard im Thurn (1852-1932) gathered during the late nineteenth century in British Guiana, especially held by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, but also in the Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford), the British Museum, the Royal Anthropological Institute and the Royal Geographical Society, using meticulous archival research and specific objects in the collection as a way into finding the histories and stories which contributed to the making of the collection. Thus, this thesis provides a historical reconstruction of the collection, which traces objects through time and space, discussing their changing meanings. The sources used here include not only materials from the archives, but also published works, the herbarium specimens, objects and raw materials themselves, photographs and secondary sources. This involves a methodological challenge of tracing the trajectories of particular objects and cross-referencing them with several sources. In addition, this thesis also contributes to the history of a neglected area of the British Empire, which was in fact neglected even in im Thurn's time: British Guiana. This thesis seeks to locate im Thurn and his collection within an imperial framework, including collaboration with colleagues in British Guiana and Britain, in order to show the multi-faceted work and collection over time.

Following a contextualization of the present work in terms of the academic literature and a brief biography of im Thurn, Chapter 1 sets up the methodological approach, including the chosen manner of understanding the collections: 'object biographies'. Chapter 2 turns to specific objects, setting them in historical and contemporary context, using both archival sources and recent trip to Guyana, discussing aspects of im Thurn's collecting practices, and seeking to restore the 'cross-cultural histories' which these objects represent. Chapter 3 uses the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 as a case study to demonstrate how British Guiana was represented in Britain at the time, and also how im Thurn sought to manoeuvre that representation. Hitherto unknown photographs held by Kew are considered in Chapter 4, including not only the ones taken by im Thurn, but also those taken by the Norton Brothers and George Samuel Jenman. Chapter 5 discusses the role of im Thurn's wife, Hannah, in her husband's work as well as her contribution towards the making of his collections. The thesis concludes with an overview of the Amerindian objects through time and space, as well as a summary of the thesis and its contribution.

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Introduction

This thesis is the result of the project *Cross-Cultural Histories of Tropical Botany in Latin America*, a collaboration between Birkbeck College, University of London and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew which started in 2008. Given the collections at Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew (hereafter referred to as Kew), which include the economic botany and herbarium, here the collected materials are explored and studied using meticulous archival research as a way into finding the histories and stories which contributed to the making of the collections. However, considering the extensive range of collections at Kew, it was important to set a pilot project to confine the study of the collections. Although it was defined that the study would be about collections from South America, it was also necessary to determine a particular period and a particular collection or collector which would be the base to explore the research questions and reveal the untold stories associated to these collections.

Considering that there is so much to be explored at Kew's collections, so many stories to be uncovered through the correspondence and the objects collected, I believe that is urgent to recover or at least have some glimpses of the histories behind these collections. While in Jim Endersby's book *Imperial Nature*, the practices of collecting and classifying in Victorian botany are explored, as well as the role of Kew and its director's, I suggest that the study of the collections themselves can add even more to this body of research.¹ Through historical reconstruction, which traces objects as they move through time and space and acquire different meanings, one of my research questions was how the pilot project could function for the object biography methodology in reconstructing

¹ Jim Endersby, *Imperial Nature: Joseph Hooker and the Practices of Victorian Science* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

the histories behind the collections. In addition, I was also interested to know how the collections represent cross-cultural encounters; how the collections shine light on the colonial relationships between Britain and its colonies at the time; and how transnational networks functioned in the fashioning of these collections.

In order to answer to these questions, I selected as pilot project, the collections gathered by Sir Everard im Thurn (1852–1932) while he was in British Guiana (now Guyana) during the late nineteenth century.² One of the reasons his collections from British Guiana were chosen, was because this colony was a somewhat neglected area of the British Empire that was worth to be studied. In addition, there was a lot of potential and diversity in terms of the materials collected by im Thurn (herbarium specimens, raw materials, objects, publications, correspondence, illustrations and photographs) which are spread not only at Kew but also in other institutions. However, it is important to stress that this thesis is not only about im Thurn's collections. Here, his collections work as a pilot project guided by the research questions.

Within this view, along the thesis, these valuable collections will be linked and contextualised, revealing the cross-cultural encounters between im Thurn and the Amerindians. It will also reveal im Thurn's collecting network, as well as some glimpses of the transatlantic exchanges between British Guiana and Britain. In addition to offering an improved understanding of im Thurn's collections, my study also seeks to situate im Thurn within the context of late nineteenth-century empire and society. The aims of the thesis as a whole involve the methodological challenge of tracing the trajectories of the objects and cross-referencing different items, namely objects, herbarium specimens, illustrations and photographs, with published works,

² Guyana is a proud and independent nation since 1966 with a rich culture, one that I had the pleasure to know in first hand. Throughout this thesis and so as to maintain an identity with the time of the events, the country will often be referred to by its former colonial name: 'British Guiana'.

correspondence and Amerindian testimonies from the present-day Makushi and Arawak communities.

Im Thurn's collections are spread across different institutions, and although these institutions will be referred to throughout the thesis, particular attention is given to those housed at Kew. Besides herbarium specimens, archives and library, Kew also holds a valuable collection of objects; the Economic Botany Collection (EBC), where the objects from British Guiana amassed and sent by Im Thurn are stored, is specifically relevant for my thesis. Although the Kew collections have been previously examined, the tendency has been to study them in isolation, within the limits of certain disciplines: the herbarium specimens, for example, have been studied principally by botanists working within the limits of botany and taxonomy. In recent years, however, these collections have started to be explored by historians, geographers, anthropologists and artists. Yet the way these collections have been analysed mean that they have often remained confined to their specific areas or disciplines and were not studied as a whole. Over the years, Kew has organised the herbarium specimens, correspondence and objects into different sections, departments and even buildings, and this had an effect on how the collections have been studied, that is, they have been studied in isolation and not as a whole. Consequently, very limited information is available on the many objects in the EBC, so there are still collections and collectors that remain unknown or to be studied. Im Thurn's collections are no exception. There have been some studies on his photographic collection (e.g. by Elizabeth Edwards, Amy Cox and Stephen Nugent), but his ethnographic collection has not been studied at all. Thus, certain collections of his have been neglected; also, and perhaps more significantly, Im Thurn's collections have never been studied as a whole. As they comprise a variety of items, including herbarium specimens, objects, correspondence and published works, they provide an excellent opportunity to identify the links between the different items,

contextualise the objects and unveil the stories behind the collections. In particular, im Thurn's collections allow us to analyse the cross-cultural encounters experienced by im Thurn with the Amerindians, as well as his collecting network and the exchanges between British Guiana and Britain.

'Exploring Tropical Nature in British Guiana: RBG, Kew's Collections Revisited' therefore explores Kew's tropical collections from nineteenth-century British Guiana (now Guyana) and analyses how British Guiana was envisaged by Britain through its collections. Here, im Thurn's collections are discussed and analysed, but so are the contributions of other individuals towards his collections, revealing im Thurn's collecting network. In the process, insights into how British Guiana was seen at the time by its 'mother country' are gained, including which plants interested Britain. Glimpses of what happened 'in the field' between im Thurn and the Amerindians are also revealed, namely how the objects and knowledge about them were amassed.

Background and Context

Before becoming a British colony, British Guiana was occupied by various European nations, including Spain and France, which struggled to possess it.³ However, the Dutch and the English were the 'chief colonising nations'.⁴ As im Thurn himself explained, 'From the date of the formation of the first successful settlement, in 1580, for more than eighty years, till 1663, France, Holland and England were competing with more or less success against each other for the possession of Guiana'.⁵ Guiana remained in the

³ Everard F. im Thurn, 'Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara Under the Dutch, Part 1', *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 2 (1883), 33–80.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

hands of the Dutch between 1667 and 1796, and they had a practical presence in organising the colony.⁶ As a matter of fact, at that time, the colonised area, here called Guiana, consisted of three colonies named Berbice, Demerara and Essequibo.⁷ In 1796 the Dutch colonies were occupied by the English, but it was only in 1803 that they came under English rule.⁸ Almost thirty years later, in 1831, the three colonies were united into the single political entity British Guiana.⁹ In 1835 the German explorer Robert Schomburgk mapped British Guiana and its boundaries, on the service for the British authorities, and in 1840 the map of the British colony was published.¹⁰ However, after its publication, Venezuela protested and negotiations between both countries over the boundary began.¹¹ The discovery of gold in the disputed area in the late 1850s did not help this fragile situation.¹² Regarding the boundary dispute, it is important to stress that Everard im Thurn was involved with the Boundary Commission from 1897 to 1899.¹³

Everard im Thurn, whose work forms the core of my thesis, was a museum curator, botanist, mountaineer, explorer, anthropologist, ornithologist, photographer and administrator. One of the reasons for studying im Thurn is to gain glimpses of the scientific culture of British Empire in that period by reconstructing this Victorian character through his Guianese collections. In addition, as Rosamund Dalziell argues, 'Few scholars have attended to the twenty years he spent in British Guiana as both an

⁶ Everard F. im Thurn, 'Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara Under the Dutch, Part 2', *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 2 (1883), 327–355.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Everard F. im Thurn, 'Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara Under the Dutch, Part 3', *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 3 (1884), 14–47.

⁹ The colony became independent in 1966 as Guyana; Stephen Luscombe, 'British Guiana', *British Empire* <<http://www.britishempire.co.uk/maproom/britishguiana.htm>> [accessed 11 August 2012].

¹⁰ Henry G. Dalton, 'Chapter 1', in *The History of British Guiana: Comprising a General Description of the Colony Volume II* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1855), pp. 1–33.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Anonymous, *Who Was Who 1929–1940* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1967), p. 690.

explorer and an administrator.¹⁴ More scholarly interest has been devoted to the years he spent as a governor on the Fiji islands. My thesis contributes to the understanding of im Thurn's work during the period he spent in British Guiana. Consequently, by connecting different sources of materials, as mentioned above, a clearer picture of im Thurn as an exemplar of Victorian colonial science is created.

The main focus of this thesis is on im Thurn's collections at Kew which are used here as a pilot project. Kew's collections started in 1847, under the directors William Hooker and his son, Joseph Hooker, when scientific research expanded and the botanical institution became essential to the developing empire.¹⁵ Of particular significance in this respect are the collections amassed by William Burchell, Richard Spruce, Robert Shomburgk, Alfred Russel Wallace, and Everard Ferdinand im Thurn during the nineteenth century. Nowadays, Kew's collections constitute an unparalleled resource not replicated in any other institution, holding the 'earth's largest and most diverse botanical collections, including reference collections'.¹⁶ While the living collections are the foundation of Kew's capacity to attract and inform the visiting public, the documentary and visual reference collections yield a treasure trove of insights into cross-cultural histories of natural history.

Besides Kew, this research considers the role of other institutions that hold im Thurn's collections including the Pitt Rivers Museum, Royal Geographical Society, National Media Museum, Royal Anthropological Institute, National Library of Scotland, Natural History Museum and British Museum. Here, I draw attention to particular objects and correspondence from im Thurn's collections that for one reason or another

¹⁴ Rosamund Dalziell, 'The Curious Case of Sir Everard Im Thurn and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: Exploration & the Imperial Adventure Novel, *The Lost World*', *English Literature in Transition (1880–1920)*, 2002 (2002), 131–157.

¹⁵ Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, 'Plant Artefacts', *Collections* <<http://www.kew.org/collections/plant-artefacts/index.htm>> [accessed 13 September 2012].

¹⁶ Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, 'Collections' <<http://www.kew.org/collections/index.htm>> [accessed 13 September 2012].

were forgotten or became confined to the limits of certain disciplines, until the present work. Through these items, the links between im Thurn and Kew, as well as his encounters with the Amerindians, are unveiled. In addition, im Thurn's collections are better understood within a context, through time and space. Particular attention is paid to the cross-cultural histories revealed through the stories the objects may tell.

There are several foci in this thesis: im Thurn's tropical collections from British Guiana; the study of the objects within a context, and through time and space; the links between these objects and the other materials such as herbarium specimens, correspondence and photographs; the understanding of im Thurn as a Victorian character, and his collecting network (alliance with Kew, contributions from colleagues and family); and the relationship between Britain and British Guiana.

Within this scope, my aim is to explore Kew's tropical collections from British Guiana gathered by im Thurn, and understand how the different items from these collections are connected so that these collections can be better understood, contextualised and seen as a whole.

Methods and Sources

In order to study and contextualise im Thurn's collections I followed the paths below:

- Cross-referencing of the information regarding the herbarium specimens, objects, correspondence, illustrations, photographs, published works and Amerindian testimonies;

- Undertaking fieldwork (interviews) to obtain an Amerindian perspective and see objects similar to the ones collected by im Thurn, being used in a context or in their ‘habitat’;
- Recovering untold stories behind the collected objects, as well as the cross-cultural encounters im Thurn experienced;
- Understanding im Thurn’s network, comprising who was involved in his collections;
- Gathering insights into im Thurn as a Victorian character as well as the connections between British Guiana and Britain.

In relation to the object collections, my first encounter was indirect, through correspondence and reports, and by consulting databases such as Kew Economic Botany Collection Database¹⁷ and British Museum Object Catalogue Database¹⁸. After making the selection of objects I was interested in, I had the opportunity actually to see them. During the research process, the ‘object biography’ methodology was used. Here, special attention was given not only to the object itself but also to the packaging, labels, accession registers, catalogues, correspondence and publications in order to understand the object trajectory. Through the study of im Thurn’s correspondence at Kew, which mentioned many of the objects that are now held in different institutional collections, the notes he made along with the objects and his published works, such as *Among the Indians of Guiana* and several reports in *Timebri*, it was possible to gain a deeper understanding of the objects im Thurn collected while he was in British Guiana. By cross-referencing these materials I was able to obtain useful information not only about

¹⁷ Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, ‘Kew Economic Botany Collection Online Database’ <<http://apps.kew.org/ecbot/search/>> [accessed 1 June 2012].

¹⁸ British Museum, ‘Everard Im Thurn’, *Collection database search*, 2009 <http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database.aspx> [accessed 5 June 2009].

the objects themselves, but also about the plant species, cross-cultural encounters, and connections between Britain and British Guiana, as well as insights into relationships between im Thurn and other botanists and institutions.

However, the data available for each object was uneven. For this reason, although the method was the same, the sources that provided information about the objects varied. Furthermore, the process of choosing, researching and writing about specific objects had often been problematic because the documentation associated with the items is generally poor or virtually non-existent.

During the study of the objects I have been working on, I realised that was also important the visualisation of these objects within their 'habitat' – *i.e.* within an Amerindian context – and to obtain a Guyanese perspective, I undertook a fieldtrip to Guyana in October 2010. To understand the immediate context in which these objects were produced and used, the first step was to contextualise them through an Amerindian perspective. Gathering traces of an Indigenous voice through the archives in which the Imperial and Victorian point of view prevails is a daunting challenge. To face this challenge I cross-referenced the information I had access to, such as the correspondence, notes, papers, books, reports and objects mentioned previously, with Amerindian testimonies from contemporary Makushi and Arawak communities. An Amerindian perspective thus emerged, combining archival and fieldwork.

In this fieldtrip, data collection such as direct observations as well as interviews with focal groups were conducted in some of the Makushi and Arawak communities, adding a Guyanese perspective to this body of research. During the fieldtrip to Guyana, I managed to interview people mostly from the Makushi and Arawak communities, belonging to the following villages: Fair View (mixed community: Arawak, Makushi, Patamona and Wapishana), Surama (Makushi community), Annai (Makushi community)

and Kabakaburi (Arawak community). However it is important to stress that this fieldtrip aimed at contextualising the Amerindian objects and offering me a sense of place, of where the objects originated. The conducted interviews were not part of an in-depth anthropological study per se.

Taking into consideration the diversity of im Thurn's collections, which range from botanical specimens to photographs, and in order to overcome the problem of items confined to the limits of certain disciplines, it was necessary to draw on work in a variety of fields. For example, im Thurn's photographs have been discussed in the limits of photography and anthropology, and his herbarium specimens in the limits of botany. To better understand im Thurn's collections in a broader framework, I gather insights from a number of related disciplines including the history of photography, botany, anthropology and museum studies, as well as cultural histories of empire. Only in this way is it possible to access the 'multidisciplinarity' of im Thurn's collections and understand them as a whole. However, it is important to stress that although the present work enables a broader view of im Thurn's collections concerning its various materials, I am still dealing with fragments of information and this thesis is the result of my analysis of these fragments.

Significance of the Study

My thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of im Thurn's collections, not only by highlighting the range and character of his object collection and photographs but also by revealing the role of important contributors to the collections, especially his wife Hannah im Thurn and George Samuel Jenman, as well as the role of cross-cultural encounters in shaping the collections. In addition, combining archival research with fieldwork brings a new perspective to the study of Kew's collections.

In this thesis, different aspects of im Thurn's collections will be explored. First, particular instances of cultural encounters between im Thurn and the Amerindians will be analysed through a range of objects: from necklaces, arrows and pots to dyes and resins, among others. Secondly, through investigation of the displayed objects in the British Guiana Court at the 1886, Colonial and Indian Exhibition, my aim is to shed light on the way the colony was visualised in Britain at that time. Thirdly, this thesis will explore photographs held by Kew that were unknown until now, and it will link them with the object's collection. Fourthly, the thesis offers a new insight into a neglected aspect of im Thurn's work – namely, the contribution of his wife Hannah in the making of the collections. Finally, the objects discussed here will be contextualised not only in relation to im Thurn's own time but also in the contemporary context, so as to have a perception of how the meaning of objects changed (or did not change) through time.

Chapter 1 sets out the framework for the whole thesis. Following a contextualization of the present work in terms of the academic literature and a brief biographical overview of Everard im Thurn's life and work, especially of the period when he lived in British Guiana (almost twenty years). I pay particular attention to im Thurn's expedition to Roraima in 1884, including a basic account of im Thurn's work in botany. I then set the collections at Kew in their historical context; in this respect, I give emphasis to Bronwyn Parry's arguments. Here, im Thurn's collections are explored and so are the sources consulted during the research including his journal *Timebri* – a very important source for this work. Brief accounts of object biographies and on cross-cultural encounters respectively provide the theoretical basis that supports my approach.

In Chapter 2 I focus on particular stories relating to a selection of objects which im Thurn collected; these stories concern encounters between the explorer and Indigenous peoples in British Guiana. Besides the objects collected by im Thurn, some

objects collected by Jenman will be discussed as well. This chapter also gives glimpses of the extent to which im Thurn's writings reflected the wider assumptions of Victorian readers. The objects collected are contextualised and there is an attempt to reconstruct their lives beyond museum walls, in 'their habitat'.

In Chapter 3 I examine the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition, which included a display of objects at the British Guiana Court. This chapter explores how the British colony was seen by the 'mother country' through the objects displayed. Although other objects will be discussed, the cases of sugar and balata receive special attention. Particular attention is also paid to the Amerindians who portrayed as 'living ethnological exhibits' in the Indian Exhibition. Im Thurn's role in the organisation of the exhibition and his connection with Kew is another point of discussion.

Chapter 4 is concerned with im Thurn's photographic collection, which now is spread across different institutions in Britain. In this chapter, forgotten and never-published photographs held at Kew are discussed. I explore the significance of im Thurn's photographs within his work, examining the extent to which combining and cross-referencing the information between photographs and objects brings new insights to their understanding.

Chapter 5 sheds light on another aspect of im Thurn's collections by revealing Hannah im Thurn's contribution towards her husband's work. The illustrations of orchids with im Thurn's labels prompted further research, revealing that it is likely that those drawings were actually made by Hannah. This chapter explores Hannah's artistic influence on im Thurn and the more general relationship between scientists and artists.

Chapter 6 concludes by summarising the discussion in the previous chapters and elucidating the role of objects within Amerindian culture, as well as their place within cross-cultural encounters seen now and then. Here, I also reflect on my personal

experience in Guyana, the interviews that took place in the interior of the country, as well as the thesis contribution.

The objects discussed in the thesis acquired different meanings in different contexts, spaces and times, following different trajectories. Through the study of the valuable materials Everard im Thurn collected in British Guiana and through the understanding of the relationship between objects, publications, correspondence, photographs and herbarium specimens, these collections are understood as the result of cultural encounters im Thurn experienced. The present work therefore aims to illuminate the multiple histories entangled within the Guianese collections that im Thurn amassed. However, this thesis not only revisits these forgotten objects (some of which have never been studied before), but also explores how these objects, in combination with other materials, can reveal many new and sometimes surprising cross-cultural histories of the transatlantic exchanges between Britain and British Guiana in the making of tropical botany.

Chapter 1

Revisiting the Collections From British Guiana at RBG, Kew

1.1. Contextualization of the Present Work

The literature on History of Empire, History of Science and Collecting and Museum studies is nowadays quite vast and is constantly growing, yet there are important references that should be mentioned to situate the academic context of this work. References such as *Visions of Empire*, *Science in the Service of Empire*, *Possessing Nature*, *Cultures of Natural History*, *Masters of All Surveyed*, *Informal Empire*, *Entangled Objects*, are landmarks that contributed to frame and contextualise academically this work.¹⁹

In the literature it is also noted the role of Kew, as an important part in the making of the empire, in terms of ‘scientific research and the development of economically useful plants for production on the plantations of the colonial possessions’ in which raw materials were extracted to be industrialised afterwards.²⁰ However, this present work shows another aspect of this trade, that is, the historical reconstruction through the study of raw materials and collected objects, by following their trajectories through time and space. As Susan Pearce notes in her book *Interpreting Objects and Collections*: ‘all collected objects begin life outside a collection, and it is possible to build up individual biographies for particular objects which cover first their lives in general circulation, then their entry into a collection, and then perhaps the entry of that collection into an established museum’.²¹ It is this life outside a collection, the object’s itinerary, that is also explored along this thesis. Taking into consideration the studies on collecting practices,

¹⁹ David Philip Miller and Peter Hanns Reill, *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany, and Representations of Nature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); John Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire: Joseph Banks, the British State and the Uses of Science in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (London: University of California Press, 1994); N. Jardine, J. A. Secord and E. C. Spary, *Cultures of Natural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); D. Graham Burnett, *Masters of All They Surveyed: Exploration, Geography, and a British El Dorado* (University of Chicago Press, 2001); Robert Aguirre, *Informal Empire: Mexico and Central America in Victorian Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1991).

²⁰ Lucile H. Brockway, ‘Introduction’, in *Science and Colonial Expansion: The Role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens* (Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 1–11.

²¹ Susan M. Pearce, ‘Introduction’, in *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 1–8.

classification and museums, Pearce's book *On Collecting: An Investigation Into Collecting In The European Tradition* and Jim Enderby's *Imperial Nature* are significant contributions to the study of collecting, museums and botanical institutions.²²

In this first chapter, I will start in a brief biography on im Thurn, including aspects of his collecting opportunities and how his involvement with Kew and work in British Guiana came about. This chapter also sets up the methodological approach, including the chosen method of understanding the collections: 'object biographies'.

²² Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation Into Collecting In The European Tradition* (Oxon: Routledge, 1995).

1.2. Im Thurn: A Biographical Sketch

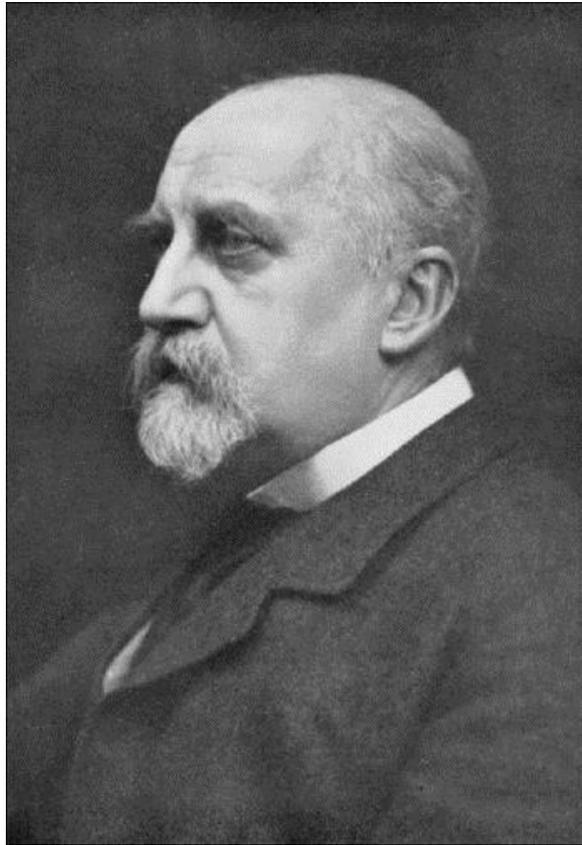


Figure 1.1. Sir Everard Ferdinand im Thurn²³

Everard im Thurn (1852–1932) received a typical English education as a son of a prosperous family.²⁴ Im Thurn soon revealed an interest for the natural world. During his schooling years at Marlborough College, from 1865 to 1870, he dedicated some of his time to the study of the local birds, a subject he was particularly interested in.²⁵ Although im Thurn demonstrated an aptitude for natural history, his headmaster told him that it would be difficult for im Thurn ‘to succeed as a pure man of science’ and the

²³ R.R. Marett, ‘Sir Everard im Thurn’, *Folklore*, 43 (1932), 455–456.

²⁴ Agathon Aerni, ‘Sir Everard im Thurn’, *Schaffhausen Municipal Archives*, pp. 348–357 <http://www.stadtarchiv-schaffhausen.ch/Biographien/Biographien-HV/Im-Thurn_Sir_Everard.pdf> [accessed 5 February 2009].

²⁵ Algernon Aspinall, ‘Sir Everard im Thurn: Born 1852: Died 7 October, 1932.’, *Man*, 33 (1933), 36–37.

best option would be to direct his career towards business.²⁶ Im Thurn followed his headmaster's advice for two years and worked in business, but he returned to his studies in 1872 at Exeter College, University of Oxford, finishing his degree in 1875.²⁷

Im Thurn's desire to pursue work in natural history led him to write to Sir Joseph Hooker (1817-1911), a very influential person at the time with many contacts around the world, for an appointment, so the Kew Director could recommend him for the position of curator of the Museum of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society of British Guiana.²⁸

In 1877, on Hooker's recommendation, im Thurn was appointed curator of the Museum, and on the 25th July the same year he landed at Georgetown, Demerara.²⁹ While he was curator in British Guiana, im Thurn organised the museum and travelled to the interior of the colony, collecting botanical specimens, which were later sent to Kew.³⁰ On the 25th December 1879, Everard finished his two-year appointment and left Georgetown for the United Kingdom, but he returned to British Guiana in 1881.³¹ This reinforced a local Guianese proverb: 'Anyone who has tasted labba [*Coelogenys paca*] and creek water is certain to return.' In other words, anyone who visits Guiana, for sure will come back.³² This opportunity to return to British Guiana came when the Colonial Office opened the post for 'Stipendiary Magistrate in the Pomeroun'.³³ Im Thurn knew about Hooker's influence on the Colonial Office, and he asked for his help in getting the post. To return his kindness, in case he got the post, im Thurn promised to conduct

²⁶ R.R. Marett, 'Sir Everard im Thurn, K.C.M.G., K.B.E., C.B.', in *Thoughts, Talks and Tramps: A collection of papers*, ed. by R.R. Marett (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

²⁷ Aspinall, 'Sir Everard im Thurn: Born 1852: Died 7 October, 1932', 36-37.

²⁸ H. I. Perkins, 'Notes on a Journey to Mount Roraima, British Guiana', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography, New Monthly Series*, 7 (1885), 522-534.

²⁹ Aspinall, 'Sir Everard im Thurn: Born 1852: Died 7 October, 1932', 36-37.

³⁰ Everard F. im Thurn, 'Anthropological Uses of the Camera', *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 22 (1893), 184-203.

³¹ Aspinall, 'Sir Everard im Thurn: Born 1852: Died 7 October, 1932', 36-37.

³² London, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, MS Director's Correspondence, KLDC11668, Letter from George Samuel Jenman to Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, British Guiana, 23 December 1881.

³³ Aspinall, 'Sir Everard im Thurn: Born 1852: Died 7 October, 1932', 36-37.

scientific observations in the field in his spare time.³⁴ Im Thurn was once again successful and in 1882 he founded *Timebri*, a journal dedicated to inform about the agricultural, commercial, scientific and literary subjects of British Guiana.³⁵ In the following year, im Thurn published *Among the Indians of Guiana*, a book about the years he lived among ‘pleasant red-skinned folk’ in which he recounted the way he lived.³⁶ During these years, im Thurn sought to gain the confidence of the Amerindians which, in im Thurn’s words, was unlike the ‘ordinary traveller, who merely passes through a country’.³⁷ Ten years after the publication of im Thurn’s book, he wrote the following: ‘I told all that I knew about them [the Indigenous peoples]; though of course further experience has now taught me a good deal more about them’.³⁸

1.2.1. Roraima Expedition

Joseph Hooker, one of the first directors of Kew Gardens, had connections and contacts that allowed him to expand botanical knowledge from various areas of the globe. Regarding British Guiana, Hooker was particularly interested in Mount Roraima, an impressive and great plateau mountain between Venezuela, British Guiana and Brazil.³⁹ Since first hearing about it from Robert Schomburgk on his return from exploring that region, Hooker’s attraction to this area of the world lasted for forty years.⁴⁰

³⁴ London, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, MS Miscellaneous Reports British Guiana 1861–1909, Letter from Everard im Thurn to Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, Norwood, 15 July 1881.

³⁵ Aspinall, ‘Sir Everard im Thurn: Born 1852: Died 7 October, 1932’, 36-37.

³⁶ Everard F. im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana: Being Sketches Chiefly Anthropologic from the Interior of British Guiana, Search* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1883).

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Im Thurn, ‘Anthropological Uses of the Camera’, 184-203.

³⁹ Michael Swan, *British Guiana: The Land of Six Peoples* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1957), p. 156.

⁴⁰ Perkins, ‘Notes on a Journey to Mount Roraima, British Guiana’, 522-534.

In 1877, the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society of Guyana sought someone to work as Curator of the Natural History Museum in Georgetown.⁴¹ The Governor in British Guiana wrote to Joseph Hooker at Kew for recommendations.⁴² Hooker envisaged he could recommend someone who ‘would be sufficiently instructed and educated to make good use of the expedition to the mountain’.⁴³ Initially, he suggested Dr James Trail (1851–1919), a very experienced botanist who had been part of an expedition to Brazil between 1873 and 1875.⁴⁴ Although Trail would have been ideal for Kew’s purposes, he secured a better position somewhere else and declined this offer. Consequently, Joseph Hooker turned to Everard im Thurn, who was not as trained or experienced as Trail.⁴⁵

With the exception of Sir Walter Raleigh’s reference to the enchantment of Mount Roraima, the Schomburgk brothers were the first to effectively draw Europeans’ attention to it. They were particularly struck by its inaccessibility, as im Thurn remarked: ‘Since their time, some half-dozen white men have reached its foot, only to return with renewed stories of the wonder and the inaccessibility’.⁴⁶ The intrigue about Mount Roraima was reiterated by im Thurn, who argued that its inaccessibility lied ‘not in its height, but in its extraordinary formation, and the apparent inaccessibility of its summit’.⁴⁷

Besides Hooker’s interest, as mentioned above, Mount Roraima also fascinated geographers and natural philosophers. Geographers described it as ‘an isolated

⁴¹ Aspinall, ‘Sir Everard im Thurn: Born 1852: Died 7 October, 1932’, 36-37.

⁴² London, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, MS Miscellaneous Reports, British Guiana 1861–1909, Article from *The Colonist*, 15 January 1877.

⁴³ Perkins, ‘Notes on a Journey to Mount Roraima, British Guiana’, 522-534.

⁴⁴ Ray Desmond, *Dictionary of British & Irish Botanists and Horticulturists: Including Plant Collectors, Flower Painters and Garden Designers* (London: Taylor & Francis publishers and The Natural History Museum, 1994).

⁴⁵ London, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, MS Miscellaneous Reports, British Guiana 1861–1909, Letters from William Walker (Royal Commercial and Agricultural Society) to Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, British Guiana, 19 February and 31 March 1887.

⁴⁶ Everard F. im Thurn, ‘Roraima’, *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 1 (1885), 548–553.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 548–553.

mountain nearly 9000 feet in height, the last 1500 to 2000 of which was a precipice up which it was supposed to be impossible to climb.’ Regarding this matter, Joseph Hooker wrote to im Thurn: ‘Did it never occur to you that the mountain may be ascended?’ The reply received was, ‘I am sure it can be, but it will cost a great deal of money.’ The Royal Geographical Society later resolved this issue by giving im Thurn the financial support needed for the expedition.⁴⁸

Im Thurn, in his letters, thanked Hooker for his support to the ‘Roraima Scheme’ and promised to send news of his achievements and discoveries on his return four or five months later.⁴⁹ George Samuel Jenman (1845–1902) was chosen to accompany im Thurn on the Roraima Expedition. G.S. Jenman was a British botanist and gardener born in Plymouth and trained at Kew between 1871 and 1873.⁵⁰ In British Guiana he was the Government Botanist (1879–1902), and considering his position it is not surprising that ‘he was largely occupied in developing the colony’s economic resources’.⁵¹ Taking this into consideration, it is understandable that in im Thurn’s letter to Hooker, he agreed that Jenman was the best choice.⁵² However, to Jenman’s disappointment, after all the work he dedicated to the proposals for funding,⁵³ he was unable to join im Thurn’s expedition because of a sudden ‘liver attack’.⁵⁴

All these setbacks failed to deter the expedition to Mount Roraima. A gentleman named Harry Inniss Perkins, an assistant crown surveyor, was appointed by permission

⁴⁸ Perkins, ‘Notes on a Journey to Mount Roraima, British Guiana’, 522-534.

⁴⁹ London, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, MS Director’s Correspondence, KLDC11575, Letter from Everard Ferdinand im Thurn to [Sir William Thiselton-Dyer], British Guiana Museum, [Georgetown, Guyana], [1878]; KLDC11587, Letter from Everard Ferdinand im Thurn to Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, from Pomeroun River, British Guiana [Guyana], 28 May 1884.

⁵⁰ Jstor Plant Science, ‘Jenman, George Samuel (1845-1902)’, *Person* <<http://plants.jstor.org/person/bm000004078>> [accessed 11 July 2011].

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² KLDC11587.

⁵³ London, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, MS Director’s Correspondence, KLDC11689, Letter from G.S. [George Samuel] Jenman to Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker; from Government Botanist’s Office, Georgetown, Demerara, 6 September 1884.

⁵⁴ London, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, MS Director’s Correspondence, KLDC11690, Letter from G.S. [George Samuel] Jenman to The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; from 67 Norwich Street, Cambridge, 18 November 1884.

of Sir Henry T. Irving to accompany im Thurn on the Roraima Expedition, which took place between October 1884 and January 1885.⁵⁵ On 18 December 1884, im Thurn and his companion, Perkins, together with seven Indians, reached the Roraima summit ‘without any difficulty greater than might be overcome by a very ordinary degree of endurance’.⁵⁶ On the Venezuelan side, they ‘discovered’ the face of the mountain which would reveal the successful route to the previously ‘inaccessible’ Roraima; according to im Thurn, they managed to achieve this, curiously, ‘from the very point from which almost every one of the few previous attempts had been made and abandoned as hopelessly impracticable’.⁵⁷

After the Expedition to Roraima, which was widely discussed within the Royal Geographical Society, im Thurn and Harry Perkins published separate accounts of their endeavour in the *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*.⁵⁸ In addition, im Thurn also published on Roraima in the *Scottish Geographical Journal* and *Transactions of the Linnean Society of London*.⁵⁹ Arthur Conan Doyle, a regular attendee of the Royal Geographical Society meetings, probably attended im Thurn’s lectures about his expedition, which might have influenced Doyle to write the book *The Lost World*.⁶⁰

In 1891, im Thurn was promoted to government agent in the North-West District of British Guiana.⁶¹ Four years later he married Hannah, daughter of Sir Robert Lorimer of Edinburgh.⁶² Four further years later, im Thurn made a significant contribution at the Paris Conference on the Venezuelan boundary dispute with British

⁵⁵ Everard F. im Thurn, ‘The Ascent of Mount Roraima’, *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography*, 7 (1885), 506.

⁵⁶ Im Thurn, ‘Roraima’, 548–553.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 548–553.

⁵⁸ Im Thurn, ‘The Ascent of Mount Roraima’, 506; Perkins, ‘Notes on a Journey to Mount Roraima, British Guiana’, 522–534.

⁵⁹ Im Thurn, ‘Roraima’, 548–553; Everard F. im Thurn, ‘The Botany of the Roraima Expedition of 1884’, *The Transactions of The Linnean Society of London*, 2 (1887).

⁶⁰ Rosamund Dalziel, ‘The Curious Case of Sir Everard im Thurn and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: Exploration & the Imperial Adventure Novel, The Lost World’, *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 2002 (2002), 131–157.

⁶¹ Aspinall, ‘Sir Everard im Thurn: Born 1852: Died 7 October, 1932’, 36–37.

⁶² *Ibid.*

Guiana, since he was involved with the Venezuelan Boundary Commission between 1897 and 1899.⁶³

In 1901, im Thurn was appointed Colonial Secretary and Lieutenant-Governor of Ceylon, but it was only at the age of 52 that he became Governor of Fiji and High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, ‘Twenty years after his most famous expedition and with a consistent record of successful and scientifically productive explorations’.⁶⁴ In 1905, he became a Knight of the Order of St Michael and St George for his services to the British government.

1.2.2. Im Thurn Under the Magnifying Glass

Concerning im Thurn’s contribution to botany, he not only collected plant specimens and objects, but also partially contributed to the descriptions of around 55 species, mostly in his journal *Timebri*⁶⁵, although several botanists such as Professor Oliver, J.G. Baker and G. S. Jenman, among others, did most of the description work.⁶⁶ Im Thurn’s paper, ‘Notes on the plants observed during the Roraima Expedition 1884’, is the first mention to many of the species found during this particular expedition.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, as im Thurn illuminates in the same paper, several specialists (Prof. Oliver, J.G. Baker, G.S. Jenman and H.N. Ridley) who helped him to examine and determine the Roraima

⁶³ Dalziell, ‘The Curious Case of Sir Everard im Thurn and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’, 131–157.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 131–157.

⁶⁵ IPNI (International Plant Name Index), ‘Thurn’, *Plant Name Query*, 2011 <<http://www.ipni.org>> [accessed 10 May 2011].

⁶⁶ Everard F. im Thurn, ‘Notes on the Plants Observed During the Roraima Expedition 1884’, *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 5 (1886), 145–223.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 145–223;

According to one of the letters at Kew (KLDC11608) there was misunderstanding between im Thurn, Joseph Hooker and the Committee of the Linnaean Society. The report ‘Notes on the Plants Observed During the Roraima Expedition 1884’ was firstly published in *Timebri* and later in the *The Transactions of The Linnaean Society of London*. This caused some confusion because actually im Thurn agreed with Hooker that the report on the botany of Roraima should be published first in *The Transactions of The Linnaean Society*.

plants also prepared the list and description of his collection.⁶⁸ The specimens collected on the way to Roraima and on the mountain itself were sent to, examined and catalogued by Kew botanists, who identified 53 new species and three new genera (Figure 1.2).⁶⁹

To honour im Thurn's work, Joseph Hooker named the genus *Thurnia*, a genus that was part of a new botanical family, Thurniaceae.⁷⁰ Jenman and im Thurn collected the specimens of this genus near the Kaitour fall, and one of the species was named *Thurnia jenmanii* Hook.f., after the botanist Jenman.⁷¹



Figure 1.2. Example of one of the specimens collected by im Thurn during the Roraima expedition, *Viburnum roraimense* (K000573692, Kew)

⁶⁸ Im Thurn, 'Notes on the Plants Observed During the Roraima Expedition 1884', 145-223.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 145-223.

⁷⁰ In the letters KLDC11584 and KLDC11585 im Thurn thanks Joseph Hooker for naming the genus *Thurnia* in his honour; Joseph Hooker, 'Occasional Notes, Sir Joseph Hooker on a New Botanical Genus from British Guiana', *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 1 (1882), 309-310; IPNI (International Plant Name Index).

⁷¹ Anonymous, 'Occasional Notes, The Genus *Thurnia*', *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 4 (1885), 316.; In a particular letter (KLDC11673) Jenman asked Thiselton-Dyer to let him have the name of the species, so it could be called *Thurnia jenmanii*.

1.3. Collections and the Empire

The desire for empirical knowledge was inseparable from the imperial desire for things.⁷²

Before the Enlightenment, many examples of exotic flora and fauna had been brought from foreign lands to be re-housed in Europe. These decontextualized objects were valued primarily as biological curiosities and exotic artefacts. However, from the Enlightenment onwards, the study and examination of plant and animal collections became more systematic. As a result, ‘voyages of discovery and exploration’ were organised in a more systematic way by European powers and a large number of collectors started gathering botanical specimens overseas to be transported to Europe.⁷³ Fieldwork overseas brought both challenges and new opportunities for the study of nature. Besides local fieldtrips, expeditions and voyages of discovery encouraged the acquisition of new specimens, and promoted the development of the systematization and organisation of the natural world. Bronwyn Parry suggests that the concentration of ‘information and specimens in one location, such as botanic gardens, (...) [helped] the collectors to gain an overview of the relationships between collected materials’.⁷⁴ Furthermore, objects such as specimens, botanical illustrations and stuffed animals provided ‘innovative means of decontextualizing, fragmenting, extracting, fixing, and thus mobilizing notoriously unstable natural materials’.⁷⁵ The other side of the collecting activities, as Parry illustrates, is the extent to which they were in the ‘service of the empire’. As well as scientific study, these collections also contributed to the development of agriculture and industry.⁷⁶

⁷² Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, p. 5.

⁷³ Bronwyn Parry, ‘The Collection of Nature and the Nature of Collecting’, in *Trading the Genome: Investigating the Commodification of Bio-information* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 12–41.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.12–41.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.12–41.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.12–41.

Britain's Empire gave naturalists access to the natural world beyond Britain's shores. Without the expansion of the British Empire, for example, Sir Joseph Hooker, could not have built one of the world's largest collections of plant specimens.⁷⁷ He had the ability to manage the necessary fieldwork for Kew without expending its limited funds, and he did this by using the popular interest in plants and gardens along with the growing awareness of the importance of botanical knowledge for the economic development of the empire.⁷⁸

Kew's first collections were acquired as early as 1847, under the directorship of William Hooker and his son, Joseph Hooker, when scientific research expanded and Kew became essential to the developing empire. The collections mentioned in this work are spread throughout many different sections, namely the Herbarium, Archives and Economic Botany, providing the ideal background to study the interactions between the objects. These collections include a wide range of items such as herbarium specimens, artefacts, books, journals, pamphlets, letters, unpublished manuscripts, plant portraits, photographs and prints. Kew's current strategy of encouraging access to its behind-the-scenes collections to maximise their use and increase their scientific, utilitarian and conservation, greatly facilitated the conduction of the present study. By studying the collections at Kew, the aim of this work is not only to link the information in a way that can make sense, but also to fit this information into a bigger story and understand the collections within a context, through time and space. Considering that the Economic Botany Collections, where most specimens date between 1847 and 1930, holds 83 thousand objects and that the Herbarium stores seven million specimens, the analysis of these collections present an enormous challenge.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the Library, Art and

⁷⁷ Jim Endersby, 'Introduction', in *Imperial Nature: Joseph Hooker and the Practices of Victorian Science* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 311–327.

⁷⁸ Sara Sohmer personal communication, April 2009.

⁷⁹ Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, 'What Is a Herbarium?', *Herbarium Catalogue* <<http://apps.kew.org/herbcat/gotoWhatIsHerbarium.do>> [accessed 5 June 2009].

Archives hold more than a half million items and is ‘one of the most important botanical reference sources in the world’.⁸⁰ Therefore, as Kew holds so many vast collections and given the limited time frame of the present work, the research focuses on collections from South America to allow these to be studied in detail. More specifically, it focuses on im Thurn’s collections from British Guiana in order to unveil their stories which remained unknown until the present work.

1.4. Sources and Methodology

Considering what was referred above in terms of tracing the objects itinerary, following them through time and their changing contexts at each stage of their lives, this section clarifies the sources and methodology used during this process.

At the early stage of the project, when it was necessary to define the collections from South America that should be studied in the pilot project, I started to seek for collectors who gathered collections from this area. My first approach was to consult the *Dictionary of British & Irish Botanists and Horticulturists* by Ray Desmond, where several collectors who made collections from South America are listed, and investigate if those collectors had collections at the EBC, herbarium and archives at Kew. Soon, I realised that this was not the correct approach, because the majority did not collect many objects, or any objects at all, or did not have many herbarium specimens or correspondence in the archives. On the other hand, I knew that the EBC had many interesting objects that deserved to have their histories revealed, so I decided to change the selection process and trace the objects’ potential collector or collectors. In this way, the Kew Economic Botany Collection Database was consulted and a search through

⁸⁰ Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, ‘Library, Art & Archives’, *Collections* <<http://www.kew.org/library/index.html> > [accessed 23 May 2011].

objects from South America was made.⁸¹ I realised that many of the objects on the database were from British Guiana and were sent by Everard im Thurn himself. As a result, I checked if I could work with these collections by selecting a few of the objects, verifying if there were herbarium specimens and correspondence that could be used to cross-reference with the information attached to the objects. At the end, the final objects that were selected from im Thurn collection were the ones that provided the most comprehensive and diverse amount of information (notes attached to the objects, correspondence, herbarium specimens and publications, for instance). Several objects that initially seemed interesting were left out of the study because there was not enough information about them or the information was misplaced, potentially making the ‘detective’ work a distraction from the main thesis.

Through the study of different sources, such as im Thurn’s correspondence at Kew, which mentioned many of the objects collected, the notes he made along with the objects and his published works, such as *Among the Indians of Guiana* and several reports in *Timebri*, it was possible to gain a deeper understanding of the objects im Thurn collected. By cross-referencing these materials I was able to obtain not only information about the objects themselves, but also about the plant species collected, cross-cultural encounters, and transatlantic relationship between Britain and British Guiana, as well as insights into im Thurn’s network.

During the research process, the ‘object biography’ methodology was used.⁸² The sources and the basis of the ‘object biography’ will be exposed in the following sections.

⁸¹ Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, ‘Kew Economic Botany Collection Online Database’.

⁸² Igor Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things: Commodization as Process’, in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 64–91.

1.4.1. Im Thurn's Collections

As a museum curator, botanist, mountaineer, explorer, anthropologist, ornithologist, photographer and administrator, im Thurn had a 'multidisciplinary' career that is reflected in the diversity of his collections.⁸³ Besides Kew (holding 55 items including objects and raw materials), both the British Museum (107 objects) and the Pitt Rivers Museum (73 objects) hold objects collected by im Thurn in British Guiana, with the Natural History Museum holding solely herbarium specimens.⁸⁴ Most of his fascinating photographic collections are held by the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI)⁸⁵ and the Royal Geographical Society (RGS).⁸⁶ Collectively, these provide a great deal of information in terms of botany, zoology, anthropology and history.

Some of the objects housed at the British Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum were sent directly by im Thurn while he was in British Guiana or Britain. In other cases, they were sent by other institutions, such as Kew, or other people who were part of im Thurn's network, as is the case of the model of the Arawak house, which I will discuss in Chapter 3.

The Archives at Kew also hold much documentary evidence concerning im Thurn's correspondence and relevant newspapers of the period while he was in British Guiana, as curator and magistrate, and then in Fiji islands, as governor. The process of research involved consulting the Kew Archives, in particular the *Miscellaneous Reports* and *Correspondence from British Guiana*, the *Director's Correspondence* (letters to the directors at Kew, most of them already digitised),⁸⁷ the *Goods Inwards Volumes*, Reports and

⁸³ Dalziell, 'The Curious Case of Sir Everard im Thurn and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle', 131–157.

⁸⁴ A.R.A. Görts-van Rijn, 'Index of Guyana Plant Collectors', in *Flora of the Guianas* (Kew Publishing, 1990).

⁸⁵ London, Royal Anthropological Institute, Box 87, im Thurn, S. & C. America: Guyana, Venezuela, 604–652, 5693.

⁸⁶ Royal Geographical Society, 'im Thurn', *Image Search*, 2005 <<http://images.rgs.org/>> [accessed 5 June 2009].

⁸⁷ Jstor Plant Science, 'Correspondence', *Resource Type: Letters* <<http://plants.jstor.org/>> [accessed 10 June 2011].

Catalogues from the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886. Im Thurn's book *Among the Indians of Guiana* and the journal *Timehri*, which will be considered below, also provided very useful information not only about the use and production of particular objects, but also examples of cross-cultural encounters im Thurn experienced. However, some objects collected in British Guiana by George Samuel Jenman, im Thurn's colleague, mentioned previously, will also be discussed throughout this thesis.

1.4.1.1. *Timehri* Journal

[Timehri] will encourage those who would not gather and give information which they know was only to be lost, to set to work and increase the store of our knowledge of the colony.⁸⁸

As mentioned previously, another important source in im Thurn's collections, not only for the study of the collections but also for understanding British Guiana itself, is the journal *Timehri*. Im Thurn was the founding editor of *Timehri*, the journal of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society (RA&CS). This society, although established since 1844, did not have periodical publications, solely pamphlets written by 'its more technical or learned members'⁸⁹ Im Thurn realised that it was worthwhile to record news facts since the discovery of the colony, such as scientific expeditions, the display of products at exhibitions and other matters in the interest of British Guiana. To respond to this need, the *Timehri* journal was created in 1882. The name derives from the Carib word *temehri*, the Indigenous word for rock inscriptions, meaning 'to paint' or a 'painting'.⁹⁰ The purpose of this journal was 'to paint' a portrait of the colony by

⁸⁸ Everard F. im Thurn, 'An Editorial Prologue', *Timehri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 1 (1882), 1–6.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹⁰ Daniel G. Brinton, 'On a Petroglyph from the Island of St. Vincent', *Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, 41 (1889), 417–420.

informing about the agricultural, commercial, scientific and literary subjects. The journal contributors were British administrators, planters, men of leisure, Anglican and Jesuit priests, and scholarly people who went to live in British Guiana.⁹¹ As Clive Wayne McWatt asserts, ‘*Timehri* provided an outlet for the publication of the work of amateur naturalists and observers of the social life in colonial British Guiana; it also served as a forum for more technical papers on agricultural and scientific topics written by specialists’.⁹² After im Thurn, the journal had John Joseph Quelch, James Rodway, Joseph Nunan and Vincent Roth as its editors.⁹³ Although *Timehri* continued uninterrupted between 1882 and 1898, due to financial constraints the final issue of 1899 presented only the ‘Society’s proceedings of meetings held from July 1898 to December 1899’.⁹⁴ The journal faced many vicissitudes during its history and experienced sporadic publications. Nevertheless, for 93 years, between 1882 and 1975, the RA&CS managed to keep the same title, *Timehri*, even though ‘for forty years the Society’s organ was silent’.⁹⁵

My main focus regarding *Timehri* is on its early volumes in which im Thurn was the editor, between 1882 and 1886, which will be mentioned during the thesis. In these particular volumes, a total of five, im Thurn reprinted and promoted the Schomburgk brothers’ accounts of their surveys of the British colony, which happened before the existence of the journal.⁹⁶ *Timehri* also provided the opportunity for im Thurn not only to write and inform about the British colony but also to expose and promote his own

⁹¹ Lloyd Searwar, ‘Launching of The Arts Journal Vol.1 No.1, Georgetown Club, Georgetown, Guyana’, *The Arts Journal*, 2004 <<http://www.theartsjournal.org.gy/launching.html>> [accessed 22 May 2012].

⁹² Clive Wayne McWatt, ‘Timehri: Life History of the Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana - Part 1’, *Stabroek News*, 2010 <<http://www.stabroeknews.com/2010/guyana-review/03/25/history-timehri-life-history-of-the-journal-of-the-royal-agricultural-commercial-society-of-british-guiana/>> [accessed 21 February 2012].

⁹³ McWatt, Part 1.

⁹⁴ Clive Wayne McWatt, ‘Timehri: Life History of the Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana - Part 2’, *Stabroek News*, 2010 <<http://www.stabroeknews.com/2010/guyana-review/04/29/history-timehri-life-history-of-the-journal-of-the-royal-agricultural-commercial-society-of-british-guiana-2/>> [accessed 21 February 2012].

⁹⁵ McWatt, Part 2.

⁹⁶ Im Thurn, ‘An Editorial Prologue’, 1-6.

work, such as his first ascent of Mount Roraima.⁹⁷ The British Guiana exhibitions were also mentioned in *Timebri*; their objective, according to im Thurn, was not just to encourage ‘production, not only of sugar, but also of all other native forms of industry, and thus of assisting the very heterogeneous inhabitants of this land’.⁹⁸

According to McWatt, im Thurn resigned as *Timebri*’s editor in 1886 because of a disagreement with the RA&CS about reducing the members’ subscription rates.⁹⁹ Although im Thurn was no longer the editor, he still contributed papers to the journal, such as the one entitled ‘Primitive Games’.¹⁰⁰

As mentioned previously, besides im Thurn, various people contributed to the *Timebri* journal, from administrators and academics to priests, discussing very relevant issues related with British Guiana. For these reasons, *Timebri* is a valuable resource that helps to contextualise British Guiana and also gives important references about the Amerindian culture. By cross-referencing this information with other publications, correspondence and notes attached to the objects, for instance, it allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the objects, contextualise them and follow their trajectories through time and space.

⁹⁷ Everard F. im Thurn, ‘The First Ascent to Roraima’, *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 4 (1885), 1–48.

⁹⁸ Everard F. im Thurn, ‘The British Guiana Exhibition of 1882’, *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 1 (1882), 100–117.

⁹⁹ McWatt, Part 1.

¹⁰⁰ Everard F. im Thurn, ‘Primitive Games’, *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 3 New Ser. (1889), 270–307.

1.4.2. Object Biographies

Objects are the result of a circuit of exchanges in which the producer, explorer, collector, intermediaries and curators are involved.¹⁰¹ Consequently, when an object is on display, ‘The objective aspect of collecting (what the things are) reduces the subjective side (who the collector is, or what drives the collector) to insignificance.’¹⁰² In other words, the story behind the object, why and how it was collected, and its context are forgotten by concealing or naturalizing ‘the social and historical processes responsible for the building up of the collections’.¹⁰³ Another very important aspect of this, which Robert Aguirre emphasises, is that the travellers not only took objects, plants, animals and rocks but also changed the places from where those items were removed. Besides changing those places, the traveller also changed the cultures that received and displayed these same items.¹⁰⁴ To understand these circuits of exchange, the focus should be on the things that were exchanged and the functions of this exchange, in what Appadurai calls the ‘social life of things’.¹⁰⁵ Bruno Latour also mentions the power of ‘mobilization’ and how important it is to exert the greatest influence on others.¹⁰⁶ This is better explained by giving the example of the naturalists when they are returning from their journeys ‘with the things’ or the evidence from their travels such as objects, plant specimens, animals and minerals. By bringing exotic and tropical items to Europe, they could arouse interest by inducing ‘others to go out of their ways’. In other words, they induced others to take journeys as well.¹⁰⁷ This appeal is also demonstrated by the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 which, besides displaying artefacts from different parts of the empire, showing its power and wealth,

¹⁰¹ Robert Aguirre, ‘Introduction’, in *Informal Empire: Mexico and Central America in Victorian Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), pp. xiii–xxix.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.xiv.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.xiv.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.xxii.

¹⁰⁵ Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, p.15.

¹⁰⁶ Bruno Latour, ‘Centres of Calculation’, in *Science in Action* (Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 215–257.

¹⁰⁷ Latour, ‘Centres of Calculation’, pp. 215–257.

also aimed to stimulate emigration to the British territories where it was ‘required to expand the trade between the different British communities’.¹⁰⁸ Particular attention to this colonial exhibition is paid in the following chapter (Chapter 3).

Following Nicholas Thomas’ words regarding Indigenous artefacts in museums – ‘we must ask why these objects were acquired and what their collectors thought they were doing’ – the question is whether im Thurn looked at these objects merely as ‘curiosities’ or if he was already looking at them from an anthropological point of view.¹⁰⁹

In im Thurn’s correspondence at Kew, he mentioned many of the objects that are nowadays kept at Kew’s Economic Botany Collection, the British Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum. By consulting this material, notes he made, the objects he collected, his published works, such as *Among the Indians of Guiana, Timbri*, several reports, and his botanical collections (herbarium specimens and natural objects), it is possible to understand more about the objects he collected while he was in British Guiana.

In addition, cross-referencing the materials in the different repositories also provides useful information regarding plant species, local people, institutions and the connection between Britain and its colonies, in this case British Guiana. The correspondence therefore gives a sense of both im Thurn’s and Kew’s aims, giving insights into the relationship between im Thurn and the different institutions, as the following chapters will explore.

During the research process, ‘object biography’ was used in terms of method, as mentioned previously. Here, special attention was given not only to the object itself but also to the packaging, labels, accession registers, catalogues, correspondence and publications to understand each object’s trajectory. However, it is important to recall

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous, ‘Colonial Indian Exhibition: British Guiana, West Indies and British Honduras’, *Illustrated London News* (London, 1886), pp. 337–342.

¹⁰⁹ Nicholas Thomas, ‘The European Appropriation of Indigenous Things’, in *Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 125–184.

that this approach also has its own limitations. Although catalogues, correspondence and notes are primary evidence and an indispensable source of material, they were also written from a specific point of view.¹¹⁰ For the majority of objects, their life story ‘comes and goes within various collected relationships, as collections are assembled and then broken up’.¹¹¹ Sometimes, the object is misplaced, as well as the information attached to it, and for these reasons, the exercise of assembling and cross-referencing this information in reconstructing its biography is quite challenging. In addition, the type of data available for each object was most of the time not the same for all the objects. For this reason, although the method was the same, the sources that provided information about the objects varied.

1.4.3. Cross-Cultural Encounters

In terms of following the objects through time and space in order to trace their histories and considering that the collected objects exposed here are also the result of cross-cultural encounters, it is important to take this aspect into consideration.

Michael Bravo explores the question of ‘ethnological encounters’ by giving the example of Richard Burton (1821–1890) – a Victorian traveller and explorer with a facility to study foreign languages. Here he mentions the art of ‘going native’ by expressing ‘the existence of the “other” in the self’, as well as the help provided by the natives when the explorers needed geographical information to build maps.¹¹² This help provided by the local people was crucial not only to the explorer’s mapping efforts, but

¹¹⁰ Susan M. Pearce, ‘Collecting Processes’, in *On Collecting: An Investigation Into Collecting In The European Tradition* (Oxon: Routledge, 1995), pp. 3–35.

¹¹¹ Pearce, *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, p.3.

¹¹² Michael T. Bravo, ‘Ethnological Encounters’, in *Cultures of Natural History*, ed. by N. Jardine, J.A. Secord and E.C.Spary (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 338–357.

also, when combined with other geographical knowledge, an important source in providing information for the empire.¹¹³

The emphasis in this thesis is on the amalgam of perspectives, the Amerindian and the Colonial/Imperial perspectives in the ‘contact zone’, which in this particular case is British Guiana. This ‘contact zone’ is defined by Pratt as:

The space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated, come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.¹¹⁴

D. Burnett addressed the subject of cross-cultural encounters thoroughly in his paper ‘It is Impossible to Make a Step without the Indians’¹¹⁵. In it the author emphasises the impact of an explorer on the local community and explains how the expeditions were integral to the colonial process as well. To demonstrate this, he used field notes and diaries of the explorers, identifying where the ‘Amerindian knowledge and power is minimized to reflect the superiority of the European and to validate the virtue of the colonial project’.¹¹⁶ The Amerindian knowledge was inferiorized in the way the explorers shaped ‘the histories and characters of Indigenous people to conform to the needs of the colony’.¹¹⁷ Although this is true, it is important to clarify how these expeditions in the interior were so dependent on Amerindians.¹¹⁸ Burnett tried to reveal the other side of the story by showing the dependency of the expeditions on these local communities. The challenge here is quite clear: there are no native testimonies. Consequently, he had to base his research on the explorers’ manuscripts, sketch the

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.338-357.

¹¹⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992).

¹¹⁵ D. Graham Burnett, “‘It Is Impossible to Make a Step Without the Indians’”: Nineteenth-Century Geographical Exploration and the Amerindians of British Guiana’, *Ethnohistory*, 49 (2002), 4–40.

¹¹⁶ Burnett, “‘It Is Impossible to Make a Step Without the Indians’”, 4-40

¹¹⁷ Sandra Pouchet Paquet, ‘V.S. Naipul and the Interior Expeditions: It’s Impossible to Make a Step Without the Indians’, *A Caribbean Studies Journal*, 5 (2007), 1–14.

¹¹⁸ Burnett, “‘It Is Impossible to Make a Step Without the Indians’”, 4-40.

works of these expeditions, and analyse and interpret the writings so he could see what lay behind them.¹¹⁹

Indeed, most of the time the archives 'are not transparent or all-inclusive; they are ideological constructs in themselves'.¹²⁰ Therefore, by looking through the archives we can only suggest glimpses of the 'Indigenous presence' in the colonial discourses.¹²¹ My intention with this dissertation is to understand these cross-cultural histories not only through notes, diaries and correspondence as Burnett suggested, but also by unveiling these entangled stories through the objects, by using, as a case study, im Thurn's collections, which are a result of these cultural encounters.

However, to understand the cross-cultural encounters through the objects collected by im Thurn in British Guiana, it is also important to know more about these objects. To comprehend these Amerindian objects, the first step is to contextualise them through an Amerindian perspective. Finding an Indigenous perspective through the archives in which the Imperial and Victorian point of view prevails is a daunting challenge. To face this challenge, I cross-referenced the available information (such as correspondence, notes, papers, books, reports and objects) with present day Amerindian testimonies from the Makushi and Arawak communities.

An Amerindian perspective is more likely to emerge if one combines archival research and fieldwork rather than by merely using the archives. It is important to see the Amerindian way of living through their own objects. The way these objects are produced and used, can give us some insights regarding im Thurn's collections. Locating present-day items, similar to ones collected by im Thurn, allows us to see how these objects changed through time, taking into account their materials, purpose, function and context. Although it is not possible to recover what im Thurn saw or experienced in his

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4-40.

¹²⁰ Aguirre, 'Introduction', p.xxii.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p.xxii.

days, by finding similar objects to the ones collected more than 150 years ago, a fresh perspective is brought to his collections. The aim is to see how things have or have not changed in the intervening period and to obtain a contemporary perspective on the cross-cultural aspects of im Thurn's work. Regarding this matter, I undertook a fieldtrip to Guyana in October 2010 with the objective of visiting some Arawak and Makushi communities, where it was still possible to find similar objects to the ones im Thurn collected. As there are nine different Amerindian groups in Guyana – Wai Wai, Makushi, Patamona, Arawak, Carib, Wapishana, Arecuna, Akawaio and Warrau – I decided to choose only two of these groups: the Makushi and Arawak.¹²² The decision was based on the fact that the majority of objects collected by im Thurn in British Guiana were from these two groups.

Data collection such as direct observations and interviews with focus groups were conducted in some of the Makushi and Arawak communities, adding a Guyanese perspective to this body of research. Yet, I have to emphasise that the purpose of this fieldtrip was to contextualise the objects and provide me with a sense of place. It did not form part of a broader anthropological enquiry. The interviews were undertaken in order to gather information about to what extent objects similar to the ones collected by im Thurn were still being used by the Amerindians nowadays and how.

It is important to see the objects outside the museums and to see them in actual use. This enriches the collections giving them a timeless value, because it grafts a modern Guyanese perspective onto im Thurn's notes and reports which, while advanced for their time, are nonetheless a product of the imperial age.

¹²² The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs Guyana, 'Amerindian Nations', *Discover*, 2009 <<http://amerindian.gov.gy/discover/tribes/index.html>> [accessed 11 July 2012].

Chapter 2

Cross-Cultural Histories: The Entangled Stories Behind the Collections

2.1. Introduction

This chapter turns to specific objects, setting them in historical and contemporary context, using both archival sources and information gathered at a recent trip to Guyana, discussing aspects of Everard im Thurn's collecting practices, and seeking to restore the 'cross-cultural histories'. The objects discussed were collected not only by Everard im Thurn but also by G.S. Jenman. I will expose some examples in which it is possible to see how objects and herbarium specimens collected by Jenman and im Thurn are connected, as well as the histories beneath them. By knowing more about the objects' histories changes the way they are perceived and hopefully will also contribute to a better understanding of the collections.

Here, particular cases will show how Europeans absorbed elements of Indigenous knowledge as well as how Amerindians absorbed European elements. Through these objects, the chapter aims to understand im Thurn's interest in certain items and comprehend why and how they were obtained. It also attempts to see these same objects as part of the ethnological encounters im Thurn experienced when he was in British Guiana. These cross-cultural encounters also revealed how the Europeans influenced the Amerindians in the way their objects were produced. Through im Thurn's descriptions of his Amerindian encounters it is possible to trace a portrait of this Victorian character which will be discussed in this chapter.

By combining different resources such as im Thurn's correspondence (at Kew and other institutions), *Bulletin of Miscellaneous Information* (Kew), *Timebri* series, *Among the Indians of Guiana* and others, the idea is to unveil the stories behind and understand the

collections from a broader perspective.¹²³ Concerning the material culture aspect in im Thurn's collections, the basic reference work used is *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs of the Guiana Indians*, a landmark in the study of Amerindian objects from British Guiana.¹²⁴ Many of the objects mentioned in Walter E. Roth's study are similar to the ones collected by im Thurn in British Guiana. However, as noted before, a few objects G.S. Jenman collected will also be examined in this chapter, as will his reports from *Timebri*. Indeed, Jenman's reports provide an important tool to help understand the colony as well as matters discussed during that period in British Guiana. Also, in Guyana I personally 'revisited' some of the objects mentioned in this chapter to get closer to a Guyanese perspective and see the objects being produced and used in their Amerindian context, so the present chapter incorporates this aspect as well.

Im Thurn's collections at Kew – spread throughout its many different sections or departments: namely the Herbarium, Archives and Economic Botany Collections – provided the opportunity to focus this research.¹²⁵ Some of these artefacts, which im Thurn sent to Kew, were later consigned to different museums in the 1960s, as confirmed in the Entry Books at the Economic Botany Section, in which the objects are listed. According to *The History of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew*, around 1956 the 'conditions of post-war austerity and financial constraint' also affected Kew opening the way for the closure of its museums.¹²⁶ During this problematic time, as a precautionary measure to preserve their collections and safeguard the objects, the museums at Kew

¹²³ Everard F. im Thurn, *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 1 (1882), 2 (1883), 3 (1884) and 4 (1885); im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana: Being Sketches Chiefly Anthropologic from the Interior of British Guiana*.

¹²⁴ Walter E. Roth, "An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs of the Guiana Indians", *Thirty-Eight Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology 1916-17*, ed. by Walter E. Roth (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1924).

¹²⁵ The Economic Botany Collection holds 83 thousand objects and the Herbarium, in which most specimens are from 1847–1930, stores 7 million. They have diverse purposes, from food, medicine and utensils, to social activities and clothing; in Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, 'What Is a Herbarium?'; Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, 'Kew Economic Botany Collection Online Database'.

¹²⁶ Ray Desmond, 'Postwar Recovery', in *The History of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew* (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew: Kew Publishing, 2007), pp. 280–295.

sent several objects to different institutions, such as the British Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum. As im Thurn's collections are spread across different institutions, some of the items (objects, drawings, photographs and herbarium specimens) that this chapter refers to are held not only by Kew but also by other institutions.

2.2. Im Thurn Among the Indians

In one of im Thurn's journeys to the interior of British Guiana, a particular episode portrays the cultural encounters and illustrates how randomly im Thurn behaved when collecting. In this episode, im Thurn describes how, after arriving to the settlement, crowds of Makushi people joined the camp with their families and domestic animals.¹²⁷ It was evident that they were spending the night there because they were bringing their hammocks as well. Im Thurn describes that 'more Indians continued to arrive' and 'each newcomer insisted upon shaking hands, a practice which they were told by our men was customary among white men'.¹²⁸ This was the exciting scene that Everard came across, where he observed the men, women and children around him. In one of his descriptions he mentions that many of them were 'loaded with necklaces of the teeth of various animals and with beads, tassels of bird's skins, and wore brilliant feather crowns'.¹²⁹ He also explains how he negotiated and what he did in exchange for particular necklaces in which he was interested:

Babies and children were all perfectly naked but for a necklace, which each wore, and a piece of twine tied round the body above the hips. Taking a fancy to one or two of these necklaces, I began to bargain with the mothers for them. One, made of deer's teeth, was really very pretty, and another consisted of three magnificent jaguar teeth. The mothers, stripping their children of

¹²⁷ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.30.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.30.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.30.

these, their only garments, gave them in exchange for red beads; the poor children screamed and bawled till, ashamed of my barbarity, I made peace by giving them some beads for themselves.¹³⁰

This episode portrays im Thurn's relationship with the Amerindian people and describes his understanding of how he managed to obtain particular objects he was interested in; the babies' necklaces in this case, and giving beads as an exchange. In another example im Thurn also explains how he had to socialise with the Amerindians so that he could 'have permission' to see their houses and ask all the questions about the objects he was interested in, as the following quote illuminates:

The houses of the Indians were always interesting, and the Indians themselves, after a time, and when their reserve had somewhat decreased, were sufficiently communicative, and sometimes even too hospitable. Etiquette demands the offer [paiwari liquor], and etiquette demands that the visitor should finish the horrid draught to the last dregs. Intent on establishing friendly relations with the people, I often found myself obliged to undergo this disagreeable ordeal; for, after it, I was allowed to walk about the house, handle all things, and ask any number of questions.¹³¹

These two cases demonstrate how Everard obtained particular objects by negotiating with the local people and how he forced himself to socialise, in the last case to drink paiwari, to get the Amerindians' trust in return for answers and to be 'allowed to walk about the house [and] handle all things', as he mentions.

Concerning im Thurn's interest in particular objects, he also mentions the *queyu*, an apron used by Amerindian women¹³² (Figure 2.1). He recognises how the *queyu* was being transformed over the years due to cultural encounters between the locals and the Europeans.¹³³ He adds that the majority of these aprons were made of 'European beads fastened together into a cloth-like fabric'.¹³⁴ Although rare, it was still possible to find original *queyus* that the Warrau women made from bark as well as aprons the

¹³⁰ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.30.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp.34-35.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p.195; The *queyu* is also mentioned in Roth, "An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs of the Guiana Indians", p.446.

¹³³ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.195.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.195.

Pianoghotto women made from small bright-coloured seeds instead of beads.¹³⁵ Im Thurn concludes by saying that ‘all these [*queyus*] are probably survivals of old indigenous customs’.¹³⁶ The beads were disseminated throughout the colony and were used ‘to replace the seeds or teeth, which were formerly all that the Indian had of this sort to make into body ornaments’.¹³⁷ As im Thurn was giving beads as an exchange for particular objects he was interested in, to study and preserve them, he was also contributing to the transformation of these objects. Consequently, the European beads were used instead of the seeds to produce the objects.

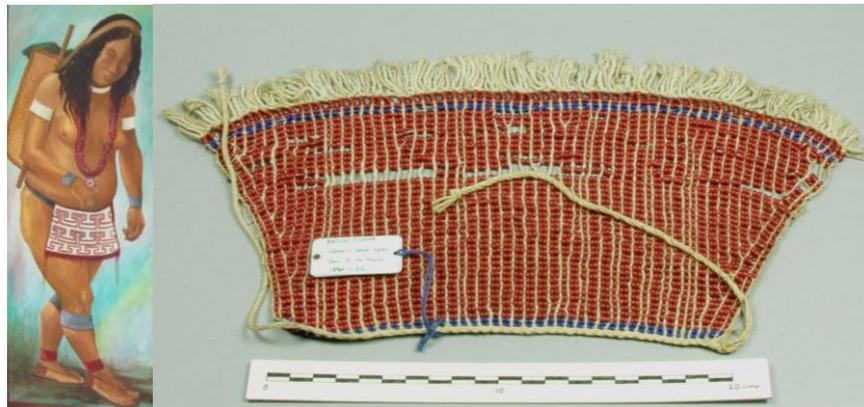


Figure 2.1. From left to right – A contemporary representation of a Makushi/Makusi woman wearing a *queyu* (panel at the Walter Roth Museum, Georgetown, Guyana) and ‘Woman’s bead apron’, British Guiana, donated by E. im Thurn (1895.11.22, Pitt Rivers Museum)

It is important to stress that the Makushi people in Guyana still produce *queyus* nowadays, but they only dress in their traditional costumes on special occasions and for celebrations. In Surama, it is still possible to find cotton *queyus* made of seeds instead of beads (Figure 2.2). Each costume has a different meaning, which is linked to a particular

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.195.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.195.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.201.

dance and song. It is through music and dance that Amerindian knowledge is still passed to younger generations.¹³⁸



Figure 2.2. Jean Allicock showing different traditional costumes used during Amerindian celebrations (Surama, Guyana, October 2010)

In Everard im Thurn's publication *Among the Indians in Guiana* (1883), it is possible to identify different cases of im Thurn's interaction with the Amerindians, as the previous examples demonstrate. The aforementioned cases give insights into how he obtained access to the information not only related to certain objects but also in the context of some Amerindian beliefs and their lives. In his book, im Thurn portrays himself as being quite suspicious of the Amerindian beliefs and his descriptions suggest he did not respect them.¹³⁹ In one peculiar case, although im Thurn was aware that the only person

¹³⁸ The songs and dances can be linked with cotton spinning or with the production of cassava for instance; Jean Allicock personal communication, Surama October 2010.

¹³⁹ In a particular example, it is possible to notice how suspicious im Thurn was towards the Amerindian beliefs. Im Thurn says: 'No Indian, unless he be a peaiman, willingly looks at Paiwarikaira [a large granite boulder which rests on a slender columnar base]; for the sight of it is followed by misfortune. Heedless of this, and regardless of the entreaties of the Indians, I approached, and even touched the rock. When, shortly afterwards, it began to rain the Indians attributed this solely to my disrespectful treatment of Paiwarikaira; nor, as will presently be shown, was this the only evil that befell us, as my men said, in consequence' in im Thurn, *Among the Indians*, p.19.

allowed to look directly to the Paiwarikaira, a large granite boulder, was the shaman, the naturalist not only looked at it but also touched the sacred rock, which was an enormous offence to the Amerindians. In addition, it started to rain and the Amerindians saw this as a reaction to im Thurn's disrespect towards the Paiwarikaira. In im Thurn's book, he mentions the peaiman, or shaman or medicine man, several times and refers how difficult it was to deal with him, as the following quote demonstrates:

Among our men was a peaiman, or medicine man, who about this time gave me some trouble. He used to tie his hammock to the same tree to which mine was tied; and being, like all Indians, very restless at night, he frequently shook and disturbed me. On telling him to move his hammock he did so with a very bad grace, and when I laughed at him, he angrily and somewhat inconsequently told Mœ [the spokesman] that 'he was not afraid of us'. Some fresh offence being again given to this man, he, once more using Mœ as an interpreter, remarked that he would kill us all, and even mentioned the order in which he would do this. We shortly had good reason to remember this remark. (...) Soon, after one by one, we all became ill, in exactly the order in which the peaiman had threatened to kill us. I cannot prove the case against the man, but I have little doubt that he intentionally caused our illness; the Indians, on the other hand, were convinced that the misfortune was due to our disrespectful treatment of Paiwarikaira.¹⁴⁰

In the text, im Thurn does not explain how the illness was caused, however he does not believe that the shaman 'intentionally caused' the illness among the group. The previous extract also reveals a clear tension between the peaiman and im Thurn, and, considering that the explorer was quite sceptical about the Amerindian beliefs, he says that he once put himself 'in the hands of an Indian peaiman'.¹⁴¹ Consequently, although he expressed scepticism towards the shaman he was also open minded enough to experience the unknown. He carefully described this esoteric experience in one of the book's chapters; in it, it is possible to recognise im Thurn's effort to understand the Amerindian perspective.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, pp.19-20.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.37.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p.348.

At first it seems that there is a contradiction in Im Thurn's discourse, which it is possible to recognise through his publications and correspondence. However, it is important to bear in mind that in Im Thurn's discourse he is addressing a particular audience – a Victorian audience. On the one hand, he shows respect and admiration towards the Amerindians by referring to their capacities; on the other hand, his discourse suggests a latent superiority because of the way he was educated, in the models of the Western education, as well as the way 'the Other' was seen in the Victorian society. In the first case Im Thurn demonstrates his admiration towards the local people by revealing he was struck 'by the way in which the Indians managed to follow the path, which, even when there is no water, is hardly discernible to an unpractised eye, and which now was completely hidden under a sheet of water; yet we emerged from the flood exactly where the track led out'.¹⁴³ This reiterates Burnett's remark in 'It is Impossible to Make a Step without the Indians' when he illuminates how local people were essential for a successful expedition.¹⁴⁴ In another example Im Thurn remarks that he met 'the most highly civilised Macusi' who spoke fluent Macusi and Portuguese who, despite having 'his teeth filed and painted after the Indian manner, seemed not entirely to have rejected barbarism'.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, although Everard recognised the Amerindians' skills, in many cases he remarks that they had signs of 'barbarism', which reflects Im Thurn's attitude of superiority. In one episode Im Thurn remarks that 'the Indian, man or woman, whatever the tribe, is not a fine animal in appearance'.¹⁴⁶ Im Thurn's ambiguity towards the Amerindians indicates an inner conflict. He had to struggle between the way he was educated, in which it was expected to see the colonies through the superior eyes of the empire and, at the same time, his perspective was gradually changing because of his experiences throughout the years

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.49.

¹⁴⁴ Burnett, 4–40.

¹⁴⁵ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.45.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.188.

spent among the Amerindians in British Guiana. It is also important to bear in mind that the cross-cultural encounters im Thurn described in the 1890s were ‘rare privileges for a European’.¹⁴⁷ In im Thurn’s paper, ‘A Tramp with Redskins’, he portrays ‘a harmonious relationship between the colonised Amerindians and himself as their colonial leader’.¹⁴⁸ In im Thurn’s correspondence there are also clear signs of affection towards the Amerindians, which is understandable, considering that he lived there for almost twenty years. This is particularly clear in a letter in which he reminisces about his time in the colony when, during a walk through Piccadilly, the experience is compared unfavourably with a walk through the ‘bush paths’, where he would be likely to come across a jaguar, a crapaud [Caribbean word for a frog] or something more interesting.¹⁴⁹

2.3. Objects and Raw Materials

2.3.1. Necklace of ‘Pretty and Curious’ Seeds

The necklace of velvet seeds donated to Kew by im Thurn in 1889 is on display at Museum No.1 Kew, where some collections from the Economic Botany are available to be seen by the public (Figure 2.3).¹⁵⁰ The purpose of this museum, which opened in 1847 and later moved to opposite the Palm House, was to demonstrate the importance of plants to mankind by displaying collections of textiles, gums, dyes and timbers.¹⁵¹ The necklace collected by im Thurn, does not have much information attached – there are

¹⁴⁷ Rosamund Dalziell, “‘A Tramp with Redskins’: A British Colonial Administrator’s Cross-Cultural Encounters”, in *Selves Crossing Cultures: Autobiography and Globalisation* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2002).

¹⁴⁸ Dalziell, “A Tramp with Redskins”.

¹⁴⁹ London, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, MS Director’s Correspondence, KLDC11642, Letter from Everard F. [Ferdinand] im Thurn to Sir William Thiselton-Dyer, from 23 Edwards Square, Kensington [London], 10 January 1900, folio 366.

¹⁵⁰ EBC no.66694 (Kew).

¹⁵¹ Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, ‘Kew, History & Heritage’
<<http://www.kew.org/heritage/places/museum1.html>> [accessed 11 June 2012].

just a few notes such as the species, the country where it was collected, the donor and the donation year. Further information about this object was obtained in the Kew Archives and Herbarium.



Figure 2.3. 'Necklace' of *Lacunaria jenmanii* on the display at the Museum No.1 (EBC66694, Kew)

The first time im Thurn mentioned this item was in a letter written from British Guiana in 1887; in it, he refers to a necklace of 'very pretty and curious' seeds that he received from local Indians about four years earlier on the upper part of the river (likely to be the Pomeroon, given that the letter was written from that locality).¹⁵² He also remarks that his sister has worn these necklaces 'almost constantly ever since and they have hardly changed in appearance at all'.¹⁵³ Im Thurn also indicates that he was sending a string to the Kew Museum. The collector continues by saying that he was hoping to go to the

¹⁵² London, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, MS Director's Correspondence, KLDC11610, Letter from Everard F. [Ferdinand] im Thurn to Sir William Thiselton-Dyer, from from Pomeroon River, British Guiana [Guyana], 8 June 1887, folios 332 –333a.

¹⁵³ KLDC11610.

locality to investigate the plant from which the seeds came. Although im Thurn intended to send a necklace to Kew, it is only two years later that he mentions it in one of his letters.¹⁵⁴ In this letter, the explorer says he is sending a large velvet seed necklace and he apologises for the delay. He also adds that he was looking into the ‘mooroo’ seeds that the Akawaio Indians strung into necklaces and that he had acquired fruiting specimens of four very distinct species of the *Quiina* genus but he had not managed to collect any flowers, which is very important to identify the species. He concludes by saying that these specimens would be sent to Kew through G.S. Jenman. This was confirmed by examining the Quiinaceae family at the Kew Herbarium, where the specimen of *Quiina guyanensis* Aubl was collected by im Thurn and sent to Kew in 1888 by Jenman (Figure 2.4). Although these specimens were collected by im Thurn, they had Jenman’s collection number (5195) but also a note mentioning that ‘Mr im Thurn’ collected them in 1888 at Issororo and Pomeroron River, and a reference to ‘mooroo’ (Figure 2.5). However, it is not very clear that the ‘mooroo’ seeds collected belonged to the same species used to make the necklace. This all shows that im Thurn and Jenman were working together, that their collections are connected, but also highlights the connection between im Thurn and Kew. As im Thurn did not have the necessary references to classify the collected specimens, it was essential for him to have a good relationship with a recognised botanical institution, such as Kew. It is clear that im Thurn was sending different specimens to Kew to get their opinion and get the collected specimens identified, the *Quiina*, mentioned above, being a good example of that.

¹⁵⁴ London, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, MS Director’s Correspondence, KLDC11620, Letter from Everard F. [Ferdinand] im Thurn to Daniel Morris, from Pomeroron River, British Guiana [Guyana], 1 July 1889, folio 343.

This example clearly shows how Kew and im Thurn were both benefiting from the exchange of herbarium specimens and objects. While Kew was acquiring items from British Guiana, im Thurn was getting valuable information from the experts at Kew.



Figure 2.4. Herbarium specimen of *Quina guyanensis* under Jenman's number with note: 'Col. Mr. im Thurn' (Jenman 5195, Kew)

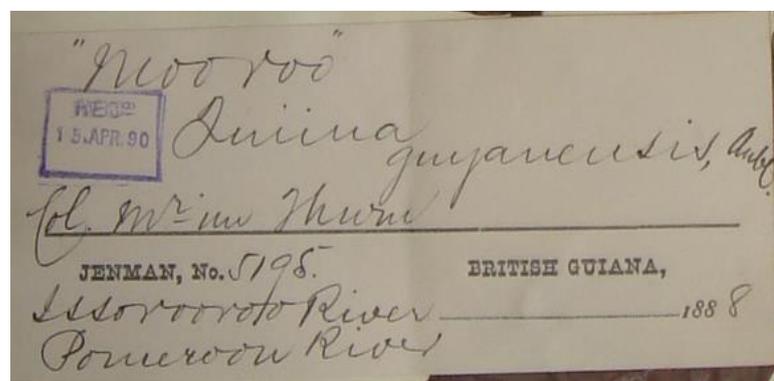


Figure 2.5. Label detail of the herbarium specimen *Quina guyanensis* (Jenman 5195, Kew)

As well as the correspondence at Kew, there is also a reference to the necklace in the paper ‘Anthropological Uses of the Camera’.¹⁵⁵ In this paper im Thurn mentions an episode where ‘the authorities at Kew asked for some information about an object of seeds from Guiana supposed to be a necklace, which is in their museum’.¹⁵⁶ He goes on to explain in the same article that ‘the thing is not a necklace at all, but [it] is worn across the body from one shoulder to the opposite hip’.¹⁵⁷ He also adds that ‘as a rule, two of these ornaments are worn, one from each shoulder, and crossing each other in front and on the back’.¹⁵⁸ He finishes by saying that ‘it is much easier to explain this when it is possible to show (...) a picture of the actual thing as worn’.¹⁵⁹ It was thus not only possible to have the evidence that the necklace referred to in the paper was the one which today is still at the Museum No.1, at Kew, but also to have a physical reference of the way the item was actually being worn. Although im Thurn’s paper has some images attached, there is no reference to the picture ‘of the actual thing as worn’ in the way Everard im Thurn described it. The photographs and slides mentioned in his paper are held by the archives of the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI), the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) and the National Museum of Scotland (NMS). In a paper by Amy Cox there is a picture of a slide housed at the NMS of an Amerindian wearing a ‘necklace’ in the way that im Thurn described in his article (Figure 2.6).¹⁶⁰ Also, at the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) there is a similar object as the one the explorer described, which is referred to as a ‘Necklet of seeds of the *Quina jamaicensis*’.¹⁶¹ These items at the

¹⁵⁵ Everard F. im Thurn, ‘Anthropological Uses of the Camera’, *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 22 (1893), 184–203.

¹⁵⁶ Im Thurn, ‘Anthropological Uses of the Camera’, 196.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁶⁰ Im Thurn, ‘Anthropological Uses of the Camera’; Amy Cox, ‘Purifying Bodies, Translating Race: The Lantern Slides of Sir Everard Im Thurn, History of Photography’, *History of Photography*, 31 (2007), 348–364.

¹⁶¹ PRM 1928.45.25.

PRM, which are long strings, are exactly as im Thurn described. They are not only a pair but they are also long enough to cross from the shoulder to the hip.



Figure 2.6. From left to right: Untitled lantern slide by Sir Everard im Thurn, ca 1877–1919 (382.24, National Museum Scotland)¹⁶² and ‘Necklet of seeds of *Quina jamaicensis*’ (1928.45.25, Pitt Rivers Museum)

It is important to stress that neither im Thurn or Kew sent any ‘necklaces’ to the PRM. However, there is a note attached to strings that PRM holds, stating that Prof. H. N. Moseley had some ‘necklets of strung seeds of *Quina jamaicensis*’ in his collection, which were given by im Thurn in 1887 and were later sent by Moseley’s daughter, Mrs Ludlow Hewitt, to the PRM in 1928. This was confirmed when, in the letter mentioned previously, im Thurn noted that besides sending a string to Kew he was also sending one each to Mrs Dyer, Mrs Hooker and Mrs Moseley (Figure 2.6).¹⁶³

¹⁶² Image from the paper: Cox, ‘Purifying Bodies, Translating Race’, 354.

¹⁶³ KLDC11610.

By considering the description of the object at the Museum No.1 and analysing the Kew Herbarium, it is possible to find herbarium specimens of the species *Lacunaria jenmanii* (Oliv.) Ducke, which were used to make the velvet seed necklace. The *Check-list of woody plants of Guyana* describes the species *Lacunaria jenmanni* as a small tree that is rare in the rainforest, but the *Quiina* sp. has the common name velvet seed tree in Creole¹⁶⁴. Kew has three specimens under the name of *L. jenmanii*, all with the same collection number (Jenman no.5178) and from the years 1888 and 1889 (Figure 2.7).



Figure 2.7. Herbarium specimen of *Lacunaria jenmanii* (K000328640, Jenman 5178, Kew)

¹⁶⁴ E.A. Mennega, D.B. Fanshawe and M.J. Jansen-Jacobs, *Check-list of Woody Plants of Guyana: Based on D.B. Fanshawe's Check-list of the Indigenous Woody Plants of British Guiana*, ed. by E.A. Mennega, W.C.M. Tammens-de Rooij and M.J. Jansen-Jacobs, Tropenbos (The Tropenbos Foundation, 1988).

From a taxonomical point of view, the updated species name is *Lacunaria jenmanii* (Oliv.) Ducke. It belongs to the Quiinaceae family and it can be found under different names, known as synonyms.¹⁶⁵ The first time the species was described it was named as *Touroulia jenmanii* Oliv. at *Hooker's Icones Plantarum*¹⁶⁶ and the specimen used for this description was the one cited above (Jenman, no. 5178); which was considered the Type specimen. Attached to those specimens were pencil drawings of the leaves, fruits and seeds, which were drafts of the botanical plates used together with the publication of the species in the *Icones Plantarum*. When the author Daniel Oliver described this species for the first time, he mentioned that the seeds of *Touroulia jenmanii* were 'externally very similar to the *velvet seeds* of Jamaica, the produce of *Quiina jamaicensis* Gris., clothed with the same long ferruginous indumentums, and strung by the Indians, as beads, for necklaces'.¹⁶⁷ When comparing specimens from im Thurn's and G.S. Jenman's collections, it seems that the ones Jenman sent have more notes attached, including on the uses of plants. As an illustration of this, one of the *Lacunaria* specimens cited above (which was used in the description of the species *Touroulia jenmanii*) has the reference 'used by Indians for making necklaces' (Figure 2.8).

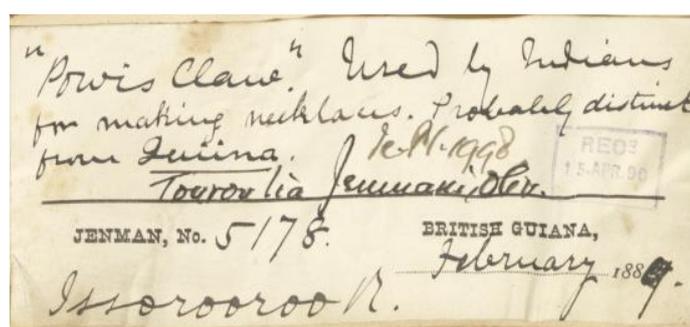


Figure 2.8. Label detail of the herbarium specimen of *Lacunaria jenmanii* (K000328640, Jenman no.5178, Kew)

¹⁶⁵ The synonyms are the following: *Lacunaria silvatica* (Pulle) A.C. Sm., *Quiina silvatica* Pulle and *Touroulia jenmanii* Oliv. According to Vicki A. Funk and others, 'Checklist of the Plants of the Guiana Shield (Venezuela: Amazonas, Bolivar, Delta Amacuro; Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana)', *Contributions from the United States National Herbarium*, 55 (2007), 1–584.

¹⁶⁶ Daniel Oliver, 'Touroulia jenmanii Oliv.', *Hookers Icones Plantarum*, 20 (1891), 1998.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1998.

Furthermore, in the specimens collected by Jenman, there are more notes regarding the locality where the specimen was collected, as the label shows (Figure 2.8). Here, the *Isorooro River* is indicated, near the Pomeroon, which maintains the same name today. There is also an observation of what seems to be the common name for that particular species, which is ‘Powis claw’ (Figure 2.8). Regarding the name powis, it is a fairly common bird in Guyana and is under the scientific name of *Crax alector* L.¹⁶⁸ There is another note ‘see fruits in museum o carp. Colln’. By consulting the Economic Botany Collection, it is possible to confirm the existence of the fruits under Jenman’s name¹⁶⁹ with the same number as the herbarium specimens (Jenman no.5178) (Figure 2.9).



Figure 2.9. Fruits of *Lacunaria jenmanii* sent by Jenman (EBC66693, Kew)

The case of the ‘necklace’ unveiled specific aspects of the botanical collections. It revealed how im Thurn collected certain specimens but also how later on these obtained Jenman’s collection numbers, which is an important detail for botanists dealing with these collections. The collector’s collection numbers attached to the specimens are extremely relevant because they are usually unique numbers, given in an increasing order

¹⁶⁸ Michael J Braun and others, *A Field Checklist of the Birds of Guyana*, National Geographic, Second (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2007).

¹⁶⁹ EBC no.66693 (Kew).

that can be matched with notes made on the field under the same number. Thus, when studying the typification of names in botany, for instance, it is important to know who collected the specimen but also the collection number because this will influence the typification process. Although this situation occurred with specimens from the Quinaceae family, it is plausible that it is not an isolated case, considering that im Thurn and Jenman worked together for several years. Also, the velvet seed necklace together with the correspondence at Kew give insights into the exchanges between Kew and the collectors, particularly the beneficial exchange of knowledge and botanical items (herbarium specimens and objects) between the botanical institution and im Thurn.

Furthermore, it is important to stress that over one hundred years later this object is still on display at the Museum No.1 and is still labelled as a necklace. Even after im Thurn's explanation to Kew authorities regarding the peculiar object and posterior claiming that the object was not a necklace at all, this object is still displayed in the same way. This particular object would be better understood if a picture of the item being worn was shown along side with it. Thus, if it were possible to display both items – the 'necklace' and the image – at the exhibition, the public could understand how the object was supposed to be worn and be provided with a context for its use.

2.3.2. Arrows Made of *Rappoo* ‘Said to Be Poisonous’

Im Thurn sent several different kinds of arrows to Britain and to the British Museum (BM) in particular. The arrows he sent from British Guiana have various shapes depending on their purpose: hunting birds, fish, turtles or game.¹⁷⁰ Most of these arrows were fletched using the feathers of the powis bird¹⁷¹ – the bird mentioned previously. The game-arrows used by the savannah tribes, which this chapter will discuss, had ‘very long lance shaped heads made of a bamboo that the Indians called *rappoo*’.¹⁷² This bamboo ‘only grows in a few places’. To use it, the Amerindians cut and dried it carefully before the arrow head was shaped and hardened in the fire.¹⁷³ After this process, the arrow head was fixed with karamanni wax into the reed shaft and was then ready to use.¹⁷⁴ Im Thurn sent two of these arrows to Kew (Figure 2.10). Later on, one of these was sent to the British Museum in 1960 (Figure 2.11).¹⁷⁵ In im Thurn’s notes regarding the objects, he says that these arrows, made of bamboo (*Guadua* sp.), which were known as *rappoo* arrows, were used to hunt bush-hogs (peccaries).¹⁷⁶ In other notes he adds that these arrows were used ‘chiefly by the Macusi Indians’.¹⁷⁷ Regarding the catalogue made by im Thurn, it is possible to notice that the *rappoo* arrow, which Kew donated to the BM in 1960, was already listed in im Thurn’s catalogue.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁰ British Museum, ‘Everard im Thurn’, *Collection database search*, 2009 <http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database.aspx> [accessed 5 June 2009].

¹⁷¹ Daniel Allicock, personal communication, Surama October 2010.

¹⁷² Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.242 (my italics).

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.242.

¹⁷⁴ Note attached to the object Am1960.10.62 (British Museum); Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.242.

¹⁷⁵ EBC Cat no. 31983 (Kew); Am1960.10.62 (British Museum): Donated by Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in 1960.

¹⁷⁶ British Museum, Archives of the Centre for Anthropology, *British Guiana: Catalogue of Donations from Everard F. im Thurn* (1881), Cat. no.789, no.194; Note attached to the object Am1960.10.62 (British Museum).

¹⁷⁷ Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, ‘Kew Economic Botany Collection Online Database’.

¹⁷⁸ British Museum, Archives of the Centre for Anthropology, *British Guiana: Catalogue of Donations from Everard F. im Thurn* (1881), Cat. no.789, no.194.



Figure 2.10. Arrow head from British Guiana collected by im Thurn (EBC31983, Kew)



Figure 2.11. Arrow head from British Guiana collected by im Thurn (arrow detail, front and behind)
(Am1960.10.62, British Museum)

In *Among the Indians of Guiana* im Thurn mentions an episode in which he refers to these *rappoo* arrows, as the following extract attests:

On the next day we reached the cataracts of Akramukra, and, on the day following, those at Rappoo. These latter take their name from a kind of bamboo which grows on the islands among them, and which is much used by the savannah Indians for making arrow-heads, which are, we were told, as poisonous as those tipped with ourali. I afterwards tried one of these rappoo arrows; but the fowl [chicken] which was shot showed no symptoms of poison; and an Indian who was standing by ingenuously remarked that a rappoo arrow is only poisonous when it enters far enough into the body.¹⁷⁹

The name given to these *rappoo* arrows had to do not only with the bamboo itself but also, as the text above confirms, with the name of the locality where this plant

¹⁷⁹ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.25.

used to grow, which is still known nowadays as Rappu Falls near Akramukra. Robert Schomburgk also mentioned that the rapids of Rappoo received their name because of the 'large quantity of Bamboo (*Nastus latifolia*)' in that area.¹⁸⁰

This episode demonstrates im Thurn's interest in actually trying these Amerindian arrows and it reveals his efforts in wanting to know more about their culture, although he also tries to demystify the Amerindian beliefs by testing these objects and commenting on the Amerindian 'naivety'.¹⁸¹

Regarding the *rappoo* arrows, im Thurn does not say they were not poisonous; actually, he is very mindful about this, as confirmed in his notes, in which he mentions that 'the heads of those arrows [rappoos] are made of a special kind of bamboo *said to be poisonous* (though this latter fact was not confirmed by my own experiments)'.¹⁸² Im Thurn seems to be very attentive in his assumptions and consequently is always testing the veracity of the Amerindian knowledge, as a Victorian man of science would do. This attention could demonstrate im Thurn's respect towards the Amerindian knowledge; however, it is more likely that he was simply being diplomatic towards the statements of Richard Schomburgk and C.B. Brown.¹⁸³ Both confirmed that the *rappoo* arrows were poisonous, so when im Thurn wrote, he was probably supporting what his colleagues said and was not being attentive towards the Amerindian knowledge.¹⁸⁴ He also gives the example of Brown's account, in which the latter explained how a peccary, when 'struck by a rappoo arrow, stood still, apparently paralysed, for a time, and then fell

¹⁸⁰ Robert H. Schomburgk, 'The Guiana Travels of Robert Schomburgk 1835–1844, Volume I: Explorations on Behalf of the Royal Geographical Society 1835–1839 (Hakluyt Society Third Series Volume 16)', ed. by Peter Rivière (Cambridge: Ashgate for Hakluyt Society London, 2006).

¹⁸¹ Another similar example is when im Thurn shares an Amerindian story: 'A plant is said to grow somewhere, a stick from which proves fatal to any living thing at which is pointed. The virtues of this are supposed to have been discovered by an Indian woman, who, when suddenly attacked by a jaguar, seized the nearest stick to defend herself, and pointed it at the animal, which immediately fell dead'. In this case, although im Thurn does not say it directly, his writing once more suggests there is an Amerindian 'naivety'; Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 25.

¹⁸² British Museum, Archives of the Centre for Anthropology, *British Guiana: Catalogue of Donations from Everard F. im Thurn* (1881), Cat. no.789, no.194.

¹⁸³ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.242.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.242.

dead'. Im Thurn tried to repeat the experiment several times but he failed to replicate the same result. He justifies himself by saying that he 'shot gently into a fowl, so that it entered only a very little way and not in a vital part'. When he pointed this out to the Amerindians, they explained that the poison could only take effect if the arrow went in far enough. Therefore, im Thurn assumed that only if the arrow could touch some vital spot of the animal, could the arrow be effective. In conclusion, he emphasised that 'the poisonous character attributed to this bamboo-wood may be considered doubtful, until more accurate experiments have been made'.¹⁸⁵ In addition, the species name *Nastus latifolius* (Kunth) Spreng., which Robert Schomburgk previously mentioned, is a synonym of *Guadua latifolia* (Kunth) Kunth, which is the accepted name nowadays.¹⁸⁶ Despite the fact that im Thurn mentioned the *rappoo* as *Guadua* sp., it is almost certain that he was referring to the species Schomburgk mentioned, which is now named *Guadua latifolia*. Im Thurn's experiments however did not show the bamboo's toxicity although – the species *Guadua latifolia* is today listed as a poisonous plant.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, im Thurn revealed that he was told how those arrows were as poisonous as the arrows 'tipped with ourali' and the arrow at the British Museum has on its back what seems to be *ourali*, as Figure 2.11 indicates.¹⁸⁸ However, this does not apply to the arrow at Kew, which is clear on both sides, *i.e.* with no *ourali*. The question is, would it be possible that im Thurn tested the arrow by adding some *ourali* to it? Given that we know that im Thurn tested the arrows and that the one at BM exhibits what appears to be signs of *ourali*, it is plausible that this might have happened.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.242.

¹⁸⁶ W.D. Clayton and others, 'GrassBase - The Online World Grass Flora', 2006 <<http://www.kew.org/data/grasses-db.html>> [accessed 6 December 2011].

¹⁸⁷ At the Economic Botany Collection, Kew there are specimens of *Guadua* sp. collected by im Thurn in British Guiana (EBC37396); Paul H. Allen, 'Poisonous and Injurious Plants of Panama', *The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, 23 (1943), 3–76; FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration), 'FDA Poisonous Plant Database', 2008 <<http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/plantox/detail.cfm?id=770>> [accessed 6 December 2011].

¹⁸⁸ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.25.

2.3.3. Ourali Arrow Points and Quiver

Other objects are worth mentioning regarding the *ourali* poison such as the *ourali* arrows, which make ‘a far more deadly weapon’ than the *rappoo* arrows referred to previously.¹⁸⁹ The *ourali* arrow points, which are long, narrow, flat and smeared with *ourali*, are ‘inserted in the socket at the end of the reed shaft in the moment before the arrow is to be used’. Im Thurn observes that the arrow points could be carried inside the quiver ‘made of hollow bamboo’ (Figure 2.12) or carried in the shaft ‘covered with a sheath of hollow bamboo’ to avoid contact with the poison.¹⁹⁰ Im Thurn also adds that ‘whether the points are carried separately or whether they are protected by a sheath, the object of the precaution is to protect the hand of the Indian from any chance of contact with the deadly poison with which the points are smeared’.¹⁹¹ Most of the objects im Thurn describes in his book *Among the Indians of Guiana* are at BM and are exactly as pictured in the book (Figure 2.12).¹⁹²



Figure 2.12. Quiver and *ourali* arrow points (Am1529, British Museum)¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.242.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.242–243.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.243–244.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p.243.

¹⁹³ Image from the book: im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.243.

Attached to these objects is a note indicating that the Makushi Indians made them and they were used for killing birds.¹⁹⁴ In im Thurn's book, he adds that the points of the arrows could have two forms, a shorter one with only one or two notches used to kill baboons and red howling monkeys, and a longer one with many notches on it used to kill birds.¹⁹⁵ Im Thurn suspected that 'a slender variety' of point arrows smeared with little poison was used to catch birds and small animals, not to be eaten but to be tamed.¹⁹⁶ However, im Thurn did not know if the Amerindians used an antidote to control the effects of the poison, as the following text illustrates:

Whether in such cases any antidote is used to counteract the effects of the poison, I was never able to learn; but I am inclined to think that the real reason of recovery (for though many animals treated in this way doubtless die, a few live) is that here is only a very minute quantity of poison on the arrow used in shooting for this purpose.¹⁹⁷

According to im Thurn, the effect of the *ourali* was 'gradually to diminish, and finally to stop, the action of the heart of any animal into the blood of which it enters'.¹⁹⁸ This poison, also known as *curare*, *curari*, *urari*, *urali* and *ourali*, was referred to by Richard Schomburgk in his elaborated paper on the subject, in which he mentions that 'Sir Walter Raleigh was the first who brought to Europe exact information of the existence of the dreadful and swiftly operating extract called *Ourari*'.¹⁹⁹ In fact, the first information on *ourali* to reach Europe was in 1595.²⁰⁰

Im Thurn says that the 'Macusis are the chief makers of this poison in Guiana, and they distribute it to the other Indians' but also pass it from generation to

¹⁹⁴ British Museum, Archives of the Centre for Anthropology, *British Guiana: Catalogue of Donations from Everard F. im Thurn* (1881), Cat. no.789, no.194.

¹⁹⁵ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.244.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.244.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.244.

¹⁹⁸ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.244.

¹⁹⁹ R. Schomburgk, 'On the Urari: The Deadly Arrow-Poison of the Macusis, an Indian Tribe in British Guiana' (Adelaide: E. Spiller, Acting Government Printer, 1879).

²⁰⁰ B. A. Krukoff and H. N. Moldenke, 'Studies of American Menispermaceae, with Special Reference to Species Used in Preparation of Arrow-poisons', *Brittonia*, 3 (1938), 1-11.

generation.²⁰¹ He continues by saying that among the Makushi only one man produces the poison ‘so that the poison-maker is a great and important man in his district’. However, although only one man produces the poison and ‘the recipe appears to be known to other Indians of the tribe’, im Thurn says that others do not prepare it because of ‘superstitious feeling of the unlawfulness of its practice except by duly qualified practitioners’. Im Thurn compares this Amerindian attitude with ‘more civilised communities’ in which there is a professional etiquette that ‘prevents members of one branch of a profession from doing work more proper to another branch of the same’.

Im Thurn notes that the ‘ourali is made with much ceremony, probably intended to enhance the importance of the maker’. In order to produce this poison several ingredients are used such as different types of bark (but the creeping plant *Strychnos toxifera* is essential), roots, peppers (*Capsicum*), ants and poison-fangs of snakes²⁰². In the last stages of preparing the poison, the *ourali* is placed into small gourds.²⁰³ It is likely that the small gourds containing the poison, which im Thurn described in his book, are the same that Kew holds nowadays (Figure 2.13).²⁰⁴ The mentioned small calabash was collected by im Thurn and has a note attached indicating that the chief of the Macusi Indians made the poison.²⁰⁵

Regarding the poison’s effectiveness, im Thurn confirms it, as the following extract attests:

A fowl slightly pricked with a dart on which the poison had been smeared, ceased to live (for that is the only way to describe the apparent symptoms of the poison) in about six minutes.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.311.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p.311.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.313.

²⁰⁴ EBC Cat no.49129 (Kew).

²⁰⁵ Note attached to the object EBC Cat no.49129 (Kew).

²⁰⁶ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.313.

Im Thurn adds that ‘the poison, if kept warm and dry, retains its power for several years’ but if it is not kept in these conditions it becomes powerless.²⁰⁷ In the correspondence at Kew, G.S. Jenman also mentions the *ourali* poison and explains that it is used ‘by the Indians in shooting birds with their blow pipe and small arrows’.²⁰⁸



Figure 2.13. Calabash of *ourali* collected by im Thurn in British Guiana and sent by Jenman to Kew in 1882 (EBC49129, Kew)

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.313.

²⁰⁸ KLDC11668.

2.3.4. The ‘Very Curious and Beautiful Piece of Karamanni’ Wax

As mentioned previously, karamanni wax is used to make *rappoo* arrows and has the particular function of fixing arrow heads. The karamanni or karaman comes from the species *Symphonia globulifera* L.f., which is also known as manni tree.²⁰⁹ The karamanni is a thick, yellow latex that is extracted from this manni tree.²¹⁰ This latex is boiled in water and later on the beeswax is added to make it more pliable.²¹¹ Im Thurn also indicated that powdered ashes or charcoal may be added to turn the karamanni black.²¹² At Kew’s archives there is a letter to Kew’s Director in which im Thurn requested Thiselton-Dyer’s (1843–1928) help to identify the species from which one of the objects he sent to the Museum was made of.²¹³ Im Thurn described this object as a ‘large circular tablet of black wax (called caraman by the Indians)’.²¹⁴ This particular object is housed today at the EBC, Kew, and has a very curious and unusual appearance (Figure 2.14).²¹⁵ The circular tablet is in a black box with a glass, a typical box from the Kew Museum used to display the objects.²¹⁶ The EBC has two different shapes of this particular wax: the ‘large circular tablet’, as mentioned before, and the cylindrical one, which, according to im Thurn was the most typical (Figure 2.14). This cylindrical shape is the result of the cooling process in which a cylindrical mould is used during this procedure. After the wax turns black it gets viscous, and while hot this liquid wax ‘is poured into a bamboo segment to store it for future use’, which is why it acquires a very cylindrical shape.²¹⁷

²⁰⁹ Tinde van Andel, *Non-timber Forest Products of the North-West District of Guyana Part II: A Field Guide* (Georgetown, Guyana: Tropenbos-Guyana series 8B, 2000).

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.231.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.231.

²¹² Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.315.

²¹³ KLDC11580.

²¹⁴ KLDC11580.

²¹⁵ EBC Cat no.66698 (Kew).

²¹⁶ Caroline Cornish, personal communication December 2011.

²¹⁷ Van Andel, *Non-timber Forest Products of the North-West District of Guyana Part II*, p.231.



Figure 2.14. From the left to the right: *Rappoo* arrow (EBC31983), karamanni wax in cylindrical shape (EBC66677), 'large circular tablet of black wax' (EBC66698) and karamanni wax involved in tree bark (EBC72843) - Objects from the Economic Botany Collection, Kew

Im Thurn explains that usually the hollow bamboo is used in the preparation of the karamanni wax, but in the case of the 'very curious and beautiful piece of karamanni' the buck pot was used to shape and harden the wax, as the following extract demonstrates:²¹⁸

One very curious and beautiful piece of karamanni, which is now in the Kew Museum, seems to have been prepared in this way. The resin has evidently been mixed with an unusually large quantity of bees wax; and the whole has then been melted and allowed to drop into a buck-pot partly filled with water. The result is a circular tablet of wax, the lower side smooth, and the shape of the buck-pot, but the upper side wrought into the most beautiful coils and folds of infinite variety. It is like a beautiful medallion carved in high relief in coal-black wood. It was prepared, apparently accidentally, by Arawak Indians.²¹⁹

I suggest that im Thurn collected this example of karamanni wax because of its unusual shape and because he thought it was a singular object 'prepared accidentally, by

²¹⁸ EBC Cat no.66698 (Kew); Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.315.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.315.

the Arawak Indians’, however he does not explain why he thought that it was an accident.²²⁰ Im Thurn later added that he saw other specimens of this wax with this particular shape and, he was inclined to think that its preparation was intentional and this was not an isolated case.²²¹ Furthermore, another detail that emerges from the extract is that he did not see the wax being prepared, so he suggests that the Amerindians used a buck pot instead to give this particular shape. Besides being used for fixing arrows, this wax is also used ‘in place of pitch and glue to fill up crevices in woodwork’, ‘to caulk the creases in boats and canoes’ and in the production of the cassava-graters (which will be examined later in this chapter).²²² Im Thurn also gives an example of the karamanni’s effectiveness.²²³ On one occasion the Amerindians were ‘sawing timber and the handle of the whip-saw parted from the blade’, so the two parts were stuck together with the karamanni in a way that repaired the saw.²²⁴ He added that the strength could be higher when there was less bees wax.²²⁵ The species *Symphonia globulifera* is also used for medicinal purposes. The manni tree bark can be used for diarrhoea and thrush, and its latex is known for its various medicinal properties.²²⁶ More precisely, it can be used for abscesses and swellings, and can be applied as a ‘disinfectant plaster on cuts and rubbed on sore lips and mouth’.²²⁷ Im Thurn further adds that the Makushi use the ‘tuara’ as a substitute of the karamanni, although it is described as whitish resin that is very rarely used.²²⁸

Through the various examples discussed, it is plausible to understand the karamanni’s effectiveness and why it was used, and indeed why the Makushi still use it

²²⁰ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.315.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p.315.

²²² Van Andel, *Non-timber Forest Products of the North-West District of Guyana Part II*, p.231; Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, pp.282, 315.

²²³ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.315.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.315.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.315.

²²⁶ Van Andel, *Non-timber Forest Products of the North-West District of Guyana Part II*, pp.231-232.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.231-232.

²²⁸ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.316.

to produce arrows (Figure 2.15).²²⁹ In Guyana, or more precisely in Surama, I had the opportunity to interview Daniel Allicock, one of the few Makushi people who still produce arrows nowadays (Figure 2.16).²³⁰ Daniel Allicock explains that the karamanni is a waterproof material, which means it can be used in arrows that can be in contact with water, such as the ones used for fishing, for instance. He also says: ‘If it works so well, why should we change?’.²³¹



Figure 2.15. Karamanni wax (Surama, Guyana, October 2010)

Although it is still possible to find the karamanni being used among the Amerindians, this is a vanishing tradition. Allicock explains that the art of producing blowpipes, arrows and bows for fishing and hunting can take some years to learn and usually the father would teach these skills to his children. The production of these objects was a very important skill that would prepare the young Amerindian for long travelling distances: it would give them the basic skills to survive in the forest as they could hunt for food and use the arrows and bows as weapons for defence.²³² Allicock

²²⁹ Interestingly, in Guyana I did not see karamanni with a cylindrical or circular shape as described previously.

²³⁰ Daniel Allicock, personal communication, Surama October 2010.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² *Ibid.*

also notes that the Makushi no longer produce blowpipes, although some Wai-wai communities still do. In the Surama village in Guyana, the elder people are the only ones still producing arrows and bows. For the younger generation it is easier to buy from the elderly instead of producing these objects themselves. Allicock also notes that the *cromia* or silk grass, like the karamanni, is one of the original materials used in manufacturing the arrows, but it is also used to tighten the handicraft and hammocks, and it is a very resistant material that is still being used nowadays.



Figure 2.16. Daniel Allicock showing the *cromia* or silk grass (Surama, Guyana October 2010)

Regarding the *cromia* or silk grass that Daniel Allicock mentioned, the EBC holds an example of this fibre that Im Thurn sent from British Guiana with a note attached indicating that it was used to produce hammock ropes (Figure 2.17).²³³ According to Im Thurn, the *cromia* ‘is ingeniously extracted from the leaves of a bromelia, and sometimes

²³³ EBC Cat no. 29676 (Kew); Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.284.

of various species of anannassa, plants like huge pineapples'.²³⁴ The leaves of the plant are split into fibres, washed and dried in the sun, and are then ready to be used.²³⁵



Figure 2.17. Silk grass or *crowia* fibre from *Ananas comosus* (EBC29676, Kew)

2.3.5. Pots and Barks

The aforementioned karamanni wax production, involved the use of the buck pot as a mould to shape the wax and get a circular shape (Figure 2.18). In addition to being used as a mould, this pot has other importance in the Guyanese culture. The buck pot is connected with Guyanese traditions such as the traditional dish known as pepper-pot, which is still very common nowadays in Guyana. According to im Thurn's notes, the pepper-pot is an Amerindian dish that the colonists adopted and it was the only form in which the Amerindians ate meat.²³⁶ In his book im Thurn also mentions that pepper-pot is made by cooking fish or meat, peppers (chilis) and cassarep (which is boiled cassava

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.284.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.284.

²³⁶ Note made by im Thurn attached to the buck pot (EBC Cat no.37797, Kew).

juice so that it is no longer poisonous) for a long time and ‘boiling [them] into a sort of thick soup’.²³⁷



Figure 2.18. Bark of ‘cauta’ *Hirtella americana* (EBC37795), buck pot (EBC37797) and buck pot lid (EBC57010) - Objects from the Economic Botany Collection, Kew (collected Everard im Thurn 1880, British Guiana)

This traditional pot was pictured in one of the photographs taken by the Norton Brothers, on one of im Thurn’s expeditions (Figure 2.19). The photograph shows the buck pot being used, as is the hammock – another very important object not only in Guyana but in the Amazonian culture. This photograph shows what seems to be a man preparing to cook, which is very rare. In terms of preparing food, im Thurn says that ‘if by some chance a man is obligated to cook, except so far as is absolutely necessary on an ordinary hunting excursion, and is seen to do so by some other Indian, he feels as much shame as if he had been caught in some unworthy act’.²³⁸ Im Thurn adds that cooking ‘when done at home and under normal circumstances, is wholly women’s

²³⁷ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, pp.260–261.

²³⁸ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, pp.255-256.

work'.²³⁹ Im Thurn also notes that Amerindian women never eat with men as they wait until the end of the meal to eat the remains of the food.²⁴⁰



Figure 2.19. Detail of the photograph 'Tumatumari, looking S.E. Potaro River' (Norton Brothers, *Scenes in the Interior of British Guiana*, NMM)

Concerning the buck pot, the EBC, Kew holds one of these specimens and its lid (which can be also used as a saucer) that Im Thurn collected from British Guiana (Figure 2.18).²⁴¹ A similar buck pot is housed at the PRM as well as another pot called *Sappoora*, which Im Thurn also mentions in his book *Among the Indians of Guiana*, which will be discussed later.²⁴² Regarding what Im Thurn wrote in this book about pottery in British Guiana, it is likely that he was particularly interested in this subject. He classifies the Amerindian pottery into four different types: the buck pot (A), a bigger variety of buck pot without a saucer (B), goglets (C and D) and the sappoora (E) (Figure 2.20).²⁴³

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.256.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.256.

²⁴¹ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.274.

²⁴² Object no.1885.9.4 (PRM).

²⁴³ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.274.

Here, im Thurn considers the buck pot as the most universal in this classification.²⁴⁴ According to him, the other similar buck pot can be much larger, higher, bounded with basket work, and used for holding Amerindian beverages such as casiri and paiwari, for instance (Figure 2.20B).²⁴⁵ The goglets are also described as clay bottles used ‘to contain liquids by the forest tribes, but not by the savannah Indians, who use the empty skins of gourds and calabashes’ instead (Figure 2.20C and D).²⁴⁶ An example of these goglets is at the EBC, Kew and according to im Thurn’s note is supposed to be imitating a fruit of *Lagenaria* (Figure 2.21).²⁴⁷ As mentioned before, the *Sappoora* (Figure 2.20.E and 2.22) is another kind of vessel, which, according to im Thurn, was mainly produced by the True Caribs and Arawaks. It was rarely used by other tribes and its purpose is to hold food, not for cooking.²⁴⁸

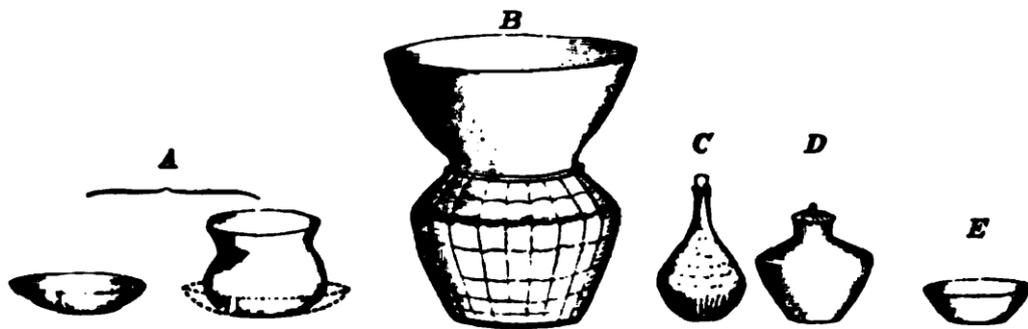


Figure 2.20. Types of pottery according to E. im Thurn²⁴⁹

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.274.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.274.

²⁴⁶ Image from: im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.275.

²⁴⁷ Note attached to the object (EBC54657, Kew).

²⁴⁸ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.275.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.275.



Figure 2.21. From left to right: 'Goglet made by Indians of Demerara' collected by Everard im Thurn, British Guiana, 1880 (EBC54657, Kew); Fruit of *Lagenaria* sp.²⁵⁰



Figure 2.22. 'Sappoora' collected by Everard im Thurn, British Guiana, (c.1885) (Pitt Rivers Museum)

²⁵⁰ Image from the website: Deeproot, 'Plant Information Encyclopaedia', *Lagenaria* <<http://www.deeproot.co.uk>> [accessed 12 June 2012].

In im Thurn's description of the pottery method he indicates that after the pot is polished and dried in the sun, drawings are made on the vessels which can be geometric, spirals, rough figures of animals, curved or straight lines.²⁵¹ These drawings are made from the juice of the bark of various trees, which can produce the colours red, pink, brown or black.²⁵² According to im Thurn, some of the Amerindians, for example True Caribs, even apply certain juices to the clay to produce a fine glaze on the vessel. After this process, the vessels are baked over a fire and this brings out the glaze or the drawing. Here, im Thurn indicates once more that the bark of a certain tree which is called by the Arawaks, *Kawta* (which probably is Kanto bark, *Hirtella americana*), is burned, ground to powder then mixed with the clay, leaving the pots very black.²⁵³ In Kabakaburi (Guyana), where there is a strong Arawak community, they still produce pots in the traditional way. They apply the juice of the bark to colour the vessels, although the powdered bark is not mixed with the clay.²⁵⁴ In this particular community they use the Mapurukong tree (which is probably *Inga alba* (SW.) Willd) and extract the juice from the bark instead of using the Kanto bark as described by im Thurn.²⁵⁵

Another example of im Thurn's cross-cultural encounters arises from an episode in which he wanted to acquire a particular pot. This provides a hint at the somewhat dubious practices that were at play in the business of collecting: he was only able to get the object after negotiating with a doubtfully sober Amerindian:

A perfected casiri-jar, especially if it is much ornamented, is highly valued; one especially fine specimen, last by bargaining for it one day when I happened to find its owner merry and good-humoured after a long drinking feast.²⁵⁶

²⁵¹ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.277.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p.277.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.277.

²⁵⁴ Fieldtrip to Guyana which took place in October 2010.

²⁵⁵ Van Andel, *Non-timber Forest Products of the North-West District of Guyana Part II*, p.115.

²⁵⁶ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.277.

The pottery work was mainly done by women and in some cases, when they were in contact with white people, they would imitate ‘vessels of European structure as they may see, such as teapots, cups and saucers, tumblers, or wineglasses; but these articles are always misshapen and untrue in curve’.²⁵⁷ Im Thurn also adds that ‘while the Indian women of Guiana are shaping the clay, their children, imitating them, make small pots and goglets; many of these toy vessels may be seen in and about almost every Indian house’.²⁵⁸

In the correspondence at Kew, Im Thurn mentions a particular bark that is mixed with clay and used by the Amerindians for making pottery, and he wonders if any identification has been made at Kew regarding this bark.²⁵⁹ In the same letter, an annotation made by Kew staff identifies the bark species as *Hirtella americana*. This letter indirectly explains why Kew kept a buck pot in their collections. As the objects that seemed more ‘ethnological’ were sent in the 1960s to other institutions, such as the British Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum, this buck pot probably stayed at Kew because the species *Hirtella* was included in the potting process. The same happened with the goglet that Kew holds that is supposed to be imitating a fruit of *Lagenaria*. Even though it is solely made of clay, it is still included in the collections and classified as a plant. From these two objects at Kew, it is possible to infer that certain specimens the EBC, Kew hold are not made of plants, although they are classified as part of the plant kingdom. Reasons behind this include the fact that plants were used in the manufacturing process or the object itself is similar to a fruit for instance. However, the way the database at the EBC is organised helps researchers to find objects related to the species that they are looking for. It would be certainly more difficult to relate these objects and plant species with if not using the database.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.278.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.278.

²⁵⁹ KLDC11580.

2.3.6. Dyes and Resins

The collections at Kew and British Museum contain some objects or raw materials collected by im Thurn that are related to the dyes and resins used by the Amerindians in British Guiana. Regarding the dyes, im Thurn refers mainly to *caraveera* (*Bignonia chica* Humb. & Bonpl.) and *faroah*, also known as annatto (*Bixa orellana* L.).²⁶⁰ Both of these dyes were described as being used to paint the body of the Amerindians.²⁶¹ According to im Thurn, painting their body was the simplest mode of adornment and the most practised among the Amerindians. The dyes or pigments used, such as the *faroah* and *caraveera*, were mixed with various oils and scented with natural resins.²⁶²

The reason why dyes are discussed in this section is because there is a clear association between the ‘primitive’ and body painting in im Thurn’s writing. The way im Thurn mentions the Amerindian appearance as primitive is described when he refers to the Amerindian way of dressing as ‘decently naked’, probably because certain parts of the body were covered, and to the body painting.²⁶³ These descriptions, among others, probably were shaped by the way the white man perceived ‘the other’, in this case the Amerindians. I suggest that dyes can be perceived as symbols that characterise the Amerindian culture and that are materialised in the objects and materials collected by im Thurn. The *faroah* is the pulp around the seeds of a shrub (*Bixa orellana*) that can grow wild on the banks of some rivers and is cultivated by the Amerindians (Figure 2.23).²⁶⁴ Annatto, or *lipstick tree*, as it is known because of the texture and colour of the pulp, is still used nowadays, although it is not so commonly used to paint the skin in

²⁶⁰ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.316.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.316.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p.196.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.196.

²⁶⁴ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.316.

Amerindian celebrations.²⁶⁵ According to Im Thurn, the use of this dye was also extended to stain the hammocks, in the case of the True Caribs, and even to colour birds' feathers, in the case of the Makushi.²⁶⁶ This particular species has been described 'from the headhunters of the Amazon to the remote Colorados of Ecuador' as a 'magical plant with a female soul'.²⁶⁷ It is used for colouring hair and body 'to ward off evil spirits and it is also considered as an effective love charm'.²⁶⁸ Im Thurn keeps saying in his book how impressed he was by the colour of the Amerindians, which was the result of the use of the plant *Bixa orellana*.²⁶⁹ He also describes how the *faroah* was used and mentions a 'tube made of hollow bamboo-steams' that contains dye, which can be found at the British Museum (Figure 2.23), as the following extract attests:

Mixed with a large quantity of oil, it is then either dried, and so kept in lumps which can be made soft again by the addition of more oil, or is stored in a liquid condition in tubes made of hollow bamboo-steams. When it is to be used, either a mass of it is taken in the palm of the hand and rubbed over the skin or other surface to be painted, or a pattern of lines is drawn with it by means of a stick used as a pencil.²⁷⁰

The origin of the species *Bixa orellana* is not very clear, but its history in terms of economic importance in Europe, for instance, demonstrates the impact of this particular species throughout the centuries. The first time annatto was brought to the attention of Europeans was by the early explorers. In 1775, Bancroft, an English dyer, obtained a

²⁶⁵ Paullete Allicock, personal communication, October 2010; Julia F. Morton, 'Can Annato (*Bixa Orellana* L.) an Old Source of Food Color, Meet New Needs for Safe Dye', *Florida State Horticultural Society*, 1960, 301–309.

²⁶⁶ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.316; Im Thurn describes an episode in which the Makushi modify the birds plumage, causing 'yellow feathers to grow in place of red, green or blue, on parrots and macaws, by plucking out the natural feathers, rubbing the part of the skin which these were torn out with the red dye-stuff called *faroah*, and making the birds drink water in which more *faroah* has been dissolved' in Everard F. Im Thurn, 'Cultivation of Artificially Coloured Feathers', *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 3 (1884), 355–363.

²⁶⁷ Morton, 'Can Annato (*Bixa Orellana* L.) an Old Source of Food Color, Meet New Needs for Safe Dye', 301-309.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 301-309.

²⁶⁹ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*.

²⁷⁰ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.316.

patent to import and use this species.²⁷¹ The history of this species, and how it was imported to and used in Europe for different purposes, such as colouring cheese and butter and dyeing textiles, for example is well documented in the literature.²⁷²



Figure 2.23. From left to right: The fruit of *Bixa orellana* or annatto (Surama, Guyana, October 2010) and container for body paint (*faroah*) made of bamboo collected by im Thurn in British Guiana (1535, British Museum)

Regarding the other dye also mentioned, *caraweera* (*Bignonia chica*), which is not so commonly used, im Thurn notes that this is prepared using the leaves of ‘a yellow-flowered bignonia’ together with other ingredients.²⁷³ Im Thurn continues and carefully describes the process in which it is possible to obtain the purple red pigment from *Bignonia chica*:

The dried leaves are boiled for a few minutes over a fire, and then some freshly cut pieces of the bark of a certain tree and a bundle of twigs and fresh leaves of another tree are added to the mixture. The whole is then boiled for about twenty minutes, care being taken to keep the bark and leaves under water. The pot is then taken from the fire, and the contents, being poured into bowls, are allowed to subside. The clear water left at the top is poured away, and the sediment, of a beautiful purple colour, is put into a cloth, on which it is allowed to dry, after this, it is scraped off and packed in tiny baskets woven of the leaves of the kokerite palm.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ Morton, ‘Can Annato (*Bixa Orellana* L.) an Old Source of Food Color, Meet New Needs for Safe Dye’, 301-309.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 301-309.

²⁷³ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.316.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.316-317.

In im Thurn's description he notes the use of the leaves and bark of *Bignonia chica* to prepare the *caramveera* pigment. Specimens of leaves and bark collected by im Thurn in British Guiana, as well as the final pigment are housed at EBC, Kew (Figure 2.24). These specimens have notes attached referring to the fact that they are used to prepare the dye, but the whole process is not understood just through im Thurn's notes.

In *Timehri*, im Thurn mentions other uses of *Bignonia chica*, such as employing yellow flowers to catch yellow butterflies.²⁷⁵ These particular flowers were picked and laid on the ground to attract the insects, then the Amerindians would invert a round quake ('a wide-mouthed basket of very open wicker-work' – discussed in Chapter 3) to catch the butterflies.²⁷⁶



Figure 2.24. Dye made of *Bignonia chica* (EBC46459), leaves of *Bignonia chica* (EBC46467), bark of *Bignonia chica* (EBC 46468) and 'faroah' or annatto pigment (*Bixa orellana*) - Objects from the Economic Botany Collection, Kew

²⁷⁵ Everard F. im Thurn, 'A Journey to Mount Russell in Guiana', *Timehri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 1 (1882), 216–228.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 223.

In relation to the resins that are mixed with the pigments and oils, it is worth mentioning the case of the hyawa tree (*Protium heptaphyllum* Marchand = *Icica heptaphylla* Aubl.). This particular species is described by im Thurn as having a pleasant odour that comes from the ‘white resin that drops from its stem, and falls in masses to the ground’.²⁷⁷ This tree species was used by the Amerindians for different purposes such as the rapid kindling of fire, the making of torches and the scenting of oils for the body, and the bark is said to be a good cough medicine.²⁷⁸

The British Museum and the EBC, Kew, hold torches made of hyawa resin that im Thurn collected.²⁷⁹ At Kew there is also a specimen of the resin itself (Figure 2.25).



Figure 2.25. Gum of hyawa, *Protium heptaphyllum* (EBC63392) and Indian torch made of hyawa gum, *Protium heptaphyllum* (EBC63393) - Objects from the Economic Botany Collection, Kew

²⁷⁷ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.96.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.177-178; James Rodway, ‘On Some of the Domestic Medicines Used in Guiana’, *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 4 (1885), 294–300.

²⁷⁹ Am1516 (British Museum).

2.3.7. British Guiana Seen Through Balata

Balata or bullet tree of Guiana (*Manilkara bidentata* (A. DC.) subsp. *bidentata* = *Mimusops balata* (Aubl.) C.F.Gaertn.) was known as one of the finest forest trees of British Guiana.²⁸⁰ By understanding the history of balata in British Guiana through Im Thurn and Jenman's reports, the objects collected by them gain significance and context. Furthermore, they illustrate particular cases of cross-cultural encounters and show how the colony was being managed. This will also be discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.4.1.).

The EBC, Kew, holds specimens from British Guiana that are made of balata or are related to its process (Figure 2.26). Im Thurn collected a large block of balata and a dish made of balata, which illustrates how this gum had different uses, such as the production of utensils (Figure 2.26).²⁸¹ Although not very common nowadays, it is possible to find some objects in Guyana that are made of balata, including bottles, cups, dishes and figures. These represent aspects of the Amerindian life, such as the production of cassava bread for instance (Figures 2.27 and 2.28).



Figure 2.26. From left to right: Dish modelled in balata (EBC50937) and specimen of balata (EBC50933) collected by Im Thurn in Demerara, British Guiana; container used to collect balata from the gooba fruit (*Lagenaria vulgaris*) collected by G.S. Jenman in British Guiana (EBC50941) - Objects from the Economic Botany Collection, Kew

²⁸⁰ Van Andel, *Non-timber Forest Products of the North-West District of Guyana Part II*, p.115; George Samuel Jenman, 'India-Rubber and Gutta-Percha', *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 1 (1882), 44–82; George Samuel Jenman, 'India-Rubber and Gutta-Percha Trees of British Guiana', *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 2 (1883), 12–32.

²⁸¹ KLDC 11582.



Figure 2.27. Toys made of balata representing Amerindians and animals (Annai, Guyana, October 2010)



Figure 2.28. From left to right: Bottles made of balata (Annai, Guyana, October 2010); Figure made of balata representing an Amerindian women making cassava bread (Liana Cane Factory, Guyana, October 2010)

Besides the objects collected by im Thurn, the botanist Jenman, in one of his letters to Kew dated 19 February 1886, mentions that he is sending a container made of *Lagenaria vulgaris*, which was used for carrying balata milk, which the EBC, Kew, still

holds today (Figure 2.26).²⁸² Despite the short description on the notes attached to the object, in *Timebri* Jenman carefully describes the process of extracting the balata milk in his report entitled *Balata and the balata industry*.²⁸³ In this process, the bark of the bullet tree is channelled to obtain the balata milk by using a cutlass.²⁸⁴ The balata milk starts to run from the bullet-tree and split calabashes are used as bowls to collect the milk.²⁸⁵

When the calabashes are full with milk, the milk is poured into the container mentioned above by using a funnel; the ‘funnel to conduct it into the narrow orifice is made of a piece of palm, maranta, or other broad leaf’.²⁸⁶ Jenman describes this container as a natural bottle known as a *goobee*, which is the ‘size and shape of an ox bladder’ and can hold up to two gallons (Figure 2.26).²⁸⁷ The *goobee* is the fruit produced by a gourd *Lagenaria vulgaris*, which is similar to a pumpkin vine. A hole is made in the *goobee* ‘near the scar where the stem was connected to the fruit, and the contents of seed and pith scraped out’, which leaves a very hard and strong shell.

To protect the shell and to affix a handle, it is laced with ‘an open work of *mamourie* – the split stem of a climbing *Cardulovica* – to which a rather long looped handle of the same material is attached that enables it to be carried over the shoulder of the collector’.²⁸⁸ Jenman continues explaining how the balata collectors had to carry the *goobees*:

On the return journey they are balanced by being hung before and behind, usually two each way, and the rapid traveller has to be careful that he does not slip, make a false step into one of the coquerite pitfalls, or trip into collision with a tree, for they are easily cracked by a blow thus given, and the milk at once escapes. When filled, the orifice is stopped by a cork cut from the

²⁸² KLDC11703.

²⁸³ George Samuel Jenman, ‘Balata and the Balata Industry’, *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 4 (1885), 153–233.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 190.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 197.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 191.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 191.

bullet-tree bark, round the edges of which clay is rubbed to prevent any leakage by jolting on the way.²⁸⁹

To dry the balata, the collectors usually use trays or vessels. In the case of the balata sample collected by im Thurn, the balata probably dried in a vase and that is why it presents a vase figure (Figure 2.26).²⁹⁰

These objects also reflect the hard work of the different people involved – men and women; Amerindians and non-Amerindians – not only in extracting the balata, but also in the process itself, from collecting to carrying and trading the balata. In Jenman's report, he indicates that few families were found on creeks collecting balata.²⁹¹ When the collecting ground was not too distant, women sometimes accompanied the men, cooking or assisting 'in laying out the calabashes and collecting the milk, while the men fell and ring the trees'.²⁹² Jenman also notes how tough a balata collector's life was, as they sometimes remained out for two or three days.²⁹³

They undertake, as I have shown, long and lonely journeys through unknown and deep untrodden forest; they are constantly wet, always ill-clad for exposure, and often short of food; they suffer much from rheumatism brought on by privations and exposure, which after a few years becomes chronic in cases and quite disables them from continuing the life.²⁹⁴

The Amerindians in Guyana still discuss today the hard life of the balata collectors. According to Leoni, her grandfather worked for the Balata Company in the 1920s and had to walk from the Demerara river to the interior, which could take one month of travelling each way.²⁹⁵ Her husband also worked in the company in the 1980s.

²⁸⁹ Jenman, 'Balata and the Balata Industry', 191.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 204.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 187.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 187.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 186.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 187.

²⁹⁵ Interview with Leoni from MRU (Makushi Research Unit) which took place in Fair View Village, Guyana (11 October 2010).

She said it was the hardest job, because the collectors had to climb a tall and sharp tree using their feet to extract the balata from morning until dawn. Besides this, it was very difficult at the end of the day to carry between three or five bags of balata milk.²⁹⁶

In the correspondence at Kew it is possible to notice Jenman's involvement with the balata issue from the consistency of his descriptions, observations and expeditions, which is also reflected in his reports on *Timebri*.²⁹⁷ Jenman's involvement is not surprising considering that he was the Government Botanist in charge at the time, and it was his function to investigate the economic potential of the species in the colony. Here, Kew's role took a major importance because Jenman, like im Thurn, depended on the institution's experts to confirm the identification of the species.

2.3.8. The Hidden Anaconda

This section will discuss some objects in which the anaconda, an important Amerindian symbol, is represented. The anaconda is a powerful symbol of nature, like the jaguar, which is associated with Amazonian myths that, according to anthropologists, 'focus on the cosmic issues of reproduction and fertility, the relationship between the sexes, the origin of culture, illness and death'.²⁹⁸ The meaning and the representation of the anaconda is a subject widely discussed in the literature.²⁹⁹ Besides having multiple

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ KLDC11683; KLDC11684; KLDC11685; KLDC11687; KLDC11693; KLDC11703.

²⁹⁸ John H. Bodley, 'Native Amazonians: Villagers of the Rain Forest', in *Cultural Anthropology: Tribes, States, and the Global System* (Plymouth: AltaMira Press, 2011), pp. 25–60.

²⁹⁹ Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology 1* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969); Claude Levi-Strauss, *From Honey to Ashes: Introduction to a Science of Mythology 2* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Origin of Table Manners: Introduction to a Science of Mythology 3* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978); Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, *Amazonian Cosmos: The Sexual and Religious Symbolism of the Tukano Indians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Eduardo Viveiros De Castro, 'Exchanging Perspectives: The Transformation of Objects into Subjects in Amerindian Ontologies', *Common Knowledge*, 10 (2004), 463–484; Peter G. Roe, *The Cosmic Zygote: Cosmology in the Amazon Basin* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982).

associations, it can also be seen as both masculine and feminine.³⁰⁰ The objects in which the anaconda is drawn, painted or carved, are therefore usually associated with stories and myths.



Figure 2.29. Calabashes of *Crescentia cujete* in which the anaconda is represented, collected by G.S. Jenman in British Guiana, 1892 (EBC46492 and EBC46520, Kew)

In some objects that Kew holds, it is possible to find traces of the anaconda's representation. An example of this is the carved calabashes from British Guiana that Jenman sent in 1892 (Figure 2.29). In both calabashes the figure of the anaconda is clearly represented, sometimes mixed with other elements such as plants, geometrical figures and other animals.

The notes attached to each calabash are similar, but indicate only that they were 'carved by a native from his own ideas'.³⁰¹ In the correspondence at Kew, Jenman mentions that he was sending some carved calabashes to the Kew Museum.³⁰² These calabashes are fruits of *Crescentia cujete* L. (Bignoniaceae), a cultivated calabash, whose

³⁰⁰ Bodley, 'Native Amazonians', pp.25-60.

³⁰¹ EBC Cat. no.46492 and no. 46520 (Kew).

³⁰² KLDC11773.

fruit can be divided into two or cut into different shapes.³⁰³ According to Jenman, all the calabash pieces that are large enough are used to hold the balata milk and for carrying the fruits. For this latter purpose they are ‘threaded together by a hole bored just under the rim’ or sometimes they are taken in a bag.³⁰⁴ In this case, the carved calabashes were probably not made for holding balata milk, taking into consideration their drawings. As Jenman seemed to give little information about these calabashes it is tempting to speculate on the stories behind the objects. These particular items appear to have been made to be a gift or maybe Jenman, fascinated with the carved calabashes, acquired them by exchanging other objects or money in return. The careful way the dried fruits were carved and the powerful Amerindian symbol of the anaconda may also indicate that the calabashes were designed for a special occasion where they were used as cups to drink an alcoholic beverage, such as paiwari or casiri.³⁰⁵ Regarding this matter, today in Guyana it is still very common in the interior to see the calabashes being used as a bowl or drinking cups.³⁰⁶

Besides the calabashes, another object worth mentioning is the cassava grater briefly referred to in 2.3.4. The cassava grater in question has a representation of an anaconda, although more geometrical than the calabashes (Figure 2.30). This object was donated to Kew by the British Empire Exhibition, which took place in Wimbledon in 1924. The collector is not identified.³⁰⁷

The cassava graters are oblong boards with many small drilled holes in which a small and angular piece of strong stone is inserted after the karamanni, which was

³⁰³ Van Andel, *Non-timber Forest Products of the North-West District of Guyana Part II*, p.253.

³⁰⁴ Jenman, ‘Balata and the Balata Industry’, 192.

³⁰⁵ Paiwari is an alcoholic drink made of cassava and casiri is made of sweet-potatoes and sugar cane in Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, pp.263-264.

³⁰⁶ Van Andel, *Non-timber Forest Products of the North-West District of Guyana Part II*, p.253.

³⁰⁷ British Pathé, ‘State Opening Of British Empire Exhibition’ <<http://www.britishpathe.com>> [accessed 25 June 2012].

mentioned previously, is rubbed 'so the holes are entirely filled up and the stones are firmly fixed as soon as the pitch is dry'.³⁰⁸



Figure 2.30. Indian cassava grater from British Guiana donated by the British Empire Exhibition (EBC38746) - Object from the Economic Botany Collection, Kew



Figure 2.31. Detail of the anaconda drawing in the Indian cassava grater (EBC38746) - Object from the Economic Botany Collection, Kew

³⁰⁸ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.282.

The representation of the anaconda in the cassava grater is not as clear as it is in the calabashes, but it is still possible to notice it (Figure 2.31). Besides the objects with anacondas mentioned here, there is also the *matapie*, an Amerindian basket whose format represents an anaconda as well, which will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Im Thurn does not mention anacondas or other snakes in his book as often as birds, a subject in which he was genuinely interested. However, he refers to an anecdotal story involving a *camoodi* or anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*):

When she [the cook] went in the dark into the shed which served as a kitchen, she was in the habit of striking the match to light the fire on a particular corner post; but one morning she was surprised to find that one match after another broke instead of catching fire. At last she struck a light in a new place, and having done so, she found to her great horror that a thirty feet long camoodi [snake] was coiled round the corner post, and on this she had been rubbing her matches.³⁰⁹

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter particular attention was paid to objects that were collected not only by Im Thurn but also by G.S. Jenman. Through the example of the ‘necklace’ it was possible to see how objects and herbarium specimens collected by Jenman and Im Thurn are connected. Also, the example of the ‘necklace of pretty and curious seeds’ illustrates how the objects, which are on display, can acquire a different meaning in the way they are exhibited by knowing the histories beneath them. This example shows how knowing more about the objects’ histories changes the way they are perceived which will hopefully change the way they are displayed.

The particular case of the dye made of annatto, which was patented in 1775 by an English dyer, represents how Europeans absorbed elements of Indigenous

³⁰⁹ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, pp.133-134.

knowledge. The annatto, which the Amerindians used to colour feathers and hammocks, was then ‘discovered’ by the Europeans and patented. As David Arnold notes, ‘A knowledge of their uses [plants] and properties had first been established by indigenous peoples and was only subsequently taken over and incorporated into European botany.’³¹⁰ On the other hand, im Thurn also mentions examples in which the Amerindians absorbed European elements. These encounters also revealed how the Europeans influenced the Amerindians in the way their objects were produced – for example, the *queyus* made of beads instead of seeds and the Amerindian pottery that started to imitate tea cups.

Through im Thurn’s descriptions of his Amerindian encounters it is possible to trace a portrait of this Victorian character. His descriptions reveal that he was deeply interested in the Amerindian culture and the way he was testing the *Rappoo* arrows and *ourali* for instance, are a good example of this. On the other hand, it is also noticeable how frequently im Thurn compared the Amerindian culture with ‘more civilised ones’, showing a clear superiority in his discourse. Im Thurn’s writings, besides being influenced by the Schomburgk brothers, who in their turn were modelled by Alexander van Humboldt, also reflect a combination of natural history and ethnographic writing and more personal elements.³¹¹ However, it is important to stress that in im Thurn’s writing he is addressing an audience. The way im Thurn expressed himself does not mean he did things the way he observed or wrote about. For this reason, im Thurn’s real self will always remain unrecoverable.

³¹⁰ David Arnold, ‘Inventing Tropicality’, in *The Problem of Nature: Environment, Culture and European Expansion* (Oxford and Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), pp. 141–168.

³¹¹ Dalziell, “A Tramp with Redskins”.

Chapter 3

The Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886:

The British Guiana Court

3.1. Introduction

This chapter uses the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 as a case study to demonstrate how British Guiana was represented in Britain at the time, and also how im Thurn sought to manoeuvre that representation. Besides revealing how the colony was seen by its mother country, this exhibition also shows which objects and raw materials from British Guiana were of interest to Britain. Taking into consideration that British Guiana was a neglected area of the British Empire, even in im Thurn's time, this exhibition was an opportunity for advertising the potential of the 'neglected colony' and to ensure that British Guiana would not be forgotten. This chapter also discusses the particular case of the 'British Guiana House' in which the Amerindians were seen as 'living objects'.

Here, particular examples of objects will be examined and their hidden stories shall be revealed. Selected objects that were on display in 1886 will be compared with similar ones, which are still being produced in Guyana today. Here, the aim is to better comprehend the objects produced in the past by understanding those manufactured in the present.

The Colonial and Indian Exhibition, the case study of this chapter, opened on 4 May 1886 and lasted for six months. This 'elaborate staging of imperial culture' received over 5 million visitors.³¹² Queen Victoria hoped this exhibition would act as a stimulus for commerce 'by encouraging the arts of peace and industry and by strengthening the bonds of Union which now exist in every portion of my Empire'.³¹³ This Exhibition

³¹² Saloni Mathur, "To Visit the Queen": On Display at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886', in *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University California Press, 2007), pp. 52–79; John Mackenzie, 'The Imperial Exhibitions of Great Britain', in *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, ed. by Pascal Blanchard and others (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), pp. 259–268.

³¹³ F. Cundall, 'Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. London: The Royal Commission', 1886. Cited in Nicky Levell, 'The Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886: An Imperial Vision', in *Oriental*

provided the opportunity to display the empire and propagate the ‘image of the vast and bountiful Empire, ‘Greater Britain’, as a singular entity: one that was united in diversity, and ruled by the omnipotent British sovereign’.³¹⁴ Britain was a ‘major sponsor of international exhibitions’ along with other nations such as France, as this showcased their colonial power.³¹⁵

Although much has been written on the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, little attention has been paid to the particular case of the British Guiana Court. By focusing on this Exhibition and on the British Guiana Court in particular, this chapter aims to understand how British Guiana was seen and administered by its ‘mother country’. In understanding Britain’s interest in the colony, my intention is to grasp im Thurn’s position in relation to the colony. Taking into consideration that the Colonial and Indian Exhibition was an opportunity to display the empire, the British Guiana Court seems to be the a suitable case in which displayed objects, raw materials and even Amerindian people reflected how British Guiana was seen at the time.

3.2. The British Guiana Court

The objects and materials displayed in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition can offer glimpses into Britain’s interest at the time in certain resources from British Guiana. It is likely that the items on display were ‘advertising’ certain products potentially important for the empire’s economy, such as sugar and rum for instance.³¹⁶ On the one hand, the way the objects were exhibited represent how British Guiana was seen at that time by

Visions: Exhibitions, Travel, and Collecting in the Victorian Age (London and Coimbra: The Horniman Museum and Gardens, London & Museu Antropológico de Coimbra, 2000), pp. 63–111.

³¹⁴ Pascal Blanchard and others, ‘Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires’, in *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, ed. by Pascal Blanchard and others (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), pp. 1–49; Levell, pp. 63–111.

³¹⁵ Burton Benedict, ‘International Exhibitions and National Identity’, *Anthropology Today*, 7 (1991), 5–9.

³¹⁶ Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, *The Times* (London, 1886), p. 13.

Britain; on the another hand, the ‘exhibits fed back into the colonies to help create the images they had of themselves’.³¹⁷ As Burton Benedict observes, ‘Artefacts alone can create an impression of a culture’.³¹⁸ Therefore, the items exhibited not only represented the objects ‘of those who had been conquered and colonised’ but also gave an impression of how Britain saw and represented its colony through the objects on display.³¹⁹ Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that these objects were taken away from their original contexts and ‘arranged in patterns at international and colonial exhibitions’.³²⁰ What happened to all the objects from this exhibition and how they were dispersed afterwards is difficult to know; however, it is known that many objects were sold.³²¹

It is worth mentioning that the exhibition also had a pragmatic and commercial side. The products and objects on display at the exhibition provided a way of understanding what consumers in Europe wanted or did not want from the British colony.³²² That way it was possible to assess which products British Guiana could export.

In relation to im Thurn’s contribution to the ethnological collection at the British Guiana Court, the *Illustrated London News* noted: ‘It was, doubtless, a pleasure to Mr im Thurn (...) to arrange the fine and varied ethnological collection exemplifying Indian manufacturers and the native mode of living.’³²³ None of those ethnological

³¹⁷ Benedict, ‘International Exhibitions and National Identity’, 5.

³¹⁸ Burton Benedict, ‘Rituals of Representation: Ethnic Stereotypes and Colonized Peoples at World’s Fairs’, in *Fair Representations: World’s Fairs and the Modern World*, ed. by Robert W. Rydell and Nancy Gwinn (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), pp. 28–61.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 28–61.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 28–61.

³²¹ Peter Rivière, ‘South American Tropical Forest Material’, *Anthropology and World Archaeology*, University of Oxford, 2010, p. Pitt Rivers Museum <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/South_America.html> [accessed 10 May 2011].

³²² George H. Hawtayne, ‘The Official Reports on the Colonial Section of the Exhibition 1886’, *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana (New Series)*, 1 (1887), 1–34.

³²³ Anonymous, pp. 337–342.

items was sent to Kew.³²⁴ Besides the logs of timber, which will be examined in Section 3.3, Kew was presented with ‘twenty-five selected specimens of native woods’, a collection of cabinet making woods from Messrs. Park and Cunningham, and other products from the British Guiana Court such as fruits, seeds, barks, flowers and fibres.³²⁵ Kew was probably not presented with many more items from it, particularly from the ethnological collection, simply because the Administrator-General of British Guiana and Executive Commissioner for the colony at the Exhibition was Mr G. H. Hawtayne, and not im Thurn.³²⁶ Im Thurn just contributed with his collections to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition.³²⁷ Actually, im Thurn was always very keen to contribute specimens to Kew, which is evident in a letter of his to William Thiselton-Dyer.³²⁸

The newspaper *The Times*, besides a reference to the ‘little British Guiana Court’, a mention to im Thurn’s contribution was also made: ‘While the sugars and the fine woods of the colony will be prominent, there will be numerous other native products, including gold, and Mr im Thurn’s ethnological figures will be of interest; natural history and native life will be amply represented’.³²⁹

In relation to the gold referred to previously, it is important to stress that the colony had gold on the Venezuelan border, but as *The Times* noted, ‘Until the boundary question is settled nothing can be done to work it.’³³⁰ In turn the main cause of the

³²⁴ J. R. J., ‘Notes on Articles Contributed to the Museums of the Royal Gardens, Kew, from the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886’, *Bulletin of Miscellaneous Information (Royal Gardens, Kew)*, 1887 (1887), 4–21.

³²⁵ J. R. J., 4–21; Anonymous, ‘Official Catalogue of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition’ (London: William Clowes & Sons, Limited, 1886), pp. 367–381.

³²⁶ Anonymous, ‘Colonial Indian Exhibition: British Guiana, West Indies and British Honduras’, pp. 337–342.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 337–342.

³²⁸ KLDC11574, In this letter im Thurn mentions that he was sending to Kew the prospectus for a local exhibition to be held in January [1888] and offers to send any specimens mentioned therein that Thiselton-Dyer desires.

³²⁹ Anonymous, ‘Colonial and Indian Exhibition’, *The Times* (London, 1886), p. 7.

³³⁰ Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, p. 13.

boundary dispute between British Guiana and Venezuela was precisely gold ‘which was known to exist in considerable quantities in the region under dispute’.³³¹

It is worth mentioning that im Thurn, who was ‘associated for so many years with the exploration and development of British Guiana’, was very knowledgeable of the border region.³³² Considering im Thurn’s awareness of British Guiana’s situation, in 1899 the British Government appointed him ‘expert witness at the Paris Negotiations on the Venezuela border dispute’.³³³ Despite the fact that British Guiana had many resources such as gold and sugar, the British colony needed and wanted ‘enterprise, capital and labour’.³³⁴ This is why the British Guiana Court at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition was so important. The idea of advertising the colony was to attract both investment and encourage people to live in British Guiana.³³⁵ Here, the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana, which was in charge of the British Guiana Court, had a crucial role in discovering and exploiting the colony’s resources.³³⁶ Thus, besides discovering and exploiting British Guiana’s resources, the society also had to ‘publicise’ the colony products through exhibitions and publications, mainly through the journal *Timebri*, mentioned previously. If the RA&CS knew exactly what kind of resources were possible to explore, more people and investment could be attracted to the colony.³³⁷

British Guiana at the turn of the century was a colony with ‘an annual trade of at least five million sterling’ and so it was ‘surely worthy of the attention both of the colonists and the mother country’.³³⁸ Although, the ‘mother country’ seemed to forget the colony, im Thurn, during one of his visits to England, drew attention to the

³³¹ Anonymous, ‘The Colonies’, *The Times* (London, 1892), p. 4.

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³³³ Dalziell, ‘A Tramp with Redskins’.

³³⁴ Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, p. 13.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³³⁶ George H. Hawtayne, ‘Our Representation at the International Colonial Exhibition of 1886’, *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 3 (1884), 90–96.

³³⁷ Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, p. 13.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

‘neglected colony’.³³⁹ According to *The Times*, since Britain took over Guiana from the Dutch ‘it can hardly be said’ that the colony had ‘made any progress at all’.³⁴⁰ Again, *The Times* refers to how British Guiana was forgotten and mentions how important it was to correct this situation, as the following extract indicates:

Somehow British Guiana seems shunted into a corner; we seldom hear much about it. This the colonists themselves feel. South America awaits a rich development, and it is good for us to have a solid footing there. Let us then do what we can to encourage the development of our colony and help the colonists to help themselves.³⁴¹

One reason that may explain why British Guiana was neglected had to do with the border dispute with Venezuela. It is likely that the instability caused by this situation kept the colony as a low priority in terms of investment to the British Government. Nevertheless, the way British Guiana was portrayed in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition was to show a rich and diverse colony in terms of nature, culture and one with plenty of resources which were worthy of being explored. This was done through the objects and products on display, which will be mentioned in the rest of this chapter.

³³⁹ Anonymous, ‘The Colonies’, p. 4.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁴¹ Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, p. 13.

3.3. ‘Two Magnificent Squared Trunks’

The report ‘Notes on Articles Contributed to the Museums of the Royal Gardens, Kew from the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886’ indicates which objects were donated to Kew.³⁴² Kew benefit from many exhibitions of the empire, but this report shows that the 1886 Exhibition was particularly valuable. Actually, Kew benefited ‘not only from the number of the specimens obtained, but also from the interest attached to many’.³⁴³ In relation to im Thurn’s involvement with the exhibition and in particular the British Guiana Court, the same report mentions that ‘the most striking exhibits obtained from this Colony [British Guiana] were the two magnificent squared trunks, most liberally purchased and presented to the Royal Gardens by Everard im Thurn’.³⁴⁴ Furthermore, in one of im Thurn’s letters Sir William Thiselton-Dyer, he wrote the following:

As regards the logs of timber, I am sorry that you should have had such unpleasant transactions with Hawtayne about them. He is an excellent fellow, but in some way very mysterious to me, has succeeded in (...) almost everyone with whom he had Exhibition dealings. It was kind of you [Sir William Thiselton-Dyer] to offer to pay me for the logs, but I had made up my mind to present them, and so I shall be gratified if the Kew authorities will regard them as gift from me.³⁴⁵

The extract from this letter, besides demonstrating the misunderstanding between Sir William Thiselton-Dyer and Mr G. H. Hawtayne – the Executive Commissioner for the colony at the Exhibition of 1886, who wanted to sell the trunks to RBG, Kew – also reveals im Thurn’s involvement with the botanical institution at this time. On another occasion im Thurn apologises for what seems to be a misunderstanding with Joseph Hooker.³⁴⁶ In the third volume of *Timebri*, im Thurn

³⁴² J. R. J., 4–21.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4-21.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 4-21.

³⁴⁵ KLDC11606.

³⁴⁶ KLDC11590.

refers in his note entitled 'A Difficulty of Botanical Collectors' how complicated it is, besides collecting, to name the plants considering that in British Guiana they do not have the time or the necessary resources to proceed with the identifications.³⁴⁷ Im Thurn also adds that, for this reason, the plant specimens are sent to institutions such as Kew Gardens, which according to the *Timebri* editor, means that

The scientific men employed, despite their ability and zeal, are unable to cope with the abundant material forwarded to them from all parts of the world; and they therefore deal with certain plants, those belonging to genera in which any of the scientific workmen concerned feel some special interest; but all the other plants are simply drafted, labelled with the name of their discoverer and the place and date of their discovery, but without any critical examination, into what appears to be their approximate place in the herbarium, there to lie until, perchance in a few cases, some new specialist interested in their particular genera may examine them.³⁴⁸

Im Thurn continues and explains how it is terrible that at Kew, they put together 'perfectly distinct' plants that can 'only be appreciated, and fittingly lamented, by one who knows the plants to which reference is made in their natural state'.³⁴⁹ After the occasional note was published, it is easy to understand why Kew's Director was offended. As im Thurn had Hooker's support to go to British Guiana, it was in the former's interest to maintain a good relationship and connection with Kew Gardens. For this reason im Thurn explained himself in one of his letters, regarding this 'objectionable passage'; he assured Hooker that he did not intend to offend him and acknowledged that he owed much gratitude to Kew.³⁵⁰ Im Thurn continues to explain that his 'comments concerning the practicalities of collecting and identifying plants were intended to express the difficulty of collecting multiple examples of specimens for the purpose of identification'. He adds that the situation should be clarified in the following

³⁴⁷ Everard F. im Thurn, 'A Difficulty of Botanical Collectors', *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 3 (1884), 162–164.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 162.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 163.

³⁵⁰ KLDC11590.

issue of *Timebri*.³⁵¹ The clarification happened in volume four (1885).³⁵² In this issue im Thurn states that ‘the offending paragraph was therefore in no way intended as a slur on the Kew staff; but rather it was intended to indicate, as a difficulty felt by some botanical collectors, that in cases where perhaps but one species of an obscure family or genus was included in a collection’.³⁵³ From these two examples it is evident that im Thurn was making an effort to maintain a good relationship with Kew and its staff.

One of the reports about the articles sent to Kew from the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886, mentioned the ‘two magnificent squared trunks’ and that the entrance would ‘be remembered’ for its size and magnificence.³⁵⁴ The squared trunks were from greenheart (*Nectandra rodioei* R.H. Schomb. Lauraceae family) and mora (*Mora excelsa* Benth. Moraceae family).³⁵⁵ These trunks ‘stood at the entrance to the British Guiana Court of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, and measured some 28 feet [around 8.5 metres] in length’.³⁵⁶ Apparently, there were two very similar entrances to the British Guiana Court, north and south respectively, as the illustrations below demonstrate (Figures 3.1 and 3.4). Besides the logs previously mentioned, there were another two wood logs in the other entrance, but from different species: siruaballi (*Oreodaphne* Nees & Mart. Lauraceae) and suradanni.³⁵⁷ A newspaper confirms this, as it mentions ‘the massive gateway of great logs of mora, greenheart, siruaballi and sirudanni, four leading economic woods of British Guiana’.³⁵⁸ The *Illustrated London News* also referred to ‘the

³⁵¹ KLDC11590.

³⁵² Everard F. im Thurn, ‘A Difficulty of Botanical Collectors’, *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 4 (1885), 132–133.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 133.

³⁵⁴ J. R. J., 4–21.

³⁵⁵ *Nectandra rodioei* R.H. Schomb. is a synonym and today’s accepted name is *Chlorocardium rodiei* (R.H. Schomb.) Rohwer, H.G. Richt. & van der Werff, consulted at Missouri Botanical Garden, ‘Nectandra Rodioei’, *Missouri Botanical Garden*, 2011, p. Name Search <<http://www.tropicos.org/>> [accessed 21 September 2011]; J. R. J., 4–21.

³⁵⁶ J. R. J., 4–21.

³⁵⁷ Anonymous, ‘Official Catalogue of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition’, pp. 367–381; The species is probably *Hyeronima alchorneoides* Allemão (Euphorbiaceae), which is a commercial timber used for canoes, floors and furniture, in Van Andel.

³⁵⁸ Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, p. 13.

wealth of British Guiana in timber by the massive beams of the brown cirouaballi and deep red saradani, which form the entrance to the little court'.³⁵⁹

The references to the size of the trunks and the prominent way they were on display at the entrance of the British Guiana Court so that 'it will be remembered' demonstrates not only power and wealth, but also the importance of these two species in British Guiana and their economic importance. It also characterises, in a certain way, the ascendance of British commercial influence, as well as the amount of investment and trade during this period in South America.³⁶⁰

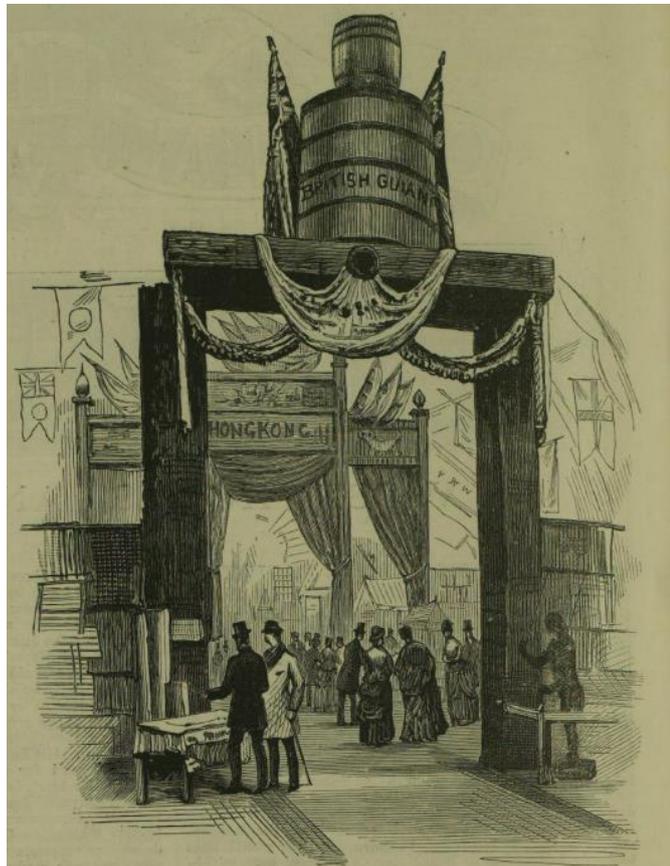


Figure 3.1. 'North Entrance to British Guiana Court'. The containers represented in the picture are vats made of wood that were used 'for collecting rain water from the roofs of houses in the colony'³⁶¹

³⁵⁹ Anonymous, 'Colonial Indian Exhibition: British Guiana, West Indies and British Honduras', pp. 337–342.

³⁶⁰ Aguirre, pp. xiii-xxix.

³⁶¹ Image from the *Illustrated London News*, Anonymous, 'Colonial Indian Exhibition: British Guiana, West Indies and British Honduras', pp. 337–342; Anonymous, 'British Guiana', p. 13.

With such vast richness in terms of flora, why were these particular species chosen? Presumably, it was because those species had not only an obvious economic value, but also medicinal properties that could contribute to progress in science – for example, in terms of the study of chemical properties. By examining the uses and properties of one species in particular, *Nectandra rodioei*, this scenario becomes clearer.

The species *N. rodioei*, also known as greenheart, is ‘one of the tallest of forest trees of British Guiana’ and ‘one of the best timbers of the colony’.³⁶² This was described by Hawtayne as being ‘unsurpassed by any other wood in the colony’.³⁶³ Its wood is one of the most durable, so it is used for the frames of houses, mill timbers and wharves.³⁶⁴ Nonetheless, the demand for this particular wood was so great that ‘the reckless cutting down of young trees’ had made good greenheart difficult to procure, as it was considered as one of the ‘eight first-class woods’.³⁶⁵ In terms of greenheart’s medicinal properties, its bark and seeds are a source of beeberine, which is an alkaloid that can be used as a tonic, febrifuge and a substitute for quinine.³⁶⁶ The seeds were used by the Amerindians to cure diarrhoea; also, in times of scarcity they were ground and mixed with other meals.³⁶⁷ Im Thurn sent a sample of this starch to Kew in 1879 with a note attached, which indicates that it was mixed with cassava – the basis of the Amerindian diet (Figure 3.2).³⁶⁸ Apparently, the greenheart seeds are used nowadays in Guyana as an abortifacient and the Makushi women take them as a tea for this purpose.³⁶⁹

³⁶² Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, p. 13; J. R. J., 4–21; George H. Hawtayne, ‘Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886, Special Catalogue of Exhibits in British Guiana Court with Introductory Notes by G.H. Hawtayne, F.R.G.S., C.M.Z.S.’ (London: William Clowes & Sons, Limited, 1886).

³⁶³ Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, p. 13; J. R. J., 4–21; Hawtayne.

³⁶⁴ J. R. J., 4–21.

³⁶⁵ Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, p. 13.

³⁶⁶ J. R. J., 4–21; Hawtayne, ‘Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886, Special Catalogue of Exhibits in British Guiana Court’; Anonymous, ‘Official Catalogue of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition’, pp.367-381.

³⁶⁷ Hawtayne, ‘The Official Reports on the Colonial Section of the Exhibition 1886’, 24.

³⁶⁸ EBC Cat. No. 45266 (Kew).

³⁶⁹ Paulette Allicock personal communication, October 2010.



Figure 3.2. ‘Starch from the greenheart (*Nectandra rodioei*) used by the Indians’ (EBC45266)

The species *Mora excelsa* is a hard and heavy wood, and young mora trunks are usually preferred for house posts because of their heaviness and strength.³⁷⁰ This species is also used to build canoes, which can last for twenty years. When old, this wood can be used as a board for cassava grating. Besides this, in some Carib communities the hollowed-out mora trunk is used as a drinking vessel for alcoholic drinks, such as paiwari and cassiri. These ‘cassiri canoes’, as van Andel described them, can contain 100 litres of drink. The mora is also used in wooden constructions to attach *matapies*. In terms of *Mora excelsa*’s medicinal purposes, its bark (containing 8% of tannins) when boiled and made into a tea, is used to relieve diarrhoea and dysentery.³⁷¹

After the closure of the timber Museum (Museum No.III) at the end of the 1950s ‘in order to convert the building to an Orangery’ the collection was reduced – many specimens were distributed and others were converted into planks.³⁷² The timber ‘specimens of special ethnographical interest’ were sent to different institutions such as

³⁷⁰ Van Andel, *Non-timber Forest products of the North-West District of Guyana Part II: A field guide*, p. 171.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

³⁷² Today, the Horniman Museum does not hold the items sent from Kew or im Thurn; Anonymous, ‘Review of the Work of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew During 1958’, *Kew Bulletin*, 14 (1960), 1–28.

the Horniman Museum, so it was then ‘possible to exhibit about two hundred and twenty different commercial woods in the space available’ at Kew.³⁷³ It is likely that the two trunks were on display at Museum No. III, which is now known as the Orangery, and later on, when the Orangery closed, the mora and the greenheart blocks were converted into planks so that they did not occupy so much space.

The Economic Botany Collections at Kew still hold the woods, which im Thurn presented. Although, the ‘logs’ mentioned here are now no longer ‘two magnificent squared trunks’, as they have been reduced to two small blocks of wood (Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.3. Planks of mora and greenheart (EBC7222 and 14873)

³⁷³ Anonymous, 'Review of the Work of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew During 1958', 1-28.

3.4. Glimpses of the Colonial Exhibition through the *Illustrated London News*

The collections illustrative of native ethnology and life are full of interest; the models of Indian houses, hammocks, pottery, basket-work, graters and other utensils for preparing cassava (the Guiana Indian staff of life), fire-sticks, various articles of dress and ornament, the warrior shield used in wrestling, the macquarrie whips, smart enough to draw blood, though apparently only of grass, and used in a game played by two Indians to try each other's strength, bows and arrows, clubs, drums – all these and many other similar objects have a real educational value, and show the advantage of having the help of a specialist like Mr im Thurn in arranging a court like that of British Guiana.³⁷⁴

Looking through the illustrations of the newspapers in which the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886 is featured is almost like having a 'snapshot' that reflects the connection between Britain and British Guiana through its products and wealth. The way those objects were on display also shows what kind of Guyanese objects and products interested Britain.



Figure 3.4. 'South Entrance to British Guiana Court' ³⁷⁵

³⁷⁴ Anonymous, 'British Guiana', p. 13.

³⁷⁵ Image from the *Illustrated London News*, Anonymous, 'Colonial Indian Exhibition: British Guiana, West Indies and British Honduras', p.341.

In the illustrations where the British Guiana Court is depicted, three Amerindian models are on display – two of them in the north and south entrances respectively and another at the ethnological stand (representing a woman with a baby) (Figures 3.1, 3.4 and 3.6). One of the models, probably the one at the south entrance, was described by the *Illustrated London News* as ‘the chocolate-coloured native, wearing a fish-bone necklace, who stands on guard, as it were, immediately to the left on entering, is a typical aboriginal’.³⁷⁶ According to *The Times*, ‘the very perfectly modelled figures’ of Amerindians ‘lent by the Crystal Palace, and regenerated by Mr im Thurn’ were the attractions in the British Guiana Court that always had small groups around them.³⁷⁷

Besides the Amerindian model, the figure of the ‘South Entrance’ (Figure 3.4) has many interesting details including canoes, illustrations, curious visitors and a variety of plants – for example, palms at the entry of the Court. According to *The Times*, the entrance of the British Guiana shows ‘good taste’ in its sparing use of flags in contrast with other courts such as the West Indian Court.³⁷⁸ *The Times* adds that the decorations of the British Guiana Court ‘display unusual taste and artistic finish’.³⁷⁹ Here, the displayed objects and the way they are exhibited not only symbolise the ‘exotic’ but also invoke the idea of tropicity. The Amerindian model, the canoes, the illustrations and even the palms give the idea of ‘an alluring dream of opulence and exuberance’.³⁸⁰ Although this may be the case, as Arnold suggests, there is also an ambivalence underneath this tropicity.³⁸¹ This tropicity could also represent ‘an alien world of cruelty and disease, oppression and slavery’.³⁸² Overall, the tropicity was the idea of the different, the alien world in terms of ‘climate, vegetation, people and disease’, the

³⁷⁶ Anonymous, ‘Colonial Indian Exhibition: British Guiana, West Indies and British Honduras’, p. 338.

³⁷⁷ Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, p. 13; As the Great Exhibition of 1851 took place at Crystal Palace, there is the possibility the Amerindian models used in the 1851 exhibition were in fact the same that were on display at the British Guiana court in 1886.

³⁷⁸ Anonymous, ‘Court Circular, Windsor Castle’, *The Times* (London, 1886), p. 7.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³⁸⁰ Arnold, pp. 141–168.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 142.

experience of the white man ‘moving into an alien world’.³⁸³ It is also important to stress a point Arnold observes:

The tropics were not just perceived to be the site of an exotic, luxuriant nature, on the one hand, or wild beasts and deadly fevers, on the other. The tropics were also identified with the people who inhabited the equatorial regions.³⁸⁴

The entrance to this small court was similar to a gate to the tropical world in which the model of the Amerindian was reinforcing this idea of tropicality. The entrance was a reflection of all of these ideas of tropicality, which were converging together because of the experiences of naturalists and explorers, especially in the nineteenth century, into the ‘alien world.’

This idea of tropicality was also reinforced through images and photographs. The British Guiana Court was described as a ‘fair show of maps, and an extremely interesting series of water-colour views of the colony’.³⁸⁵ This is confirmed through the image in the *Illustrated London News* (Figure 3.4) that shows illustrations on display, which according to the *Official Catalogue* were probably maps, plans, paintings, water-colour drawings and photographs.³⁸⁶ Looking through the descriptions in the *Special Catalogue*, there were photographs ‘illustrative of British Guiana, its scenery and inhabitants’ by C. Norton, a water-colour Sketch of Roraima by im Thurn and on the top of the entrance an illustration of the capital, Georgetown.³⁸⁷ Although im Thurn had an enormous interest in photography, it is important to note that for this exhibition, he only contributed one water-colour sketch of Roraima and no photographs at all.³⁸⁸ The only photos listed in the *Official Catalogue* were from C. Norton and Siza.³⁸⁹ However, Kew

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

³⁸⁵ Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, p. 13.

³⁸⁶ Anonymous, *Official Catalogue of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*, pp. 367-381.

³⁸⁷ Hawtayne, *Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886, Special Catalogue of Exhibits in British Guiana Court*, p. 18.

³⁸⁸ Anonymous, *Official Catalogue of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*, pp. 367-381.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 367-381.

received a photograph entitled *British Guiana, Three Mile Trench of Victoria regia Lilies* from this exhibition signed by B.R. Back (Figure 3.5). Nonetheless, this particular photograph is not listed in the *Official Catalogue*.

This photo illustrates a very emblematic image of British Guiana by showing several *Victoria regia* distributed in one of many canals in the colony.³⁹⁰ Schomburgk commented on this peculiar species: ‘What could better give an idea of the luxuriance and richness of vegetation in Guiana, than the splendid *Victoria regia*, the most beautiful specimen of flora in the western hemisphere?’³⁹¹



Figure 3.5. *British Guiana, Three Mile Trench of Victoria regia Lilies* signed by B.R. Back (British Guiana Court, Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886, 154A/1886, Kew)

³⁹⁰ The accepted name is *Victoria amazonica* (Poepp.) J.C. Sowerby in Missouri Botanical Garden, ‘Tropicos.org’ <<http://www.tropicos.org>> [accessed 30 September 2011].

³⁹¹ Schomburgk, Description of British Guiana, in D. Graham Burnett, ‘Marks on the Land: Landmarks, Aesthetics, and the Image of the Colony’, in *Masters of All They Surveyed: Exploration, Geography, and a British El Dorado* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

3.4.1. Products on Display: The Case of Sugar and Balata

Regarding other objects on display at the British Guiana Court, behind the Amerindian model at the South Entrance (Figure 3.4) one can see what seems to be a stand with glass bottles, which probably contained sugar and saccharine products such as rum and syrups or even gums and oils. As the *Official Catalogue* notes, there were many ‘sugar specimens’ on exhibit, including ‘muscovado’, white and yellow crystals, and dark sugar.³⁹² As sugar was ‘the chief product’ the *Official Catalogue* mentions that on its success depended ‘the prosperity if not the existence of the Colony [British Guiana]’, it is understandable why the exhibition dedicated a section to sugar.³⁹³ In addition, the following extract from *The Times* confirms its importance:

Mr. Hawtayne, the energetic Commissioner for British Guiana, has been too modest in his demands for space; his small but highly interesting court (...) has a somewhat overcrowded appearance. Sugar and rum, in every variety of colour and strength, are the most conspicuous objects in the court, as they are the most important articles produced by the colony.³⁹⁴

However, although sugar was an important commodity in the colony and the British Guiana sugar factories were ‘among the finest in the world’, its exports were already decreasing by the time of the exhibition.³⁹⁵ According to *The Times*, the severe crisis that British Guiana was passing through was caused by the production of beet sugar by Germany and other countries, which offered better prices.³⁹⁶ Apparently, all other colonies that depended on sugar, just as British Guiana, also suffered greatly.³⁹⁷ In British Guiana, apart from sugar ‘the colonist had little else to depend on’.³⁹⁸ Nevertheless, this crisis did not seem to be acknowledged in the British Guiana Court.

³⁹² Anonymous, *Official Catalogue of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*, pp. 367-381.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 367-381.

³⁹⁴ Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, p. 13.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁹⁷ Anonymous, ‘The Colonies’, p. 4.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Here, different samples of this commodity embraced all the different classes of sugar manufactured in the colony and it was believed that 70 lb of sugar was being sold per day in the colony court.³⁹⁹

In order to respond to the sugar crisis, according to *The Times*, the colony was encouraged to invest in other commodities such as coffee and cocoa, and to develop some of the ‘fine fibres’ such as silk grass and tibusiri, balata gum or even tanning barks, that were shown in the Exhibition.⁴⁰⁰ Although balata did not have the same representation in the British Guiana Court as sugar, this rubber was a very important product that reflects the situation in the colony at the time. In order to better understand and contextualise the products on display, the example of balata will now be examined.

Despite the fact that balata (*Manilkara bidentata* (A. DC.) subsp. *bidentata* = *Mimusops balata* (Aubl.) C.F.Gaertn.) was seen as an alternative commodity and a possible answer to the sugar crisis, its historical value surpasses its economic importance to the colony.⁴⁰¹ The case of balata seems to be more important historically in the case of British Guiana, than in terms of its economical value.

Balata gum is an intermediate in character between india-rubber and gutta-percha, because it combines the properties of both gums and it ‘is said to be as good as the best combination of those materials that can be made’.⁴⁰² Although not as well known as the other gums, balata has been used for golf balls, insulation and to cover submarine cables for many decades.⁴⁰³ Despite it being referred to by an American firm of manufacturers as ‘the best gum in the world’ and Dr Hugo Muller saying it has great

³⁹⁹ Anonymous, ‘British Guiana’, p. 13.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴⁰¹ Van Ansel, *Non-timber Forest products of the North-West District of Guyana Part II: A field guide*, p. 51; Jenman, 44–82; Jenman, 12–32.

⁴⁰² Jenman, 153–233.

⁴⁰³ Bouncing balls, ‘Natural Rubbers - What’s In A Name?’ <<http://www.bouncing-balls.com/index2.htm>> [accessed 23 June 2012].

purity when compared with gutta-percha, the gum of the bullet-tree never found a place within the market like the other rubbers did.⁴⁰⁴

According to Jenman, the first exportation of balata gum occurred around the 1860s when a small sample was sent to Britain for experiment on Dr Van Holt's suggestion after he visited Surinam.⁴⁰⁵ From then, exportations started to increase, reaching the quantity 20,000 lbs (around 9,070 kg) in 1865 and, after some market fluctuations, the quantity of 47,483 lbs (around 21,500 kg)⁴⁰⁶ in 1877 and 93.573 lbs (42,444 kg) in 1881.⁴⁰⁷ However, it is important to stress that there was 'no export duty on balata', no checks were exercised by Custom House Officers, and the aforementioned was provided by its exporters.⁴⁰⁸ Also, as Jenman illuminates, the colony did not make a significant profit by trading its forest products:

From the products of our forest which are utilised, important as they undoubtedly are, the colony derives hardly any profit, while the forests are impoverished by wanton waste and the depredations of the dishonest, and the trade is in the hands of a few merchants. As to the balata trade, unless some efficient method of utilising the whole of the bark be discovered, felling should be prohibited, and, if, with this rule, an export tax were imposed, and every package containing the gum required to bear a special brand belonging to the grant on which it was gathered.⁴⁰⁹

This extract, besides referring to the fact that the colony hardly got any profit from the forest products, also indicates the existence of a parallel economy, in which the trade was 'in the hands of a few merchants'. Jenman seems to be genuinely concerned with this, not only with the dishonest trade itself, but also with the methods employed to extract the balata milk. Jenman adds that trees were 'being felled by the Indians for the balata they yield, at the insistence of traders who travel up the river purchasing the

⁴⁰⁴ Jenman, 'Balata and the Balata Industry', 176-179.

⁴⁰⁵ Jenman, 'India-Rubber and Gutta-Percha', 66; Jenman, 'Balata and the Balata Industry', 180-181.

⁴⁰⁶ Jenman, 'India-Rubber and Gutta-Percha', 66-67.

⁴⁰⁷ Jenman, 'India-Rubber and Gutta-Percha Trees of British Guiana', 32.

⁴⁰⁸ Jenman, 'Balata and the Balata Industry', 182.

⁴⁰⁹ Jenman, 'India-Rubber and Gutta-Percha Trees of British Guiana', 32.

products procurable from the native inhabitants'.⁴¹⁰ Jenman also explains that the Amerindians are allowed to cut timber of a specified limit to size, and that it should be used by them, which, according to him, does not give them the right to cut the trees for this commercial purpose, or 'in tapping trees for the juice of their barks'.⁴¹¹

Im Thurn also comments on this particular trade in which 'some half-dozen regular traders, black people or coloured, who almost constantly move about in their boats, or 'floating shops', carrying cheap European goods to the Amerindians and obtaining in return such produce as these people have to give'.⁴¹² The products that the Amerindians had to offer were forest products; the balata was among these, and according to im Thurn the way the balata milk was extracted was a 'wasteful method in which it has been carried on, the tree is now not far from being exterminated'.⁴¹³

Jenman also considers the Amerindians to be 'committing a depredation for which they should be held responsible on detection' and 'much more should the men who instigate them to it for their own profit, knowing that they could not do it with impunity themselves, be severely punished for their villainy'.⁴¹⁴ Im Thurn adds to this:

[The balata] is collected by the most injurious method of felling the trees, chiefly by one man, a coloured man from the coast, who makes his living, and it is apparently no bad one, by collecting this balata (...). This is of course wholesale robbery and wilful destruction of Crown property; and I am the Superintendent of Crown lands in this district [Pomeroon]! But though I can lay my hands on this robber, and perhaps on others, almost any day, I have no power to deal with such cases.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

⁴¹² Timehri, Vo.2, 1883 p.238 Everard F. im Thurn, 'Between the Pomeroon and the Orinoco', *Timehri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 2 (1883), 211-239.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁴¹⁴ Jenman, 'India-Rubber and Gutta-Percha Trees of British Guiana', 31.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

These texts demonstrate how the colony was being managed but also show which decisions were taken regarding forest policies and the Amerindian's rights to their lands. Jenman adds to this:

Nearly the whole of the forest land of this colony is Government property. It goes under the title of Crown Lands. Portions of it are let out under certain stated conditions, fixed by ordinance, in blocks.⁴¹⁶

He also says that 'an annual rent of 30 cents per acre is charged' during the occupancy when certain portions are let.⁴¹⁷ Jenman mentions that 'the aboriginal Indians are allowed to cut timber not exceeding 12 inches squared – a privilege that is greatly abused, and to take any substance off the uncut Crown lands'.⁴¹⁸ In Jenman's discourse, he refers to the Amerindian's lands, as belonging to the 'Crown lands' and that the Amerindians were actually abusing that privilege.

Jenman also cites the case of Berbice where the majority of the balata collected was not from the grants but from Crown lands.⁴¹⁹ However, it is important to stress that the majority of balata collectors employed were 'not the true river residents', so they were not local Amerindians that were allowed to cut timber; instead, they were from 'New Amsterdam, its neighborhood, or from New Forest'.⁴²⁰ Through Jenman's discourse it is possible to see how the Amerindians were regarded: as children who needed to be reprimanded when they did something wrong. In this case, felling trees and cooperating with the traders, and at the same time protected from these 'unscrupulous men' as the following text indicates:

⁴¹⁶ Jenman, 'Balata and the Balata Industry', 182.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, 185.

It is notorious that unscrupulous men use the privileged and almost uncontrolled liberty which Indians enjoy to make use of any forest product, to evade the law and its obligations as regards themselves. The colony is thus defrauded, and the duped Indian, who is led by such men very often transgress the limit of his privilege, is also done out of the fair reward he should receive for his labour. All this would at once be stopped if it were made illegal for anyone to purchase from an Indian except through the Government agent, who in this capacity would act as protector both of Indians and of Crown lands.⁴²¹

As the majority of the balata collectors were not Amerindian and, when the above happened, the latter were usually being manipulated by the traders, Jenman says that the Government reviewed the 'privileges accorded to the aboriginal Indians' to respond to this situation, protect the 'Crown lands' and the forests in British Guiana.⁴²²

It is not very clear what happened afterwards regarding this matter, but the Amerindians in Guyana still mention today that they had to pay for a piece of land every year if they decided to settle in a particular place.⁴²³ When the Amerindian in charge of paying the rent died, his or her son continued to pay; only in the mid-1990s did the Guyana Government give the land to the Amerindian Villagers, so this annual fee no longer applies.⁴²⁴ Nowadays, according to *The New Amerindian Act* (2005), the Amerindians have 'rights over forests and forest products'.⁴²⁵

In relation to the balata milk extraction, there are two methods to collect it: the already mentioned one involving felling the trees before they are tapped and the one where the trees are tapped while they are still standing.⁴²⁶ Jenman notes that he was unable to discover if the Amerindians used to extract the balata milk from the bullet tree

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁴²² Jenman, 'India-Rubber and Gutta-Percha Trees of British Guiana', 32.

⁴²³ Interview with Leoni from MRU (Makushi Research Unit), which took place in Fair View Village, Guyana (October 2010).

⁴²⁴ Interview with Leoni from MRU (Makushi Research Unit), which took place in Fair View Village, Guyana (October 2010).

⁴²⁵ The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs Guyana, 'Amerindian Act 2005', *Legislation*, 2009 <<http://amerindian.gov.gy>> [accessed 11 July 2012].

⁴²⁶ Jenman, 'Balata and the Balata Industry', 193.

in the past. According to him, it is likely that they did not.⁴²⁷ He adds that ‘so far as can be gathered, the credit of discovering its promising commercial character belongs to the neighboring colony of Suriname’.⁴²⁸

After Jenman’s report ‘Balata and the Balata Industry’⁴²⁹ was published, the balata exploitations boomed during 1913–1924 and it was harvested by Creole and Amerindian ‘balata bleeders’ who would climb the trunk of the trees to collect the balata milk.⁴³⁰ This confirms what is still remembered nowadays in Guyana. In the 1930s the production decreased, because virgin balata areas could no longer be profitably exploited and the balata was also replaced by synthetic materials.⁴³¹

D.B. Fanshawe noted that once the bark has been bled it cannot be bled again until the bark is regenerated, which can take between 8 to 10 years. After this time, on the second tapping the ‘latex production is only a third of the original yield and poorer in quality’.⁴³² This may explain why the bullet trees were felled to harvest balata. By felling the trees, this yields much more latex than if tapped standing, but it of course destroys the source of future harvests.⁴³³

The British Guiana Court presented an image of itself of richness and diversity but there is more than meets the eye once we look past the displayed products of mere objects and raw materials. Through the example of balata we can better understand the position that Britain had towards the Amerindians, and get some glimpses of how the Amerindians were seen.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁴³⁰ D.B. Fanshawe, ‘Forest Products of British Guiana, Part II. Minor Forest Products’, in *Forestry Bulletin No.2* (British Guiana: Forestry Department, 1948).

⁴³¹ Van An del, *Non-timber Forest products of the North-West District of Guyana Part II: A field guide*, p. 152.

⁴³² Fanshawe.

⁴³³ Fanshawe.

3.4.2. Objects on Display: Among the Warishis and Matapies

As the illustration of the Ethnological stand shows (Figure 3.6), although small, it was nevertheless very rich in ethnological artefacts. Here, a model of an Amerindian woman carrying a baby with the help of a ‘suriana’ – a basket used ‘for carrying burdens on the back’ as described by im Thurn⁴³⁴ – is exhibited. The ‘suriana’, also known as ‘warishi’ nowadays, has a strong band made of natural fibres, which is typically passed over the top of the head.⁴³⁵

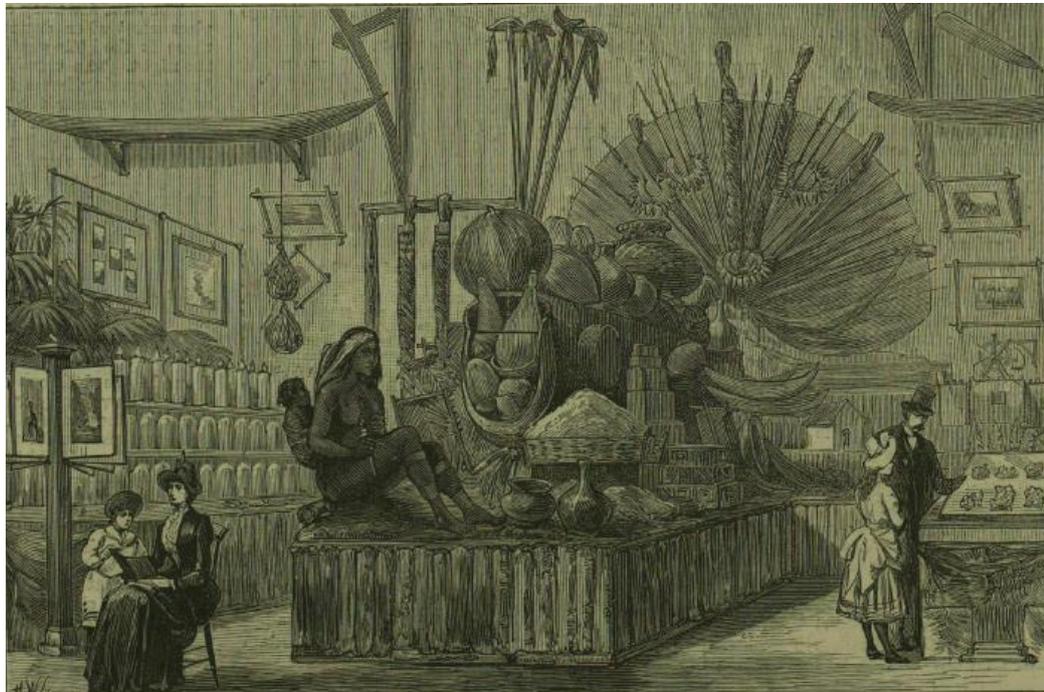


Figure 3.6. ‘Ethnological Stand, British Guiana Court’⁴³⁶

A more detailed warishi is shown just next to the model and is full of items that are probably calabashes. Adjacent to the warishi are more baskets, swiflers and pots, such as a pepper pot and goglet, as discussed in Chapter 2. Although it is difficult to know what subsequently happened to the items on display, similar warishi baskets were

⁴³⁴ Note attached to the basket sent to the British Museum (1960.Am10.67).

⁴³⁵ Roth, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs of the Guiana Indians*, p. 375.

⁴³⁶ Image from the *Illustrated London News*, Anonymous, ‘Colonial Indian Exhibition: British Guiana, West Indies and British Honduras’, p. 340.

sent to Kew by im Thurn and later on were given to the British Museum in 1960 (Figure 3.7). Nowadays, similar warishis are still being used in the interior of Guyana (Figure 3.8).



Figure 3.7. From left to right: Warishi made of iturite, *Ischnosiphon arouma* collected by im Thurn (Am10.67, British Museum) and herbarium specimen of *Ischnosiphon arouma* collected by Jenman in 1879 (Jenman no.464, Kew)



Figure 3.8. The warishi being used in Surama, Guyana (October 2010)

The warishis in the images were produced using a Marantaceae, *Ischnosiphon arouma* (Aubl.) Körn, also known as ‘iturite/itiriti’ or ‘mukru’ (Figure 3.7 and 3.8).⁴³⁷ Nowadays, ‘nibbi’, which is from a different family, Araceae (*Heteropsis flexuosa* (Kunth) G.S. Buntin), is also used to produce these warishi baskets. However, the baskets im Thurn sent were produced only with the species described before, *Ischnosiphon arouma*. The Marantaceae is still today one of the best sources of fibres in the Amazon for producing baskets and domestic utensils.⁴³⁸ The Amerindians still use these baskets to carry cassava, wood and even babies. Im Thurn sent different kinds of baskets to Britain and many of them were used to pack different objects.⁴³⁹

The way these baskets are produced is explained in Walter Edmund Roth’s work entitled *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs of the Guiana Indians*, which describes the preparation and splitting of the stems of ‘itiriti’ plant in detail.⁴⁴⁰ Roth also observes that during this process the ‘inner side of the nail of the left forefinger’ is used as a wedge, so the expert basket makers are easily identified because their nail is often chronically damaged.⁴⁴¹

In relation to the herbarium specimens of *Ischnosiphon arouma* collected by im Thurn in 1880, a note mentions only that a ‘quake’ (special basket to carry wood or cassava) was sent to Kew. However, on Jenman’s specimen, collected one year earlier, more detailed notes were attached, saying that the species was used to produce ‘quakes’ and ‘matapees’ (Figure 3.7).

All the baskets mentioned previously were, and still are, being produced by Amerindian men, so that the women can have the utensils needed to prepare cassava and hammocks, such as cotton baskets, ‘warishis’ to carry cassava, and ‘matapies’ to

⁴³⁷ Mennega and others, *Check-list of Woody Plants of Guyana*, p. 116; Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 281; Van Andel, p. 129; Roth, p. 137.

⁴³⁸ Flávia R.C. Costa, Fábio Penna Espinelli and Fernando O. G. Figueiredo, *Guide to the Marantaceae of the Reserva Ducke and Rébio Uatumá* (Manaus: Attema, 2008), pp. 1–162.

⁴³⁹ Notes at the British Museum.

⁴⁴⁰ Roth, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs of the Guiana Indians*, pp. 138-139.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 138-139.

squeeze the poison juice from the grated cassava. While men are responsible for the basketry, women are responsible for the production of the cassava bread, farine and hammocks.⁴⁴²

The *matapie* is a very distinctive object, which is illustrated at the Ethnological



Stand (Figure 3.6). A *matapie* is a long basket hanging by a horizontal stick (Figures 3.6 and 3.9). This cassava squeezer is also made from *Ischnosiphon arouma*, the species previously mentioned. This particular basket not only plays a major role in the daily life of the Amerindians – as Im Thurn described, ‘no scene is more characteristic of Indian life than that of the women preparing cassava’ – but also materialises an amazing richness in terms of Amerindian traditions and histories.⁴⁴³ The *matapie* is also known as *tingi* in Makushi which means ‘similar to an anaconda’. This name comes from a very old Amerindian story that is still told nowadays. In this story, a man while seeing an anaconda (also known by the Makushi as *comodi*) swallowing an agouti (a mammal) thought he could reproduce the same principle by using ‘mukro’ (*Ischnosiphon arouma*) in order to squeeze the cassava and take the poisonous juice out of it.⁴⁴⁴ Not only is the shape of the *matapie* similar to an anaconda, but the movements the snake makes

Figure 3.9.

Matapie

when swallowing the animal are similar to the ones made by Amerindian

people when they are squeezing the cassava to remove the poisonous juice.⁴⁴⁵

Once dried, the cassava is ready to be used for making bread or flour. For this purpose ‘a large circular iron griddle or plate’ is placed over the fire and the bread baked on it.⁴⁴⁶ Although this is a very traditional Amerindian process, some changes to the

⁴⁴² Paulette Allicock personal communication October 2010.

⁴⁴³ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 260.

⁴⁴⁴ Paulette Allicock personal communication October 2010.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁶ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 261.

method have occurred over time because of cultural encounters. As an example, im Thurn mentioned that the 'large circular iron griddle or plate' was from 'European manufacture' but the 'remote Indians' used a flat slab of stone for the same purpose, although there 'can be little doubt that this stone was originally universally used'.⁴⁴⁷

Im Thurn was fascinated with the Amerindian way of processing cassava, stating in his book that he even tried to imitate the Amerindians:

I have often admired, and vainly tried to imitate, the skill with which an Indian woman 'quoits' up these large and thin [cassava] cakes.⁴⁴⁸

Im Thurn was not only fascinated with the Amerindian objects, but was also concerned with their disappearance because of the influence of the 'white men', as the following quote attests:

Indian basket-work is so beautifully neat, that it is much to be regretted that the art of producing it is fast dying out, at least wherever the influence of white men is felt. Missionaries would certainly be doing good work if they endeavoured to revive and retain this and all other such native arts.⁴⁴⁹

Besides his preoccupation, he also suggests possible ways to avoid the extinction of Indian basket-work skills, especially by active participation of the missionaries in maintaining the Amerindian crafts. These missionaries, however, as 'agents of colonialism', to use Renato Rosaldo's expression, were the same agents that opened the way for the 'effect of civilization' in the contact between Amerindians and Europeans.⁴⁵⁰ In addition, there is also a certain contradiction when im Thurn refers to the 'influence of white men'. Besides being a 'white man' himself, im Thurn was also shaping and

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

⁴⁵⁰ Renato Rosaldo, 'Imperialist Nostalgia', *Representations*, 1989, 107–122; Jacob W. Gruber, 'Ethnographic Salvage and the Shaping of Anthropology', *American Anthropologist*, 72 (1970), 1289–1299.

changing the culture around him by obtaining certain Amerindian objects and giving beads as an exchange, for instance. This nostalgia in im Thurn's discourse 'occurs alongside [with] a peculiar sense of mission, the white man's burden, where civilized nations stand duty-bound to uplift so-called savage ones', as Rosaldo puts it.⁴⁵¹ Therefore, it was important to 'record the precious culture before it [could] disappear forever'.⁴⁵²

However, although im Thurn was fascinated with the cassava process, there are no *matapies*, swifter's or graters sent by him at Kew, British Museum or Pitt Rivers Museum. There is the possibility that these objects were very difficult to obtain, simply because the Amerindians did not want to trade them. But if this was true, why were so many *matapies* on display at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition on the Ethnological Stand? Maybe the objects were from old collections that belonged to the Museum of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana, the same society that was in charge of the British Guiana court and where im Thurn started his professional career as museum curator in 1877. I can only speculate, the answer remains unknown.

In addition, although Kew does not have any *matapies* sent by im Thurn, one from British Guiana is on display at Museum No.1. This *matapie* was donated in 1905 by Miss E Courtenay Bell and is made of the same species that cassava squeezers are still made of today, *Ischnosiphon arouma*.⁴⁵³ Not much is known about Miss Bell, only that she was a traveller and an honorary member of the RGS⁴⁵⁴ who lived in Old Headington (Oxford) and London.⁴⁵⁵ She collected a large number of North, South and Central

⁴⁵¹ Rosaldo, 'Imperialist Nostalgia', 108.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, 115.

⁴⁵³ EBC Cat no. 29514 (Kew).

⁴⁵⁴ Her name is recorded in the Royal Geographical Society, 'List of Honorary Members, Honorary Corresponding Members and Fellows, RGS 1921' <<http://scans.library.utoronto.ca/pdf/1/35/listofhonoraryme00royauoft/listofhonoraryme00royauoft.pdf>> [accessed 27 June 2011].

⁴⁵⁵ Stephanie Jenkins, 'The Hermitage, 69 Old High Street', *Headington history: Listed Buildings & Structures*, 2011 <http://www.headington.org.uk/history/listed_buildings/oldhighstreet69.htm> [accessed 27 June 2011].

American baskets but also travelled to China, Japan, Turkey and Europe.⁴⁵⁶ Some of the objects she collected are at Kew, the Pitt Rivers Museum and the British Museum.



Figure 3.10. Mr Singh manufacturing the *matapie* basket (Annai, Guyana October 2010)

⁴⁵⁶ Alison Petch, '[Miss] E.C. Bell', *England: The Other Within - Analysing the English Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum* <http://england.prm.ox.ac.uk/noajax-individuals.foo?i_l=B&i_id=100> [accessed 27 June 2011].

3.4.3. The Amerindian House

Looking at the illustration of the Ethnological Stand once more (Figure 3.6) it is possible to notice a model of a house (Figure 3.11). According to the *Illustrated London News*, im Thurn arranged many items for the Ethnological Stand, which ‘comprise[d] models of Indian houses, cassava sieves and baskets, hammocks, gourds for preserving piawarie, calabashes, feather crowns of mules, and bead aprons of women’.⁴⁵⁷ In the catalogue of this exhibition there is a reference to a ‘Model of [an] Indian house, with models of some of their household utensils’.⁴⁵⁸ It is likely that the model house portrayed in the illustration of the *Illustrated London News* was actually the model of an Amerindian house described in the catalogue of the exhibition.



Figure 3.11. Detail of the ‘Ethnological Stand, British Guiana Court’ with the Amerindian Model House on display on the left side ⁴⁵⁹

In relation to the model house, the Pitt Rivers Museum holds a model of an Amerindian house similar to the one described (Figure 3.12).

⁴⁵⁷ Anonymous, ‘Colonial Indian Exhibition: British Guiana, West Indies and British Honduras’, p. 338.

⁴⁵⁸ Anonymous, *Official Catalogue of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*, p. 380.

⁴⁵⁹ Anonymous, ‘Colonial Indian Exhibition: British Guiana, West Indies and British Honduras’, p. 340.



Figure 3.12. ‘Model of Arawak house with domestic utensils’, collected by E. im Thurn and presented by Miss Grace Pelham in 1901 (1901.19-1.1, Pitt Rivers Museum)

The Victorian atmosphere at the Pitt Rivers Museum gives the idea of going back in time. The way the objects are on display and organised gives the feeling that everything has remained untouched for years. The model house from British Guiana is a trifle hidden and is curiously displayed between two wooden birds from Papua New Guinea (Figure 3.12). The idea of tropicality, condensed in a collection of objects from different tropical places assembled together, is still reflected in the way objects are on display today. This Arawak house contains four models of men, model baskets (*matapie* and cassava swifter), fans, hammocks, vessels, a pepper pot and fishing equipment, as described in the *Official Catalogue*. Initially, a canoe and paddle were included in the house, but though they can still be found at the same museum, they are now in a section where different kinds of miniature boats are on display. According to the information from the *PRM Object Catalogue*, the model house was made for Everard im Thurn and

given by him to Miss Laura Grace Pelham.⁴⁶⁰ There is no mention of who the artisan was or when the model house was made. Later in 1901, the 13-year-old Miss Pelham donated it to the PRM, giving her address as Trinity College, Oxford, where her father, Henry Francis Pelham, was president.⁴⁶¹

The year im Thurn gave this model house to Miss Pelham is not known, but presumably this item was also on display at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in 1886, although there is also the possibility that a very similar one was on exhibit rather than this one. Given the evidence, my suggestion is that a few years later, after the exhibition ended in November 1886, the house was given by im Thurn to Henry Francis Pelham's daughter as a gift, after 1888 when she was born.

Looking at the model of the Amerindian house, it is worth tracing back its 'life' through different contexts, from the place where it was constructed in Guiana to the Colonial Exhibition in 1886, from where it was possibly sent as a gift for a new-born child to the place it ended up – the Pitt Rivers Museum. This model house raises several questions: was this house made under order, just for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, or was it common to produce miniature houses as toys for children, or for tourists? At the British Museum, there are also two model boats sent by im Thurn, and the same question arises. Was this a way to have an example of a boat but on a smaller scale that could be transported easily to Britain or was it just a toy? Did Amerindian children also play with these objects?

⁴⁶⁰ The model house is also mentioned by Rosamund Dalziell, 'Everard Im Thurn in British Guiana and the Western Pacific', in *Writing, travel, and empire: in the margins of anthropology*, ed. by Peter Hulme and Russell McDougall (New York: I.B.Tauris, 2007), pp. 97–118. However, Dalziell notes that the house was a gift to Pelham's daughter Alice, which I believe was a small misunderstanding because Henry Francis Pelham only had Laura Grace and Catherine Harriet as daughters along with three other sons in Darryl Lundy, 'A Genealogical Survey of the Peerage of Britain as Well as the Royal Families of Europe', *thePeerage.com*, 2011 <<http://thepeerage.com/p9456.htm#i94558>> [accessed 10 May 2011].

⁴⁶¹ Lundy; Rivière, 'South American Tropical Forest Material'.

Some of the utensils reproduced in miniature, such as the quake, cassava squeezer, grater and others, are still produced today as part of the Amerindian way of life, as toys, decorations or as souvenirs for tourists (Figure 3.13).



Figure 3.13. Bradley with a miniature boat at Kabakaburi, Guyana (October 2010)

3.4.3.1. The Palm Roof

The details of the model house, deserve special attention, for they are quite remarkable. The materials used to construct it and its contents are the same natural ones as the original objects they represent (palm leaves, calabashes and different fibres to produce basketry, for instance). Concerning the plant species, as the different materials are not identified individually, not even by common name, it is difficult to be certain what species were used to build the model. However, because it is a reproduction of an Arawak house, the roof was possibly made of *Manicaria saccifera* Gaertn. (Arecaceae),

known as troolie palm, which is still used today by the Arawak communities, such as the one in Kabakaburi near the river Pomeroon in Guyana (Figure 3.14). As Im Thurn indicates, various kinds of palms were used to build roofs. Also, the selection of the palms did not depend on the ethnic group, but on the palm trees available at the time.⁴⁶² The species *M. Saccifera* was commonly used because ‘each gigantic undivided leaf of the troolie palm is really a shelter in itself’. Just a few leaflets were needed and without further preparation they were overlapped ‘like tiles’ to produce ‘a most perfect roof’. Furthermore, as Im Thurn observes, there was a large amount of trade on the coast between the Amerindians and the planters, before zinc was introduced as a substitute for the palm roof. Before the introduction of zinc, ‘most of the buildings on the sugar estates were thatched’ with troolie leaves.⁴⁶³



Figure 3.14. Roof made of troolie palm, *Manicaria saccifera* (Kabakaburi, Guyana October 2010)

⁴⁶² Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 209.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

Im Thurn also notes that in certain places where the troolie palm (*Manicaria saccifera* Gaertn.) does not grow, *Geonoma baculifera* (Poit.) Kunth is used instead.⁴⁶⁴ This dwarf palm, known by the Amerindians as *dealibanni*, has ‘small, almost transparent leaves’ and has the advantage, as described by im Thurn, that its leaves could be arranged in a row (Figure 3.15).⁴⁶⁵ All the rows of leaves could be removed from the walls or roof of a house and ‘be tied on to a new framework’ very quickly.⁴⁶⁶ Im Thurn also mentions a case, regarding this kind of roof as the following quote attests:

One Indian I knew, who had a small house thatched in this way in his field, which was far from any settlement, in which he used to live for a day or two at a time when cultivating the ground, used to carry the thatch with him each time he went to or came from his field, in order that the house might not afford shelter to any other Indians during the absence of the owner.⁴⁶⁷



Figure 3.15. ‘Thatch made of leaves of *Geonoma*’ collected by E.F. im Thurn (1960.Am10.107, British Museum)

The roof, which is housed nowadays at the British Museum, is presumably very similar to the ‘portable roof’ described by im Thurn, as the leaves could be removed very easily. In the example given by the naturalist, this particular roof was frequently

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

taken from one place to another depending on where the owner was living, demonstrating the ‘portability’ of this object. Roofs, which are usually seen in the West as something fixed – not transportable or mobile, in this space take on a completely different dimension according to the needs of the owners. The portable roof, besides providing a shelter to its owner when he or she was away from home, also gave a clear message: visits were not welcome when the owner was away.

Im Thurn also described the existing trade concerning the palm roofs and adds:

Moreover, this kind of thatch is so convenient that it has been adopted by many of the negroes, and other Creole settlers on the coast, who buy the laths ready set with leaves from the Indians; and the trade in these articles on some parts of the coast is so brisk, that the Indians have learned to cheat, by substituting, in the article made for trade, laths cut from the manicole palm (*Euterpe oleracea*) for those from the booba (*Iriartia exorrhiza*), the former being much more easily procurable though less durable.⁴⁶⁸

(...) The thatch is made much more enduring by the smoke of the fires which are constantly kept up in inhabited houses, so that on such a house, the thatch lasts for some years, while in a desert house or temporary benaboo, it falls to pieces in a few months.⁴⁶⁹

Concerning the trade of palm roofs at that time, which im Thurn describes, it is curious how this kind of roof started to be adopted by different ethnic groups. As im Thurn notes, the Amerindians began to use different species to produce these roofs; they chose species that were more accessible, but as im Thurn mentions these were not so durable. Later on, the naturalist also explains that the constant smoke also helped to preserve the roofs; he gives the example of how the desert houses or benabs were much more fragile because there was no constant smoke to preserve them.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

3.5. 'Living Ethnological Exhibits'

There are important differences between exhibiting objects and exhibiting people. Objects don't talk back⁴⁷⁰

The world exhibitions in the nineteenth century represented the 'dominant relations of power' in which different societies were categorised, rationalised and objectified.⁴⁷¹ The result of this categorisation created a hierarchy in which the 'portrayed world' was defined by 'races, sexes, and nations' that occupied specific and fixed places in these exhibitions by the host countries.⁴⁷² The way non-Western cultures were represented at these exhibitions was defined by the host culture, which in the case of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition was Britain.⁴⁷³ These powerful exhibitions were visually appealing and educational, instead of being just 'pictorial, literary or journalistic'.⁴⁷⁴ These exhibitions 'created a powerful stock of images of the non-Western world for European consumption' where all sorts of entertainments were used to attract the public.⁴⁷⁵ Moreover, the exhibitions also reflected a 'cross-cultural character' where the 'indigenous cultures' of the British Empire were displayed. An example of this was the visit to the queen by the 'indigenous people' that will be discussed below.⁴⁷⁶

The British Guiana House, where the Amerindians from British Guiana were seen as 'living ethnological exhibits', was part of the British Guiana representation at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886 (Figure 3.16).⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁰ Benedict, 'International Exhibitions and National Identity', 5-9.

⁴⁷¹ Zeynep Çelik and Leila Kinney, 'Ethnography and Exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles', *Assemblage*, December (1990), 34-59.

⁴⁷² Çelik and Kinney, 'Ethnography and Exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles', 36.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁷⁵ Saloni Mathur, 'Living Ethnological Exhibits: The Case of 1886', *Cultural Anthropology*, 15 (2000), 492-524; Benedict, 'International Exhibitions and National Identity', 5-9.

⁴⁷⁶ Çelik and Kinney, 'Ethnography and Exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles', 38.

⁴⁷⁷ The British Guiana house is marked as pink on the left side in the ground plan of the exhibition, as the illustration shows.

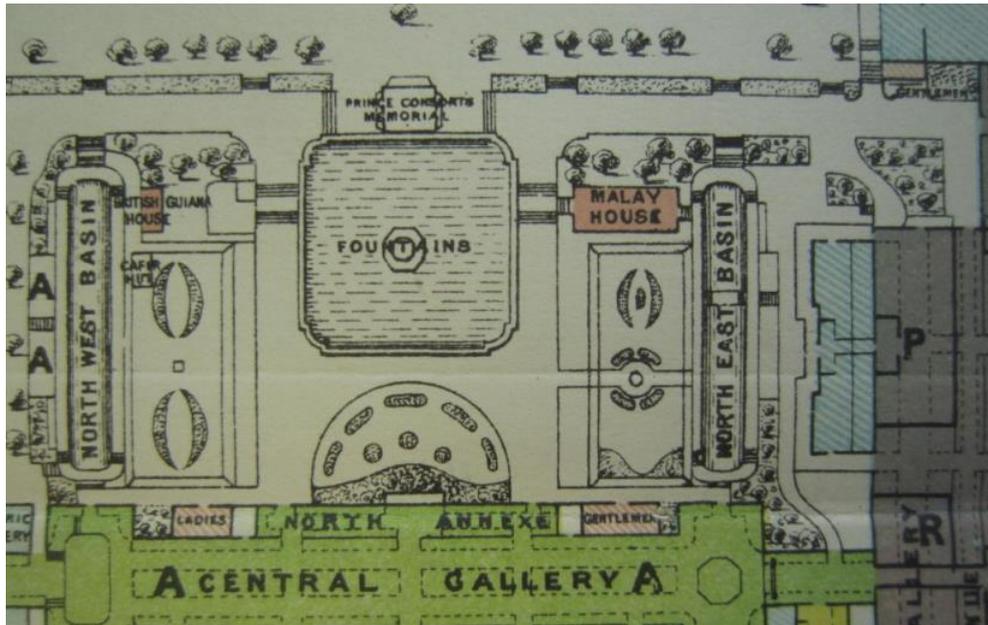


Figure 3.16. Detail of the ground plan of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition Site, South Kensington, 1886, in which the British Guiana House and the British Guiana Court (R) are pictured⁴⁷⁸

The purpose of this British Guiana House was to give a sense of the Amerindian life, so besides exhibiting Amerindian objects, the ‘natives’ were also included as ‘living ethnological displays’ (Figure 3.17).⁴⁷⁹ The practice of bringing people from overseas to world exhibitions started in Paris in 1867 and, as John Mackenzie suggests, these ‘native villages’ ‘were the prime way in which people in the metropolis were brought into contact with the conquered peoples of the Empire’.⁴⁸⁰ In the case of Britain, ‘the amalgamation of colonised peoples’ into the exhibitions began with the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886, which had ninety-seven people on show, including the Amerindians from British Guiana.⁴⁸¹ Moreover, for these exhibitions the natives not only helped to construct the Indigenous villages, but later on were to ‘inhabit them, putting on displays of their arts and crafts’, which was very popular at the time.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁸ Anonymous, *Official Catalogue of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*.

⁴⁷⁹ Mathur, ‘Living Ethnological Exhibits: The Case of 1886’, 492.

⁴⁸⁰ Mackenzie, ‘The Imperial Exhibitions of Great Britain’, p. 265.

⁴⁸¹ Benedict, ‘Rituals of Representation: Ethnic Stereotypes and Colonized Peoples at World’s Fairs’, pp. 28-61.

⁴⁸² Benedict, ‘International Exhibitions and National Identity’, 5-9.



Figure 3.17. 'Native House, British Guiana'⁴⁸³

The display of 'living exhibits' not only intended to show the extension and glory of the British Empire, but also to provide an 'antithetical sense'.⁴⁸⁴ The idea was to demonstrate 'their relative advancement and superiority' through the comparisons between 'the primitive', represented by the Indigenous people, and the industrialised nations.⁴⁸⁵ This led to an 'increasing interest in the diversity of human morphology, stimulated by discoveries of new countries and colonial conquests'. Thus, there was an urgent need for anthropologists to explain this diversity.⁴⁸⁶ In 'Ethnological Encounters', Michael Bravo explores the subject of Ethnology, which will be addressed shortly in the following paragraph.⁴⁸⁷ While European culture had a long tradition and practice of recording descriptions of other peoples in a systematic way, argues Bravo, the terms 'ethnology', 'ethnographic' and 'ethnological' were only introduced in the 1830s and

⁴⁸³ Image from the *Illustrated London News*, Anonymous, 'Colonial Indian Exhibition: British Guiana, West Indies and British Honduras', p. 338.

⁴⁸⁴ Çelik and Kinney, 'Ethnography and Exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles', 38.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁸⁶ Blanchard and others, 'Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires', pp. 1-49.

⁴⁸⁷ Bravo, 'Ethnological Encounters', p. 339.

1840s.⁴⁸⁸ In Ethnology, differences in language and vocabulary were analysed taking into consideration both the diversity and the similarities. Questions like ‘whether the different human races belonged to the same species’ remained unanswered for most of the century.⁴⁸⁹ To conduct valid ethnological research it was required access to information about the peoples of other nations (*i.e.*, their history, beliefs, language, customs and culture).⁴⁹⁰ However, this had to come from reliable sources from all different parts of the world, especially where the British had political and economical interest. Cultural artefacts were used in these studies but so were ‘live specimens’, who ‘were first studied in their natural environment’ and later on transported and exhibited.⁴⁹¹ Indigenous peoples were displayed and seen as objects of natural history in Victorian exhibitions.⁴⁹²

Britain’s Great Exhibitions gradually became dominated by the theme of the empire, building on the combination of education, trade fair and entertainment on a huge scale.⁴⁹³ The way the ‘Other’ was exhibited, not only showed the curiosity for the ‘Other’, the different and exotic, but also reinforced the idea of inferiority and the primitive, by reflecting the ‘attitudes and policies of the colonising powers’.⁴⁹⁴ On the other hand, the ‘living exhibits’ also had the function of amusing, informing and educating, although the boundaries were not very clear, and the interests were various.⁴⁹⁵ The ‘entertainment value of the “savage” was increased’ by activities such as dance, music and games which were considered primitive.⁴⁹⁶ It is important to stress that there was not only a spatial distance but also a temporal distance between the ‘living exhibits’

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 342.

⁴⁹¹ Blanchard and others, ‘Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires’, p. 3.

⁴⁹² Bravo, ‘Ethnological Encounters’, p. 338. Blanchard and others, ‘Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires’, p. 3.

⁴⁹³ Mackenzie, ‘The Imperial Exhibitions of Great Britain’, p. 259.

⁴⁹⁴ Blanchard and others, ‘Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires’, p. 4; Benedict, ‘International Exhibitions and National Identity’, 7.

⁴⁹⁵ Blanchard and others, ‘Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires’, p. 24.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

and the exhibition visitors. As Johannes Fabian notes, Anthropology, an emerging discipline at the time, was inclined to assume a ‘petrified relation’ between the observer and other societies.⁴⁹⁷ Therefore, Indigenous societies and their histories were understood as fixed and unchanging.⁴⁹⁸ How the ‘natives’ performed their artisanal tasks seemed to ‘belong to another age’, giving an idea of their apparently undeveloped status.⁴⁹⁹ This is demonstrated in the illustration in the *Illustrated London News* (Figure 3.17) that shows the Amerindians performing some of their daily activities: producing baskets, preparing the cotton to create hammocks or just simply observing and talking to each other. The objects on display are very typical as well: fans, quakes, cassava swifters and a hammock. This illustration in one sense could seem an image from British Guiana. The way the objects are displayed gives a sense of an Amerindian scene, were it not for the fact that the Amerindians were so heavily dressed, the marble wall behind the house and the two curious visitors looked so out of place.

The image of the British Guiana house (Figure 3.17) also shows a fence that keeps a certain distance between the Amerindians and the visitors. As Benedict says, ‘In many exhibits people were treated as objects and not given the opportunity to talk back.’⁵⁰⁰ This is demonstrated by the way they were kept back from the public by a fence.⁵⁰¹ In addition, many Indigenous people just spoke unrecognised languages, which helped to keep a social distance.⁵⁰² However, in the case of these particular Amerindians, some could speak, read and write in English.⁵⁰³ Besides, all had ‘been baptized in the Church of England Mission’ and had ‘British’ names, which give the impression that the Amerindians ‘on display’ were ‘civilised Indians’, as described by im Thurn in his book,

⁴⁹⁷ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other, How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.143.

⁴⁹⁹ Çelik and Kinney, ‘Ethnography and Exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles’, 39.

⁵⁰⁰ Benedict, ‘International Exhibitions and National Identity’, 8.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁰³ Anonymous, *Report of the Royal Commission for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* (London, 1886).

the Amerindians that were 'civilised' were the ones that could speak besides their native language, another western language.⁵⁰⁴

In short, as Benedict observes, the ways of displaying people and their artifacts in the colonial exhibitions could be summarise in three different approaches: they could be seen as merely curiosities, trophies or as 'artisans with their products'.⁵⁰⁵ Regarding the display of people with their artefacts, the objects shown were unusual to the audience, as were the activities performed.

One of the newspapers notes the interest the Amerindians aroused:

[The Amerindians] have a little shelter for themselves in the space near the fountains, and it is interesting to watch them quietly pursuing their occupations, weaving in primitive fashion, making spear-heads, and so on. We had the pleasure of seeing one of them, a vigorous-looking young fellow, shooting an arrow from the blow-pipe, an extremely difficult operation. The precision of aim and the distance to which the arrow was sent were wonderful.⁵⁰⁶

However, although much has been written about the 'living anthropological exhibits', little attention has been paid to the 'ethnological exhibit' at the British Guiana House. Through the newspapers of the time it is possible to have glimpses of how the Amerindians were seen during the exhibition and the reception at Windsor Castle, where the queen invited the 'natives' for lunch, as the following extracts attest:

The Queen received today the natives of her Majesty's dominions who have come to England to take part in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition; The 'natives of British Guiana played on instruments and showed the use of their arms.⁵⁰⁷

Besides this particular occasion where the Amerindians were hosted by the queen and exhibited their arts, few newspapers mentioned the 'Indians from British

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 313; im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p.45.

⁵⁰⁵ Benedict, 'Rituals of Representation: Ethnic Stereotypes and Colonized Peoples at World's Fairs', p. 29.

⁵⁰⁶ Anonymous, 'British Guiana', p. 13.

⁵⁰⁷ Anonymous, 'Court Circular, Windsor Castle', p. 7.

Guiana' but when this happened, they were compared with the Amerindian models on display at the colony court:

In the British Guiana Court, Mr Hawtayne, (...) had the honour of presenting again to the Queen the interesting natives of that colony, who have quite recently been brought over.⁵⁰⁸

Real live specimens of aboriginal natives, not to mention the fine models which grace several of the courts, as those of India and British Guiana.⁵⁰⁹

[The Amerindian models when] compared with the live specimens of natives recently imported they seem somewhat idealized, though probably they belong to different tribes. The three couples and the piccaninnies [small black children] belong, we understand, to two tribes, the Macoosis and Aracoonas, and are Christianized.⁵¹⁰

In the *Illustrated London News*, the Amerindians were mentioned in only a few lines noting what they were wearing in the exhibition and what they wear 'ordinarily' in British Guiana:

The natives who keep watch and ward at the southern end are in fête costume. Ordinarily, all the clothing worn by the Indians is a waist-cloth by the men, and a small bead apron by the women.⁵¹¹

The above extracts also highlight how the Amerindians are referred to as 'real live specimens of aboriginal natives' that had been 'recently imported', which demonstrates how much they were seen as objects. However, despite the extracts from the newspapers describing the Amerindians as specimens, it is still possible to unveil the human beings behind these portraits and descriptions. To do this, I made a connection between the Amerindians pictured and the names listed in the table of the *Report of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* (Figure 3.18 and Table 3.1).⁵¹² According to this report,

⁵⁰⁸ Anonymous, 'The Queen at the Colonial Exhibition', *The Times* (London, 1886), p. 8.

⁵⁰⁹ Anonymous, 'Colonial Conferences', *The Times* (London, 1886), p. 4.

⁵¹⁰ Anonymous, 'British Guiana', p. 13.

⁵¹¹ Anonymous, 'Colonial Indian Exhibition: British Guiana, West Indies and British Honduras', p. 338.

⁵¹² Anonymous, *Report of the Royal Commission for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*.

which lists their names, activities and ages, at least three Amerindian families represented the 'Red Indians of British Guiana' at the British Guiana House: Austin's, Dance's and Mathews's/Gordon's.⁵¹³ The three families are also referred to as 'three couples' who were 'Macoosis', 'Aracoonas' and, according to the report, 'Acawoios'.⁵¹⁴ *The Times* mentioned that there were ten Amerindians who actually visited the queen, who are listed in the report, but only nine are pictured in the illustration.⁵¹⁵ Following this list, it is tempting to try to identify the people in the picture. However, there are only nine Amerindian people represented so the identifications made are only possibilities (Figure 3.18). It is difficult to imagine what these families had been through, leaving their villages in the interior of tropical British Guiana, which they had perhaps never left before, and travelling by ship to cold Britain. In Britain, these Amerindians probably not only suffered with the weather but were also astonished with London, the buildings and Londoners. However, maybe being with the queen at Windsor Castle was not such an occasion for them as it would have been for British people. Nevertheless, being 'displayed' at the British Guiana House was probably a very uncomfortable experience for the Amerindians. Although they were performing the same activities that they always did, this time they were confined to a minor and artificial space in comparison with the savannahs and rainforests they were used to.

The idea of identifying the Amerindians who were represented in the image of the *Illustrated London News* as 'ethnological exhibits' is to see them not as objects but as people with an identity. By using the reports of that time, it is still possible to connect these 'ethnological exhibits' to a name, to a human being.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

⁵¹⁴ Anonymous, 'British Guiana', p. 13.

⁵¹⁵ Anonymous, 'Court Circular, Windsor Castle', p. 7.

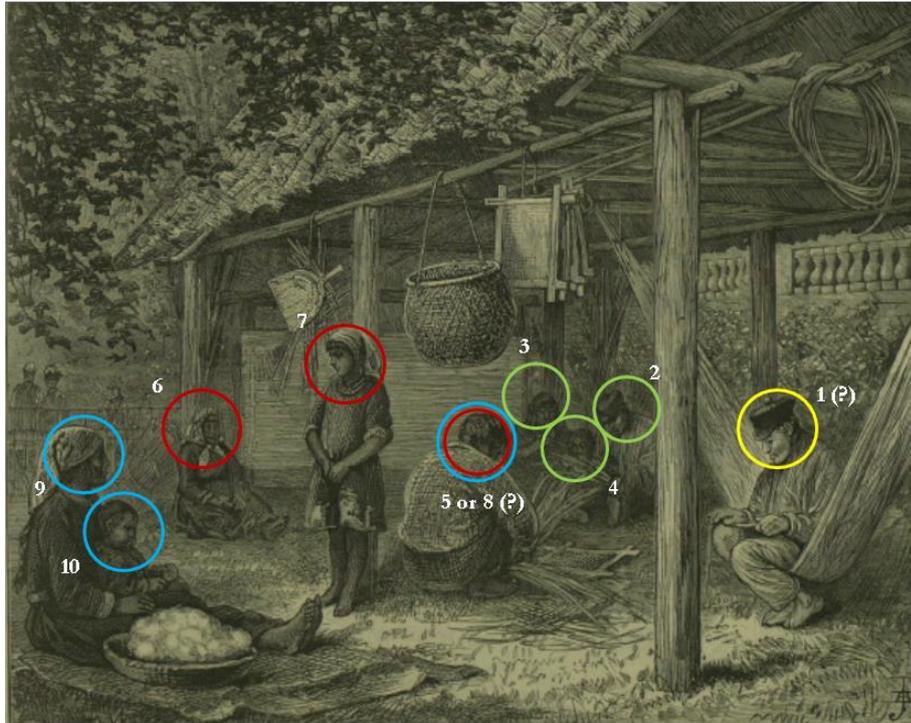


Figure 3.18. 'Native House, British Guiana', image adapted ⁵¹⁶

(Legend: Blue circles – Dance family; Red circles – Mathews' and Gordon's family; Green circles – Austin's family; Yellow circle – unknown)

Table 3.1. Description of the Amerindians present at the British Guiana House with details about their activities and ages ⁵¹⁷

British Guiana - Red Indians

1.	Edward Seon	Interpreter and guide.
2.	William Austin	Arecuna: hunter (42).
3.	Christina Austin	Wife of the above, Acawoio: labourer (31).
4.	Catherine Austin	Child of the above (5).
5.	Anthony Gordon	Macoosi: wood-cutter; reads and writes in English (24).
6.	Catherine Matthews	Aunt of Anthony: Acawoio: labourer (32).
7.	Maria Matthews	Daughter of Catherine: Acawoio: reads and writes a little (8).
8.	Simeon Dance	Arecuna: labourer (26).
9.	Rebecca Dance	Wife of Simeon: Arecuna: field labourer (24).
10.	John Dance	Child of above: Arecuna (2).

⁵¹⁶ Image from the *Illustrated London News*, Anonymous, 'Colonial Indian Exhibition: British Guiana, West Indies and British Honduras', p. 338.

⁵¹⁷ Notes attached to the table: "These people had all been baptized in the Church of England Mission. They cultivate land, fish, and hunt, and are employed by wood-cutters." The figures between the parentheses denote the age in Anonymous, *Report of the Royal Commission for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*, p. 313.

3.6. Conclusion

The Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886 reflected the empire's desire for progress and industrialisation. However, there was also an increase of natural collections during the nineteenth century in order to preserve nature and to keep what was still left.⁵¹⁸ Here, this was demonstrated through Jenman's reports about balata where he shows his concern with the forests in British Guiana. Besides this, im Thurn's objects collections also had the objective of preserving the objects that were disappearing and not being produced as before. This exhibition also placed together unrelated peoples of different parts of the Empire not only physically but also psychologically, giving a sense that they belonged to the Empire.⁵¹⁹

The way the objects were displayed at the British Guiana Court may also reveal the power relations which were 'disguised by amusements or displays of crafts', as Benedict said.⁵²⁰ He goes further by explaining that 'every time we put some object on show in a museum or some person on show on a stage, or making a pot, power relations are being expressed'.⁵²¹ Benedict also proposes that there are many reasons for exhibiting people and objects that are not related to power so the display of people should be analysed even in theatrical terms.⁵²² In other words, the setting, the scenario, the dresses, tools and objects are all of part of the theatrical setup.⁵²³

In conclusion, the example of the 'British Guiana House' clearly illustrates the purpose of these 'native villages' whose function was 'to show off the quaint, the savage,

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1289-1299.

⁵¹⁹ Paul Greenhalgh, 'Human Showcases', in *Ephemeral vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 82-111.

⁵²⁰ Benedict, 'Rituals of Representation: Ethnic Stereotypes and Colonized Peoples at World's Fairs', p. 28-61.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

⁵²² *Ibid.*

⁵²³ *Ibid.*

the exotic, to offer living proof of the onward march of imperial civilization',⁵²⁴ and to emphasise the 'continuity of ethnic or cultural differences'.⁵²⁵

Because of im Thurn's first-hand experience of British Guiana and its inhabitants, he was invited to organise the Ethnological stand in this Colonial and Indian Exhibition at the British Guiana Court. Although there was an imperialist nostalgia in his discourse, particularly in his book *Among the Indians of Guiana*, it appears that he was genuinely concerned about the loss of the knowledge of Amerindian craftwork. While im Thurn was in the British colony he had 'considerable freedom to pursue his anthropological interests' although he struggled with his official role.⁵²⁶ Im Thurn displayed sincere sympathy towards the Amerindian people and described them as being naive, as the case of the problem in collecting balata discussed in this chapter.⁵²⁷ As im Thurn lived for so many years in British Guiana, he developed an attachment for that 'geographically remote British colony', which affected his commitments to the 'imperial centre'.⁵²⁸ It is possible that his drive to exhibit some of the objects at the Exhibition in 1886 was not to display the Amerindian objects as a mere 'curiosity'. I instead suggest that im Thurn was in fact collecting and displaying the objects in order to salvage them, as if he wanted to give a contribution to the Amerindian culture by leaving a legacy of those Amerindian objects in the imperial metropolis. Besides this, im Thurn was also advertising the potential of the 'neglected colony' and trying to ensure that British Guiana would not be forgotten. While the objects themselves cannot tell us their own stories, we can trace their trajectories and the imaginative geographies they convey in the field, but also in the libraries, archives and museums, both in British Guiana and in Britain, where they can still be found today.

⁵²⁴ Mackenzie, 'The Imperial Exhibitions of Great Britain', pp. 259-268.

⁵²⁵ Benedict, 'Rituals of Representation: Ethnic Stereotypes and Colonized Peoples at World's Fairs', p. 28-61.

⁵²⁶ Dalziell, 'Everard im Thurn in British Guiana and the Western Pacific', pp. 97-118.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*

Chapter 4

Assembling Photographs, Specimens and Objects

4.1. Introduction

A photograph preserves a moment of time and prevents it being effaced by the suppression of future moments.⁵²⁹

This chapter focuses on another aspect of im Thurn's collections – his photographs – which were both interesting objects in their own right, but also indicate his interest in using the new technology at the time, photography, as part of his anthropological study. In this chapter I will bring to light previously unrecognised im Thurn photographs in Kew's collections. Im Thurn photographs were a channel that allowed him to disseminate his work not only in anthropology but also in botany. Im Thurn's photographs were used in his book *Among the Indians of Guiana*, in his papers, such as 'Anthropological uses of the Camera' and at his presentations at the Royal Anthropological Institute, for instance.

In this chapter, besides discussing im Thurn's material found at Kew, unknown photographs from Norton Brothers and G. S. Jenman will be also unveiled, providing some hints of im Thurn's network in British Guiana.

The photographs discussed here were used as an artful way to give visibility to im Thurn's work in order to promote it. In addition, these photographs were also promoting British Guiana to the wider world.

Im Thurn contributed not only to the botany field, with collections of botanical specimens and published papers, but also to anthropology with many published works, which highlights his interest in photography. Most of his known photographic

⁵²⁹ J. Berger and J. Mohr, *Another Way of Telling* (London: Granta, 1989). in Elizabeth Edwards, 'Introduction: Observations from the Coal-face', in *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), pp. 1–23.

collections from British Guiana are held by the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) in London, where im Thurn was President between 1919 and 1920, and the Royal Geographical Society (RGS), also in London.⁵³⁰ While im Thurn's work in photography is relatively well known, some of his photographs that Kew presently holds were never acknowledged or published.⁵³¹ Although it seems that Kew was not aware of possessing such a collection as it is not catalogued, several letters in Kew's archives indicate that it had received photographs sent by im Thurn. This work traces these particular photographs that are spread across the different sections of this botanical institution. This chapter explores a particular set of photographs that are spread across dozens of boxes of photographs forgotten at Kew. These hidden treasures contain several photographs and educational pictures that were used in exhibitions at Kew. This chapter gives an overview of im Thurn's photograph collections with particular focus on the one held by Kew. It explores the materiality and meaning of these photographs and its interaction with particular objects im Thurn collected.⁵³² As photographs are 'real visual objects engaged in social space and real time', they cannot be reduced to an abstract practice.⁵³³ The analysis is not restricted 'to sorting out structures of signification'.⁵³⁴ Instead, it also takes into account the 'signifying role of photography in relation to the whole nature of the object and its social biography'.⁵³⁵ In such contexts, the photographs discussed here, are seen in connection with im Thurn's collections and in the context of that epoch to understand their role in im Thurn's work.

⁵³⁰ Aerni, pp. 348–357.

⁵³¹ See especially T. D. Ayler, 'Very Loveable Human Beings: The Photography of Everard im Thurn', in *Anthropology and Photography*, ed. by Elizabeth Edwards (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 187–192; Amy Cox, 'Purifying Bodies, Translating Race: The Lantern Slides of Sir Everard Im Thurn, History of Photography', *History of Photography*, 31 (2007), 348–364; Christopher Pinney, 'The Parallel Histories of Anthropology and Photography', in *Anthropology and Photography 1860-1920*, ed. by Elizabeth Edwards (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 74–95.

⁵³² Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, 'Mixed Box: The Cultural Biography of a Box of "Ethnographic" Photographs', in *Photographs Objects Histories: on the materiality of images*, ed. by Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (New Haven & London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), pp. 47–61.

⁵³³ Elizabeth Edwards, 'Introduction: Observations from the Coal-face', pp. 1–23.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–23.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–23.

Everard im Thurn's photographs from British Guiana are unveiled and cross-referenced with the rest of his collections and work. Through the analysis of 'photographs as material objects to which things happen' it is possible to gain glimpses of how British Guiana was seen at the time and try to visualise the colony through im Thurn's eyes. This last point however is obviously a subjective exercise.⁵³⁶ The idea is, in one sense, to contribute to the understanding of British Guiana through im Thurn's collections. In another sense, it is to use visual images with other materials to rethink the ways the colony was seen and represented, as well as the encounters between Europeans and Amerindians.

In addition to the photographs at Kew, several photographs from im Thurn that are housed at Royal Geographical Society and Royal Anthropological Institute⁵³⁷ will be studied. The diversity of collections that im Thurn amassed, such as herbarium specimens, objects and photographs clearly reflect his various interests as a typical Victorian man of his time. This chapter will also consider some of his objects. In this way, my aim is also to add another layer of understanding to the story behind the collections, demonstrating how the collections are interconnected.

⁵³⁶ Edwards and Hart, pp. 47-61; Roslyn Poignant, 'The Making of Professional "Savages"', in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. by Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 55-84.

⁵³⁷ RAI, Box 87, Everard im Thurn, S. & C. America: Guyana, Venezuela; 604-652, 5693.

4.2. Searching for im Thurn's Photographs

The existence of im Thurn's photographs at Kew's collections was unknown until the present work. Researching into the *Director's Correspondence* I was able to uncover several references to photographs that im Thurn sent to Kew from British Guiana.⁵³⁸ In addition, the information retrieved in the *Economic Botany Entry Books* confirmed that Kew actually received thirty-seven photographs from im Thurn between 1880 and 1897.⁵³⁹ It is important to stress that Kew's archives started being sorted during the 1980s, but there was no specific department at the institution to organise the photographs.⁵⁴⁰ Nevertheless, nowadays several sections at Kew, despite not being well known, also hold photographs, as the Economic Botany Photograph Collection does at its Travels and Maps room, and its Palm room. The latter room, in addition to holding herbarium specimens, also contains a photograph collection of palms. The photographs in both rooms are organised by genus and in alphabetical order. As both of these collections were not very large or catalogued, all the boxes were cross-referenced with im Thurn's correspondence and publications in order to find the photographs he took in British Guiana.

Besides this, as the photographs could be spread across different sections at Kew, the herbarium specimens collected by im Thurn from British Guiana were also searched to check whether some photographs could be eventually attached to them. Despite the possibility that im Thurn's photos at Kew were lost, during the present research some photographs were brought to light, as discussed in the sections below.

⁵³⁸ In one of the letters, im Thurn specified that he was sending twenty-three photographs of palms to Kew (KLDC11631).

⁵³⁹ *Economic Botany Entry Book (1879-1881)* p. 22, 25.5.1880, entry no. 53, six photos; *Ibid.*, p. 41, 19.11.1880, entry no. 120, one photo; *Economic Botany Entry Book (1881-1895)* p. 165, 22.10.1885, entry no. 110, twelve photos; *Ibid.*, p. 285, 30.12.1887, entry no. 161, one photo; *Ibid.*, p. 421, 4.5.1892, entry no. 1, one photo; *Ibid.*, p. 462, 13.12.1892, entry no. 169, fifteen photographs; *Economic Botany Entry Book (1896-1924)* p. 29, 11.1.1897, entry no. 4, one photo.

⁵⁴⁰ Christopher Mills, personal communication.

4.3. Photography in im Thurn's Time

Photographs are both images *and* physical objects that exist in time and space and thus in social and cultural experience.⁵⁴¹

Photography was an invention that 'arose from the search for greater naturalism in representation' and ended up freeing artists of portraying reality accurately.⁵⁴² The naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913), for example, asserted that photography was 'a totally new departure' in a period of much interest in visual documentation.⁵⁴³

Although 'photography brought the Empire into the Home', it was overshadowed by the success of exhibitions, where there was the opportunity to display the empire.⁵⁴⁴ The display of humans in native dresses in these exhibitions, mentioned in Chapter 3, had much more impact on the public than static images of Indigenous people.⁵⁴⁵ According to Stephen Nugent, 'Images of native peoples provided by serious scholars and explorers (often merged categories in this period) represented an extremely small portion of image production of that epoch.'⁵⁴⁶

Regarding the relationship between anthropology and photography, Gilles Boëtsch and Yann Ardagna noted that 'the concept of the collections of anthropological

⁵⁴¹ Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, 'Introduction: Photographs as Objects', in *Photographs Objects Histories: on the materiality of images*, ed. by Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (London & New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), pp. 1–15.

⁵⁴² Tristram Powell, 'Fixing the Face', in *"From today painting is dead" The beginnings of Photography The Victoria and Albert Museum 16 March-14 May 1972* (The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1972), pp. 9–11.

⁵⁴³ Asa Briggs, 'Photography as Social Documentation', in *"From today painting is dead" The beginnings of Photography The Victoria and Albert Museum 16 March-14 May 1972* (The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1972), pp. 13–15.

⁵⁴⁴ Briggs, 'Photography as Social Documentation', pp. 13–15.

⁵⁴⁵ Stephen Nugent, 'The Tropic of Amazon: Missing Peoples and Lingering Metaphors', in *Scoping the Amazon: Image, Icon, Ethnography* (Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2007), pp. 67–97.

⁵⁴⁶ Nugent, 'The Tropic of Amazon: Missing Peoples and Lingering Metaphors', p. 78.

photographs' was endorsed by Ernest Conducré in 1858.⁵⁴⁷ Later on, in 1860, the French Imperial Museum of Natural History produced, in the context of the development of craniology, a book entitled *Instructions for travellers and employees in the colonies on how to collect, preserve and expedite objects of natural history*.⁵⁴⁸ This book had a section dedicated to anthropology where it was proposed that casts of living humans should be made or, if not possible, photographs should be taken.

According to Christopher Pinney in 'The Parallel Histories of Anthropology and Photography', it is important to have in mind that the anthropologist wished to minimise the effect of his/hers presence in anthropological studies.⁵⁴⁹ Actually, the photographer's quest was to provide a 'reality effect' in his or hers photographs, where the subjects had to appear as natural as possible, involving 'the effacement of any marks of the presence of the photographer's culture'.⁵⁵⁰ Although this seems obvious to contemporary scholars, it did not happen with the first anthropological photographs. These first anthropological photographs did not provide a 'reality effect' at all. Here was a merging of photography and discipline, in which normalisation transformed the space into an instrument, by using a regular grid for instance.⁵⁵¹ This is the so-called anthropometric photography im Thurn contested in his paper 'Anthropological Uses of the Camera'.⁵⁵² Furthermore, Pinney refers to the movement as having the intention of 'de-Platonizing' the world, where there is a productive union between anthropology and photography, where the main idea is to share a common language. To explain

⁵⁴⁷ Gilles Boëtsch and Yann Ardagna, 'Human Zoos: The "Savage" and the Anthropologist', in *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, ed. by Pascal Blanchard and others (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), pp. 114–122; E. Conducré, 'La Photographie Au Muséum D'histoire Naturelle', in *La Lumière*, 1858, pp. 1–2.

⁵⁴⁸ MIHN (1860), *Instructions pour les voyageurs et les employés dans les colonies sur les manières de recueillir, de conserver et d'envoyer les objets d'histoire naturelle*, Paris: Éditions Martinet in Boëtsch and Ardagna, pp. 114–122.

⁵⁴⁹ Pinney, 'The Parallel Histories of Anthropology and Photography', pp. 74–95.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 76; Christopher Pinney, 'The Doubled History of Photography and Anthropology', in *Photography and Anthropology* (London: Reaktion books, 2011), pp. 17–62.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 17–62.

photography's 'de-Platonizing' tendency, Pinney uses the case of Everard im Thurn, who the former described as a 'willing victim in early anthropology' as he was quite ahead of his time.⁵⁵³

In im Thurn's abovementioned paper he advocated the technology of that time, which was photography, for his anthropological studies.⁵⁵⁴ As hand-held cameras arrived around 1885 im Thurn probably used these in the field.⁵⁵⁵ By combining anthropology and photography, im Thurn gave the camera a completely new role.⁵⁵⁶ He saw the use of the 'camera for the accurate record' and not only to photograph the primitive folk, who were accurately measured and photographed.⁵⁵⁷ Im Thurn also attempted to see these folk as living beings and not just as objects of study.⁵⁵⁸ However, Nugent argues that in practice it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the posed photograph from the observational one and in many cases there is little difference between them.⁵⁵⁹ He adds that 'what im Thurn claims to be observational photographs of his own are not terribly convincing' and that the Amerindians are still portrayed in these photographs as objects.⁵⁶⁰ Nonetheless, they must be seen within the context of their time; what im Thurn did in terms of photography had not been done before. Im Thurn adapted photography to record people and cultures that were always mixing with others.⁵⁶¹ Consequently, im Thurn changed the 'outlook and development' in the research

⁵⁵³ Pinney, 'The Parallel Histories of Anthropology and Photography', p. 77.

⁵⁵⁴ Im Thurn, 'Anthropological Uses of the Camera', 184-203.

⁵⁵⁵ Tristram Powell, 'Photography Before the Dry Plate', in *"From today painting is dead" The beginnings of Photography The Victoria and Albert Museum 16 March-14 May 1972* (The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1972), pp. 5-8.

⁵⁵⁶ Pinney, 'The Parallel Histories of Anthropology and Photography', p. 78.

⁵⁵⁷ Im Thurn, 'Anthropological Uses of the Camera', 184; Anonymous, 'Im Thurn Memorial Lecture, 1936', *Nature*, 138 (1936), 395.

⁵⁵⁸ Im Thurn, 'Anthropological Uses of the Camera', 184; Anonymous, 395.

⁵⁵⁹ Stephen Nugent, 'Method and Data: Framing Indians', in *Scoping the Amazon: Image, Icon, Ethnography* (Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2007), pp. 129-189.

⁵⁶⁰ Nugent, 'Method and Data: Framing Indians', p. 178.

⁵⁶¹ Anne Elizabeth Maxwell, 'A Lens on the Other: Photographs of Non-western Peoples by Anthropologists and Travelers', in *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions: Representations of the Native and the Making of European Identities* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 38-72.

method, marking ‘an important step towards documentary field photography’.⁵⁶² Through im Thurn’s papers and his innovative photographs, it is clear that he is undoubtedly a contributor to a maturing anthropology.⁵⁶³

As Elizabeth Edwards suggests, im Thurn’s photographs ‘became scientific (‘ethnological’ or ‘anthropological’) as they were collected and institutionalised by learned societies and universities’, such as the RAI and the RGS.⁵⁶⁴ Moreover, im Thurn’s photographs have the particularity of being valued for ‘the perception and categorization of their subject matter’ rather than following any specific scientific methodology.⁵⁶⁵ In any case, im Thurn’s work, in representing native people, also helped to project imperial culture and British Guiana to the world.⁵⁶⁶

As photographic images have the peculiarity to assemble information, they were believed to be more reliable and easier to understand than descriptive texts because the risks of misspelling and misunderstanding were limited.⁵⁶⁷ Im Thurn’s perception of photography is also illuminated by the way he used his photographs and slides during his presentations. For instance, im Thurn used images while presenting his paper, ‘Anthropological Uses of the Camera’ at the Royal Anthropological Institute, but these were not reproduced in the published version.⁵⁶⁸ However, some of the images published in im Thurn’s abovementioned paper were manipulated. Im Thurn handled particular photographs to accentuate certain details, and by observing them it is possible to see that some of them look like paintings.⁵⁶⁹ This especially applies to particular slides

⁵⁶² Anonymous, ‘Im Thurn Memorial Lecture, 1936’, 395; Pinney, ‘The Parallel Histories of Anthropology and Photography’, p. 78.

⁵⁶³ Nugent, ‘The Tropic of Amazon: Missing Peoples and Lingering Metaphors’, p. 87.

⁵⁶⁴ Elizabeth Edwards, ‘Photography and the Making of the Other’, in *Human Zoo and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, ed. by Pascal Blanchard and others (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), pp. 239–246.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁵⁶⁶ Nugent, ‘The Tropic of Amazon: Missing Peoples and Lingering Metaphors’, p. 87.

⁵⁶⁷ Pinney, ‘The Parallel Histories of Anthropology and Photography’, p. 87.

⁵⁶⁸ Nugent, ‘The Tropic of Amazon: Missing Peoples and Lingering Metaphors’, p. 77.

⁵⁶⁹ Cox, ‘Purifying Bodies, Translating Race: The Lantern Slides of Sir Everard im Thurn, History of Photography’, 348–364.

held at the National Museum of Scotland (NMS) and certain photographs at the RAI.⁵⁷⁰ These slides, which he used in his presentations, were retouched by im Thurn to highlight the people and leave the landscape with a sense of mystery (Figure 4.1).⁵⁷¹ As Deborah Poole says, im Thurn was blocking the ‘distracting backgrounds and contexts’ surrounding his photographic subjects.⁵⁷² Besides this, im Thurn’s focus ‘was on the *human*, but his anthropological perception of photography excluded, as did the racial photography he opposed, the *visual excess* of context and the *off-frame*’.⁵⁷³



Figure 4.1. ‘True Carib Boys’ by E.F. im Thurn (no.75, Royal Anthropological Institute)

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 348-364.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 348-364.

⁵⁷² Deborah Poole, ‘An Excess of Description: Ethnography, Race, and Visual Technologies’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 34 (2005), 159–179.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, 159-179.

4.4. ‘Scenes in the Interior of British Guiana’

The photos of *Mauritia flexuosa* L.f. and *Attalea maripa* (Aubl.) Mart. (Figure 4.2), which will be discussed in this section, were not sent to Kew by im Thurn.⁵⁷⁴ These photographs had a letter attached, dated from 1998, showing that they were sent by Dr Reginald Child’s wife, Mrs F.M. Child. In the letter, Mrs Child explained that the photographs she was sending to Kew belonged to her husband, Dr Child, who was the Director of the Coconut Research Institute in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. Attached to this letter was a reply from Dr John Dransfield, who used to be the Senior Principal Scientific Officer (Palms) at Kew. Dransfield wrote that ‘we have collections of palms from British Guiana made by im Thurn who appears to have taken the two photographs and I suspect we may actually have material of the very palms in the pictures’.

It is important to notice that both palm photographs (Figure 4.2) that Kew holds have a Norton Brothers mark at the right bottom corner of the picture, which does not happen in the photographs by these brothers at the RGS.⁵⁷⁵ However, the handwriting in the frame of both photographs is likely to be im Thurn’s and the locality noted, Maccassema, was actually near Pomeroun, one of the places where he lived.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁴ The Palm photographs were found at the Palm Room at Kew where there is a collection of photographs only concerning the palm families which are organised by alphabetical order; *Attalea maripa* (Aubl.) Mart. is the accepted name, although in the photograph it appears as *Maximiliana martiana* H.Karst., which is a synonym (Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, ‘World Checklist of Selected Plant Families’ <<http://apps.kew.org/wcsp/>> [accessed 6 February 2012].

⁵⁷⁵ Lowri Jones personal communication 2009.

⁵⁷⁶ Alleyne Leechman, *The British Guiana Handbook 1913: Containing General and Statistical Information Concerning the Colony, Its Industries, Manufactures and Commerce*, ed. by Alleyne Leechman (The Argosy, 1913), p. 23.



Figure 4.2. From left to right: ‘Æta Palm *Mauritia flexuosa*, Maccassema’ by Norton Brothers, British Guiana; ‘Kokerite Palms *Maximiliana martiana*, overgrown by *Clusias* at Maccassema’ by Norton Brothers, British Guiana (Kew)

Norton Brothers was a photographic company active in Georgetown between 1876 and 1890, representatives of which used to accompany im Thurn on his expeditions in British Guiana. One of these was the journey to Kaieteur Falls from October to November 1878.⁵⁷⁷ As a result of this trip, a series of views were published at *Scenes in the Interior of British Guiana*, which the National Media Museum holds.⁵⁷⁸ Apparently, im Thurn used this album, or at least a very similar one, as a catalogue or portfolio, as suggested by the correspondence at Kew. Specifically, in one of his letters, im Thurn asked Kew’s Director if he was interested in some photographs that he could send later,

⁵⁷⁷ Cambridge University Library, ‘Norton Brothers’, *The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) Photographers Index*, 2004 <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/rcs_photographers/entry.php?id=353> [accessed 5 July 2010].

⁵⁷⁸ This album is stored at the National Media Museum (NMM) in Bradford, UK, and was donated by Mr Howard Ricketts; The album has references to im Thurn but it also has his signature. Besides this album by the Norton Brothers, there is another album held by the Cambridge Library entitled *Seventeen Select Photo Views – Entrance to the River Demerary and the City of Georgetown*, by C.F. Norton among other photographs of the Norton Brothers.

unmounted.⁵⁷⁹ Attached to this letter was a list of objects sent, in which the album *Scenes from Guiana* was included.⁵⁸⁰ In a later letter, im Thurn stated that the photograph book arrived safely and he was happy to send the six photographs to Kew, which the director named for the museum.⁵⁸¹ This album was sent by im Thurn to different institutions as a portfolio. In the album, the different views from British Guiana were displayed, and possible buyers could choose the photographs they were interested in. Through the correspondence it is noted that im Thurn sent six photographs of this album to Kew in 1880.⁵⁸² As these photographs belonged to the album *Scenes from Guiana* and had similar photographs to the ones Norton Brothers made, it was expected that Kew would have obtained identical photos to the ones kept at the NMM. Furthermore, some photographs at Kew show this similarity, although the photograph titles were slightly different. For example, one of the photos at Kew has the title ‘Wood cutting grant at Sacarara, Purple heart timber (*Copaifera*) in foreground’ (Figure 4.3) but the same photograph at NMM is entitled ‘Wood-cutting grant at Sacarara, No. 1’. Im Thurn would have changed the title of the chosen photo according to the interest of the person or institution. The photograph at Kew was stored in the Economy Botany Photograph Collection, which is where the photographs on display at the Kew Museums are kept, so it is possible that this particular photograph was exhibited at one of the Kew Museums.

⁵⁷⁹ Kew, MS Director’s Correspondence, English Letters, Vol. 90: 40–52, From Everard im Thurn, College Road, Dulwich, 26 April 1880 to [William Thiselton-Dyer].

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸¹ Kew, MS Director’s Correspondence, English Letters, Vol. 90: 40–52, From Everard im Thurn, College Road, Dulwich, 19 May 1880 to [William Thiselton-Dyer].

⁵⁸² RBG, Kew, MS Director’s Correspondence, English Letters, Vol. 90: 40–52, From Everard im Thurn, Dulwich, 21 May 1880 to [William Thiselton-Dyer].



Figure 4.3. 'Wood cutting grant at Sacarara, Purple heart timber (*Copaifera*) in foreground' signed by E.F. im Thurn, 1880 (Kew)

It is difficult to know for certain who produced the original photograph, whether it was by Norton Brothers or im Thurn, as the same photograph at Kew was signed by im Thurn and the other at NMM by Norton Brothers. However, I believe that both have credit because it is clear that they were working together. On one hand, it is likely that im Thurn was learning about photography with the photographic company and, on the other, Norton Brothers benefited from going on expeditions with such an expert and experienced guide as im Thurn.

Nonetheless, it is also important to see these photographs within the context of the collections at Kew. It is likely that they were kept because they are related to plant species and could provide extra data that the herbarium specimen itself could not. These particular photographs (Figures 4.2 and 4.3), besides providing information about the habitat where the species could be found, also give an idea of how the species were being explored in British Guiana. In the case of the photograph of the purple heart timber (Figure 4.3), the image was included in the Economic Botany Collection so it is likely that it was used for educational purposes and was on display at the Kew Museum.

Here, the idea was to inform the public about the different species of wood, and this photograph fitted in well within the collection.

Another point is that in the album *Scenes in the Interior of British Guiana* a similar photograph of the palm *Mauritia flexuosa* L.f., entitled *Group of Æta Palms at Bartica Grove* was also included. As this palm was a very common plant in im Thurn's time, it is not surprising that this particular species was photographed. Im Thurn's reports have several references to palms and to the species *Mauritia flexuosa* in particular (Figure 4.4). Im Thurn described it as probably the 'most abundantly distributed of all the palms of Guiana, growing in every district'⁵⁸³; Alfred Wallace said it was 'one of the most noble and majestic of the American palms'.⁵⁸⁴



Figure 4.4. Herbarium specimen of *M. flexuosa*, Corentyne River, British Guiana (im Thurn no. VII, Kew)

⁵⁸³ Everard F. im Thurn, 'Palms of British Guiana', *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 3 (1884).

⁵⁸⁴ Alfred Russel Wallace, *Palm Trees of the Amazon and Their Uses* (London: John Van Voorst, 1853).

Apparently, Sir Walter Raleigh was the first to bring the fruits of this species to Europe.⁵⁸⁵ *Mauritia flexuosa*, also known as *ata* or *ité* palm, has innumerable uses and is used by the Amerindians for food, drink and clothing (it is also known as the *tree of life*).⁵⁸⁶ The seeds can be eaten, the leaves are used for thatching roofs, the pith for mats, sails and wrestling shields, the leaf stalk for sandals and musical instruments, and sap for drinks, and fibre from the young leaf called *tibisiri* is used for making hammocks, sandals and baskets.⁵⁸⁷ Some of these objects, such as the wrestling shield and sandals, will be discussed during this chapter.

Here, it is important to note the trajectory of these photographs, the story behind them as related to change of ownership and physical location. This shows the ‘complex patterns of values and relationships ascribed to photographs are momentarily fixed only to change again’.⁵⁸⁸ In the example of the palm photographs, some parts of the story are missing. They were probably sent from British Guiana, maybe given or sold by Norton Brothers or im Thurn, and later ended up in the hands of Dr Child in Sri Lanka, perhaps as part of his photograph collection. The only part of the story that is known for sure is that the photographs of palms were given by Dr Child’s wife to Kew in 1998. It is fascinating to look at these photographs and imagine how much they travelled: from South America, maybe to Europe, Sri Lanka and then Europe (again), or more precisely London. These same photographs were given different meanings, value, had different owners, and could be found in various localities through time.

⁵⁸⁵ Anonymous, ‘Occasional Notes: Sir Robert Schomburgk on the Ité Palm’, *Timebri, The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana*, 5 (1886), 121–122.

⁵⁸⁶ Im Thurn, ‘Palms of British Guiana’, p. 30; At the Kew herbarium there are two herbarium specimen of *M. flexuosa* that were collected by im Thurn in Orealla, Corentyne River in 1879 and another one by G.S. Jenman in 1890.

⁵⁸⁷ Mary Noel Menezes, *The Amerindians in Guyana, 1803-1873: A Documentary History* (London: Routledge, 1979).

⁵⁸⁸ Edwards and Hart, ‘Introduction: Photographs as Objects’, pp. 1-15.

4.5. From Photographs to Wrestling Shields and Dresses

In Im Thurn's paper 'Anthropological Uses of the Camera' he writes about a game played by the Warraus where 'each player - and in this game the males only take part - is provided with a large shield made of the leaf-stalks of the *ata* or ité palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*)'.⁵⁸⁹ He adds that in the game 'each pair of players, the one pressing his shield against that of the other, each strives to overthrow the other'.⁵⁹⁰ His description about the game of the Warraus ethnic group provides a clue to one of the photographs held by the RGS archives (Figure 4.5).⁵⁹¹



Figure 4.5. 'Warran Indians of Guyana, 1890' photograph by Im Thurn (Royal Geographical Society)

This particular photograph demonstrates Im Thurn's interests: anthropology and photography. Im Thurn also added notes and titles to these photographs, which, according to Elizabeth Edwards were 'cultural markers'. As Edwards argues, 'The photographic frame was often saturated with cultural markers of the stereotype, and

⁵⁸⁹ Im Thurn, 'Anthropological Uses of the Camera', 198.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁵⁹¹ Photograph no. S0011301, Royal Geographical Society, 'Im Thurn'.

anchored through a distancing or generalizing text.⁵⁹² Im Thurn's captions such as 'Macusi in dancing dress', 'Arawaks – beating time for the dancers', 'Warraus with cake of *ata* bread'⁵⁹³, thus constituted 'an ethnographic massing of representation of peoples, regardless of the photographic discourse from which they emerged'.⁵⁹⁴

Regarding the wrestling shields (Figure 4.6), similar shields were donated by im Thurn in 1881 to the British Museum and in 1893 to the Pitt Rivers Museum, which are still on display today.⁵⁹⁵



Figure 4.6. Wrestling shields (Pitt Rivers Museum)

These wrestling shields (known as ha-ha) were used by Warraus on ceremonial occasions. They were made from horizontal bars of ité palm pith bound together by

⁵⁹² Edwards, 'Photography and the Making of the Other', p. 245.

⁵⁹³ Titles from photographs stored at RAI (Photo Archives: Box 87, im Thurn, S. & C. America: Guyana, Venezuela, 604-652, 5693).

⁵⁹⁴ Edwards, 'Photography and the Making of the Other', p. 245.

⁵⁹⁵ Cat. no.1893.6.2, Pitt Rivers Museum and Cat. no.Am1881C2.1558, British Museum.

three long vertical sticks, the ends of which were ornamented with fibre tassels.⁵⁹⁶ On this ceremony a challenge would be made and accepted, and the opponents would take up the shields and stand firmly facing each other (from behind their shields) holding the shields in the hands by the two sides.⁵⁹⁷ After making several feinting moves, the opponents would push each other by the shield, the winner being the one who dislodged the other from his position.⁵⁹⁸

In Im Thurn's paper he also acknowledges a 'photograph of a Partamona (Ackawoi) red man in a curious dress made and worn for a special festival celebrated by those people and called Parasheera'.⁵⁹⁹ Im Thurn describes the dress: it 'consists of three parts, which may be described as skirt, cloak, and mask, all made of the bright greenish-yellow, immature leaves of the palm *Mauritia flexuosa*'.⁶⁰⁰ This paper had an illustration of the photograph that helped to easily identify the photo housed in the archives of the RGS (Figure 4.7).



Figure 4.7. From left to right: 'Indian in traditional costume, British Guiana' by Im Thurn 1890 (S0011306, RGS); Photograph of the Parishara dancer taken in 2002 (Walter Roth Museum)

⁵⁹⁶ Pitt Rivers Museum Object Collection Database.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁹ Im Thurn, 'Anthropological Uses of the Camera', 195.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 195.

This celebration is known as Parasheera or Parishara and is an Amerindian dance in which the dancers are wearing costumes that can be made of *Mauritia flexuosa* or *Maximiliana regia*. The dance is associated with various forest animals, especially the peccary.⁶⁰¹ The leaf dress relates to the palm trees growing along the edge of the forest and in the savannah swamps. The palm fruits attract animals such as the peccaries, which are an important source of meat for people. According to the Amerindians, this dance heralds bountiful meat and fish to feed the people.⁶⁰² Although since the 1980s this celebration has become less and less common, in 2002 the UNESCO Project 'Preservation and Revitalization of Community Art Forms' brought back the tradition and involved most inhabitants of the Makushi village of Karasabai in South Pakaraimas sub-district and the Wapishana village of Maruranau. The idea was to study the Makushi and Wapishana custom, given that it was common in both cultures yet slowly disappearing.⁶⁰³ The project not only allowed the study of this tradition but also gave the possibility for the younger generations to witness such an event for the first time, and perhaps continue with this tradition.

The study of im Thurn's photographs also illustrates his ideas about collecting. His photographs reveal not only the kinds of objects he was interested in (for example, the shields mentioned above), but also his enormous interest in anthropology. Im Thurn's perspective on acquiring local objects is also worthy of attention. He was not particularly interested in collecting several objects just for the sake of it. As an example of this, im Thurn mentions the dress cited above stating:

⁶⁰¹ Gerard Pereira, 'The Parishara Dance' (Georgetown, Guyana: Walter Roth Museum).

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*

Probably there is not an example of this dress in any existing museum; for it is probable that no white man except myself has ever seen it, and I frankly confess that I was deterred, as has often been the case under similar circumstances, from bringing away an example of the dress by the consideration that when seen off the body of the wearer it would look like nothing in the world but a small bundle of withered palm leaves, and would to the uninitiated seem supremely uninteresting.⁶⁰⁴

He adds that

A good series of photographs showing each of the possessions of a primitive folk, and its use, would be far more instructive and far more interesting than any collection of the articles themselves (...) or, if it is desired to illustrate not the possessions but the habits of such folk, the thing can be done in the same way.⁶⁰⁵

Although Im Thurn suggests that he was not particularly interested in collecting objects, his collections indicate exactly the opposite. Im Thurn collected a very reasonable number of objects (around 240) which are spread across different institutions in Britain.

⁶⁰⁴ Im Thurn, 'Anthropological Uses of the Camera', 197.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 197.

4.6. The Forgotten Photographs

4.6.1. Photograph of a ‘Flower of *Aristolochia* used as a Hat by a Native of British Guiana’

The Economic Botany Photograph Collection in the Travel and Map Room at Kew, holds a photograph by im Thurn unknown until the present work (Figure 4.8).⁶⁰⁶ This peculiar photograph entitled ‘Flower of *Aristolochia gigas* var. *sturtevantii* used as a Hat by a Native of British Guiana’ brings together im Thurn’s interests, namely botany, anthropology and photography.⁶⁰⁷



Figure 4.8. ‘Flower of *Aristolochia gigas* var. *sturtevantii* used as a Hat by a Native of British Guiana’ by E.F. im Thurn 1897 (Kew)

⁶⁰⁶ This particular photograph collection is stored at the Travels and Maps Room, Kew.

⁶⁰⁷ Although, the species on the title of the photo is *Aristolochia gigas* var. *sturtevantii*, the accepted name nowadays is *Aristolochia grandiflora* Sw. and belongs to the Aristolochiaceae family (Missouri Botanical Garden).

This photograph displays a more artistic style, which was not so clear in Im Thurn's previous photographs. Im Thurn probably wanted to focus the attention exclusively on the Amerindian boy. However, the flower the boy is wearing as a hat gives a completely different meaning to Im Thurn's photographs. It is possible to note a transformation of Im Thurn's style by the way he pictures the boy. Here, Im Thurn shows that he is more comfortable with the camera by becoming more adventurous and even artistic in the way he composes the photograph. On the other hand, Im Thurn criticised the photographs in which the Amerindians do not appear 'in their natural state' or are adorned with clothes, and here the Amerindian boy is adorned with the flower.⁶⁰⁸ Despite this, in the above photograph it seems that the Amerindian boy is posing in a studio and he is adorned with a flower, which contradicts Im Thurn's idea of taking photographs of the Amerindians 'in their natural state'.

Nonetheless, this photograph is striking in many ways. The title of the photograph – '...native from British Guiana' – leads us to think that the photograph was taken somewhere in Guyana. However, the geographic range of the species *Aristolochia grandiflora* Sw., which the Amerindian boy wears as a hat, does not include Guyana.⁶⁰⁹ Even so, there is the possibility that this species could have been cultivated, presumably from seeds sent from Trinidad or Jamaica, where it occurs. Still, the reason for the photograph remains puzzling. First of all, a plant not native from Guyana and, at most,

⁶⁰⁸ Im Thurn, 'Anthropological Uses of the Camera', 186.

⁶⁰⁹ The species *Aristolochia grandiflora* Sw. is the accepted name for *Aristolochia gigas* var. *sturtevantii* S.Watson. This species has the longest flowers on Earth and is short-lived flower (three days) of a continual blooming tropical liana. It has various common names: pelican-flower, duck-flower (Guatemala, Mexico), swan-flower (Jamaica), poisoned hogmeat (Jamaica), dutchman's pipe, among other names. The distribution of *Aristolochia grandiflora* includes Mexico, Central America, Cuba, Jamaica, Colombia, Trinidad, and Ecuador. However, the species has been introduced and cultivated in other countries, including Brazil. The herbarium specimens at Kew of *A. grandiflora* are from Guatemala, Mexico, Belize, El Salvador, Jamaica and Trinidad, and there are no specimens of this species collected in Guyana at the Kew herbarium. Concerning the uses of *A. grandiflora*, it can be used as an abortifacient, antiasthmatic, antidepressant, antimalarial, anti-ophidian, antirheumatic, aromatic and astringent, and for the treatment of cholera, chills, yellow fever, liver diseases, malaria, rabies, tetanus and syphilis. For more information please see María Angélica Bello, Hamleth Valois-Cuesta and Favio González, 'Aristolochia Grandiflora Sw. (Aristolochiaceae): Desarrollo y Morfología De La Flor Más Larga Del Mundo', *Rev. Acad. Colomb. Cienc.*, 30 (2006), 181–194; K. S. Burgess and others, 'Pollination Biology of *Aristolochia Grandiflora* (Aristolochiaceae) in Veracruz, Mexico', *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden*, 91 (2004), 346–356.

being a recent acquaintance to the natives, this species would probably have been treated with some care. The Kuna, for example, prevented their children from touching and looking at these flowers because, according to them, they could stain their face like the stains present in the flower (Figure 4.9).⁶¹⁰ Whether the natives knew that this species was toxic or not is unclear, but this plant is currently known by its toxic effect in humans, consisting mainly of severe liver and kidney damage.⁶¹¹ This toxicity has led to the ban, at least in Europe, of medicines containing derivatives of *Aristolochia*.⁶¹²



Figure 4.9. Flower of *Aristolochia grandiflora* ⁶¹³

The reason why im Thurn chose this particular assemblage of elements in this photo is unclear. It can be viewed as a mere artistic composition, combining in the same photo two otherwise alien elements. It is not only the presence of a non-native flower but also how this same flower was probably manipulated by the photographer and placed on the head of the boy. However, the human element is not passive in this photo. The boy's expression conveys a blurred message, something between shyness

⁶¹⁰ Bello and others, 'Aristolochia Grandiflora Sw. (Aristolochiaceae): Desarrollo y Morfología De La Flor Más Larga Del Mundo', 181-182.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 181-182.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 181-182.

⁶¹³ Daniel Mosquin, 'Aristolochia grandiflora', *UBC Botanical Garden and Centre for Plant Research*, 2008 <http://www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org/potd/2008/10/aristolochia_grandiflora_tentative.php> [accessed 7 July 2010].

and fear – a scared Amerindian boy. Although it is difficult to have a perception of what he was feeling at the time, the book *Legends and Myths of the Aboriginal Indians of British Guiana* refers the reactions of the Amerindians towards the photographer and his camera.

Some had thought that photography was 'not quite right';
And the artist's strange movements seemed magical quite
So that old man had shifted his place on the sand,
And caused a great deal of delay;
For the camera's use he could not understand,
Though he saw it was not meant to play.
Some had said 'twas 'a gun':
And – though he would not run –
To have it aimed at him seemed very queer fun;
And he kept getting out of the way.⁶¹⁴

In this poem, which supposedly describes the Amerindian's curiosity towards the camera, this instrument was seen as a gun, something bizarre and 'not quite right', causing suspicion among the Arawaks. It is important to bear in mind that any photographic encounter required cooperation from the people being photographed, in this case the Amerindian boy.⁶¹⁵ The reasons why the boy cooperated are difficult to know for certain, but they could be fear, sense of obligation or even inducement.⁶¹⁶ Although nowadays most Amerindians in Guyana are happy to appear in photographs, there are certain places in the country such as Karukubaru where they believe that their spirit could be trapped when the photograph is taken.⁶¹⁷ Im Thurn also mentions a time when he persuaded the Amerindians 'to stand in front of such a terrible object as a camera to be photographed'.⁶¹⁸ However, Im Thurn says the Amerindians repeatedly

⁶¹⁴ W.H. Brett, 'The Cannibal Mounds', in *Legends and Myths of the Aboriginal Indian of British Guiana* (Chilworth and London: Unwin Brothers, The Gresham Press, 1880), pp. 30–35.

⁶¹⁵ Nicolas Peterson, 'The Changing Photographic Contract', in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. by Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 119–145.

⁶¹⁶ Peterson, 'The Changing Photographic Contract', 123–124.

⁶¹⁷ Neil Marks, 'GUY-05: Of Pakaraimas and Patamunas: A Tribe Clings to Its Language for Survival of Its Culture', *Guyana Chronicle*, 2006
<<http://premiereportagem.org.br/article.sub?docId=20224&c=Guiana&cRef=Guyana&year=2006&date=abril 2006>> [accessed 9 August 2012].

⁶¹⁸ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 369.

defeated his purpose and reacted by ‘clapping their hands over their eyes at the moment the cap of the apparatus was withdrawn, lest the terrible eye of the camera should see them’.⁶¹⁹ Here, it is clear that the Amerindians did not want to be photographed, so it is likely that im Thurn had to be very persuasive for them to take the photographs he wanted. How he achieved his goal we do not know.

In the case of the boy, he could be simply reacting to an obscure element, intensively real to him. An element that the camera could only capture indirectly, through the boys’ bodily expressions – the pungent and unpleasant smell of the *Aristolochia*, an intensive odour used to attract fly pollinators.⁶²⁰ This hidden element might explain the bodily expression of the Amerindian boy – arms folded near the chest, his hands near his nose. One could argue that he is trying to cope with the intense and unpleasant scent of the giant flower.

Knowing the species that the Amerindian boy was wearing as a hat, makes it possible to infer several meanings embedded in this photograph. The species, besides being a botanical curiosity, is also known as a medicinal and magical plant. *Aristolochia grandiflora* does not occur in Guyana, which probably added even more interest to the species in question. This photograph suggests an assemblage of different knowledge: botanical, medicinal, and artistic. However, it conveys a much deeper message. One that could be seen as a reflection of that moment in time. A time of exploration, of recombination of elements otherwise apart by nature or human will. A time of new perspectives, no matter how toxic or unpleasant. A time of power: the power to combine what nature had kept apart – the frightened boy and the misleadingly unpleasant flower.

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

⁶²⁰ Burgess and others, ‘Pollination Biology of *Aristolochia Grandiflora* (Aristolochiaceae) in Veracruz, Mexico’, 346.

4.6.2. Photographs of Palms

In the correspondence at Kew, im Thurn asks if the institution is interested in photographs of palms ‘as he has negatives of a great many species and would be glad to provide copies if desired’.⁶²¹ In the same letter, there is a note from Kew stating that the ‘photographs would be most desirable’ to have.⁶²² As mentioned before in section 4.2, im Thurn sent photographs to Kew and thirty-seven were received. In addition to the two photographs of palms referred to in section 4.4., there are two more photographs stored in the same palm room at Kew that are worth analysing.

These two photographs are signed on the back by im Thurn and have an uncommon frame, not seen in his other photographs at Kew (Figure 4.10). Entitled ‘*Wallichia densiflora* in my garden’ and ‘*Astrocaryum gynacanthum*’, they have a similar frame to the ones found among Norton Brothers’ photographs at the Cambridge Library.



Figure 4.10. From left to right: ‘*Wallichia densiflora* in my garden’ (no. III 70); ‘*Astrocaryum gynacanthum*’ (no. VI 122) - both photographs by Everard im Thurn, 1896 (Kew)

⁶²¹ KLDC11630.

⁶²² *Ibid.*

Concerning the photograph of *Wallichia densiflora*, although this species only occurs from Himalaya to China, it is plausible that im Thurn got seeds and experimented in his garden by introducing foreign species, which was something he used to do.⁶²³ In one of im Thurn's letters to Kew he writes that he is looking for plants for his garden in British Guiana and is particularly interested in the species *Camoensia maxima*, an African species.⁶²⁴ Here, im Thurn asks if Kew could give some spare plants in exchange for anything from British Guiana.⁶²⁵ In addition, in a postscript note in one of im Thurn's letters, he says that some photos of his garden were going to be shown at the Forestry Exhibition, and he offered to send some to Kew.⁶²⁶ It is likely that the photograph of *W. densiflora*, which was taken in im Thurn's garden, belonged to the batch of photos shown at the Exhibition.

In relation to the photograph entitled '*Astrocaryum gynacanthum*', it is possible to notice a figure of a man likely to be Gabriel (Figure 4.11), an Amerindian im Thurn mentioned several times in his publications.⁶²⁷ Gabriel was an important figure in im Thurn's writings; he was his attendant and accompanied him along the explorer's expeditions, as he did on the Ascent of Roraima in 1884.⁶²⁸ According to im Thurn's descriptions, Gabriel was his right-hand-man and even helped the explorer with the camera in the field, as the following quote attests:⁶²⁹

⁶²³ The accepted name nowadays is *Wallichia oblongifolia* Griff in Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, 'World Checklist of Areaceae' <<http://apps.kew.org/wcsp/>> [accessed 14 February 2012]. On a photograph from EBC, Kew there is a reference of an orchid introduced by im Thurn in Fiji, more precisely in the Government house garden, from the Solomon islands. After that introduction, the orchid spread by seed over a large area of Suva peninsula.

⁶²⁴ KLDC11630.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁶ KLDC11587.

⁶²⁷ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*; Im Thurn, 'Anthropological Uses of the Camera'; Everard F. im Thurn, 'A Tramp with Redskins, Thoughts, Talks and Tramps', in *A Collection of Papers by Sir Everard im Thurn*, ed. by R.R. Marrett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934).

⁶²⁸ Dalziell, "A Tramp with Redskins".

⁶²⁹ Im Thurn, 'A Tramp with Redskins, Thoughts, Talks and Tramps'.

[Gabriel] has readily adapted himself to help me in all the many European hobbies which go to make up my life, and has even acquired sufficient of the delicacy of skill requisite to assist me in the manipulation of the camera in the field.⁶³⁰

In im Thurn's paper, there is a photograph of Gabriel entitled *Gabriel, the child of a red-skinned mother, a warrau, and a black father* (Figure 4.11) which was exhibited during im Thurn's presentation at RAI.⁶³¹ Here Gabriel, im Thurn's assistant, is portrayed as a local Amerindian, and the title of the photograph even mentions his parents' ethnic group. However, in im Thurn's photographs housed at RAI, which are more anthropological, it is rarely noted the name of the photographed person. This observation also reinforced the view that Gabriel had a relevant role in im Thurn's life. This photograph also led to the idea that the person portrayed in the photograph that Kew holds could actually be Gabriel. Nevertheless, in this photograph, Gabriel, or at least who seems to be Gabriel, appears dressed in a western way, more adapted to help im Thurn 'in all the many European hobbies', such as the manipulation of the camera, as im Thurn mentioned.

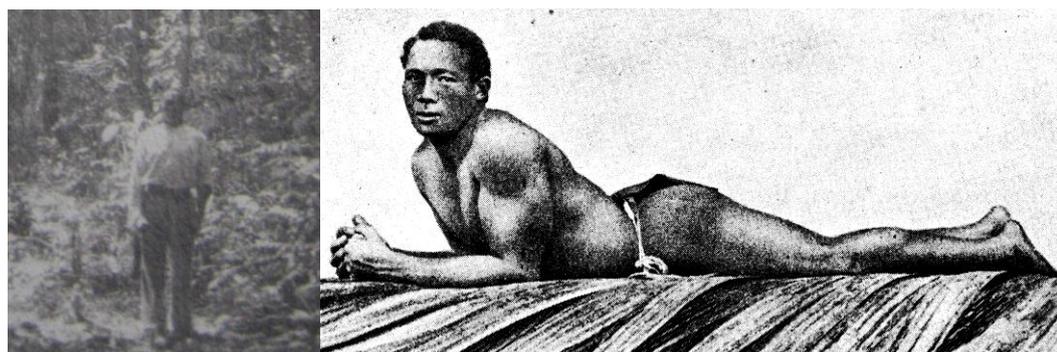


Figure 4.11. From left to right: Detail of the photograph '*Astrocaryum gynacanthum*' in which appears what seems to be Gabriel (im Thurn, no. VI 122, Kew); Image of Gabriel in one of im Thurn's papers – *Gabriel, the child of a red-skinned mother, a warrau, and a black father*

⁶³⁰ Im Thurn, 'Anthropological Uses of the Camera', 184-203.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, 184-203.

In a particular episode, im Thurn mentions that at the end of one of his journeys he realised that his last pair of shoes was worn out.⁶³² Im Thurn notes that the area where they were was very stony, even the ‘redskins’ of those stony plain regions who had ‘extraordinarily hardened feet’ still needed to wear sandals made from palm leaf stalk, usually *M. flexuosa*.⁶³³ These sandals were so hard that the Amerindians had big calluses between their toes from a lifetime of wearing sandals like these. As im Thurn could not walk without suitable footwear, his ‘faithful Gabriel’ gave him his own cricket shoes, which were a present from im Thurn.⁶³⁴ Although Gabriel was not used to hard ground, he insisted on giving the shoes back to im Thurn so he could continue the journey. It is not clear what happened afterwards, what Gabriel wore on his feet, if he actually tried the sandals made of leaf stalk or if he continued the journey barefoot.

This particular incident demonstrates Gabriel’s relation with im Thurn, but it also, reflects, as Dalziell notes, the physical challenges im Thurn faced in British Guiana as a European, as well as the ‘Amerindian solution to the problem’.⁶³⁵ Im Thurn describes his helpmate as ‘faithful Gabriel’. However, it is important to stress that this could be only a reaction from Gabriel towards im Thurn’s position of superiority, as a man of his period. This episode also reveals that im Thurn gave western gifts to Gabriel, such as the cricket shoes, which may explain the way that im Thurn’s assistant is dressed in the photograph found at Kew. The sandals mentioned by im Thurn were very similar to the ones that the British Museum holds nowadays sent by Kew in 1960 (Figure 4.12).

⁶³² Im Thurn, ‘A Tramp with Redskins, Thoughts, Talks and Tramps’, 87.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁶³⁵ Dalziell, “A Tramp with Redskins”.



Figure 4.12. Sandals made of the leaf stalk of *Mauritia flexuosa* (Am1063ab, British Museum)

Nonetheless, it is also important to mention that there are also thirteen photographs of palms that apparently belonged to G.S. Jenman, im Thurn's colleague. In these photographs, signed by Jenman, there are many notes referring that they were taken in the Botanical Gardens in Georgetown, British Guiana, where Jenman was the government botanist between 1879 and 1902.⁶³⁶ Through the correspondence it is possible to prove that Jenman actually sent photographs to Kew.⁶³⁷ Here a reference can be found on how Jenman sent a photograph of the 'two non-native West Indian palms' *Oreodoxa regia* and *O. oleracea*, which Kew still holds now.⁶³⁸ He explains that both species of palms were introduced in British Guiana around the 1800s.⁶³⁹

Kew holds a very particular photograph where the genus *Euterpe* is represented and according to the author, is similar to *O. regia*. This photograph is important because, besides showing the palm, it also portrays a peculiar couple (Figure 4.13). This particular photograph will be discussed in Chapter 5.

⁶³⁶ The paper where these photographs were mounted, varies between sugar paper and a special paper to mount photographs, similar to the one used by im Thurn; Jstor Plant Science, 'Jenman, George Samuel (1845-1902)?

⁶³⁷ KLDC11788; KLDC11704.

⁶³⁸ KLDC11788.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*

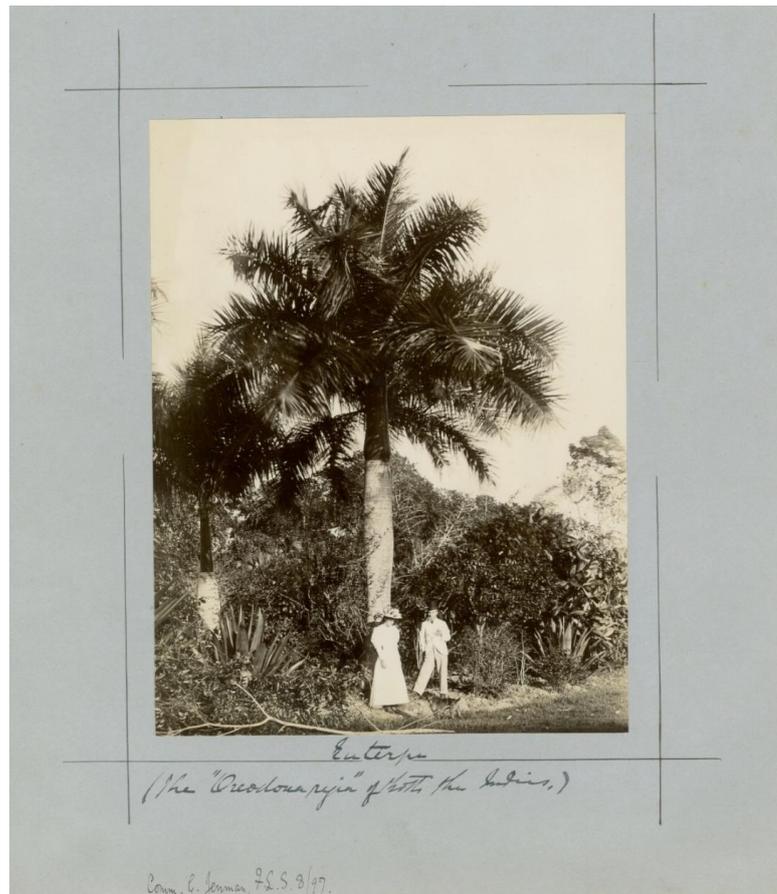


Figure 4.13. Photograph signed by G.S. Jenman (Kew)

The last photographs discussed here give an idea of which species were being introduced into British Guiana. These photographs show not only the species that were common in certain areas of British Guiana, such as the case of *M. flexuosa*, but also what was non-native in the colonies, what was 'exotic' to the colony. This is evident not only through im Thurn's photographs in which the photo of the Amerindian boy demonstrates the use of a non-native species, but also through Jenman's photographs. In Jenman's letters, he explains that the photographs he was sending were from species introduced into British Guiana. This illuminates how the photographs can be important in botanical terms to understand the course of the species and how and when they were introduced, or at least to have glimpses of how this might have happened.

The collection of photographs that Kew holds are not merely objects that document different plant species spread all over the globe. Indeed, photographs ‘are no different from other historical sources in that they must be integrated with other ways of articulating the past’.⁶⁴⁰

Photographs need to be contextualised, and in this case, correspondence and other similar photographs signed by Norton Brothers for instance, were used to understand their signifying role within im Thurn’s collections. Besides this, these forgotten photographs (Figures 4.8 and 4.10) are also extremely relevant to the understanding of im Thurn’s collections as whole, where all the materials are interconnected.

Although being housed in a botanical institution, these photographs are valuable documents not only to the study of botany, but also to the history of science and museum studies, among others. Despite its size, this fascinating collection of photographs had contributions from different botanists and explorers from all over the world, from different periods. It is likely that some of the photographs were exhibited. Using Edwards’s words, it is understandable how photographs are active participants ‘in the making of meanings around culture’ considering that they ‘were displayed, swapped, collected, taken for collectors locally’.⁶⁴¹ While ‘we expect photographs to *tell*, an effort must be made to understand and contextualise these photographs to better comprehend their role within the collections.’⁶⁴²

⁶⁴⁰ Edwards, ‘Introduction: Observations from the Coal-face’, pp. 1-23.

⁶⁴¹ Elizabeth Edwards, ‘Exchanging Photographs, Making Archives’, in *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), pp. 27–50.

⁶⁴² Siegfried Kracauer, *History: The Last Thing Before the Last*, ed. by P. O. Kristeller (Princeton, NJ: Marcus Wiener Publications, 1995). in Edwards, ‘Introduction: Observations from the Coal-face’, pp. 1-23.

4.7. Conclusion

Through his photographs, im Thurn disseminated his work not only in anthropology but also in botany. Although only five photographs signed by im Thurn were found at Kew among the thirty-seven the botanical institution received, the outcome is still insightful. In addition to im Thurn's material, unknown photographs from Norton Brothers and G. S. Jenman were also unveiled through this research.⁶⁴³ The correspondence and the signatures on the photographs indicate that Jenman was probably the author. However, as certain herbarium specimens collected by im Thurn were instead sent by Jenman (who gave his collection numbers to the specimens) there is the possibility that this might have also happened to photographs found at Kew and signed by Jenman.

Im Thurn's photographs were used in his book *Among the Indians of Guiana*, in his papers, such as 'Anthropological uses of the Camera' and for his presentations at the Royal Anthropological Institute, for instance. As the company Norton Brothers accompanied im Thurn in his expedition to the Kaieteur Falls, he had the opportunity to have a completely documented fieldtrip not only through words and reports but also, and more importantly, by images. These photographs were a tool that gave the visibility that im Thurn needed to promote his work. Photographs 'were made for a reason, for an audience, to communicate information within a culture of realism and an expectation of objectivity'.⁶⁴⁴ Besides advertising his work, the photographs also captured glimpses of British Guiana – of the Amerindians, the landscape and the vegetation. Photographs also helped to contextualise some of the objects im Thurn collected such as the wrestling shields. Im Thurn was advertising British Guiana to the world through his photographs. The album *Scenes from Guiana*, which was sent to Kew, is an example of

⁶⁴³ Two photographs by Norton Brothers and thirteen photographs by G.S. Jenman were found at Kew.

⁶⁴⁴ Joan M. Schwartz, 'We Make Our Tools and Our Tools Make Us', *Archivaria*, 1995, 40–74. in Edwards, 'Introduction: Observations from the Coal-face', pp. 1-23.

this. Considering what was mentioned in Chapter 3 about British Guiana being forgotten by its ‘mother country’, im Thurn was making efforts to make the colony visible to the British public. Im Thurn’s efforts were accomplished not only in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition through the display of objects, but also through his work, such as publications in which photography had a very important role to play. It seems that im Thurn used all the resources available, such as photographs, objects and publications, so the colony would not be forgotten by Britain.

These photographs are inevitably connected to the past but also to the future – ‘a moment, fixed and active in the present, specifically to communicate the past in the future’.⁶⁴⁵ Through im Thurn’s photographs it is possible to see these encapsulated moments and have glimpses of British Guiana in his time. In the case of the photograph of the Amerindian boy, it reveals how ethnographic photography in the colonial period encoded power relations in which Indigenous people were not only subjects but were also subjected to the camera.⁶⁴⁶ Considering that this photograph is part of the Economic Botany Photograph Collection, and taking into account the similarity of its frame with the one of the photograph ‘Wood cutting grant at Sacarara’ mentioned previously (and shown in Figure 4.3), both photographs were probably on display at the Kew Museums.

In conclusion, photographs, like other collected objects, have ‘accumulative histories that draw their significances from intersecting elements in their histories’.⁶⁴⁷ It is important to stress that the meanings attached to these objects are transformed and changed through time, so one can understand photographs as being active in social

⁶⁴⁵ Edwards, ‘Introduction: Observations from the Coal-face’, pp. 1-23.

⁶⁴⁶ Peterson, ‘The Changing Photographic Contract’, pp. 123-124.

⁶⁴⁷ Edwards, ‘Introduction: Observations from the Coal-face’, pp. 1-23.

relations – they are ‘not merely passive and inert entities to which things happen and things are done’.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁸ Christopher Gosden and Y. Marshall, ‘The Cultural Biography of Objects’, *World Archaeology*, 31 (1999), 169–178. *in* Edwards, ‘Introduction: Observations from the Coal-face’, pp. 1-23.

Chapter 5

British Guiana Through Her Eyes:
Hannah im Thurn, the Unknown Artist and the
Botanist's wife

5.1. Introduction

The women remain amusing oddities on the peripheries of imperial knowledge, and it is their extraordinary lives that provide the context for analysis rather than their contribution to British imperial culture.⁶⁴⁹

This chapter continues the focus on unrecognised and misattributed aspects of im Thurn's collections. Here, I will examine the contribution of Hannah im Thurn (Figure 5.1), Everard im Thurn's wife, to his work, particularly as an artist. I will also discuss how Hannah's work has been incorrectly credited to Everard, while situating Hannah within the context of imperial wives and their role in the British Empire. Revealing Hannah's artistic contribution to im Thurn's collections gives another perspective on im Thurn's work. The chapter will also explore the cross-cultural encounters experienced by Hannah, which shows that it was not only im Thurn who experienced these encounters.



Figure 5.1. Hannah im Thurn (National Library of Scotland)

⁶⁴⁹ Cheryl McEwan, 'Introduction', in *Gender, Geography and Empire* (Aldershot, England & Burlington, USA: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), pp. 1–24.



Figure 5.2. Detail of the photograph signed by G.S. Jenman (Kew)

As mentioned in Chapter 4, among the photographs signed by Jenman was a rare and quite peculiar one of a couple and a small dog (Figure 5.2). The couple – the bearded man in a suit, wearing a top hat and holding a cigar, and the shy woman with a hat of flowers – are almost certainly Everard and Hannah im Thurn. Not that they are identified on the card-mounted print itself. This photograph is silent in relation to the couple pictured. The photographs at Kew are not catalogued and Jenman's correspondence mentioning the photographs of palms, saying that they were taken in British Guiana is no more revealing. However, as the above photograph is from 1897 (two years after Hannah and Everard got married) and given the physical similarities between the couple portrayed here with other photographs taken, it is likely that we are

looking at the im Thurns. This photograph, besides showing the im Thurns in British Guiana, also make us wonder about the im Thurns as a couple. It make us think about Hannah's role in the relationship and also her influence in im Thurn's work. By analysing this peculiar photograph we are not merely looking at Everard, the botanist, colonial administrator, explorer and anthropologist, we are looking at the im Thurns couple, Hannah and Everard.

The epigraph at the beginning of this chapter by Cheryl McEwan highlights the fact that 'the contribution of women to British imperial culture' has been underestimated and 'the part they played in the production of imperial knowledge has been overlooked'.⁶⁵⁰ Thus, rather than just providing the context for British culture, these 'extraordinary lives' also contributed to the development of British culture itself.

Taking this into consideration, it is worth mentioning that the role of Hannah im Thurn (Figure 5.1) remains relatively neglected within studies of Everard im Thurn's collections and work. Evidence of this, is the absence of publications about Hannah im Thurn.⁶⁵¹ Within this context, this chapter seeks firstly to understand how im Thurn's wife, Hannah, was involved in Everard's collections. Secondly, as not much is known about the 'relations between women and the territories through which they travelled, and their part in the production of imperial knowledge', another aim of this chapter is to determine some of Hannah's perceptions about British Guiana and her experiences, and examine this British colony through a feminine and Victorian 'eye' so as to understand her contribution to the making of an 'imperial knowledge'.⁶⁵²

⁶⁵⁰ McEwan, 'Introduction', p. 5.

⁶⁵¹ At the time this thesis was written, the author Rosamund Dalziell was preparing a publication on im Thurn's biography with two chapters about Hannah im Thurn (Dalziell personal communication, October 2011).

⁶⁵² McEwan, 'Introduction', p. 5.

Despite the restrictions towards race, social class and gender from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, an increasing number of women were travelling abroad and expressing their ideas and experiences by writing books and presenting lectures, for instance.⁶⁵³ It has nonetheless been argued that in spite of the increasing attention paid to the ‘texts of women travel writers, much of this has focused upon the women themselves as individual rebels against the constraints of Victorian society’.⁶⁵⁴ The case of Hannah im Thurn is a fine example of a woman who remained within the boundaries of acceptable feminine behaviour. She was neither independent nor travelling by herself; rather, she was accompanying her husband to British Guiana where he was Government Agent in the North-West District. In fact, it is possible to infer that Hannah im Thurn was travelling with ‘the sense of duty’ implicit ‘in the role of wife’ by accompanying her husband and supporting him in his post in the British colony.⁶⁵⁵ Conversely, Helen Callaway and Dorothy Helly argue that in the ‘contemporaneous accounts of British imperialism’ the wives of colonial administrators and officials were ‘representations of the worst aspects of colonialism: its racism, snobbery and eurocentrism’.⁶⁵⁶ I suggest that this does not apply to Hannah considering for instance her apparent sympathy towards the Amerindians, which will be discussed later.

As it was mentioned previously, Hannah was accompanying Everard. However, it has to be recognised that although Hannah travelled to different places with her husband, including British Guiana, Paris, London, Ceylon and Fiji, and wrote to her family from those places, she was not a travel writer. However, Hannah’s writings provide traces of her experiences, points of view and thoughts about the places she was living at the time.

Giving that currently there are no publications on Hannah’s life or work, the analysis of

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁵⁵ Cheryl McEwan, ‘Travel, Text and Empowerment’, in *Gender, Geography and Empire* (Aldershot, England & Burlington, USA: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), pp. 25–63. p. 29.

⁶⁵⁶ Helen Callaway and Dorothy Helly, ‘Crusader for Empire: Flora Shaw/Lady Lugard’, in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Imperialism*, ed. by N. Chaudhuri and M. Strobel (Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 79–97. in McEwan, ‘Introduction’, p. 5.

Hannah's writings was based on primary sources, such as Hannah's correspondence from British Guiana, particularly to her mother, which is held at the National Library of Scotland, photographs at Kellie Castle and newspapers articles from that period.⁶⁵⁷

5.2. Hannah im Thurn (née Cassels Lorimer) (1854–1947)

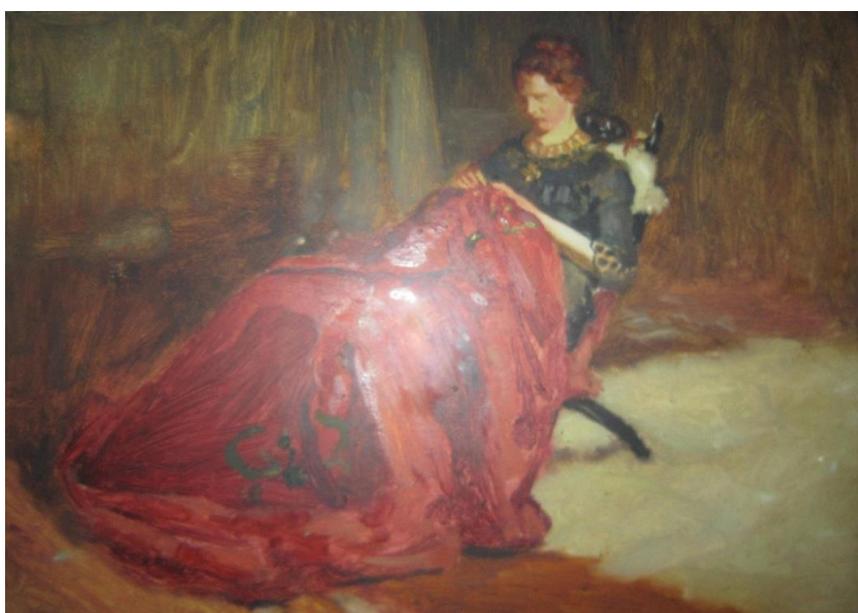


Figure 5.3. 'Painting of Hannah Lorimer Sewing' by J.H. Lorimer (Kellie Castle, National Trust for Scotland)

Although much has been written about Everard im Thurn, the same cannot be said of his wife Hannah. Therefore, documenting her presence has been challenging. Little is known about Hannah im Thurn herself (7 December 1854–6 March 1947) (née Hannah Cassels Lorimer), apart from the fact she was an artist⁶⁵⁸ from Edinburgh⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁷ Hannah im Thurn's letters from Morawhanna [British Guiana], ACC8695/no. 126 (i), National Library of Scotland.

⁶⁵⁸ Dalziell, 'Everard im Thurn in British Guiana and the Western Pacific', pp. 97-118; Hannah im Thurn also appears at the PRM Database as an artist *in* Pitt Rivers Museum, 'Hannah C. Im Thurn', *Relational Museum Collector Information*, 2006 <http://history.prm.ox.ac.uk/collector_3899.html> [accessed 12 March

who married im Thurn on 15 August 1895 in Scotland.⁶⁶⁰ Hannah Cassels Lorimer was one of six children by Hannah Riddle and James Lorimer – a distinguished international lawyer, political philosopher and Professor of Public Law at the University of Edinburgh.⁶⁶¹ The Lorimers are known mainly because of Hannah’s brothers, John Henry Lorimer (1856–1936) the painter, and Robert Lorimer (1864–1929) the architect.⁶⁶² J.H. Lorimer also painted Everard im Thurn’s portrait held at the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, Glasgow (Figure 5.4).⁶⁶³ Hannah’s sister, Janet, was also connected with British Guiana as wife of Sir David Chalmers, Chief Justice of the Colony.⁶⁶⁴



Figure 5.4. ‘Sir Everard im Thurn’ by J. H. Lorimer (Royal Scottish Geographical Society, Glasgow)⁶⁶⁵

2012]; Anonymous, ‘Edinburgh University’, *The Englishwoman’s Review* (London, 1880), p. 208; Rivière, p. Pitt Rivers Museum.

⁶⁵⁹ Marett, ‘Sir Everard im Thurn, K.C.M.G., K.B.E., C.B.’, p. xxii.

⁶⁶⁰ Everard F. im Thurn to Sir William Thiselton-Dyer, from Kellie Castle, Pittenweem, Fife, North Britain [Scotland]; 27 July 1895; RBG, Kew (KLDC11632).

⁶⁶¹ I. Gow, H. Horrocks and S. Williamson, ‘The National Trust for Scotland, Kelly Castle and Garden’ (Edinburgh, 2008).

⁶⁶² Gow and others, ‘The National Trust for Scotland, Kelly Castle and Garden’.

⁶⁶³ Im Thurn, ‘A Tramp with Redskins, Thoughts, Talks and Tramps’; This particular portrait was analysed by Dalziell, ‘Everard im Thurn in British Guiana and the Western Pacific’, pp. 97-118.

⁶⁶⁴ Marett, ‘Sir Everard im Thurn, K.C.M.G., K.B.E., C.B.’, p. xxii.

⁶⁶⁵ Image from the book: Im Thurn, ‘A Tramp with Redskins, Thoughts, Talks and Tramps’.

Regarding J.H. Lorimer's paintings, and besides Everard im Thurn's portrait, in October 2000, Christie's in Edinburgh sold the original work 'A Peaceful Art' by J.H., where a scene at Kellie Castle shows J.H.'s sisters and his mother (Figure 5.5).⁶⁶⁶ The painting depicts his mother reading while both sisters, Hannah and Louise, are doing embroidery. Hannah appears in the foreground with her hair covered. The painting itself led to an important source of information: the Kellie Castle at Fife, Scotland. The castle, which is now part of the National Trust for Scotland, belonged to the Lorimer family and currently holds paintings and other pieces of art by the family.⁶⁶⁷ Among these, are pictures by her brother, including one representing Hannah, and photographs and other paintings by Hannah, which will be examined below in this chapter.



Figure 5.5. From left to right: 'A Peaceful Art' by J.H. Lorimer, and the same room at one of the towers at Kellie Castle nowadays (October 2011)

⁶⁶⁶ Christie's, 'John Henry Lorimer, R.S.A. (1856-1936), A Peaceful Art', *Sale 6360/Lot 124*, 2012 <http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=1891284> [accessed 7 March 2012].

⁶⁶⁷The National Trust for Scotland, 'Kellie Castle & Garden', *Places to visit*, 2012 <<http://www.nts.org.uk/Property/Kellie-Castle-Garden/>> [accessed 7 March 2012].

5.3. British Guiana Through Hannah's Drawings and Letters

After marrying Everard in August 1895, Hannah im Thurn departed from England, Southampton with her husband on the ship *Para*, whose destination was Demerara, British Guiana, where it arrived on 25 September of the same year.⁶⁶⁸ Hannah im Thurn's stay in British Guiana was a brief one though.⁶⁶⁹ An analysis of her correspondence with her mother reveals a few glimpses of Hannah as a person and her impressions about this British colony. Hannah's letters were sent from Morawhanna, a remote place in the border between Guyana and Venezuela some fifty miles from Mount Everard, which is probably named after Everard im Thurn.⁶⁷⁰ Hannah and Everard were living in the government house that im Thurn built.⁶⁷¹ The Beebes – a couple who made ornithological expeditions to Venezuela and British Guiana and visited the area a few years later – said the house was surrounded by a magnificent garden (Figure 5.6).⁶⁷² It was located in the North-West District of Morawhanna and im Thurn described it in a letter dated from 1890, five years before he got married, saying that he was sorry to leave Pomeroun and its beautiful house, although he 'has comforted himself by setting up a very nice house in this district [North-West District] and the rudiments of a very nice garden'.⁶⁷³

⁶⁶⁸ Findmypast, 'Im Thurn', *Passenger lists leaving UK 1890-1960*, 2012

<<http://www.findmypast.co.uk/passengerListBrowseVoyages.action?departureYear=1895&browseType=1>> [accessed 27 March 2012].

⁶⁶⁹ Rosamund Dalziell personal communication, October 2011.

⁶⁷⁰ Mary Blair Beebe and C. William Beebe, *Our Search For a Wilderness: An Account of Two Ornithological Expeditions to Venezuela And to British Guiana* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1910). As far as I am aware there are no records of when Mount Everard was named and by whom.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁶⁷³ KLDC11623.



Figure 5.6. The government house built by Everard im Thurn at Morawhanna ⁶⁷⁴

In many ways Hannah im Thurn was a woman of exceptional ability. She managed to study Arts at the University of Edinburgh,⁶⁷⁵ which was unusual in a period when few women had access to higher education.⁶⁷⁶ She left the comfort of Scotland to live in the tropical British Guiana solitude after marrying Everard. He was forty-three years old and Hannah was already forty-one when she got married, an advanced age compared with most marriages at the time. It is likely that the marriage was one of companionship, as Everard needed company in British Guiana and here, Hannah, too was a mature woman. The correspondence between Hannah and Everard does not strike twenty-first century readers as very romantic, and the letters Hannah and her mother exchanged reflect the sense that the couple seem to be just good friends, which

⁶⁷⁴ Beebe and Beebe, *Our Search For a Wilderness: An Account of Two Ornithological Expeditions to Venezuela And to British Guiana*, p. 143.

⁶⁷⁵ Anonymous, 'Edinburgh University', p. 208; Hannah was one of the five ladies who got the Certificate in Arts from the University of Edinburgh in 1880.

⁶⁷⁶ Barbara T. Gates, 'Cataloguing the Natural World: Case Studies of Women Naturalists', in *Kindred Nature: Victorian and Edwardian Women Embrace the Living World* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 66–109.

reinforces the idea of a marriage of convenience.⁶⁷⁷ Hannah accompanied her husband to this British colony, but most of the time im Thurn was away, or preparing expeditions in the interior of the country.⁶⁷⁸ For im Thurn, these expeditions ‘in the company of local Amerindian people constituted one of the most intensely felt pleasures of his life’.⁶⁷⁹ Hannah seemed to have accepted the role of a colonial wife by providing comfort for the stresses of Everard’s work, which was especially important in a remote place such as Morawhanna where there was cultural isolation.⁶⁸⁰ Here, Hannah was isolated from other Europeans: in addition, this area was scarcely populated even by Amerindians. This is not surprising considering the instability of the area because of the Venezuelan/British Guiana border problems. It looks like Hannah also provided ‘companionship, the reduction of loneliness and the greater comfort of a home supervised by a woman’, which was expected for a colonial wife.⁶⁸¹ Nonetheless, Hannah did much more: she was also a representative of the British home culture and ‘its moral standards’.⁶⁸² The Victorians believed that colonial wives ‘brought normality, giving their menfolk also a sense of stability and purpose’.⁶⁸³ As im Thurn was spending much of his time with the Amerindians when he was in the interior, Hannah’s function, from the period’s perspective, was to assist in maintaining the dignity of ‘civilized standards’ and preventing im Thurn from ‘going native’, which was ‘politically relevant to the British style of colonial domination’.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁷⁷ Acc8695 (National Library of Scotland).

⁶⁷⁸ From Hannah im Thurn to her Mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana] 19 December 1896 and 2 January 1897; Acc8695/126(i) (National Library of Scotland).

⁶⁷⁹ Dalziell, “A Tramp with Redskins”.

⁶⁸⁰ Beverley Gartrell, ‘Colonial Wives: Villains or Victims?’, in *The incorporated wife*, ed. by Hillary Callan and Shirley Ardener (Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm Ltd, 1984), pp. 165–185.

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁶⁸³ Janice N. Brownfoot, ‘Memsahibs in Colonial Malaya: a Study of European Wives in a British Colony and Protectorate’, in *The incorporated wife*, ed. by Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardener (Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm Ltd, 1984), pp. 186–218.

⁶⁸⁴ Gartrell, ‘Colonial Wives: Villains or Victims?’, p. 169.

Hannah left behind the daily support of family and friends, the usual range of cultural events and entertainment, and the comfortable familiarity of the home environment. She was ever thoughtful of those left in Britain – her mother and siblings. She sought solace from her long separation by writing letters in which she discussed literature and her art works, asked about her brother's paintings,⁶⁸⁵ described im Thurn's adventures near the Venezuelan border and expressed her concern regarding her husband's expeditions.⁶⁸⁶ Her letters indicate her constant concern for im Thurn's safety during his fieldtrips, and for his health. Hannah remarks several times how im Thurn, or 'E.', as she used to call him, had headaches and problems with his eyesight after being in the interior of Guiana.⁶⁸⁷ This is also acknowledged in a letter Everard sent to Kew's Director, William Thiselton-Dyer, in which im Thurn apologises for his 'scrawl', and explains that his eyes have been bad and he could hardly see.⁶⁸⁸ Because of Everard's poor eyesight, Hannah used to read to him and it is likely that she started to take care of his correspondence, and probably even wrote letters on his behalf. However, it is important to notice that Everard's handwriting style was not consistent and over the years his handwriting varied greatly. Nevertheless, Hannah as an artist could have tried to copy her husband's handwriting while presumably writing his letters. Although it is difficult to prove for sure that Hannah was writing Everard's letters on his behalf, this suggestion makes sense.

Hannah's correspondence shows that she could not stop feeling anxious about Everard being in the tropical forest. Although she believed he was in good hands by having the Amerindians as companions on his trips to the interior of Guiana, she felt

⁶⁸⁵ From Hannah im Thurn to her Mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana] 19 December 1896; Acc8695/126(i) National Library of Scotland.

⁶⁸⁶ From Hannah im Thurn to her Mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana] 26 March 1897; Acc8695/126(i) National Library of Scotland.

⁶⁸⁷ From Hannah im Thurn to her Mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana] 19 December 1896; Acc8695/126(i) National Library of Scotland.

⁶⁸⁸ KLDC11633.

constantly restless. The brief experience she had in the tropical forest, near their house, made her feel completely lost and frightened of the unknown green. As she writes:

The Indians are marvellous about finding their way even in places they don't know and they have plenty of provisions and are or were quite well; still I can't help feeling anxious at the thought of their all wandering about in search of one another, having as I have, just seen enough of tropical forest to feel one might be hopelessly lost 20 yards from home. That all the innumerable creeks and all the turns on them look first the same.⁶⁸⁹

The correspondence also indicates the activities Hannah used to do to fill her time when Everard was away: writing to her family, drawing plants (orchids in particular) and landscapes, going for walks with local children, and reading then discussing the books afterwards with her mother by letter. Despite living in the lonely Morawhanna, Hannah im Thurn tried to get the most out of the place by travelling to the surrounding areas with local children, never forgetting to draw during breaks in the walks, as her correspondence attests:

We celebrated the day [Hannah's mother's birthday] by having a delightful outing, going a little way in the launch on its way to Amakura and then taking to a boat and going up a creek. Such a lovely one where we saw any quantity of wonderful birds and a good [...] orchids and butterflies. We breakfasted sitting in the boat, the boys making a fire on shore, sketched a little and then paddled home.⁶⁹⁰

In Morawhanna, spending time with local children was a way of helping Hannah to overcome the loneliness of the place and perhaps fill the emptiness of not having children herself. Every once in a while, Hannah would have a child or a friend to spend some time with her, as she described in the following extract: 'My young companion is a

⁶⁸⁹ From Hannah im Thurn to her Mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana] 26 March 1897; Acc8695/126(i) National Library of Scotland.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

sweet lass [child] and very intelligent and very chatty and it makes it very much less lonesome to have her'.⁶⁹¹

These quotations reflect the implicit assumption of how rewarding and important social relations and company were. For Hannah, when her husband was away, children were clearly an escape from solitude. Regarding Hannah's aforementioned activities, she actually did what was expected of a colonial wife: read, paint and even enjoy 'exploring the world around them'.⁶⁹² Although Hannah used to describe to her mother the activities with the children while her husband was away, she also wrote about the times Everard spent at home. The couple used to take walks during the day and Hannah would read to him in the evenings:

Everard and I had a nice day (...). It is good that there is still so much room in the world. We had a good long walk up hill and down day long on Indian track and I enjoyed much stretching my legs a bit and I didn't feel it particularly hot; but it was very hot.⁶⁹³

I am reading it ['Kate Carnegie' by Ian Maclaren] to E. [Everard] in the evening while he is sorting orchids and we are liking it very much.⁶⁹⁴

It is a pleasing speculation to imagine im Thurn, with his knowledge of orchids, talking about them and teaching their scientific names to Hannah while he was sorting the specimens and encouraging her to draw orchids to enrich his herbarium. In fact, in some of Hannah's letters she mentions the orchid's scientific names, which was probably a result of im Thurn sharing his botanical knowledge with his wife.⁶⁹⁵ On the other hand, Hannah could also be compensating for im Thurn's deficiencies, such as his

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹² Gartrell, 'Colonial Wives: Villains or Victims?', pp. 176-177.

⁶⁹³ From Hannah im Thurn to her Mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana] 8 May 1897, Acc8695/126(i) National Library of Scotland.

⁶⁹⁴ From Hannah im Thurn to her Mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana] 10 April 1897; Acc8695/126(i) National Library of Scotland.

⁶⁹⁵ Hannah im Thurn letter to her Mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana], ACC8695/no. 126 (i), 26 March 1897, National Library of Scotland.

poor eyesight as mentioned before, as in the case of Mary, wife of Charles Lyell, who helped her husband by reading to him for hours.⁶⁹⁶

5.4. The Orchid Watercolours



Figure 5.7. Example of one of the orchid watercolours with the label attached, *Rodriguezia secunda* (synonym of *Rodriguezia lanceolata*) (c.n. 136, Kew)

Kew holds sixteen watercolours of orchids with printed labels stating that they were made by E. F. im Thurn.⁶⁹⁷ Although it is known that im Thurn was particularly

⁶⁹⁶ Patricia Fara, 'Women/Science', in *Breeches: Women, Science and Power in the Enlightenment* (London: Pimlico, 2004).

interested in drawing orchids⁶⁹⁸ and that Kew holds some pencil sketches signed by him, this research suggests that these particular watercolours are a misattribution and I propose that they were actually made by Hannah im Thurn. Besides these sixteen watercolours at Kew, there are two additional pencil drawings signed by im Thurn and several more attached to the orchid specimens from British Guiana collected by im Thurn. These pencil drawings show very detailed reproductions of the floral structures, accompanied by notes explaining the sketches, which the orchid watercolours do not have. However, with the exception of the watercolour of *Maxillaria parkeri* Hook. (c.n. 142), in which it is indicated that it was given to Kew in 1898, and of a pencil drawing of *Peristeria guttata* Knowles & Westc. (c.n. 77), which holds im Thurn's signature and is dated 13 December 1894, the other fifteen watercolours are not signed by im Thurn or dated.⁶⁹⁹

Particular attention is being paid here to these orchid watercolours because it is likely that they show Hannah's involvement in im Thurn's work. The orchid watercolours under discussion are mentioned in the correspondence between im Thurn and William Thiselton-Dyer, who was Kew's Director during this period. For example, in a letter addressed to the Director, im Thurn stated that with the agreement of his wife he was sending the orchid drawings to Kew, although he hated to part with them, which reveals Hannah's involvement in the decision.⁷⁰⁰ In this particular letter there are no specific references to the orchid species on which the drawings were based. All of these drawings still carry im Thurn's printed labels, mentioning 'Orchids of Guiana' (Figure 5.7), with the exception of one watercolour. Besides the printed labels, the drawings are also numbered (c.n. in Table 5.1). The identified paintings represent species of orchids

⁶⁹⁷ This section was based on the short note: Sara Albuquerque, 'Watercolours of Orchids Native to British Guiana at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Attributed to Hannah Cassels im Thurn (1854–1947)', *Archives of Natural History*, 39 (2012).

⁶⁹⁸ Everard F. im Thurn, 'Sketches of Wild Orchids in Guiana', *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, 22 (1889), 40–52.

⁶⁹⁹ C.n. is the collection number, although in the labels appears C.M, which I believe was a printing error.

⁷⁰⁰ KLDC11642.

from British Guiana and this is confirmed by the species distribution (Table 5.1). In the Orchid Herbarium at Kew, the specimens sent by im Thurn have the same printed labels and numbers as the drawings so that why it has been supposed that they were painted by Everard.

Table 5.1. List of orchid watercolours studied with reference to the accepted names in brackets, collection number (c.n.) and the species distributions (based on WCSP⁷⁰¹).

Species	c.n.	Distribution
<i>Aspasia variegata</i> Lindl.	68	Trinidad to Brazil
<i>Bifrenaria longicornis</i> Lindl.	81	Trinidad to South Tropical America
<i>Catasetum barbatum</i> (Lindl.) Lindl.	149	Trinidad to South Tropical America
<i>Cryptarrhena kegelii</i> Rchb.f.	123	South Tropical America
<i>Ionopsis teres</i> Lindl. (= <i>Ionopsis satyrioides</i> (Sw.) Rchb. f.)	125	Tropical America
<i>Leucobyle subulata</i> (Sw.) Schltr. (= <i>Trichopilia subulata</i> (Sw.) Rchb. f.)	72	Tropical America
<i>Maxillaria acutifolia</i> Lindl. (= <i>Mormolyca acutifolia</i> (Lindl.) M. A. Blanco)	160	Tropical America
<i>Maxillaria bolivarensis</i> C. Schweinf.	88	Costa Rica to Guyana and Peru
<i>Maxillaria bolivarensis</i>	183 or 88	Costa Rica to Guyana and Peru
<i>Maxillaria candida</i> Lindl.	104	Guyana to Northern Brazil
<i>Maxillaria parkeri</i> Hook.	142	South Tropical America
<i>Maxillaria parviflora</i> (Poepp. & Endl.) Garay (= <i>Camaridium vestitum</i> (Sw.) Lindl.)	103	Florida to Tropical America
<i>Maxillaria violaceopunctata</i> Rchb. f. (= <i>Heterotaxis violaceopunctata</i> (Rchb. f.) F. Barros)	[87 ?]	South Tropical America
<i>Notylia wulfschlaegeliana</i> H. Focke (= <i>Macroclinium wulfschlaegelianum</i> (H. Focke) Dodson)	29	Central and South Tropical America
<i>Rodriguezia secunda</i> Kunth (= <i>Rodriguezia lanceolata</i> Ruiz & Pav.)	136	Lesser Antilles to Central and South Tropical America
<i>Trigonidium obtusum</i> Lindl.	83	Northern South America to Brazil

⁷⁰¹ Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, 'World Checklist of Selected Plant Families'.

The sixteen paintings were either produced on paper used to mount photographs or on sugar paper. This suggests that the im Thurns did not have access to a large stock of standard paper and used what was available. The reason why the paper to mount photographs was used is not surprising given that Everard was a photographer and in British Guiana obtaining special drawing paper could have been difficult, if not even impossible. This particular paper was also used to mount some photographs from British Guiana, such as the ones currently held by the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI).

In a letter Everard sent from British Guiana to Kew's director, dated 13 September 1896, Everard excused himself for not writing more often and said this was because he devoted much time to 'managing a wife' in the previous year, which possibly meant that he was dedicating himself to the marriage.⁷⁰² In addition, six letters from Hannah, currently held by the National Library of Scotland, were written from Morawhanna between 1896 and 1897 to her mother, as previously mentioned.⁷⁰³ These particular letters, besides providing evidence that Hannah was living in British Guiana with her husband, also prove that she was painting the orchids. In one of the letters, dated 26 March 1897, Hannah stated, 'I have been painting the splendidest orchid I have ever seen *Coryanthes macrantha* very rare out here'.⁷⁰⁴ Further evidence of Hannah's authorship of the drawings appears in another letter dated 26 September 1897, in which im Thurn commented on how his wife's paintings added considerable value to the collection.⁷⁰⁵ She is known to have exhibited some of her paintings, which were 'typical scenes' of Fiji, at the Royal Horticultural Society's show in Westminster on 6 February 1912, when her husband gave a 'pleasant conversational lecture' about the 'vegetation of

⁷⁰² KLDC11633.

⁷⁰³ Hannah im Thurn's letters from Morawhanna [British Guiana], ACC8695/no. 126 (i), National Library of Scotland.

⁷⁰⁴ Hannah im Thurn letter to her Mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana], ACC8695/no. 126 (i), 26 March 1897, National Library of Scotland.

⁷⁰⁵ KLDC11637.

Fiji and the South Sea Islands'.⁷⁰⁶ Furthermore, Hannah's painting 'View from the Governor's Residence, Fiji' also supports the recognition of Hannah im Thurn as an artist.⁷⁰⁷

One factor could eventually cast some doubt over the assertion made regarding Hannah's authorship of the drawings. On Wednesday 3 May 1899 Everard im Thurn showed 'some beautiful water-colour sketches of Guiana orchids'⁷⁰⁸ at the Royal Society's conversazione in Burlington House, Piccadilly.⁷⁰⁹ Nevertheless, the reports do not state whether he was the artist or not. At least twenty genera were represented in the Royal Society exhibit.⁷¹⁰

Returning to the drawings, considering that one of the watercolours at Kew is dated – the *Maxillaria* Ruiz & Pav. (c.n. 142), which was presented in 1898 – the sixteen watercolours were very likely produced by Hannah herself between 1895 and 1897.

It is important to stress that even though im Thurn held an official post as Stipendiary Magistrate in the Pomeroon from 1882 to 1891 and that in 1891 he was promoted to be Government Agent in the North-West District, an appointment which brought him into close contact with the Venezuelan Boundary Commission from 1897 to 1899⁷¹¹, the ship records⁷¹² and the letters at Kew⁷¹³ do not indicate that im Thurn was in British Guiana after 1897.

As previously mentioned, the course of the boundary between the North-West Province in British Guiana and Venezuela has long been a matter of dispute, as

⁷⁰⁶ Anonymous, 'Forced and Other Plants. Royal Horticultural Society's Show', *The Times* (London, 1912), p. 4.

⁷⁰⁷ Design & Art Australia Online, 'Lorimer, Hannah, B. 1854' <<http://www.daao.org.au/search/?q=im+Thurn&advanced=false>> [accessed 3 May 2012].

⁷⁰⁸ Anonymous, 'Conversazione of the Royal Society', *Science*, 9 (1899), 723–724.

⁷⁰⁹ Anonymous, 'Royal Society Conversaciones', *The Times* (London, 1899), p. 9.

⁷¹⁰ Anonymous, 'Catalogue of the Objects &c., Exhibited at Conversazione, May, 1899', *Yearbook of the Royal Society*, 1900, 124–134.

⁷¹¹ Anonymous, p. 690.

⁷¹² Findmypast, 'Passenger lists leaving UK 1890–1960'; In the ship records it is only mentioned the departures from the United Kingdom from 1890. Regarding that period, im Thurn went only on two occasions to Demerara, British Guiana in 15 February 1893 and 25 September 1895 (this second time with his wife).

⁷¹³ Jstor Plant Science, 'Correspondence'.

Venezuela claimed large parts of the province as of its own.⁷¹⁴ One of the reasons for this, discussed in Chapter 3, was the existence of gold in that area.⁷¹⁵ Considering im Thurn's knowledge of the colony, it is not surprising that he was ordered to go to London as he was probably the greatest expert on the disputed territory.⁷¹⁶ The newspaper *The Times* recalls that im Thurn visited England in December 1897 'in connexion with the boundary question [diplomatic relations between Britain and Venezuela]'. Given the lack of any information indicating im Thurn's presence in British Guiana after this visit to London, it is possible that the im Thurns remained in Britain afterwards.⁷¹⁷ In 1899 im Thurn took his role as adviser as part of the British delegation and as a special correspondent for the London newspaper *The Times* in the international arbitration in Paris.⁷¹⁸

According to the passengers' list, mentioning the departures from Britain to British Guiana, there is no evidence that im Thurn was in Guiana after 1897, even though he still held an official post there. Furthermore, the letters written by im Thurn after 1897, which Kew holds, were sent from the Hotel Palace, Champs-Élysées, Paris in September 1899, probably while he was dealing with the court of arbitration in that city.⁷¹⁹ While im Thurn was in Paris, he was certainly accompanied by his wife Hannah, as her business card confirms by having the *Palace Hôtel, Champs-Élysées* as her address – the same address on the correspondence of her husband that Kew holds (Figure 5.8).

⁷¹⁴ Agathon Aerni, 'Sir Everard im Thurn', *Schaffhausen Municipal Archives*, pp. 348–357 <http://www.stadtarchiv-schaffhausen.ch/Biographien/Biographien-HV/Im-Thurn_Sir_Everard.pdf> [accessed 5 February 2009].

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁷ Anonymous, 'Great Britain and Venezuela', *The Times* (London, 1897), p. 5.

⁷¹⁸ Aerni, 'Sir Everard im Thurn'.

⁷¹⁹ KLDC12794; KLDC12797; KLDC12796.

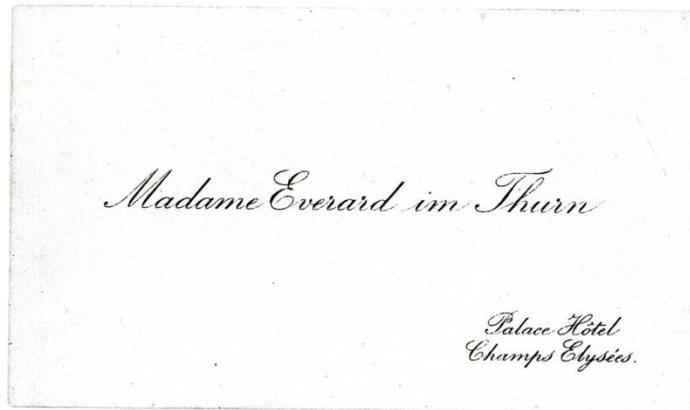


Figure 5.8. Hannah im Thurn's business card (National Library of Scotland)

In 1900 im Thurn received the Order of CB (Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath) for his consulting work to resolve the border conflict. The conclusion of the international arbitration over the boundary dispute between British Guiana and Venezuela also meant the end of im Thurn's career in the colony, which by then had become his second home.⁷²⁰ In November 1905 im Thurn, in recognition of his varied merits, was awarded the Order of KCMG (Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George). Therefore, im Thurn and his wife could now each use the title of *Sir* and *Lady* respectively.⁷²¹

⁷²⁰ Aerni, 'Sir Everard im Thurn'.

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*

5.5. The Amerindian Sculptures

A photograph or life mask shows how the subject looks. The good portrait or statue shows what he *is*, bringing to the surface his inner character or soul.⁷²²

Hannah im Thurn was an all-round artist and in addition to drawing, she also made sculptures. Hannah's relationship with arts was certainly influenced by her artistic family, especially her brothers. Hannah was aware of various techniques and was actually familiar with plaster. She 'caught the trick of the beautiful moulded plaster ceilings at Kellie [Castle], done by a wandering band of Italian artists in the seventeenth century', and was apparently entrusted to do some works on the execution of the moulded plaster ceilings.⁷²³

The plaster sculptures are a good example of Hannah's work that has survived to our days. The Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) holds an Amerindian bust made by Hannah (Figure 5.9) and there is another one at the National Museum of Guyana, Georgetown (NMG) (Figure 5.10).⁷²⁴ According to the Pitt Rivers Museum Catalogue, the sculpture of the Warrau boy from British Guiana, made of plaster bronzed and donated in December 1898, was done by Hannah im Thurn herself.⁷²⁵ In terms of display history, the bust was originally displayed on the ground floor of the Balfour Library and later on removed for building work.⁷²⁶ In relation to the sculpture that the NMG holds, even less is known about it, only that it was donated by Everard im Thurn. Nonetheless, it is very likely that Hannah was also the author of this piece. Regarding Everard's interest in anthropology, it is plausible that Hannah, perhaps encouraged by

⁷²² *Twenty Modern Americans* (1942) in Marianne Kinkel, 'Introduction', in *Races of Mankind: The Sculptures of Mahina Hoffman* (University of Illinois Press, 2011), pp. 1–20.

⁷²³ Douglas Sladen and Yoshio Markino, 'Lady Authors at Addison Mansions', in *Twenty Years of My Life* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1914), pp. 119–145.

⁷²⁴ Rivière, 'South American Tropical Forest Material'.

⁷²⁵ Information from the Pitt Rivers Museum Object Catalogue (October 2011).

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*

her husband, started to produce sculptures, again in support of Everard's work, but this time in anthropology.



Figure 5.9. 'Bust of a Warrau boy made by Hannah im Thurn' (1898.52.1, Pitt Rivers Museum)



Figure 5.10. 'Warrau Boy' sculpture (National Museum of Guyana, Georgetown)

In Hannah's correspondence, she asked her mother for plaster which she probably used to make the above sculptures. Hannah herself noted: 'Many thanks to Bobby for doing about the plaster for me. I hope I shall make a good use of it. I have heaps of things in my head I want to do if only the time would hold a little more. My 68th study has made some way but is certainly far from being proved worth anything'.⁷²⁷ This text, besides mentioning the plaster for Hannah's projects, also conveys her insecurity towards her skills. It is visible that the bust at the National Museum of Guyana has lost part of the colour that originally covered the plaster (Figure 5.10). This was probably caused by several fires the institution suffered over the years. There is also a clear difference between both sculptures in terms of quality and skill. Both sculptures were probably part of a study set, and the sculpture the Pitt Rivers Museum holds is likely to be one of Hannah's last works of this set (Figure 5.9). There is also a clear improvement from the sculpture that the NMG holds to the sculpture at the PRM.

Regarding Hannah's sculptures, it is worth mentioning a note about her work where Hannah describes the 'skin of the Indians as cinnamon red':

But Mrs im Thurn, who has had special opportunities of observing them [Amerindians] describes the skin of the Indians of British Guiana as cinnamon red; and a bust of a Macusi boy, now in the British Museum, which was modelled and coloured by Mrs im Thurn, is of a bright clarety-red.⁷²⁸

As Hannah mentions the colour of the skin of the Amerindians, im Thurn also does as a similar discourse in his book:

It is very difficult to describe the colour of the skin [of the Amerindians]. It is usually said to be 'copper-coloured', and the Indians themselves are sometimes called 'red-skins'. Both these

⁷²⁷ From Hannah im Thurn to her mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana] 8 May 1897, Acc8695/126(i) National Library of Scotland.

⁷²⁸ Anonymous, 'The American Aborigines', *Isle of Wight Observer* (Ryde, 1900), p. 7.

expressions refer to the real appearance of the skin, for the colour is, as nearly as I can express it in words, very red cinnamon.⁷²⁹

The *Isle of Wight Observer* notes that the British Museum holds a bust made by Hannah that, however, is not included on the BM database.⁷³⁰ In any case, this sculpture is ‘a bust of a Macusi boy’ and the sculptures discussed before this one are busts of Warrau boys, another ethnic group that survives in Guyana. It is important to note that the same newspaper says only that ‘Mrs im Thurn had special opportunities of observing’ the Amerindians, which shows a certain distance. However, the correspondence reveals that she was not merely observing but actually interacting with the local children.⁷³¹ It is very likely that Hannah produced these sculptures while she was in British Guiana. As mentioned previously, the correspondence shows that Hannah, while in British Guiana, asked her mother for plaster, which reinforces the idea that the sculptures were made in the colony.⁷³² This is important to stress given the case of Malvina Hoffman (1885/1887(?)–1966). Hoffman was an American sculptor and author, whose *Races of Mankind* sculptures, instead of being modelled ‘in exotic places’, were actually produced in her studios in New York and Paris ‘with a cadre of skilled workers’.⁷³³ Hoffman travelled on behalf of the Field Museum, USA, and she ‘intended her sculptures to narrate other supposed signs of race through poses, gestures, and habitual actions associated with cultural activities and social occupations’.⁷³⁴ Hoffman’s sculptures represented different ‘racial types artistically’.⁷³⁵

⁷²⁹ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 189.

⁷³⁰ Anonymous, ‘The American Aborigines’, p. 7.

⁷³¹ From Hannah im Thurn to her mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana] 26 March 1897; Acc8695/126(i) National Library of Scotland.

⁷³² From Hannah im Thurn to her mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana] 8 May 1897, Acc8695/126(i) National Library of Scotland.

⁷³³ Kinkel, ‘Introduction’, pp. 1-20.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*

In the case of Hannah, it seems that her sculptures were influenced by her husband's work, as mentioned previously. Although she seemed to be reasonably familiar with working with plaster, the sculptures were a new challenge for her. In her letters, she mentions that she was in her '68th study'. Probably these two sculptures were part of a bigger collection to which Hannah devoted her time while she was in British Guiana. Maybe the photographs of the Warraus taken by her husband, as the one discussed in the previous chapter, captivated Hannah enough for her to embrace sculpture. Consequently, it was not only the photographs her husband took that could document the Amerindians in British Guiana: Hannah's sculptures could as well, thus providing a tridimensional view of the Amerindians. It is not difficult to visualise Hannah interacting with the local children given that in her letters she seems to enjoy their company. It is a pleasant speculation to imagine her, working in Morawhanna, very focused, modelling the sculpture and the Amerindian child in front of her, curious to see the result.

Unfortunately, little is known about these busts. Although im Thurn did not mention Hannah's sculptures in his work, maybe the busts were not merely artistic forms. They could also have been tools Everard used in his anthropological work.

5.6. Marrying Artists and Scientists, the Marriage

Partnership

Hannah and Everard seemed to be very active in their social activities by participating in several social events, such as the Royal Society of Arts Conversazione, a social gathering for discussion of the arts, where discussions would include, for instance, the ‘Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers, and Commerce’.⁷³⁶ Apart from accompanying her husband, Hannah im Thurn also appeared to be very active on her own, being especially interested in the higher education of women. For example, according to *The Times*, Hannah im Thurn participated in a dinner ‘in aid of the fund for the building and endowment of the new premises of Bedford College – the oldest University College for women’.⁷³⁷



Figure 5.11. ‘At opening of Nasum School in 1908’ (National Library of Scotland)

⁷³⁶ Anonymous, ‘Royal Society of Arts Conversazione’, *The Times* (London, 1911), p. 12.

⁷³⁷ Anonymous, ‘Bedford College for Women’, *The Times* (London, 1911), p. 7.

Their relationship seemed to have resulted in a scientific enterprise wherein Everard contributed with his knowledge of the natural world and Hannah, in addition to supporting and accompanying him, contributed with her artistic abilities.⁷³⁸ It seems that Hannah saw nature differently from Everard. She saw the natural world through an artist's eyes, providing a different view from Everard's work – the orchid drawings being an example of this. Moreover, in the nineteenth century botanical art started to be integrated in the botanical sciences of this period as 'an active and interpretative contribution to science', as well as helping with the development and dissemination of ideas within botany.⁷³⁹ However, these kinds of relationships 'were not often equal partnerships'.⁷⁴⁰ During the nineteenth century, botany was a field in which women worked because it was an acceptable female practice in the society.⁷⁴¹ In the case of Hannah she engaged with botanical illustration, as well as landscape and still-life art, which were socially acceptable activities (Figures 5.12 and 5.13). Thus, although Hannah contributed to Everard's work, her artistic assistance seems marginalised and not fully acknowledged.

⁷³⁸ Suzanne Le-May Sheffield, 'Gendered Collaborations: Marrying Art and Science', in *Figuring it out: Science, Gender and Visual Culture*, ed. by Ann B. Shteir and Bernard Lightman (Hanover & London: University Press of New England, 2006), pp. 240–264.

⁷³⁹ Gill Saunders, *Picturing Plants: An Analytical History of Botanical Illustration* (Berkeley: University California Press, 1995). in Sheffield, 'Gendered Collaborations: Marrying Art and Science', p. 241.

⁷⁴⁰ Sheffield, 'Gendered Collaborations: Marrying Art and Science', p. 241.

⁷⁴¹ Ann B. Shteir, *Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science: Flora's Daughters and Botany in England, 1760-1860* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).



Figure 5.12. Small watercolour by Hannah 'Hannah Lorimer after David Cox' (Kellie Castle, National Trust for Scotland)

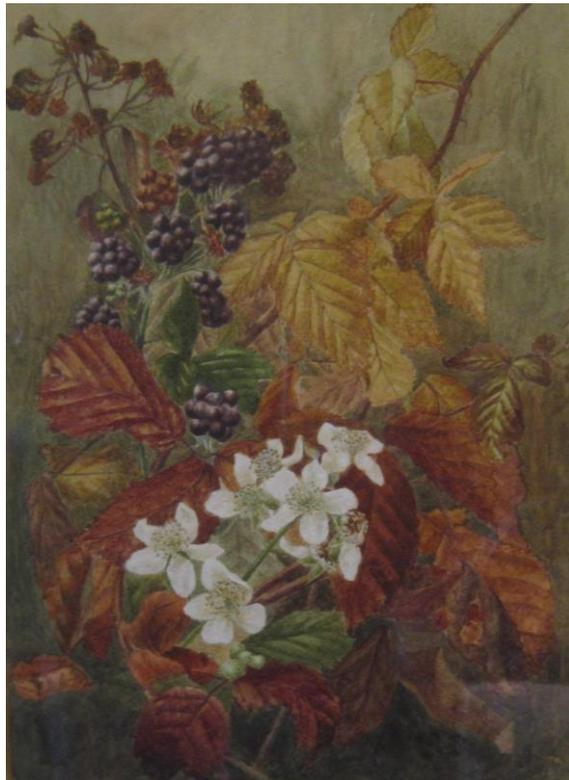


Figure 5.13. Small watercolour of hedgerow flowers by Hannah (Kellie Castle, National Trust for Scotland)

In view of this, it is important to remark that Hannah was not very confident as an artist, as she reveals in her letters: ‘How I wish I could paint... [I] spend a lot of time trying and produce such horrid stuff.’⁷⁴² This insecurity about her own work was probably caused by her family’s success in the arts, and of her brother J.H. Lorimer in particular. In her correspondence, she frequently asks her mother about J.H.’s work and for his advice.⁷⁴³ It is likely that she was comparing her work with her brother’s and that is why she did not feel particularly confident. On the other hand, regarding what she wrote to her mother, the paintings and photographs in which Hannah appears, her eyes look modest and she expresses a humble look that seem to reflect a shy person – and one who was probably not very confident. In another letter, Hannah’s fears and insecurities come up once more:

In my big tent boat where I have been trying to paint a bank (...) to an orchid the last two days. All the same I fear you would think my picture very ugly. The assemble of lights and gleam and air and distant water was delightful but the actual water near the (...) bank and mangrove slump were not fine colour and I fear I have made them no [better]. A whole creek or bank is wonderful and enormous and in many ways lovely but it is very difficult that one can at all get at.⁷⁴⁴

Hannah’s insecurity towards her artistic skills may explain why the orchid drawings were not signed neither her drawings on display at Kellie Castle. Probably she did not feel confident enough to claim the orchid drawings that Kew holds as hers. There are several examples in which women did not receive the credit for pictures they made. One is Emily Gosse (1806–1857), a talented artist whose drawings were attributed to her husband, Philip Gosse, ‘identifying him as the artist who prepared the

⁷⁴² From Hannah im Thurn to her Mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana] 19 December 1896; Acc8695/126(i) National Library of Scotland.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁴ From Hannah im Thurn to her Mother from Morawhanna [British Guiana] 10 April 1897; Acc8695/126(i) National Library of Scotland.

drawing that was the basis for the plate'.⁷⁴⁵ The fact that in his book *Im Thurn* does not mention the name of the 'lady friend' (Hannah, perhaps?) who drew coloured plates and two of the smaller uncoloured illustrations shows how women's work was seen at the time.⁷⁴⁶ During the nineteenth century women's artistic work for science 'could be anonymous, unpaid, and/or generally unrecognised publicly'.⁷⁴⁷ This might be another reason why the orchid drawings were not signed.

Hannah's work was not mentioned, with the exception of one letter by *Im Thurn* referred to previously, which Kew holds. Hannah's case is similar to John's Gould's wife. Elizabeth Gould (1804–1841) was from a different generation, but she was an artist like Hannah and she contributed to her husband's work. Elizabeth was married to John Gould (1804–1881), who wrote the first comprehensive account of the birds and mammals of Australia and, like Everard *Im Thurn*, was a naturalist and ornithologist.⁷⁴⁸ Although John Gould drew birds very competently, the great majority of his plates had the help of one of seven artists he employed, and Elizabeth was one of them.⁷⁴⁹ Elizabeth participated actively in John's work, but she was 'only partially revealed as the illustrator' of some of her husband's books.⁷⁵⁰ Besides this, John signed all the plates, 'which disabled reviewers from discerning exactly who did what'.⁷⁵¹ Although the Goulds seemed to have a more active marriage partnership than Everard and Hannah, this case has certain similarities with the *Im Thurns*, not least because, like Hannah, Elizabeth was also working behind-the-scenes for her husband's success.

Another example is the case of the amateur Irish artist Lady Edith Blake (1845–1926). Her husband, Sir Henry Arthur Blake (1840–1918), was Governor in many areas

⁷⁴⁵ Barbara T. Gates, 'Those Who Drew and Those Who Wrote', in *Figuring it out: Science, Gender and Visual Culture*, ed. by Ann B. Shteir and Bernard Lightman (Hanover & London: University Press of New England, 2006), pp. 192–213.

⁷⁴⁶ *Im Thurn*, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. vii.

⁷⁴⁷ Sheffield, 'Gendered Collaborations: Marrying Art and Science', p. 241.

⁷⁴⁸ Ann Datta, *John Gould in Australia* (Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1997).

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁷⁵⁰ Gates, 'Cataloguing the Natural World: Case Studies of Women Naturalists', p. 74.

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*

of the British Empire, and actually succeeded in Thurn as Governor of Ceylon from 1903 to 1907.⁷⁵² Like Hannah, Lady Edith Blake was the wife of the Governor and was particularly interested in painting, besides having an interest in natural history and anthropology. Her collections of drawings of the Jamaican flora and fauna resulted from her work in the country and have much scientific and artistic interest.⁷⁵³ At the time Hannah in Thurn was in British Guiana, Edith Blake was in Jamaica, where her husband was Governor from 1889 to 1897.⁷⁵⁴

Also important to mention is the case of Anne Rudge (née Nonaille) (1763–1836). She married Edward Rudge (1763–1846), who instructed her in the knowledge of botany.⁷⁵⁵ Anne drew fifty botanical plates for her husband's *Plantarum Guianae* and made other botanical drawings for Edward's articles.⁷⁵⁶ The base for Edward's work *Plantarum Guianae*, which was done without ever 'having to leave the British shores', was a purchase made when Kew sold plant specimens from French Guiana.⁷⁵⁷ Thanks to his wife, Edward's piece of work benefited from Anne's artistic skills as she provided very detailed and accurate botanical illustrations.⁷⁵⁸ Although some of Hannah in Thurn's archives still exist, in the case of Lady Rudge there is no archival material available, but her name did not remain in obscurity because her husband encouraged 'the publication of his wife's name on the plates'.⁷⁵⁹

Maria Turner (1797–1872) is further example of a woman who served her husband, William Hooker, who was Kew's first Director, and she did so for fifty years

⁷⁵² Christine Ellwood and J.M.V. Harvey, 'The Lady Blake Collection: Catalogue of Lady Edith Blake's Collection of Drawings of Jamaican Lepidoptera and Plants', *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History). Historical*, 18 (1990), 145–202.

⁷⁵³ Ellwood and Harvey, 'The Lady Blake Collection', 145–202.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁷⁵⁵ Sheffield, 'Gendered Collaborations: Marrying Art and Science', p. 243.

⁷⁵⁶ Sheffield, 'Gendered Collaborations: Marrying Art and Science', p. 243; The botanical plates are actually from flora of French Guiana and not British Guiana according to W. T. Stearn and L. H. J. Williams, 'Martin's French Guiana Plants and Rudge's "Plantarum Guianae Rariorum Icones"', *Bulletin du Jardin botanique de l'Etat a Bruxelles*, 27 (1957), 243–265.

⁷⁵⁷ Stearn and Williams, 243–265; Sheffield, p. 245.

⁷⁵⁸ Sheffield, p. 243.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

during which she drew and engraved for him.⁷⁶⁰ This family practice was also followed by their son, Joseph Hooker, Kew's second Director, whose wife Frances Henslow (1825–1874) also assisted her husband with his botanical correspondence and publications.⁷⁶¹

However, Hannah's drawings were more artistic than scientific – she was more a flower painter than a botanical illustrator, even though her drawings were highly detailed. Despite the fact that the requirements of botanical illustration were already established at this period, Hannah did not pay particular attention to the sexual parts of plants in her drawings, as Anne Rudge did for instance.⁷⁶² Nevertheless, this does not diminish Hannah's credits into her botanical work. Her drawings are valuable and, although they are more artistic than scientific, they provided the colours of the plants, especially the colour of the flowers, including information about the habitat that the dried specimens did not provide.

In summary, it seems that Everard appreciated Hannah's work, as he mentioned in one of the letters to Thiselton-Dyer saying how her work added more value to his collection.⁷⁶³ As previously referred to, when im Thurn gave a lecture on Fiji's vegetation at the Royal Horticultural Society, Hannah supported him in his presentation by exhibiting her paintings of 'typical scenes' of Fiji. Furthermore, it seems that the couple's relationship as a 'scientific enterprise' evolved through time. It is likely that Everard recognised the importance of his wife's contribution to his scientific work and the importance of her artistic skills in communicating his scientific ideas, as in the case of the lecture on Fiji's vegetation. In turn, Hannah found a way to publicise her own artistic work, via her marriage, and it is likely that along the years she found the

⁷⁶⁰ Ann B. Shteir, 'Women and Botany in the Victorian Breakfast Room', in *Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science: Floras's Daughters and Botany in England 1760 to 1860* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

⁷⁶¹ Shteir, 'Women and Botany in the Victorian Breakfast Room', pp. 179-180.

⁷⁶² Lys de Bray, *The Art of Botanical Illustration: The Classic Illustrators and Their Achievements from 1500-1900* (Bromley, Kent: Christopher Helm Ltd., 1989), p. 114. in Sheffield, p. 245.

⁷⁶³ KLDC11637.

confidence to present her work with the support of her husband. However, Everard did not seem to make much effort to publicise Hannah's work before they went to Fiji and, because of this, her life and work in British Guiana became largely invisible, as happened with the orchid drawings.

5.7. Conclusion

The preceding chapters have focused on im Thurn's collections from British Guiana and their entangled and forgotten stories. This chapter has focused on Hannah, im Thurn's wife, revealing her artistic contribution to im Thurn's collections and giving another perspective on im Thurn's work. Also, this chapter has shown that it was not only im Thurn who experienced cross-cultural encounters. Hannah's correspondence shows that she was in contact with the local children, and the sculptures she made are most certainly the result of those contacts. In the history of exploration, there has been a tendency – although there has been a notable change in recent decades, to focus on the encounters of male explorers making contact with native peoples. However, unsurprisingly, there was actually a parallel phenomenon: the wives of those explorers/governors/scientists were actually making contact with the local people as well.

In conclusion, it is clear that Hannah was involved in im Thurn's work. Her drawings were linked to the herbarium specimens – providing extra information about and complementing them, in order to help identification. Nowadays, certain herbarium specimens have photographs attached to provide certain details of the species. In the im Thurns time, drawings were used instead. Taking the example of *Maxilaria*, a species that is very difficult to identify so, to proceed with the identification of this species, it is necessary to have very detailed drawings, since the herbarium specimen itself is not

sufficient.⁷⁶⁴ Thus, detailed, accurate drawings are crucial for the identification of the species.

It is evident therefore that the orchid watercolours discussed here and the herbarium specimens are part and parcel of the same collection as they have the same kind of labels and a corresponding number. Rather than just artistically, Hannah's drawings were therefore very important botanically, also because they added the information needed to identify certain species. I suggest that Hannah im Thurn contributed to science and to the 'imperial knowledge' accumulated in the metropolitan centre in particular, through her artistic skills, which in turn enriched im Thurn's orchid herbarium. It is important to bear in mind that 'Imperialism formed the context for much Victorian Science'.⁷⁶⁵ The explorers, governors and, as this case demonstrates, the 'colonial wives' who were once considered irrelevant to the development of sciences, were actually contributing to its enhancement not only with objects, specimens and illustrations, but also by being active participants 'in the making of the scientific knowledge'.⁷⁶⁶ They were providing the empire with valuable information about the colonies regarding their fauna, flora, *etc.* through the items they collected, the illustrations they made, and the reports and papers they wrote. Nonetheless, as Suzanne Le-May Sheffield states: 'Botanical art conducted within the context of marriage enabled women to make an important contribution to the scientific endeavour that they may not have made otherwise, drawing them into the centre of scientific knowledge production'.⁷⁶⁷ In addition, considering that the 'Hookers sought new exotic plants species with commercial potential for British consumers', all the data related to these

⁷⁶⁴ Phil Cribb, personal communication, 23 January 2012, RBG, Kew.

⁷⁶⁵ Endersby, pp. 311–327.

⁷⁶⁶ Jim Endersby, 'Introduction', pp. 311–327.

⁷⁶⁷ Sheffield, p. 240–264.

exotic plants, such as herbarium specimens and drawings, like the ones Hannah made, were essential for the studies of ‘commercial potential’.⁷⁶⁸

Besides contributing to the imperial knowledge through her artistic skills, Hannah also fulfilled the ‘role of the ideal colonial wife’ that ensured the health and psychological welfare of her husband.⁷⁶⁹ In relation to this subject, Patricia Fara argues that ‘at the most basic level, many men would simply have been unable to cope without the emotional support of a companion who was sufficiently educated and intelligent to discuss’ with.⁷⁷⁰ By re-examining Hannah and Everard’s relationship, Hannah becomes a more ‘powerful presence’.⁷⁷¹ Although she did not have formal scientific training she became involved with her husband’s work, as Emma Darwin, Charles Darwin’s wife, similarly did. Emma Darwin, who actively discussed and contributed to her husband’s work, was ‘converted [in the annals of the history of science] into a mother-figure’.⁷⁷² In the case of Hannah, her position could be interpreted as a very maternal one as well, probably because she never had children and she manifested that feeling towards her husband. Hannah was constantly worried about Everard when he was doing fieldwork, as shown in her correspondence, like a mother concerned with her child. She was concerned with his health, especially when typical diseases caused by age started to appear, and she encouraged her husband to retire to a rural area as a private scholar and bibliophile.⁷⁷³ The widely travelled im Thurn, who was cared for by his wife, could at last enjoy the peace and tranquility of his garden and library at Cockenzie House, Scotland.⁷⁷⁴ Hannah supported im Thurn whenever possible, and even after his death in 1932 she continued to support his work, as she did in 1936 when she presented books

⁷⁶⁸ Jeanne Kay Guelke and Karen M Morin, ‘Gender, Nature, Empire: Women Naturalists in Nineteenth Century British Travel Literature’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 26 (2001), 306–326.

⁷⁶⁹ Gartrell, ‘Colonial wives: villains or victims?’, p. 172.

⁷⁷⁰ Fara, ‘Women/Science’, p. 29.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷⁷³ Aerni, ‘Sir Everard im Thurn’.

⁷⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

and possibly maps to the Library of the Royal Scottish Society.⁷⁷⁵ In addition, many of im Thurn's publications had sold out long ago so, in 1934, Hannah im Thurn helped the Oxford University Press publish a collection of im Thurn's writings in a book titled *Thoughts, Talks and Tramps*.⁷⁷⁶ Hannah im Thurn died at the age of 92 on 6 March 1947 at her home in Edinburgh, where her artistic achievements and contribution to her husband's work remained unknown until now.⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁵ Anonymous, 'Proceedings of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 52 (1936), 189.

⁷⁷⁶ Aerni, 'Sir Everard im Thurn'.

⁷⁷⁷ Anonymous, 'Lady im Thurn', *The Times*, 1947, p. 7.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: Echoing Objects

- Reverberations Through Time and Space -

No little ingenuity is displayed by the Indians in making their simple household utensils, weapons, and ornaments. Yet many of the arts practised by their ancestors, such as that of shaping stone into knives and for other purposes, have disappeared already; others, such as the making of bows and other weapons, are even now gradually, but rapidly, disappearing in consequence of European manufacture throughout the interior.⁷⁷⁸

Through the examination of different materials, namely objects, herbarium specimens, correspondence, photographs and illustrations, this thesis has sought to reveal the often hidden and/or overlooked histories of tropical botany. By unearthing these histories, it was possible not only to have a glimpse on the cultural encounters between im Thurn and the Amerindians but also between im Thurn and Kew Gardens, as well as exchanges between Britain and British Guiana.

The objects discussed herein were seen in different contexts, spaces and times, and their particular trajectories were followed. These objects were manufactured in Guyana; some were exchanged for beads and displayed in museums or exhibitions in Britain, and later ended up stored in warehouses, where their stories remained silent. This thesis not only revisited these forgotten objects collected by im Thurn, which have not been studied before, but also explored how these objects, in combination with other materials, reveal connections between Britain and its colony. The study of these collections also revealed further insights into im Thurn and his collecting network, such as Kew and George Samuel Jenman for instance.

Throughout the thesis, different aspects of im Thurn's collections have been explored. First, particular episodes of cultural encounters between im Thurn and the Amerindians were analysed through a range of objects: from necklaces, arrows and pots to dyes and resins, among others. This discussed how certain objects were obtained by im Thurn as well as his influence in the Amerindian culture. Secondly, through the study

⁷⁷⁸ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 269.

of the displayed objects at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 at the British Guiana Court, it was possible to visualise how the colony was seen by its ‘mother country’. This particular exhibition also reflected the exchanges between British Guiana and Britain but also between im Thurn and Kew Gardens. Thirdly, this thesis explored unknown photographs that Kew holds, revealing the extent to which im Thurn’s collections are better understood if the items are cross-referenced – for example, the photograph of Amerindians with wrestling shields with the objects themselves, the wrestling shields on display at the Pitt Rivers Museum. Lastly, the thesis offered a new insight into im Thurn’s work – the contribution of his wife Hannah towards the collections. Although Hannah’s work remained neglected until now, illustrations and sculptures she made were brought to light in this work, as were their link to the im Thurns’ marriage partnership.

Attention was given not only to objects collected by im Thurn but also to objects collected by G.S. Jenman, his colleague in British Guiana. Im Thurn and Jenman worked together, undertaking expeditions to the interior of the colony. Through the study of the collections, especially the herbarium specimens, it was possible to notice that both collections, im Thurn’s and Jenman’s, are connected and complement each other. Although im Thurn was interested in botany, the expert in this field of knowledge was actually Jenman. It seems that im Thurn was more concerned with anthropology and photography, leaving botany to Jenman, the Government Botanist. Many herbarium specimens from British Guiana that Kew holds nowadays were sent via Jenman, although collected by im Thurn. However, while Jenman was the botanist in charge, im Thurn had vast experience in the field. Both therefore benefited from this professional relationship.

The collections studied here provided traces of cross-cultural encounters between Everard im Thurn and the Amerindians but also between Hannah, his wife,

and the local children. Furthermore, there were also cross-cultural exchanges between the different Amerindian ethnic groups described by im Thurn in his book, *Among the Indians of Guiana*. Each Amerindian group was specialised in the production of certain objects or materials: the Warraus were known for the best canoes, the Makushis for the *ourali* used for poisoning arrows, and cotton hammocks, and the True Caribs for pottery.⁷⁷⁹ Im Thurn said that in order to interchange goods, the Amerindians used to do long journeys, so news passed from one district to another.⁷⁸⁰ For this reason, even if certain groups were hostile towards each other, the exchange of goods between them allowed a certain peace. The objects *per se* allowed different 'tribes', as im Thurn refers to the indigenous communities, to communicate with each other and helped information to be spread rapidly, through traders 'who carried with them the latest news'.⁷⁸¹ In addition, these same objects could be manufactured by Makushis, exchanged for pots made by the True Caribs, ending up exchanged for European knives, for instance. In many of the objects collected by im Thurn the Amerindian group who manufactured them is not identified. This probably happened because im Thurn was aware of these interchanges between the Amerindians, therefore not sure to which group they belonged to. In im Thurn's reports he mentions that the amount of object exchanges in the interior of British Guiana was considerable. Besides this, nowadays it is very common to find mixed communities. As a result, the objects produced are infused with entangled stories which have been passing through different ethnic groups for generations.

Moreover, im Thurn explains that to obtain certain objects he bargained with the Amerindians and exchanged European goods for what he wanted. Although he mentions several times that many Amerindian arts were disappearing, he was at the

⁷⁷⁹ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, pp. 271-272.

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

same time contributing to their disappearance by exposing the Amerindians to European goods in their exchange dealings. The Amerindians' experience in dealing and negotiating with foreigners is still noticeable today, as a result of the exchanges that occurred throughout the centuries. However, im Thurn acknowledges that the Amerindians were not innocent in this regard and that they actually preferred to obtain certain utensils instead of producing them. In this respect, the fieldtrip I undertook to Guyana revealed that the Amerindians are nowadays caught in a dilemma between tradition and progress. In general, there is a certain conflict and contradiction in the Amerindians' narrative: the desire to be in touch with a modern way of life but, at the same time, perpetuating the Amerindians' traditions. Life has changed in Guyana since im Thurn lived there, but certain observations he made at the time are still valid today. Although the Amerindians want to keep their traditions, as one would expect, they also want to have access to better living conditions, technology, *etc.*, like others do. Despite traditional houses made of clay bricks and palm roofs still can be seen nowadays, they are being substituted for more comfortable concrete houses with zinc roofs. The same is happening with the traditional objects that the Amerindians produce today. The Amerindian utensils, for example, are being substituted by imported ones, as im Thurn used to describe. Today, most of the Amerindians have jobs and this significant change has had an impact not only in the Amerindian way of life but also in the production of objects. There is not so much time available for Amerindian husbands to manufacture graters or *matapiés* baskets for their wives to produce cassava flour, for instance. Besides this, more Amerindian children go to school, spend less time at home, and have less time to learn about their traditions. However, during my fieldtrip in 2010, I noticed that this particular situation was a matter of concern amongst the Amerindians. As a response, Arawak, Makushi and others planned to implement more activities in the local schools related to Amerindian cultural history, traditions and languages.

Another aspect worth mentioning is the explorer's dependence on the Amerindian people that still happens nowadays. Researchers are still completely dependent on local knowledge in terms of geography, logistics, *etc.*, and, using Burnett's words, it is actually 'impossible to make a step without the Indians'.⁷⁸² Considering my own case when I was in the remote place of Kabakaburi in Guyana, where boats are the only transport form available, I could not make a single step without my Arawak guide Natasha. Her family had a boat and if I wanted to contact the Kabakaburi Toshao (Captain) or people to be interviewed, I always needed a boat and someone to accompany me. Even more than one hundred years after im Thurn's presence in British Guiana, this journey showed me that local knowledge remains crucial for the success of any expedition.

It is impossible to recover all the different voices involved in cross-cultural histories. However, by gathering relevant and important information, we can get closer to them. In this thesis, in order to grasp the full story, my strategy was to cross-reference information obtained from very different sources.

During my first interview in Fair View Village, near the Iwokrama forest, it was clear how differently I saw the same objects when compared with the way my local interviewee Leoni, saw them.⁷⁸³ First, I was still seeing the objects in a museum context or with no context at all, because most of the objects I dealt with until that moment were stored in museum deposits and archives. As for Leoni, these same objects were part of her daily life. In Leoni's case they exist within a context, they are part of a landscape, and they have a practical use, a meaning, a history. This interview also made me realise that Leoni had more interest in the objects that were bought from the outside than in the ones manufactured in the village. I believe this is why she only told me about

⁷⁸² Burnett, "It Is Impossible to Make a Step Without the Indians".

⁷⁸³ Leoni was part of the MRU (Makushi Research Unit) for Fair View Village (the interview took place in October 2010).

the basketry – an example of the latter – at the end of the interview. Leoni gave a different value to the objects produced locally. Importantly, the objects in the village also showed signs of modernity. One example of this was the grater, which has experienced alterations through time, as all different versions of it are available today: the original one, made of wood with stones attached; the one made of wood and a metal plaque or just an aluminum sheet; and the most recent one, with an electrical engine attached (in some cases the engine, being substituted by a bicycle).

During the fieldtrip to Guyana I also witnessed some cross-cultural experiences that happen nowadays, but in a different scale and context from those that happened in im Thurn's time. Many Amerindians mentioned to me that they started to appreciate their land even more after talking with tourists and researchers, who praised the savannah and the forest from a different perspective. This influenced the way the Amerindians think about their own land and its value. The foreign eye helped the locals to assign a different value to their own landscape. Although the Amerindians have always attributed a special significance to the land they were born in, it seems that it acquired another layer of meaning when it became also special to foreign people. One of the Makushi guides from Iwokrama field station, Elai, told me that he learned a lot about his own culture when people from outside visited and asked questions.

The aim of my journey to Guyana was to have contact with the Amerindian Guyanese people, and to see the objects I have been studying, such as baskets and arrows, being used in their context – in an Amerindian context. Before this fieldtrip, the objects discussed here were not fully contextualised, which is why it was so important to understand them within their 'habitat'. Visualising these particular objects within a landscape, being manufactured and still being used, gave me the insight I was searching for. As a matter of fact, being in the interior of Guyana, and seeing similar objects to the

ones im Thurn collected, more than one hundred years ago, made me realise that these objects actually 'have a life' outside the museum walls.

This fieldtrip also made me realise how much respect and care the urban Guyanese people show towards the Guyanese Amerindians. However, although Amerindian culture is appreciated, there are very few projects for preserving the indigenous knowledge. In fact, the Amerindian people whom I contacted were very interested in my project, which in a way surprised me. They were interested to know not only how the objects collected by im Thurn were made, to see if the processes used nowadays are still the same as those used by their ancestors, but also who im Thurn was and what he was doing in Guyana. The locals were also surprised to hear that objects collected more than one century ago from Guyana still survive in collections in Britain.

Concerning the Amerindian people, it is worth mentioning how they were perceived and seen in im Thurn's time. Although im Thurn mentioned that the Amerindians were not innocent in the way they preferred to buy objects instead of producing them themselves, he still describes the Amerindians as naive, as in the case of the balata issue discussed in this thesis (Chapter 4), within which he seems quite patronising towards the Amerindians. The case of the 'British Guiana Court' illustrates clearly that the Amerindians were seen as 'living objects' as they were displayed to educate, amuse and entertain visitors. However, in this thesis it was shown that although they were seen and described as objects in the reports of the time, by reading these same reports against the grain it was possible to provide these Amerindians with an identity and see what kind of people they were, not only through their names but also through their ages and the activities in which they used to engage. It is undeniable that im Thurn was deeply interested in the Amerindian culture, but at the same time it is possible to notice how frequently im Thurn compared the Amerindian culture with 'more civilised ones', showing a clear superiority in his narrative. This is not surprising and is actually

expected, considering that his discourse was modelled within cultural parameters of the Victorian era. Nevertheless, im Thurn was advertising the potential of the 'neglected colony' and making an effort so that British Guiana would not be forgotten.

In relation to Thurn's photographs, besides helping to promote his work in anthropology and botany, they also played an important role in advertising the British colony. The collaboration between the Norton Brothers and im Thurn helped to give some visibility to the colony. In addition, im Thurn's photographs helped me to contextualise some of the objects he collected, such as the 'necklace' and the wrestling shields. The photograph of the Amerindian boy with, a 'flower hat', led me to the speculation, that im Thurn's wife Hannah may have influenced him to be more artistic in his photographic experiments. Furthermore, in the light of her interest in making sculptures of Amerindian boys, it is possible that she have asked im Thurn to take this photograph.

Finding out more about Hannah not only enriched the understanding of im Thurn's collections, but also brought a different perspective to these. Following the traces of Hannah's work within im Thurn's collections, I realised how important it was to illuminate her contribution, which remained neglected within the studies of Everard im Thurn's collections and work. In the process, the portrait that emerged of Hannah im Thurn was of a woman who, although remaining within the boundaries of acceptable feminine behaviour, produced some accomplished artistic work. She was not independent, nor travelling by herself, but accompanying her husband to British Guiana. There, Hannah probably started her artistic contribution towards im Thurn's collections through her orchid drawings. Besides this, the encounters with Amerindians Hannah experienced and im Thurn's work in anthropology probably influenced her to open her creativity in producing new pieces of artwork, including sculptures of Amerindian boys.

Arjun Appadurai argues that ‘we have to follow things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectory. It is only through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculations that enliven things’.⁷⁸⁴ To understand the meanings of these Guianese objects, I followed these objects not only in museums and archives in Britain, but also in the field in Guyana, to get closer to the local contexts of their production, exchange and use. Thus, by doing this the objects acquired different meanings, and I had glimpses of an Amerindian perspective, and of what im Thurn might have experienced while he was living in British Guiana.

In the research undertaken, I focused on particular objects. However, many more remain to be studied. This thesis highlighted particular items such as the ‘necklace’ or the arrows as a mean– to undertake a transversal analysis of the collections; the particularity of each object demanded an individual study of its trajectory. In this way, new directions and new perspectives were given to im Thurn’s collections.

This thesis exposed photographs at Kew that were not known, including those by im Thurn and the Norton Brothers, but also from G.S. Jenman. Jenman’s collections (objects, herbarium specimens and photographs) provide a treasure trove for researchers, and remain untapped – they are still waiting to be studied and analysed by researchers. This thesis also offered a more botanical approach into im Thurn’s collections, as in the case of the medicinal properties of the trees from which the logs of wood exhibited in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition came from and the *Aristolochia*, including im Thurn’s contribution to botany.

In conclusion, this thesis made a significant contribution in terms of historical reconstruction of the Kew collections, using im Thurn’s collections as a pilot project, by tracing objects as they move through time and space and discussing their changing

⁷⁸⁴ Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, p. 5.

meanings. It also brought together methodologies, ideas and sources from different fields including, History of Science and Museum/Collection Studies. The sources used include not only materials from the archives, but also published records, the specimens and ethnographic items themselves, photographs and secondary sources. Additionally, this work contributed to the history of a somewhat neglected area of the British Empire, which was in fact neglected even in Thurn's time: British Guiana. It also located Thurn and his collection within an imperial framework, including collaboration with colleagues in British Guiana and in Britain, in order to show the multi-layered characteristic of the collecting enterprise of the period.

In this work a significant part of the collections of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew were revisited and original methodologies and approaches were applied. The methodologies used in this work can be replicated in future studies in order to study museum collections and unveil the stories underneath them. In this way, I hope to have opened a door for further discoveries.

Appendix

- Guyana Map -



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