The background of the cover is a watercolor landscape painting. It depicts a coastal scene with a prominent stone tower or castle structure on a hillside. The foreground shows a body of water, possibly a bay or harbor, with a small boat visible. A large, leafy tree stands on the right side of the frame. The sky is rendered in soft, layered washes of color, suggesting a hazy or overcast day. The overall style is characteristic of 19th-century landscape watercolor.

A British Sentiment

Landscape Drawings and Watercolors
1750-1950

FROM THE COLLECTION OF JOHN HARBOLD

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FROM THE COLLECTION OF JOHN HARBOLD

March 3 – April 15, 2017



Curated by:

Olivia Falcey

Caroline Fallon

Christopher Guy

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Sophie Weinstein

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Title page: (Top) John Wilson Carmichael, *Holy Island*, n.d., graphite and sepia wash on paper (cat. 18). (Bottom) Robert Taylor Pritchett, FSA, *Veblungnes, Norway*, n.d., graphite and watercolor on tan paper (cat. 50).

Frontispiece: Rev. James Bourne, *Rocky Path in a Wooded Valley*, n.d., graphite and watercolor on paper (cat. 10).



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Landscape Painting: Background to Subject

Phillip Earenfight

The image of an artist in a landscape, with portable easel, paint box, and parasol, working out of doors and representing the vista as if it were a slice of the view before them, is among the most common conventions to suggest the concept of a “painter.” This is conveyed nicely in Winslow Homer’s *Artists Sketching in the White Mountains* (fig. 1), where a group of painters—including the artist—takes their place along a sunny ridge to render their view. The notion that artists ought to paint landscapes is so widely accepted in contemporary western society that one could hardly be faulted for assuming that such imagery always existed—that it follows as a matter of course. On the contrary, in the West, as in other parts of the world where making and acquiring



Fig. 1. Winslow Homer, *Artists Sketching in the White Mountains*, 1868, oil on panel. Portland Museum of Art, Bequest of Charles Shipman Payson.



Fig. 2. *Nakht with his family hunting in the Nile marshes*, detail of a wall painting in the tomb of Nakht, scribe and priest under Pharaoh Tuthmosis IV (18th Dynasty). Cemetery of Sheikh Abd al-Qurnah, Egypt. Photo: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

images of the landscape assumed a high level of importance (e.g., Sung Dynasty China) such imagery, as is true of all genres, is a product of historical and cultural circumstances.¹

One has only to consider painting in Europe prior to the fourteenth century to find a rich and vibrant tradition of manuscript, panel, and wall painting that is dominated by images of man and the divine and virtually free of landscape imagery, save for an occasional miniature palm tree that stands for all of paradise. Indeed, the western pictorial tradition, which emerged in antiquity among the dominant Mediterranean cultures, is one in which the human form is the purpose for imagery, and only under particular historical and cultural circumstances that the space around the figures (i.e., the landscape) assumes greater prominence.

Contrary to prevailing assumptions, representations of the landscape, even as nothing more than a space in which figures perform, are unusual among pre-modern cultures. Moreover, “pure” landscapes—those that represent nature, free of any associations to humans—are particularly rare. Such images are the result of conditions that emerge at specific instances over the course of human creativity. The lack of landscape painting for significant stretches in the history of art comes as little surprise. It requires a fundamental inversion of priorities, away from humans and their actions and toward the surrounding context, making the land around figures the subject of inquiry. Such a shift occurs not in isolation, but in tandem with parallel shifts across all segments of the culture, so that the pictorial imagery is but one expression of a much broader interest in the land.

Although the ancient Egyptians provide us with many of the earliest representations of nature, such imagery focused on human activity within the landscape and was destined to be seen by no one, other than the tomb painters and priests who saw them only briefly, prior to the completion and sealing of the tomb (fig. 2). And while the Minoans and Hellenistic Greeks were among the first to represent large-scale imagery in which the landscape predominates, the wall paintings in ancient Roman villas were the first to demonstrate the notion of a landscape painting as a window onto the surroundings. In some instances, the Roman landscape imagery provides a stage for epic poetry, in others it evokes pastoral poetry (fig. 3), while others suggest the pleasures of a vine-covered arbor—all of which the Romans extolled in their life and writings. In these images, the Romans demonstrate their mastery of linear and aerial perspective to create a sense of space and their subtle use of color and light and dark to



Fig. 3. Roman, *Landscape*, 1st century, wall fresco, Pompeii. Photo: Scala / Art Resource, NY.

suggest volume, all of which results in a convincing rendering that replicates what one might see outside the window of their villa. This is the height of landscape painting in the ancient world.²

However, by the fourth century, with the rise of Christianity and the introduction of artistic traditions that stressed line and pattern, interest in representing the space around figures dried up and with it, representations of the landscape. This trend away from the naturalistic, three-dimensional imagery of the Roman world and towards a spiritual, diagrammatic, two-dimensional style that we associated with the Medieval world, dominated artistic trends in the West for close to a millennium.³ But like so much of the ancient Roman world, landscape painting entered into a period of “dehydration” during the Middle Ages, to be refreshed when renewed interest in the physical world ushered in the Renaissance.

Since virtually all examples of ancient Roman landscape painting were unknown to artists of the early Renaissance, the techniques for creating an illusionistic image (perspective, light and dark, space, and volume) had to be reinvented. A principal obstacle in this development, however, was the overwhelming emphasis on the human figure as the primary vehicle for carrying meaning—the purpose for making the image in the first place. And it would be several centuries before cultural forces would stimulate the development of representations that focused on the landscape itself, free of human presence.⁴

Among Renaissance artists, Leonardo da Vinci, with his intense interests in the natural world and stunning skills at representation, was particularly well positioned to launch a revolution in landscape painting. The remarkable landscape features in the backgrounds of Leonardo’s portraits and religious paintings and a number of his brilliant pen and ink



Fig. 4. Leonardo da Vinci, *Landscape*, 1473, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Uffizi, Florence. Photo: Scala/Ministero per i Beni e le Attività culturali / Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 5. Giorgione or Titian, *Pastoral Concert*, oil on canvas, c. 1509–1510, Louvre, Paris. Photo: Hervé Lewandowski, © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.

studies of the landscape provide endless speculation on the course of art history had he fully manifested his abilities to represent the land (fig. 4). However, the dominant role of the figure in Florentine art would not be challenged, and the direct heirs of the Roman pastoral landscape tradition would fall instead to the Venetians, led above all by Giorgione and Titian (fig. 5). Over the course of the sixteenth century, Titian and his compatriots laid the ground for the development of landscape painting as a major genre.

A second, parallel current in the development of landscape painting appears north of the Alps, out of a French and Netherlandish manuscript tradition of the fourteenth and early fifteenth century that adopted aspects of Italian panel painting (e.g., Jan van Eyck). These forces eventually coalesced in the works of Albrecht Dürer, whose watercolor

studies of the landscape rival those of Leonardo (fig. 6). He was followed by painters such as Paul Brill, Joachim Patinir, and Jan Bruegel, who further explored the development of landscape imagery.⁵

It is, however, in the seventeenth century, with the rise of scientific study and increased interest in the natural world and the forces of nature, that landscape painting emerges as a distinct genre, apart from history painting, still life, and portraiture. With Rome as the center of European art, landscape painting grew to unprecedented popularity. Drawing influence from the Venetians, painters such as Annibale Carracci and Claude Lorraine formulated what would be the ideal classical landscape: a sun-filled arcadia of trees framing softly rolling hills and distant mountains, dotted with classical ruins, and suitable for shepherds and music (fig. 7).⁶

Further removed from the classical world of Italy and largely discouraged from producing religious paintings, artists working in the Dutch Republic developed a remarkable tradition of genre, still life, and landscape painting, one that lacked the poetic roots of the Mediterranean and focused intently on the contemporary world around them. In landscapes of the Dutch countryside, painters such as Jacob van Ruysdael responded to their physical surrounding as they appeared at that moment, reflecting, at times, the nationalistic and economic associations that were bound to the land (fig. 8).⁷

The late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was also a time when artists formed academies of art, first in Italy and later in France and England, all of which held the humanistic values of antiquity and the Renaissance, which prized human action at the ultimate goal of writers and painters. Although landscape and still-life painting occupied the lowest rungs of

the academic hierarchy, the development of such institutions led to greater appreciation and respect of the profession and the gradual deterioration of the apprentice system, which had been the model for artistic training since antiquity.

Landscape Painting in England

Painting in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England was dominated by portraiture and, due to a lack of local talent, much of it produced by a succession of artists imported from the Continent: Hans Holbein, Anthony van Dyck, Peter Lely, and Godfrey Kneller. In the eighteenth century, when England began producing painters of the first order, they, too, were principally portraitist—William Hogarth, Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, and Thomas Lawrence. Hogarth and Reynolds were particularly important for their contribution to art theory and criticism and for creating the basis for academic study and training in the arts. Gainsborough, who studied under Hogarth, however, was not only a skilled portraitist, but England's first major painter of landscapes (fig. 9).

Although painters such as Richard Wilson provided early efforts to reconcile the style of Claude's classical landscapes with northern sensibilities, it is with Gainsborough's landscapes that we see the beginnings of what will become one of England's great contributions to the history of painting.⁸ Gainsborough was not only a gifted painter in oil, but equally skilled as a watercolorist and draughtsman. Indeed, he regarded drawings as an independent medium. His interests in watercolor and drawing coincide with broader trends in the media, witnessed by the emergence of watercolor societies, which provided a forum for display, criticism, and a place within the artistic hierarchy. This trend was encouraged by the emergence of commercially prepared



Fig. 6. Albrecht Dürer, *Landscape Study of Water, Sky and Pine Trees (near Nuremberg)*, c. 1496, watercolor. British Museum, London. Photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum / Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 7. Claude Lorraine (Gellée), *A Classical Landscape with Cattle Crossing a Stream*, c. 1670, oil painting on canvas, Anglesey Abbey, Cambridgeshire. Photo: National Trust / Art Resource, NY.

artists' materials—brushes, oils in bladders or tubes, watercolor pigments in cakes, palettes, easels, and paint boxes—which not only made life easier for the professional artist, but also stimulated generations of amateur painters, particularly in the area of watercolor.

Of particular significance for the development of landscape painting during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the debate over the concept of the picturesque, to which William Gilpin contributed mightily (fig. 10). The picturesque was among the most important issues in landscape painting as well as in art criticism, literature, and landscape gardening and architecture. Regardless of one's position on this topic, the development of such theoretical writing on the arts represented the high level to which artistic discourse on the subject of landscape painting had risen in England.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the increasing richness of British artistic talent and the growing wealth and sophistication of its collectors led, in part, to the artistic flowering of the Victorian Age, which produced England's best-known landscape painters, Joseph Mallord William Turner (fig. 11) and John Constable, and its best-known critic, John Ruskin. Often understood within the broad term "Romantic," artists, poets, and writers explored the potential for the landscape to be a primary means to consider humanistic themes—seizing a role once reserved for figure painting, epic poetry, and history. In this way, the sky, forest, trees, river, and ancient ruins could stand for abstract concepts once conveyed through human action. It is within this milieu that the image of the painter as we often imagine emerges: seated before a landscape with easel, brush, paint box, and a parasol, creating a view of the land.

A British Sentiment: Landscape Drawings and Watercolors 1750–1950

The works selected for this exhibition and the essays considered here span the Georgian, Elizabethan, and Edwardian eras, with works from Gilpin's picturesque watercolors to Henry Charles Brewer's study of the ruins of London during the Blitz. They represent a wide range of subjects including tourist views of Mount Vesuvius and Cader Idris, detailed studies of rocks and trees, and images of churches, cottages, and ruins, many identifiable and others imagined. They also cover a range of media, from graphite and chalk drawings to monochrome ink studies and watercolors. And they demonstrate a range of intents, from large, highly finished, salon quality watercolors to quickly drawn passages in the pages of a sketchbook, to detailed monochromatic works that await the attention of a ready engraver. Many of the artists were members of one watercolor society or another, some were professionals and academicians, while



Fig. 8. Jacob van Ruysdael, *Plain with View of Ootmarsum (Overijssel)*, n.d., oil on canvas, Alte Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemaldesammlungen, Munich. Photo: Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 9. Thomas Gainsborough, *Woodland Scene with a Peasant, a Horse, and a Cart*, c. 1760, watercolor, gouache, gray wash, and black chalk. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac D. Fletcher Collection, Bequest of Isaac D. Fletcher, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photo: Art Resource, NY.

others were highly-skilled amateurs. Together, as shown in the exhibition catalogue entries at the end of this book, they demonstrate the wide range of interest in landscape imagery during this period.

As is typical of much of art history, initial studies within the discipline of British landscape painting were written largely by collectors and curators and, thus, tend to focus on matters of attribution, artist biographies, and establishing a reliable chronology and history. Subsequent generations of scholars, many of whom were trained in the second half of the twentieth century, have built on this foundation, applying methodological approaches to the study of the

landscape drawn from other fields of inquiry, namely politics, sociology, anthropology, and economics. Indeed, any study of the land leads ultimately to discussions of ownership, management, labor, wealth, and privilege. As a product of this contemporary scholarly environment, the essays published here reveal the influence of such socio-historical methodological trends.

Claire Paulsen's study, "Loss and Recovery: British Landscapes as National Identity," and Christopher Guy's, "The Classist Ideology of the Picturesque Mode," follow the publications of Michael Baxendall and Svetlana Alpers, and respond to questions of what contemporary viewers would have seen in these images of the landscape, particularly as their responses reflect their position in society.⁹ Taylor Hunkins, in his essay, "Aesthetic Integrity of the Picturesque," and Xiaoqi Huang, in her essay, "Humphry Repton's Vision in English Garden Design," further explore issues of the picturesque and the challenges presented by this problematic concept in landscape painting, garden design, and philosophy. Sophie Weinstein's study, "Abroad and At Home: The Impact of the Grand Tour and Domestic Tourism on British Landscape Painting," examines how British artists not only learned to paint landscapes according to the models developed abroad, but also, how such principles were brought home and applied to the local landscape. Caroline Fallon's "Departures from Nature" explores notions of the real and ideal in landscape painting, focusing on the seventeenth-century landscape watercolorists William Gilpin, Paul Sandby, and Alexander Cozens. Oliva Falcey's essay, "English Gothic in the Countryside: British Taste in Stone and Paint," considers aspects of style and meaning in the buildings that frequently appear in landscape paintings of this period. Jackson Zyontz's essay, "The Watercolor Manual: Legitimizing Watercolor Through Text," and Alexia Tobash's "British Watercolorists and the Validation of their Art," consider the social status of landscape painters in watercolor and how, through publications and organizations, watercolorists improved their status within the professional artistic hierarchy. Joelle Paull's essay, "John Ruskin and Matthew Arnold: The Nineteenth-Century Critics' Love of Landscape," explores the developing role of the critic in the art world, looking at the works of the leading proponents of landscape painting. The findings brought forth in these studies cause one to look beyond the images themselves, to consider the forces that shaped landscape imagery, how such imagery came to represent ideas and forces typically associated with figurative imagery, and how the public understood and responded to them. While they do not exhaust the lines of inquiry into this subject, they provide a welcome point of entrance through a body of largely unpublished material.



Fig. 10. William Gilpin, *Picturesque Capriccio*, n.d., graphite, ink, and watercolor on paper, private collection (cat. 27).



Fig. 11. Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Goldau, with the Lake of Zug in the Distance: Sample Study*, c.1842–3, graphite, watercolour, and ink on paper. Tate Gallery, London. Photo: Tate, London / Art Resource, NY.

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- 1 For the development of landscape painting in western art, see Helen Langdon, "Landscape," in *The Dictionary of Art* 18, edited by Jane Turner (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 700–720; and Kenneth Clarke, *Landscape into Art* (London: 1949). For Chinese painting, see Michael Sullivan, *The Birth of Landscape Painting in China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962).
 - 2 Luba Freedman, *The Classic Pastoral in the Visual Arts* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989); and Karl Scheffold, "Origins of Roman Landscape Painting," *Art Bulletin* 62 (1960): 87–96.
 - 3 Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).
 - 4 Ernst H. Gombrich, "The Renaissance Theory of Art and the Rise of Landscape," in *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon, 1966; rev. New York and London: Phaidon, 1971), 107–121.
 - 5 Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1953); Walter Gibson, *Mirror of the Earth: The World Landscape in 16th-Century Flemish Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).
 - 6 Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape: Annibale Carracci, Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorraine* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).
 - 7 Wolfgang Stechow, *Dutch Landscape Painting of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Phaidon, 1966).
 - 8 Leslie Parris, *Landscape in Britain: 1750–1850* (London: Tate Museum, 1973); Lewis Hawes, ed., *Presence of Nature: British Landscapes 1780–1850* (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 1982).
 - 9 Michael Baxendall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

Jackson Zyontz

As watercolor painting became popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, instruction manuals began circulating as a way of educating amateur and professional artists on the methods and techniques of preparing and using watercolors. These manuals were often written by an artist or an experienced colorman and gave precise detailed instructions on every step of preparation from preparing pigments to cutting and sizing paper. As artists working in the medium fought for legitimacy and a place in the art academies, these manuals codified and standardized practices which, until the mid-seventeenth century, had been localized. It had always been the responsibility of the artist to create the materials for their artworks as well as the works themselves.¹ Codifying the preparation practices in these instruction manuals allowed the industry of artists' colormen to arise. This in turn spurred the legitimacy of watercolor which had previously been a genre reserved for studies, sketchbooks, or private drawings. A common theme throughout watercolor manuals is the shared desire by author and artist to elevate the status of the watercolor genre to an academic level equal to oil painting, a medium long since established as dominant. This is evidenced in the discussions in each manual on how to prepare and mix pigments. Every manual has a slightly different technique, slightly different advice, or builds on previously published manuals, however the objective of obtaining the finest powders for the best pigments is a common theme. Included in each manual was a list of "approved" pigments with instructions on how to prepare them, grind them, and mix them with the necessary binding agent in order to apply them to paper. These instructions gave the artist or colorman a reference when working. Another outcome of these manuals was the development of the artists' colorman, an industry of entrepreneurial individuals who prepared and sold watercolor materials to artists. The instructions found in the watercolor manuals allowed colormen to learn how to prepare all the materials in order to sell to artists.

Martin Hardie traces the first watercolor manual to Edward Norgate who wrote his *Miniatura or the Art of Limning* in 1630.² Norgate's manual was the first to codify a list of pigment colors and minerals from which these colors could be derived. Norgate, in his introduction, gives a small explanation for writing the manual stating his purpose was

to speake, then is the true order and mannors of the Colours, the meanes to prepare them ready to the pencill and to cleanse them from those grosse and corrupt mixtures and faces where with by the

Art and avarice of those that sell them or the carelessness of those that make them commonly are sophisticated.³

Norgate's specific focus on the treatment of pigments is evidence that from early in the seventeenth century, watercolor artists were concerned about the creation and mixture of their pigments. Norgate's list of pigments included twenty-four pigments: two shades of white, five shades of green, four shades of blue, three of green, three of red, four of brown, and three of black.⁴ He purposely omits pigments such as Verdigrisee, Orpiment, and Litmus saying these pigments, while used, were unworthy and dangerous.⁵ He relegates these pigments to tinting maps, thus distinguishing between the art of watercolor and map-making.⁶

Norgate expands on his list of pigments by providing detail about each pigment and giving instructions on how each should be prepared. Ceruse, a pigment used to make white, would quickly become rusty and dirty colored after a few weeks on a paper.⁷ Norgate prefers white lead for white pigments, however, he cautions the artist not to grind the mineral too fine for, "when dry in your shell or used in your work it will glitter and shine."⁸ He urges the artist to wash either their ceruse or white lead in distilled water, then letting the mixture sit for two or three hours.⁹ Norgate says to continue this process until the water no longer tastes salty and the shiny residue stops appearing in the water. He also cautions the artist to take extreme care in the process for carelessness could ruin the art work.

Norgate continues with a discussion of washing pigments; he follows with a discussion of grinding and mixing the pigments with the colloid agent, necessary to keep the pigment on the paper. He instructs the artist to use a stone of either porphyry or serpentine to grind the pigments. The pigments were to be ground in water, then laid on a large chalk stone to dry. The chalk would draw out any remaining impurities in the ground pigment, leaving a dry powder ready to be mixed for painting.¹⁰

Norgate's specific and often delicate treatment of the process of pigment mixing is an example of the importance of properly creating the materials for the watercolor artist. Soon after *Miniatura* was published, William Sanderson published his manual, *Graphice*, in 1658.¹¹ By the end of the seventeenth century, these artistic manuals became common. Artists wrote and published various manuals on different topics of watercolor, to appeal to a wide range of interests. Marjorie Cohn attributes the increased practice of



Fig. 1. George Barnard, *Llangollen Bridge* (detail), black chalk, graphite, gouache, gray wash, on paper, private collection (cat. 7).

watercolor to the manuals' widespread availability.¹² As amateur artists found easy ways to educate themselves, they began practicing watercolor painting more and experimenting with different techniques.

Although Norgate's early attempt was significant in its day, one of the best-known manuals is *The Art of Drawing and Painting in Water-colours*, printed in 1735 for J. Peele and written by an unidentified author. Like *Graphice* and *Miniatura*, this manual laid out precise instructions for how to prepare the pigments for use. *The Art of Drawing and Painting* also goes one step further than either Sanderson or Norgate, by advising the artist on how to compose his works as well as how to lay the color on the paper. The manual also includes a section organized by color, where each is specifically addressed in length. The chapter on white pigments



Fig. 2. Aaron Edwin Penley, *Figures Conversing near a Mill*, n.d., graphite, gouache, and watercolor on paper, private collection (cat. 48).

provides a revealing comparison to Norgate's chapter written almost a century earlier. The author recommends flake white over lead white, explaining that lead white is more likely to turn black-brown if used with hard water. Lead white also had to be treated more than flake white to remove impurities before use.¹³ The transition to flake white would have made it easier for an amateur artist or colorman to make a desirable pigment, a sign of the democratization of watercolor art. The author also mentions pearl and oyster shell as being the best materials from which to create white pigment, but adds that it is rare and difficult to make. The author continues to explain the process of refining the mineral, washing the lead white with white vinegar to cause it to ferment, then washing it with water until all impurities are gone before leaving the powdered pigment to dry.¹⁴ The author also discusses the advantages of using white paper to create whites instead of using a white pigment.¹⁵ Despite this complex technique, the author urges the artist to use this method to create superior color.

A discussion of white pigments is intriguing for it provides a lens through which to look at the use of body-color or gouache. Body-color, according to Hardie, is the practice of mixing colored pigments with a white lead pigment in order to create a translucent semi-liquid paste. This was often used to add highlights or texture to a painting (figs. 1-2). However, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the use of body-color was criticized by watercolor purists. Hardie explains that the term "pure-color" was created in opposition to the practice body-color and artists who worked in body-color were often seen as lesser than

pure-color artists.¹⁶ In light of this schism, the discussion of white pigments in the instruction manuals is intriguing. Nowhere in either *Miniatura* or *The Art of Painting and Drawing* was body-color named or stigmatized; instead tips are given on how to mix and apply the white pigments. The author of *The Art of Painting and Drawing* even goes as far as advising artists on how to apply lead white so it will not blacken over time.¹⁷ He explains his attempts to rectify the problem as well as offer alternatives. There is no evidence of a bias or stigma against body-color in his writing; he appears genuine in his attempts to use white pigment in watercolor works. Norgate, in his discussion of mixing pigments, frequently recommends mixing white into pigments. He encourages mixing white into pigments to accent various facial features when painting humans or animals, as well as using body-color to highlight shadows when transitioning from light to dark areas of the paper.¹⁸ Nowhere in Norgate's treatment of body-color does he show any bias toward the medium; instead he actually encourages the artist to work in body-color in order to make his painting superior.

Neither Hardie or Cohn find evidence to suggest that a bias or stigma against body-color exists. Hardie does not discuss any negative bias in his discussion of pigment types and colors.¹⁹ Cohn treats the issue of pure-color versus body-color in her study, *Wash and Gouache*, where she mentions an increased “fetish” in mixing China white with pigments in order to experiment with lighting.²⁰ She cites Ruskin's attempts in the medium as proof of body-color's success due to his intricate use of light gradient effects.²¹ Body-color allowed for an extended gradient when transitioning from light and dark and its advantages were exploited by eighteenth-century artists. The instruction manuals, however, present a problem for they both discuss in length the procedures for creating a white pigment which could be mixed with colors. Norgate is even very specific about which objects in a painting should be mixed with gouache. Of course, watercolor purists would prefer the artist not use an opaque or semi-opaque white body-color of any kind, using only carefully protected passages of the unpainted white paper to serve as highlights (fig. 3). Indeed, artists were urged to never “lose your paper”—apply pigment to the entire surface—while watercolor painting.²²

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, watercolor painting as a medium was experimental in nature due to its low status among artists. Until the early seventeenth century, watercolor remained confined to the realm of pre-drawings, studies, sketchbook drawings, and practice for more complex versions usually in oil. This gave the artist freedom to experiment with materials and painting techniques. A comparison between *The Art of Drawing and Painting* and



Fig. 3. William Collingwood Smith, *Cader Idris* (detail), n.d., watercolor on paper, private collection (cat. 54).

Miniatura, written a century earlier, reveals an innovative shift in technique. Norgate's method for preparing white pigments, while much less complex, was more time consuming and therefore unfit for an industry of amateur and professional artists. Washing the lead white and letting it sit would have taken hours, time a colorman with clients could not afford. Norgate's method instead seems more appropriate for the professional artist. The method described by the author of *The Art of Drawing and Painting* is much more expedient and better suited to the casual artist. Washing the mineral with vinegar was quicker than washing with distilled water and thus was a technique that could be copied by amateur artists and entrepreneurial colormen. The expedient method described by the author is most likely a product of the watercolor fervor that swept England through the eighteenth century.

In addition to advice on preparation technique, these manuals also gave instruction on how to apply the color to the paper. The author of *The Art of Drawing and Painting* set aside a whole chapter of his manual to discuss gold leaf and the application of gold pigments on the paper. The fact that the manual deals with gilding speaks to the wide readership of these manuals. In addition to the artists themselves, book binders, book illustrators, gilders, and framers, all read these manuals for instruction in various techniques. The author instructs the artist, in detail, on several different ways to apply gold leaf to the paper. One such way was to mix up Vermillion and egg white to a consistency the author calls an oil. Then this is strained and worked into a paste which is fixed to the paper with gum arabic. The author then instructs the artist to apply a strong gum-water wash to the outlines, then apply the gold leaf. The final steps were to rub it with cotton once it was dry then polish it with a dog's tooth.²³ The care taken when writing these instruction shows the obvious

skill of the author and also his desire to educate the aspiring artist. Norgate similarly instructs artists how to apply paint but instead of advice on technique he focuses on pigment choice. For distinguishing between light and shadow, for example, Norgate recommends using white, English Oker, and Indico, explaining these pigments are very natural looking and blend well.²⁴ He also recommends using white, red lead, and lake to accent lips and cheeks when drawing portraits of faces.²⁵ Norgate, however, contradicts himself by immediately following his recommendations with a simple statement, “But to prescribe an absolute and general Rule is both impossible and a little ridiculous . . . your own observations, practice, and discretion must be your best Director.”²⁶ Despite giving detailed advice on how to mix the pigments, he immediately follows up by telling the artist to ignore him and instead trust his observations. Despite being over a century old by the peak of watercolor painting in Britain, Norgate’s instruction in his manual still had a lasting influence on how artists translated their observations onto paper.

Paper, while often overlooked, was a crucial part of the artist’s toolkit and as a result, the manuals spent considerable space informing the artist on the different types of paper which would be used. The underdrawing media (ink, graphite, red chalk, charcoal) dictated the paper an artist used for their work. The author of *The Art of Drawing and Painting* treats the subject in a section about applying charcoal, pencil, and crayon to paper. He recommends using a soft, coarse-grained paper when using charcoal to create the underdrawing so that the soft pigment clung to the textured paper fibers (fig. 4). When using harder, fine-grained materials, such as graphite, a smoother, finer toothed paper was suggested so that the pigment would rest on the surface



Fig. 4. Henry Charles Brewer, *Inner Temple Hall and the Lamb Building*, 1941, graphite, watercolor, and gouache on paper, private collection (cat. 12).

of the paper (fig. 5). Norgate does not treat the issue of paper or drawing media, but frequently references charcoal as the preferred underdrawing media due to its ability to render light and dark.²⁷

As the genre of watercolor became more widely accepted among academic artists, it also became associated with a lady’s art. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most women were barred from formal artistic training and therefore sought watercolor due to its informal nature. Traditionally, women were barred from academic artistic training because of the focus on the human form, which required extensive study of the nude figure. Moreover, oil painting was regarded as a messy media that soiled one’s hands, and was thus inappropriate to feminine sensibilities. Aware of these assumptions, some watercolor manuals were written with female artists in mind, providing them with directions on how to be an artist and how to assert themselves in a male-dominated profession. G. Brown’s manual *New Treatise on Flower Painting or Every Lady Her Own Drawing Master* opens with a confession that women are not taught the fundamentals of painting even though they have a natural taste and talent for art, especially flower paintings.²⁸ From there he continues, in the style of Norgate, to lay out his list of pigments necessary for painting and also the treatment of pigment tints, however, where he differs from Norgate is his perspective. His language throughout this treatise expressly urged women to train themselves to paint. This emphasis on using one’s hands for creative expression parallels similar developments in music, where cultured women were expected to play instruments such as the piano. Legitimizing the media of watercolors meant more than gaining acceptance to the academies; it narrowed the gender



Fig. 5. William Gilpin, *Picturesque Capriccio*, n.d., graphite, ink, and watercolor on paper, private collection (cat. 27).



Fig. 6. *William Reeves Artists Watercolour Paint Box*, c. 1780s. Photo: R. M. Bodoh.

gap within the art world. Painting flowers as Brown instructs was a means of personal and financial agency and a way for women to gain a foothold in the art world.

As instruction manuals began to cater to specific audiences, colormen began to distribute manuals in bulk. The proliferation of instruction manuals was most likely the catalyst for the appearance and importance of the artist's colorman. According to Hardie, the first colorman came to England with Sir Godfrey Kneller in 1675.²⁹ Kneller employed this man to prepare his pigments and other related materials and eventually set him up in London.³⁰ Hardie does not name Kneller's colorman but explains that a century later, the company of Reeves & Son had filled the market by manufacturing compact watercolor cakes for artists (figs. 6–7).³¹ Both Cohn and Hardie mention the increasing popularity of tube-based pigments which appeared a little later in the nineteenth century. Cohn does say that by the mid-nineteenth century, William Blake was the only artist who continued to mix his own pigments.³² Cohn says this shift was due to artists not wanting to spend the time to undergo the preparation process.³³ Cohn also mentions that by the nineteenth century, colormen were so good at their jobs that homemade pigments severely lacked in quality compared to the cakes and tubes sold at art materials suppliers.³⁴

Colormen were also trained to provide an artist with all manner of materials necessary for the watercolor artist, such



Fig. 7. *Van Belonging to Reeves & Sons, manufacturers of artists' materials, London*, c. 1930. Photo: HIP / Art Resource, NY.

as brushes and palettes. According to Cohn, the watercolor-brush was a complex instrument designed to hold as much fluid as possible while simultaneously maximizing the surface tension of the brush so the liquid only comes out of the tip. The ideal brush retained its shape against light pressure and was usually made out of horse hair. The quality of the brush was vital to the quality of the wash. Brushes made with subpar bristles often ran the risk of spilling loose wash, fraying, or even breaking. Quills became popular methods of applying wash, since the removable tips allowed several individual colors to be applied with one brush. While neither Norgate or the anonymous author specifically treat the issue of brushes, both strongly recommend the artist frequently clean their brushes to prevent pigment buildup. Cohn notes that by the end of the nineteenth century, artists were using one or two large flat camel brushes and one small brush for detailing.³⁵

Between 1630 and 1900, countless watercolor manuals were published for the watercolor community. As methods of pigment making became more efficient, however, it became less practical for artists to make pigments themselves.³⁶ When the Royal Watercolor Society was created in 1804, it established a formal training for artists wishing to work in watercolors. With access to formal training, less artists required these manuals to self-train. In addition, by the nineteenth century, artist materials shops had become quite established and carried an extensive range of products. According to Cohn, artist materials shops usually carried a variety of pigments as well as multiple brushes, inks, papers, gums and binding agents, pencils, and sketchbooks (figs. 8–9).³⁷ The introduction of pigments such as Cobalt Blue also gave less incentive for artists to make their own. J. Barnard & Son introduced Cobalt Blue into the market in 1871 with great acclaim.³⁸ This rare pigment was difficult to make but also

created a very pleasing rich blue wash.³⁹ As more artists began buying pigments instead of making them, the quality of the work began to be judged partially by the type and quality of the pigments. This competition made self-mixing pigments a less desirable option for artists trying to gain admission to the academies or other watercolor societies.

While the watercolor manuals became obsolete, they were an important part in the legitimacy of the genre. By codified procedures and practices, these manuals established a model for the artist similar to the oil painter. In addition, manuals often instructed artists to think of watercolor as similar to oil when painting. By establishing the watercolor artist as equal in rank and method as the oil painter, it helped legitimize watercolor as a genre of high art, as opposed to an unfinished work fit only for private use. The heightened fervor surrounding the art and practice in England in the eighteenth century was due, in part, to the extensive dissemination of these artistic manuals. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, as the rigid structure of art began to break down, watercolor artists finally gained acceptance as members of academies and salons.



Fig. 8. Smart & Sutherland, *Rathbone Place, Marylebone, London*, 1823, etching and aquatint with hand coloring. Photo: HIP / Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 9. Thomas Rowlandson, *Ackermann's Repository of Arts, 101 Strand*, 1809, etching and aquatint with hand coloring. The Trout Gallery, Gift of The Brooks V Limited Partnership Collection, 2011.7.59.

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- 1 The use of water-suspended pigments dates to pre-antiquity; in England the practice developed during the Renaissance. For watercolors in tinting prints, see Susan Dackerman, *Painted Prints: The Revelation of Color* (Baltimore and College Park: Baltimore Museum of Art and Penn State University Press, 2002).
 - 2 Martin Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, edited by Dudley Snelgrove with Jonathan Mayne and Basil Taylor, 3 vols. (London: Batsford, Ltd., 1966), 1:10.
 - 3 Edward Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning* (London, 1630), edited from the manuscript in the Bodleian Library (Tanner 326) and collated with other manuscripts by Martin Hardie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919), 6.
 - 4 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 7.
 - 5 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 7.
 - 6 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 7.
 - 7 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 8.
 - 8 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 8.
 - 9 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 8.
 - 10 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 10.
 - 11 Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, 1:10.
 - 12 Marjorie B. Cohn, *Wash and Gouache, A Study of the Development of the Materials of Watercolour* (Cambridge: Fogg Art Museum and the American Institute for Conservation, Harvard University, 1977), 11.
 - 13 Anonymous, *The Art of Drawing and Painting in Water-colours . . . With Instructions for Making Transparent Colours of Every Sort; Partly from Curious Personages in Holland, France and Italy; but Chiefly from a Manuscript of the Great Mr. Boyle* (London: Lockshead, 1731), 28.
 - 14 Anonymous, *The Art of Drawing and Painting in Water-colours*, 29.
 - 15 Anonymous, *The Art of Drawing and Painting in Water-colours*, 30.
 - 16 Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, 1:11.
 - 17 Anonymous, *The Art of Drawing and Painting in Water-colours*, 29.
 - 18 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 22.
 - 19 Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, 1:10.
 - 20 Cohn, *Wash and Gouache*, 52.
 - 21 Cohn, *Wash and Gouache*, 52.
 - 22 Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, 1:13–14.
 - 23 Anonymous, *The Art of Drawing and Painting in Water-colours*, 29.
 - 24 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 23.
 - 25 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 22.
 - 26 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 22.
 - 27 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 22.
 - 28 George Brown, *A New Treatise of Flower Painting or Every Lady Her Own Drawing Master* (London: G. Riley, 1799), 1.
 - 29 Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, 1:17.
 - 30 Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, 1:17.
 - 31 Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, 1:18.
 - 32 Cohn, *Wash and Gouache*, 34.
 - 33 Cohn, *Wash and Gouache*, 35.
 - 34 Cohn, *Wash and Gouache*, 35.
 - 35 Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, 22.
 - 36 Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, 1:12.
 - 37 Cohn, *Wash and Gouache*, 13.
 - 38 Cohn, *Wash and Gouache*, 34.
 - 39 Cohn, *Wash and Gouache*, 34.

Alexia Tobash

Today's viewers might consider Joshua Cristall's *Capriccio Landscape with Castle* (fig. 1), a landscape watercolor from the eighteenth century, a completed painting. But in its day, it was probably unknown to all but the artist and perhaps his colleagues and friends. Although the subject of the work followed current trends in English painting, it would have been "pushed into mere decorative beauty" because it was a landscape—not a history painting, and a watercolor—not an oil painting.¹ However, over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a rising interest in the subject of landscapes and the technique, display, and collection of watercolor painting would reshape such perceptions. Central to this reshaping of perceptions was the emergence and development of artistic academies and societies, some of which were directed exclusively to watercolor painters, many of whom worked in landscape. Such activities contributed to one's professional life, but it also influenced the public's perception of their work. This essay will show that the creation of such groups enabled artists to reshape the established hierarchies of subject matter and medium.

The Royal Academy And Hierarchies In The Arts

The origins of the Royal Academy in England stems from the work of Dr. Thomas Monro, who was a principal physician at Bethlehem Hospital and a watercolor enthusiast (fig. 2). Dr. Monro created a drawing school and inspired its offshoot, the Sketching Society, known as "The Brothers." Such groups identified a need for painters to regularly practice, advance their understanding of painting, and critically discuss their art.² These earlier societies inspired the formation of the Royal Academy, which was founded in 1768



Fig 1. Joshua Cristall, *Capriccio Landscape with Castle*, n.d., watercolor on paper, private collection (cat. 21).

under King George III and organized along the lines of the academies in Italy and France.³ The creation of the Royal Academy was an awakening for both eighteenth-century painters and collectors. Under the Academy, oil painters—especially those of history and portraiture—were no longer considered craftsmen.⁴ They were granted an elevated status, regular exhibition space, greater authority within the organization, and a sense of community. The annual summer exhibition—first at Pall Mall, then Somerset House, and finally at Burlington House—became an important venue for public discussion and sales. The Academy added a pivotal cultural and social aspect to London life for the wealthy and middle class.⁵

The first president of the English Academy, Sir Joshua Reynolds, delivered his famous *Discourses* annually from 1769–1790. It was in these essays that he bestowed the "appropriate" theories of art and aesthetics. He provided advice to aspiring artists and set the standard for the visual arts. Reynolds was of the traditional mindset of philosophers such as Horace, who argued that "art should instruct as well as delight."⁶ On December 10, 1771, Reynolds claimed that

the value and rank of every art is in proportion to the mental labour employed on it, or the mental pleasure produced by it.⁷

Such notions provided the philosophical basis for a hierarchy of genres, in which history painting occupied the highest level, deeming it "the natural and proper form of serious expression."⁸ As Andrew Wilton has noted, "the main aim of the history painter was to ennoble and idealize by the use of suitable facial expressions and gestures the actions he



Fig. 2. Thomas Monro, *A Farmhouse*, n.d., watercolor on paper, private collection.

chose to represent.”⁹ And so, Reynolds echoed the work of Charles Le Brun and the French art theorists by codifying artistic theory for the late eighteenth century and cemented, in Wilton’s words, a “canon of belief which dominated artistic life in England for nearly a hundred years.”¹⁰

For all its strengths, this kind of closed establishment tended to make the Royal Academy an exclusive club, particularly since it limited membership to 40 artists and added only 20 associate positions in the second year. Associates could be elected if they had previously exhibited artwork with the Academy and academicians were elected from the associate status. There was no limit to the number of works that academicians and associates could present at Somerset House, therefore leaving very little space for the works of nonmembers. The general taste of the Academy could be seen in the selection of works that its members chose to exhibit.¹¹ The oil painters who gained status through the Royal Academy and dominated its ranks, sought to control the institution and consciously separated their oil paintings from the less academic, “decorative arts,”¹² which included watercolor painting. Artists who worked purely with watercolor could not be elevated to the rank of academican.¹³ Watercolors hung in competition with the other paintings and when exhibited, they were “skied,” meaning they were hung close to the ceiling, where they were difficult to see.¹⁴ They were excluded from “the Great Room” of Somerset House.¹⁵ The history paintings in oil were placed in the main room, while the lesser genres and media were placed next to other oil paintings in subsequent rooms. Even as late as 1861, watercolor landscapes were pushed into the “decorative art” category by critics:

Water-colour painters, as contrasted with the leading professors of oil, are deficient in artistic training; they have not put themselves through the same severe course of study. Anatomy, the human figure, and the treatment of drapery, have been carried just to the point of “the rustic,” and nothing more. The want of this thorough training is specially seen in the more ambitious figure-subjects in the gallery of the New Water-Colour Society.¹⁶

This was true for other media as well. Drawings were shown at other exhibitions starting in 1760, but the Academy did not allow drawings as completed works of art until 1769. Architects, who worked most often in drawings, were thus long excluded from the Academy’s salons. Engravings were also shown starting in 1769.¹⁷

Changing Status Of Landscape Painting

As the Royal Academy made clear, history painting dominated the other genres. However, over the course of the



Fig. 3. Richard Wilson, *The Destruction of the Children of Niobe*, 1760, oil on canvas, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, New Haven.

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, landscape imagery gained greater attention and support. A development in schools of landscape painting in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and ultimately England, as well as increasing interest in the natural sciences, led to a growing fascination with the physical world, the landscape, in particular.¹⁸ Efforts were made to explore the potential of landscape imagery by expanding its place in traditional narrative painting. This can be seen in Richard Wilson’s *The Destruction of the Children of Niobe* (fig. 3), in which the painter provides a mix of landscape and history. Likewise, in *A Historical Landscape, Representing the Retirement of Timoleon*, Alexander Cozens creates a landscape infused with political content.¹⁹ Moreover, Thomas Gainsborough commented on the wealthy, destitute, and middle classes in *Going to Market* (fig. 4), which is dominated by landscape scenery.²⁰

Apart from the works themselves, the Reverend William Gilpin developed a definition of the picturesque and provided a new vocabulary for landscape in his *Observations*. The idea of the “moral landscape” became prevalent in literature.²¹ In the early 1770s, Alexander Cozens explored and codified nature in *The Shape, Skeleton, and Foliage of Thirty-two Species of Trees* and *The Various Species of Composition of Landscape in Nature*. He also categorized landscapes by their emotion and associated them with states of mind: attention, caution, awe, expectation, fear, and terror. In his work, he labeled and illustrated nearly every variation of tree and sky.²² In 1790, Archibald Alison wrote *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* to discuss the power images have to move humans emotionally via their associations to people and places.²³ Landscape elements gained meaning: an oak tree was no longer just a detail, it represented national strength.²⁴ These

types of associations were especially important to England's sense of national identity in the 1800s, when it was at war with France. Specifically, English landscape imagery became a symbol of the nation.²⁵

The emergence of Romanticism in the pictorial and literary arts contributed to a growing appreciation of the natural world, in and of itself, and as a metaphor for forces beyond a man's control. Romantic writers such as Jane Austen and Wordsworth provided detailed descriptions of landscape in their novels, where they served as powerful metaphors.²⁶ Travel guides to Northern Wales, Scotland, and the Lake District provided domestic tourists with potential sites to visit. Such developments paralleled and contributed to increased interest in images of the land, stimulating the development of landscape painting in England.

Watercolor Landscapes

Joshua Reynolds's death in 1792 lessened the pressures of academicism. The "council-room"—the area where lesser paintings were hung and where people went to escape the "bustle of the other departments"—eventually became the most crowded.²⁷ These "decorative arts" were attracting a large enough following to warrant a split from the Academy. The invention of gouache (an opaque, water-based color) and the improvements in paint technology led professional painters to experiment with watercolor. Henry James Richter and Richard Westall began to paint history topics in watercolor.²⁸ Thomas Gainsborough and Joseph Mallord William Turner not only promoted the subject of landscape, but also the use of watercolors (fig. 5). Gainsborough exhibited watercolors in imitation of oil paints at the Royal Academy in 1772 and later, in the 1820s, Turner used oil paints to imitate the effect of watercolor and the prices for these paintings fetched the same as traditional oil paintings.²⁹ Drawings became more elaborate, competing with oil in popularity and style,³⁰ and around 1820, works began to rival oil paintings with gilded frames and varnished surfaces.³¹ In the galleries, visitors saw glazed and framed watercolors and displayed them in their homes as such.³² Consequently, artists and the public confused landscape with history and watercolor with oil.

Critics were also confused by the rising interest in watercolor landscapes. Sir George Beaumont did not agree with the rise of landscape painting, but Gainsborough argued that history painting was obsolete.³³ Sir Thomas Lawrence still believed in the Academy's hierarchies, but he could not deny the drama and influence of Turner's landscapes.³⁴ Critics continued to view watercolors in this way; they claimed that academicians were intelligent and disciplined, but they also could not neglect the rise of watercolor landscape:



Fig. 4. Thomas Gainsborough, *Peasants Going to Market: Early Morning*, 1773, oil on canvas, private collection.

those right-minded men who have strived to render their works a record of sober thought and intellectual progress. It cannot be concealed that our English school, both for evil and for good, has been passing through a period of revolution.³⁵

Critics quoted Reynolds, arguing that watercolors were "a mere matter of ornament,"³⁶ not presuming for one instant to arouse "the noblest faculties."³⁷ They clearly favored the Royal Academy, where one could find large-scale narrative oil paintings.³⁸ However, the market did not warrant the need for such works; there was little interest or demand for them publically or in private homes. Collectors sought to decorate their homes with smaller works. Thus, a market opened for smaller-scale landscapes in watercolor.

Watercolor Societies

The Old Water-Colour Society—the first of such groups—was formed in part to meet the interest of the watercolor artist and their collectors.³⁹ There were several benefits to watercolorists for separating from the Academy. The purpose of the Society was established in its first exhibition catalogue:

The utility of an Exhibition in forwarding the Fine Arts arises, not only from the advantage of public criticisms, but also from the opportunity it gives to the artist of comparing his works with these of his contemporaries in the same walk. To embrace these points in their fullest extent is the object of the present exhibition; which, consisting of water-colour pictures only, must from that circumstance, give to them a better arrangement, and a fairer ground of appreciation, than when mixed with Pictures in Oil. Should the lovers of



Fig. 5. Joseph Mallord William Turner, *The Lake of Zug*, 1843, graphite and watercolor, Marquand Fund, 1959 (59.120), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY

the Art, viewing it in this light, favor it with their patronage, it will become an Annual Exhibition of Pictures in Water Colours.⁴⁰

The Old Water-Colour Society sought to provide all the honors and benefits that oil painters received at the Royal Academy. Also, there was a social component: the group would participate in classes and organize trips. Their first exhibit took place in 1805 and in 1862, a newly expanded gallery space led to the creation of an annual Winter exhibition of “sketches and studies by members.”⁴¹ The Society also made sales much easier. Instead of leaving the buyer to seek out the artist, the Society published a catalogue and served as a conduit for sales between artists and collectors. The buyer could purchase the painting by paying ten percent up front and then the rest of the amount once the painting was delivered. Originally, the group divided all income (admission fees, sales, membership dues) among the members. However, as the group’s financial needs grew, the members modified such arrangements and set up a treasury to manage the Society’s finances.⁴²

William Frederick Wells, Samuel Shelley, Henry Pyne, and Robert Hills were the founders of the Old-Water Society. They conspired to split from the Academy and on November 30, 1804, they organized a meeting with Nicholas Pocock, Francis Nicholson (cat. 47), John Varley, Cornelius Varley, John Claude Nattes (cat. 46), and William Sawrey Gilpin. They elected Shelley as treasurer, Hills as secretary, and Gilpin as president of the “Society of Painters in Water Colour.”⁴³ The first exhibit took place in June of 1805 and included George Barret Jr., Joshua Cristall (cat. 21), John Glover (cat. 30), William Havell, James Holworthy, and Stephen Francis Rigaud among a total of sixteen members.⁴⁴

They were of diverse ages, some early 20s and one past 60 years old. This was the first exhibit of solely watercolors and focused on mainly landscape paintings. Two-hundred seventy-five works were hung in two rooms at 20 Lower Brooks Street.⁴⁵ During the seven-week exhibition, 12,000 visitors paid to see the works, many of which were sold.⁴⁶

Unlike the Royal Academy, it is difficult to follow the histories of watercolor societies due to their constant restructuring. From 1805–1812, the Old Water-Colour Society was known as the “Society of Painters in Water Colour.” For five years it was known as “The Society of Painters in Oil and Watercolour,” causing a huge divide within the group. This controversy between oil and watercolor was caused by the reduced sales between 1812–1820, which were spurred by economic depression and war with France.⁴⁷ At the time, the inclusion of oil paintings seemed reasonable considering that “larger and richer” watercolors were being created.⁴⁸ This, however, led to conflict. One camp wanted to include oil paintings with the watercolors because it would attract greater attention and sales and it would elevate watercolors by comparing them to oil paintings. The other camp argued that the inclusion of oil paintings undermined the philosophy of the Society. In 1820, the latter camp prevailed and the Society went back to only exhibiting watercolors and its original title.⁴⁹ In 1881, the Old Water-Colour Society was endorsed by the crown and became “The Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colour” and today, it is known as the Royal Watercolour Society (RWS). The frequent restructuring and name-changing illustrates the instability of the societies and the constant struggle among artists over the issue of watercolor and oil.

The Old Water-Colour Society maintained three different kinds of membership: member, lady exhibitor, and associate. In 1804, the founders decided to limit the number of members to 24. A year later, they added fellow exhibitor or associate exhibitor, which was limited to 16. Members could be elected from this preliminary status. After its reorganization in 1820, the Old Water-Colour Society decided to limit its members to 20 and associates to 12. But the interest in watercolor continued to grow and in 1880, they changed the limit to 40 members and 45 associates. It accepted women from the start, as associate members, and then allowed them to become full members starting in 1890.⁵⁰ Other notable participants in the early years were John Sell Cotman, David Cox, DeWint, Samuel Prout, Edmund Dorell, Ramsey Richard Reinagle (fig. 6), Frederick Christian Lewis, and George Robert Lewis.⁵¹

Despite the popularity of watercolors, by the mid-1800s, many critics remained attached to the artistic theories and values of the Royal Academy. They were unsure how to react

to watercolor landscapes. In 1821, The Old Water-Colour Society issued a manifesto claiming that the materials for watercolor painting had improved, but “some critics,” namely Sir George Beaumont, “still occasionally lament the infatuation of artists in throwing away so much time and talent on materials of so perishable a nature.”⁵² However, this criticism is a testament to the Old Water-Colour Society’s success in raising the status of their art to meet oil painters.⁵³ With the popularity of the Old Water-Colour Society, the “existing tendency for watercolourists to rival painters in oil was confirmed and strengthened.”⁵⁴ Despite claims in 1861 that the New Water-Colour Society had the best exhibition seen in years, critics continued to argue that watercolor landscapes were just an unfortunate phase:

the comparative worthlessness of those partial modes which command but passing popularity. Then it will be found that pictures which aspire to nothing higher than “the furnishing apartments with elegance” must take a low position in the great competition of thought and civilization.⁵⁵

Such views would send painting back to mechanical trade and further away from the liberal arts.⁵⁶ But, the watercolor societies eventually led to a change in opinion. In 1907, a review of the Old Water-Colour Society’s latest exhibit praised the Society for remaining exclusive without missing “talented innovators.”⁵⁷ The exhibition featured works from a large range of styles and time periods.⁵⁸

The success of the Old Water-Colour Society led to the creation of other societies in London. The Associated Artists was founded in 1807 but was dissolved after its 1812 exhibit. In 1807, it was briefly known as the “New Society of Painters in Miniature and Water-Colour.” One year later it was known as the “Associated Artists in WaterColour” and in 1810 until its end, was known as the “Associated Painters in Watercolour.” Its exhibitions ran in the spring and included artists like Sir Augustus Wall Callcott and Joseph Powell. The Associated Artists was created to accommodate the artists not in the Old Water-Colour Society, but it was overshadowed, especially during the times of war.⁵⁹

The New Watercolour Society (fig. 7) was founded in 1831, became the “New Society of Painters in WaterColour,” the “Associated painters in Watercolor,” the “Institute of Painters in WaterColour” and in 1883 to the present the “Royal Institute of Painters” (RI). This society was created to protest against the exclusiveness of the Academy and the Old Water-Colour Society, which only included 24 members at the time. To protest, this society was originally run very differently. Its annual exhibitions were held in the summer. They added a second in the Winter starting in 1866 to compete with the Old



Fig. 6. Ramsay Richard Reinagle, *Beverley Hall, Yorkshire*, n.d., watercolor on paper, private collection (cat. 52).



Fig. 7. George Scharf, *Interior of the Gallery of the New Society of Painters in Watercolours, Old Bond Street*, 1834, watercolor, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Water-Colour Society. It did not limit members, which at times caused the society to struggle. The Dudley group of Watercolourists and the Society of Miniaturists eventually merged with the group and the Piccadilly Gallery was built to accommodate the increased size of the society. The New Watercolour Society was small at first, with the original members serving as a “managing committee.” This committee maintained a “proper standard of quality.” But, in 1834, members were elected and exhibitions were limited to those members. In 1880, the associate category was abolished and membership was capped at 100 members.⁶⁰ Joseph Powell was the first president of the Society, and William Cowen (fig. 8) was a founding member.⁶¹

Before 1768, painters in England had little status in society. The founding of the Royal Academy was a cultural



Fig. 8. William Cowen, *Malton Priory*, n.d., ink on bristol paper, private collection (cat. 21).

awakening, one that elevated the status of artists in society. They were given a regular exhibition space, a new community, and a philosophical basis for their professional practice. Although the Royal Academy did not favor landscape painting or watercolors, over time, both the genre and the medium came to occupy a widely accepted place among the arts, in larger measure through the work itself and the dialogue stimulated by rival societies. The improvement in watercolor and the painting practice among wealthy and middle-class amateurs, particularly women, led to an interest in this “lesser” medium. Eventually, critics began to appreciate their work as well. It is because of these societies that watercolor landscapes maintain a prominent place in the visual arts of England.

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- 1 Michael Rosenthal, "Landscape as High Art," in *Glorious Nature: British Landscape Painting 1750–1850*, ed. Katharine Baetjer (New York: Hudson Hills Press and Denver: The Denver Art Museum, 1993), 15.
- 2 Jean Hamilton, *The Sketching Society 1799 to 1851* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1971), 2; Andrew Wilton, *British Watercolours 1750–1850* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1977), 192.
- 3 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 14.
- 4 Huon L. Mallalieu, *Understanding Watercolours* (Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 1985), 53.
- 5 Wendell V. Harris, "A Handlist of Nineteenth-Century London Art Societies and Their Predecessors," *Nineteenth-Century Studies* 18 (2004): 140.
- 6 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 16.
- 7 Joshua Reynolds, *Seven Discourses on Art* (1771), *Discourse IV*, edited by Robert R. Wark (San Marino: Huntington Library Publications, 1959), 57.
- 8 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 21.
- 9 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 21.
- 10 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 21.
- 11 Harris, "A Handlist of Nineteenth-Century London Art Societies," 140.
- 12 Mallalieu, *Understanding Watercolours*, 53.
- 13 Graham Reynolds, *A Concise History of Watercolors* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1971), 98.
- 14 Mallalieu, *Understanding Watercolours*, 53.
- 15 Iolo A. Williams, *Early English Watercolours* (Bath: Kingsmead Reprints, 1952), 211.
- 16 "The Royal Academy and the Water-Colour Societies," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 53 (1861): 206.
- 17 Harris, "A Handlist of Nineteenth-Century London Art Societies," 140.
- 18 Rosenthal, "Landscape as High Art," 14.
- 19 Rosenthal, "Landscape as High Art," 19.
- 20 Rosenthal, "Landscape as High Art," 24.
- 21 Rosenthal, "Landscape as High Art," 19.
- 22 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 36.
- 23 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 36.
- 24 Rosenthal, "Landscape as High Art," 16.
- 25 Martin Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain, Vol. II. The Romantic Period* (London: B.T. Bratford, 1967), 117.
- 26 Rosenthal, "Landscape as High Art," 14.
- 27 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 50.
- 28 Anne Lyles and Andrew Wilton, *The Great Age of British Watercolours: 1750–1880* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1993), 260.
- 29 Rosenthal, "Landscape as High Art," 15.
- 30 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 50.
- 31 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 50.
- 32 Mallalieu, *Understanding Watercolours*, 198.
- 33 Rosenthal, "Landscape as High Art," 18.
- 34 Rosenthal, "Landscape as High Art," 16.
- 35 "The Royal Academy and the Water-Colour Societies," 201.
- 36 Reynolds, *Seven Discourses on Art*, 57.
- 37 Reynolds, *Seven Discourses on Art*, 57.
- 38 "The Royal Academy and the Water-Colour Societies," 220.
- 39 There was a trend of watercolorists splitting from their academies in other countries. In 1855, the Belgian School founded its Société d'Aquarellistes and due to an even greater interest in watercolors, the Société des Hydrophiles split in 1883; Reynolds, *A Concise History of Watercolors*, 149. The French Société d'Aquarellistes had their first exhibition in 1879. Reynolds, *A Concise History of Watercolors*, 136.
- 40 Mallalieu, *Understanding Watercolours*, 54.
- 41 Harris, "A Handlist of Nineteenth-Century London Art Societies," 144.
- 42 Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain: II. The Romantic Period*, 114.
- 43 Williams, *Early English Watercolours*, 212.
- 44 Williams, *Early English Watercolours*, 211.
- 45 Williams, *Early English Watercolours*, 211.
- 46 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 50.
- 47 Williams, *Early English Watercolours*, 211.
- 48 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 50.
- 49 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 50.
- 50 Williams, *Early English Watercolours*, 211.
- 51 Williams, *Early English Watercolours*, 228–229.
- 52 Mallalieu, *Understanding Watercolours*, 198.
- 53 Mallalieu, *Understanding Watercolours*, 198.
- 54 Wilton, *British Watercolours*, 50.
- 55 "The Royal Academy and the Water-Colour Societies," 221.
- 56 Reynolds, *Seven Discourses on Art*, 57.
- 57 A Modern Painter, "The Case for Modern Painting III – The Royal Water-Colour Society," *The Burlington Magazine* 11 (1907): 156.
- 58 A Modern Painter, "The Case for Modern Painting III," 156.
- 59 Harris, "A Handlist of Nineteenth-Century London Art Societies," 147.
- 60 Harris, "A Handlist of Nineteenth-Century London Art Societies," 149.
- 61 Charles Holme, *The Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours* (London: Offices of 'The Studio,' 1906), vii.

The term “picturesque” is used to describe a certain pictorial mode in landscape paintings. It emerged during the eighteenth century, when there was an effort to explore the potential of the landscape genre, particularly its iconographic and aesthetic integrity. The picturesque style emerged at this time, as theorists were concerned with the beauty and sublimity of nature. The term first appeared in literature, and painters and art theorists began to apply the concept of the picturesque onto the traditional approach for depicting, organizing, and discussing nature.¹ This approach was problematic as the philosophical principles behind the definition of the picturesque rely too much on the principles of the sublime (vast landscapes that produce a feeling of infinity and awe) and beautiful (the most desirable aspects of nature into one controlled landscape), making it an aesthetic of taste rather than one based on the senses. It was an effort to refine the aesthetics of the other two in hopes to create a new way of observing nature. Theorists like William Gilpin (fig. 1) and Uvedale Price sought to formalize the picturesque in a way to establish a collective taste that guided artists. Their efforts, however, only perpetuated the instability of the picturesque aesthetic, which overall diminished its integrity to a commodity.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth, there came about a philosophical shift in aesthetic theory that contributed to the construction of the picturesque style. Beginning in the 1670s, du Fresnoy and Shaftesbury adapted the theories on beauty and nature from the renaissance and prior in an effort to understand how it related to modern discourse.² In particular, du Fresnoy stated that “the principal part of painting is to *know* what is most beautiful in nature and most proper to that art.”³ The call to criticize nature for its most beautiful qualities would greatly affect the writings of William Gilpin and Uvedale Price, but it also established the framework for future philosophical inquiry. Though he does not write about landscape specifically, William Hogarth applies du Fresnoy’s theory in *The Analysis of Beauty*.

They are in a much fairer way, ladies, as well as gentlemen, of gaining a perfect knowledge of the elegant and beautiful in artificial as well as natural forms, by considering them in a systematical, but at the same time familiar way, than those who have been prepossessed by dogmatic rules, taken from the performances of art only....⁴

Within the construction of objects, through line, form, size, and detail, Hogarth argues that there are innate aesthetic properties. Therefore, the role of an artist is to then understand these properties in order to create art that is holistically beautiful. Hogarth also presents a conceptual shift in the approach to beauty; before, as argued by Shaftesbury, it was theorized that true beauty came from morality. Hogarth claimed that when it came to all compositions, found both in nature and art, “the particular force of each, which seem most to *please and entertain the eye*, and give that grace and beauty.”⁵ To Hogarth, the recognition of beauty comes from a sensational response to either nature or a work of imagination. If this is true, then aesthetic theory demanded a shift towards the inquiry of sensibilities and their universalities among all men.

In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Edmund Burke explores the physiology behind our understanding of beauty and its opposite, the terrible. The strongest passions that are incapable of definition are pain and pleasure, both of which to some degree are the means for creation of any object.⁶ Expanding upon this recognition, Burke argues that the absence of the pain does not equate to pleasure, nor does the absence of pleasure bring about pain. In the moment when pain ceases, there is a level of pleasure, but it is of a small degree and exists because it is pleasurable to return to a neutral state. Likewise, the absence of pleasure does not bring about pain, but instead a level of discomfort. With this, there is a tension between the passions of pain and pleasure.⁷ Burke titles this neutral state as *delight* and defines it as “the sensation which accompanies the removal of pain or



Fig. 1. William Gilpin, *Picturesque Capriccio*, n.d., graphite, sepia ink, and wash, private collection (cat. 27).

danger.”⁸ This distinction is important because it establishes the sensibility that drives the organization of the picturesque style. Walter Hipple adapts Burke’s categorization of sensibilities and rationalizes the physiological effect on each: “the sublime produces amazement by expanding the nervous fibers, the beautiful produces love by relaxing them, and the picturesque therefore does something midway between these.”⁹ For example, John Martin’s *The Great Day of His Wrath* (fig. 2) produces the sublime sense of awe, whereas Poussin’s *Landscape with Diogenes* (fig. 3) evokes a relaxed and serene feeling. Hipple argued that the picturesque style relaxed the tension among the nervous fibers and would return them to their original state. In this sense, the experience of the picturesque is the product of the tension between different combinations of expanding and relaxing fibers. The aesthetic integrity of picturesque, therefore, relies on the presence or absence of either the beautiful, sublime, or both.

If the picturesque contains both the beautiful and sublime, in some fashion, then it needs to be understood to what measure it acts as a balance between the two. Writing in the twentieth century, Christopher Hussey defends the picturesque as a distinctive style that differs from the aesthetic principles of the beautiful and sublime. In *The Picturesque* (1927), Hussey criticized Burke’s discussion of the beautiful and sublime because he felt that it “did not touch objects that had neither the smoothness of the beautiful nor the overwhelmingness of the sublime. These were to be recognized later as forming the third category, the Picturesque.”¹⁰ Though Hussey admits to the similarities of the beautiful and sublime within the picturesque, he argues that the quality of the third is too specific to be labelled as a by-product of another style. Instead it combines characteristics of the two in an effort to produce a style that represents a new mode of nature. In this way, Hussey’s conclusion does not attempt to expose how the picturesque is different from the beautiful and sublime, but instead states that its aesthetic quality is so distinctive that it demands to be its own category.

In his “Introduction on Taste,” in *A Philosophical Inquiry* (1757), Burke provides the foundation of a more compelling argument for the role of the picturesque. At its most abstract level, this introduction states that taste provides a fluid transition among perceptions and reactions.¹¹ Taste depends on the senses, of which all men have the same, and differentiates to what extent the senses affect a person. All men can perceive that light is more pleasing than dark, but to the degree in which it is more pleasing is relative to each specific person.¹² Since the picturesque “achieves neither the full tragedy of the sublime nor the serene comedy of the beautiful,” it is insubstantial to stand alone as a third category;



Fig. 2. John Martin, *The Great Day of His Wrath*, 1851-1853, oil on canvas, Tate Gallery, London, Photo: Tate, London / Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 3. Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with Diogenes*, oil on canvas, Louvre, Paris. Photo: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

though it does not combine the complete essence of the beautiful or sublime, it incorporates their aesthetic principles.¹³ Thus the picturesque is a mixture of the sublime—or as Burke would say “self-preserved pain—and the familiar.”¹⁴ It is a fusion of the two passions that provides a balance between what is familiar and comfortable, and what is terrific. The picturesque draws from different combinations of both to create something delightful to the eye. In this way, the picturesque should not be regarded as a third distinct category, but instead a transition that, though varied, connects the beautiful to the sublime.

Furthermore, the picturesque style can and should be regarded as the application of *taste* to the most beautiful and sublime. Jay Appleton defines taste to be a preference to different methods and devices to satisfy the inborn passions that Burke has outlined.¹⁵ The picturesque creates different combinations of the sublime and the beautiful which creates a certain tension among the passions of pain, pleasure, or

delight. The aesthetic integrity of the beautiful and sublime is strong as both have physiological reactions to the viewer—pleasure from beauty and awe or terror from the sublime. Physiologically, the picturesque style does not produce a new sensation, but instead a feeling of delight, which in itself is merely a mid-way point between pain and pleasure. It seems, then, that the aesthetic exchange between the picturesque and either the beautiful or sublime is too transparent to justify a distinct style. Instead, the picturesque acts as applied taste that selects the preferred characteristics from the two physiological styles.

If the picturesque is accepted as the concept of taste applied to both the beautiful and sublime, then the aesthetic integrity of the style must be questioned. Taste is subjective, “[N]o one can strictly answer to what pleasure or pain some particular man may find from the taste of a particular thing.”¹⁶ The difference in taste from one man to another is dependent on either the degree of natural sensibility or from a closer attention to the object.¹⁷ Depending on the combination of the familiar and the sublime within a picturesque scene, different degrees of the feeling of delight are achieved. As Hussey notes, the picturesque point of view is contemplative and dependent upon one’s biased perception. This creates a loose sense of judgment as each individual’s taste can differ from another’s. It was necessary, therefore, to establish a collective taste that would serve as the standard for determining the aesthetic value of a picturesque landscape. In order to create a collective *taste*, the general public must learn and accept one interpretation of the picturesque aesthetic.

Gilpin sought to formalize the picturesque and provide a system for how it can be achieved in art. From 1768 to 1776, Gilpin made a number of tours through Britain sketching different scenes that captured his definition of the picturesque style.¹⁸ He searched for the details within nature that capture the essence—his essence—of the picturesque. In his analysis and writings, he explains that nature alone lacks the perfect balance on which the picturesque depends.

In the meantime, with all this magnificence and beauty, it cannot be supposed that every scene, which these countries present, is *correctly picturesque*.¹⁹

With this realization, Gilpin attempted to establish a set of principles that any artist can use to accurately contemplate the natural environment. The hope was to create a highly specialized artistic eye, what would be later called the “Picturesque Eye.”²⁰ By extensively traveling around to different regions, whether domestic or abroad, the viewer must have a new object of pursuit — that of not barely examining the face of a country; but of examining it by the rules of *picturesque beauty* — that of not merely describing;

but of adapting the descriptions of natural scenery to the principles of artificial landscape.²¹

The natural landscape, as Gilpin suggests, should be mined for the characteristics that best capture the picturesque style. To do this effectively, Gilpin goes further to reduce a natural landscape into compositional elements that are most picturesque, that is combining elements of the beautiful and sublime.

Nothing conveys an idea of beauty more strongly, than the lake; nor of horror than the mountains; and the former lying in the lap of the latter, expresses in a strong manner the mode of their combination.²²

Gilpin presents an outline that demonstrates the applied taste of the picturesque. His paintings, such as *Picturesque Capriccio* (fig. 1), can be analyzed according to the formal elements Gilpin describes as picturesque. Both his writings and his paintings provide the first attempt to define the picturesque style in relation to the natural world.

Gilpin maintained a deep appreciation for the roughness of the natural world. He felt that representing only the smoothness of nature created an aesthetically weak composition. Instead, the picturesque composition consists of uniting in one whole a variety of parts — and these parts can only be obtained from rough objects.²³

The roughness in nature evokes the passions contributing to the sublime; these images remind the viewer that nature is organic and uncontrollable.²⁴ To balance this reaction, as Gilpin suggests, the composition must be framed in a specific way that confines the view to the parameters of the page. Under this principle, the picturesque may be great or small because it depends on the character of boundaries.²⁵ The frame unifies the intricacy of the objects within; even though each detail may not be naturally observed together, the artificial lens in which the “Picturesque Eye” places them creates the cohesion amongst the composition.

Price further adapts Gilpin’s guidelines to the picturesque as a taste that can also be acquired from contemplating the art of great masters. He seeks to decode what Gilpin meant by the “Picturesque Eye,” as a mode of study which will best enable a man of a liberal and intelligent mind to judge the forms, colours, effects, and combination of visible objects, either in single compositions or else as parts of scenery.²⁶

The “liberal and intelligent mind” that Price describes observes not only the natural world, what Price diminishes as vague and of “unsettled” taste, but also the great art that has come before. He stresses that the compositional value of the great masterpieces should guide the “Picturesque Eye” when exposed to the natural world.²⁷ This is a slight variation of



Fig. 4. Claude Lorrain, *Landscape with the Rest on the Flight into Egypt (Noon)*, 1661, Hermitage, St. Petersburg. Photo: HIP / Art Resource, NY.

Gilpin's argument because it focuses less on combining different elements of nature together, but instead improving nature by shaping it with the same compositional style of another work of art.

The study of pictures can only produce any real advantage if we use it as a school in which we may learn to enlarge, correct and refine our view of Nature and by that route become good judges of scenery.²⁸

His approach, in a similar way to Gilpin's, allows anyone to learn how to observe the natural world through the picturesque lens in an effort to create a uniform aesthetic formula. Price also writes extensively on how to render different natural forms in a truly picturesque way. His studies should be understood as guide books for creating landscapes in the picturesque manner.

Price also holds the same appreciation for the roughness found in nature and agrees with Gilpin that it is integral to the picturesque landscape. An artist or anyone who views objects with a "Picturesque Eye," "looks with indifference, if not with disgust, at the clumps, the belts, the made water, and the eternal smoothness and sameness of a finished place."²⁹ Again, the "Picturesque Eye" must be contemplative and critical of idealized beauty. In this way, Price proclaims a distaste for great masters like Claude Lorrain who depict nature at its most improved and beautiful state (fig. 4). He acknowledges the effort Claude takes to portray the land as truly idealized as a clear lack of judgment:

There is not a person in the smallest degree conversant with painting, who would not, at the same time, be shocked and diverted at the black spots and the white spots—the naked water,—the

naked buildings,—the scattered connected groups of trees, and all the gross and glaring violations of every principle of art.³⁰

Price, though clearly stating his disgust for Claude's paintings, does not attempt to diminish the beautiful. He recognizes the natural beauty within landscape as an integral part of a picturesque composition, but it must be equally balanced with the roughness of the natural world—it cannot stand alone.³¹ With Claude as an example, Price felt it necessary to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the great masters, specifically in their depictions of landscape. By understanding how prior artists depict nature, the picturesque artist can discern what features capture the balance between the roughness and smoothness that Gilpin addresses.

The reductive system that Gilpin and Price have created, though shaping a collective taste, is problematic. On the one hand, they found it absolutely necessary to form a detailed guide to the picturesque style; in order to create a uniform taste, the public must undergo a process of learning from painters, in this case Gilpin and Price.³² On the other, encouraging amateur artists to follow a set of prescribed principles when observing nature leads to artifice. Gilpin and Price encourage the artist to select the parts of nature that fit best within their formula—combining different elements to create an imaginative view of nature. The picturesque style, as applied taste, is already weak since it exploits the physiological sensations of the beautiful and sublime. Gilpin and Price have further weakened the aesthetic integrity of the style by reducing the artistic process to a mix and match of preferred features.

Referring back to Gilpin and his effort to frame the rough and organic natural world, the "Picturesque Eye" is one that is consciously aware of artificial boundaries. The frame seeks to reaffirm the viewer that he is in control of the landscape—it is within the confines of reality with which he is comfortable.

The Picturesque represents the movement of enclosure, control, the road which moves securely and fittingly into the countryside, the comforting flanking of the 'side-screen' hills, roughness subjected to symmetry, the ego's certainty about the world it can hold or manage.³³

The framed composition creates a sense of authority to the viewer as he is able to comfortably balance the tension between the sense of infinity with the natural world and the confinement of a novelty picture. This is a direct application of the tension that Burke describes within the beautiful and sublime. However, whereas one strategy for this balance is to combine different aesthetic elements of the two styles, this



Fig. 5. William Gilpin, *A View in Middleton Dale, Derbyshire*, watercolor, private collection (cat. 28).

approach requires an acceptance of the artificiality of the painting itself. Gilpin employs this technique within his own paintings. The composition of *A View in Middleton Dale, Derbyshire* (fig. 5) is framed by an oval, which was a typical characteristic of Gilpin. As an unnatural shape, more so than the square or rectangle, the oval creates a portal into the scene that Gilpin composed. Upon observing this painting, one is instantly reminded of its finite reality; the boundaries in place are the outermost limits of landscape within.

Regarding aesthetics, the emphatic framing exposes the artificiality of the work. In other words, a viewer should understand that any picturesque landscape depicted in either painting or sketch is limited to the confines of the boundaries of the sheet.³⁴ As a means of providing a balance from the “mischance” of nature, the picturesque frame comforts the tensions of exposure to the irregular or unfamiliar.³⁵ It places the roughness of nature, which evokes the sublime sense of infinity within a refined frame. This empowers the viewer in two ways: the framed landscape enables the viewer to possess and exert his authority over the natural world. The picturesque landscape, in this way, becomes a commodity. It was never an attempt to depict the natural world authentically, but a way to possess it.

Once commodified, the picturesque style quickly suffered from its popularity. Although Gilpin and Price sought to formalize a unified picturesque taste, neither theorist concisely defined the term.³⁶ Additionally, as the concept of taste is subjective, the process of learning a uniform taste is also subjective. There must be a conscious effort, on behalf of the general public, to recognize the picturesque style, as outlined by Gilpin and Price, as truth. However, since the picturesque style teaches the public how to identify an aesthetic of taste and not the senses, it became easy for the public to start to apply the style to other aspects of their lives;

the “Picturesque Eye” is not able to limit itself to just landscape art, but to many cultural forms. Thus, the picturesque style allowed many to use it to aestheticize their lives.³⁷ From garden design to women’s fashion, the picturesque style became a term that applied to many different aspects of culture at that time. Though this ultimately helped broaden the style’s recognition, the popularization further weakened its aesthetic integrity. Once rooted in the literary realm, the term passed and then spread colloquially to everyday life.

The aesthetics of the picturesque, through the analysis of Edmund Burke, combines elements of beauty and the sublime in an effort to create a refined taste. With this understood, Gilpin and Price wrote extensively on the picturesque aesthetic—or taste—as a way to validate the style and form a collective approach to creating it. Their efforts to reduce the landscape into a formula, easily accessible to the most amateur artists, diminished the integrity of the style as one that was overly-simplified.³⁸ Once learned, the picturesque artist could, and many did, travel around domestically or abroad to find their own picturesque landscapes. The drawings and paintings made on these tours, as framed depictions of the natural world, became possessions that expressed reputation among the social elite. With this, the picturesque aesthetic was used heavily in many other cultural pursuits. The picturesque became a commodity, allowing man to reduce nature into a framed image. From this, the picturesque became the aesthetic for common man; its integrity was simple enough that the public eye could identify it, create it, and possess it.

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- 1 Martin Price, "The Picturesque Moment," in *Essays Presented to Fredrick A. Pottle*, eds. Fredrick W. Hillis and Harold Bloom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 259–292.
- 2 Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque* (London: GP Putnam's Sons, 1927), 52–53. Shaftesbury's writings were integral to landscape aesthetic theory for two reasons: he identified beauty to be synonymous with reason and virtue and he also applied the concept of sublimity, at once just a literary term, to aesthetics. His philosophy would eventually shape the work of Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant.
- 3 Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 52.
- 4 William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty* (Oxford: Carendon Press, 1753), 23.
- 5 Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 31.
- 6 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 2nd ed. (Menston: Scholar Press, 1757), 30.
- 7 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 31–33.
- 8 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 34.
- 9 Walter J. Hipple, *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque in Eighteenth–Century British Aesthetic Theory* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1957), 204.
- 10 Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 60. Here, Hussey outlines the basic attributes of the sublime: obscurity, power, privations, vastness, infinity, succession, and uniformity as well as the attributes of the beautiful: smallness, smoothness, gradual variation, and delicacy of form and colour.
- 11 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 11–26.
- 12 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 15.
- 13 Price, "The Picturesque Moment," 276.
- 14 Price, "The Picturesque Moment," 265.
- 15 Jay Appleton, *The Experience of Landscape* (London, New York: Wiley, 1975), 210.
- 16 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 15.
- 17 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 21. Edmund Burke provides this example when explaining the variables that determine to what degree of taste a man possesses: "let us suppose a very smooth marble table to be set before two men; they both perceive it to be smooth, and they are both pleased with it, because of this quality. So far they agree. But suppose another, and after that another table, the latter still smoother than the former, to be set before them. It is now very probable that these men, who are so agreed upon what is smooth, and in the pleasure from thence, will disagree when they come to settle which table has the advantage in point of polish."
- 18 Appleton, *The Experience of Landscape*, 28–29.
- 19 William Gilpin, *Observations relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (London: 1792), 127.
- 20 Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 62.
- 21 William Gilpin, *Observations on the river Wye, 1782* (Oxford: Woodstock Books, 1991), 1–2.
- 22 Gilpin, *Observations relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty*, 191. In one of the other studies by Gilpin, *Observations on the river Wye*, he provides an example on how a river scene should be broken down into compositional elements, "Every view on a river, thus circumstanced, is composed of four grand parts; the *area*, which is the river itself; the *two side screens*, which are the opposite banks, and mark the perspective; and the *front-screen*, which points out the winding of the river." Gilpin, *Observations on the river Wye*, 8.
- 23 Gilpin, *Observations relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty*, 19.
- 24 Gilpin also includes the incorporation of ruins in picturesque scenes as achieving the same roughness. The ruins are a motif utilized heavily in sublime art and literature and so, with the right balance, it can be considered a picturesque feature.
- 25 Hipple, *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque*, 17.
- 26 Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 65–66.
- 27 Uvedale Price, *An essay on the picturesque, as compared with the sublime and beautiful; and, on the use of studying pictures, for the purpose of improving real landscape* (London: 1796), 4.
- 28 Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 66.
- 29 Price, *An essay on the picturesque*, 16.
- 30 Price, *An essay on the picturesque*, 24.
- 31 Price, *An essay on the picturesque*, 21. When Price is addressing the work of Claude, he says that all of the accoutrements that the artist places in his landscapes—clumps, as Price calls them—should be removed from the landscape. However, in a footnote, he clarifies that, "I do not mean by this, that *nothing* should be cleared; on the contrary, a proper degree and style of clearing adds as much to beauty and effect as it does to neatness."
- 32 Appleton, *The Experience of Landscape*, 208–209.
- 33 David Punter, "The Picturesque and the Sublime: two worldscapes," in Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, eds., *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics since 1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 226.
- 34 Punter, "The Picturesque and the Sublime," 224.
- 35 Punter, "The Picturesque and the Sublime," 231.
- 36 Punter, "The Picturesque and the Sublime," 220.
- 37 Ann Bermingham, "The Picturesque and ready-to-wear femininity," in Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, eds., *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics since 1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 86.
- 38 *Great Age of British Watercolors 1750–1880*, eds. Andrew Wilton and Anne Lyles (London: Royal Academy of Arts), 177. In many ways this "cookie-cutter" approach to art is still admired today. Novelty painters like Bob Ross exploit the process of painting, simplifying it so much that it becomes kitsch. His aim in this approach is to make art accessible to the general public.

Xiaoqi Huang

Long before William Gilpin defined the term “picturesque” as “that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture,” landscape architects William Kent and Lancelot “Capability” Brown introduced this new aesthetic into English garden design. Kent, the pioneer of English landscape design, followed the notion that “all gardening is a landscape-painting” and worked on the principles of perspective, light, and shade.¹ However, this belief is challenged by Humphry Repton, one of the protagonists of landscape design in late eighteenth-century England. Repton sought to separate landscape design theory from that of landscape painting, arguing that the two should operate according to different guidelines. Apart from his work designing garden landscapes for private estates, Repton spent most of his efforts formulating theories on landscape design. This essay will examine the discordance between Repton's theory and his practice, and find possible reasons for it by analyzing his published writings—*An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste in Landscape Gardening* and *The Art of Landscape Gardening*—and his work for private patrons.

Before Repton proposed his theory that landscape garden design should operate along guidelines specific to the profession, landscape designers Joseph Addison and Alexander Pope maintained that garden design should, as Kent and Brown argued, follow the model of landscape paintings. According to Pope, landscape designers should treat gardens in the same manner as they do in painting: distance things by darkening them and narrowing the plantation toward the end.² The interest in perspective and light-dark passages are common features in picturesque compositions as in Ramsay Richard Reinagle's *Beverley Hall, Yorkshire* (fig. 1).

The notion that there is—or ought to be—a harmony of style and intent among the sister arts is rooted in the



Fig. 1. Ramsay Richard Reinagle, *Beverley Hall, Yorkshire*, n.d., private collection (cat. 52).

writings of Horace, who coined the phrase *ut pictura poesis* (as is painting, so is poetry).³ Just as Horace thought painting and poetry were linked through similar modes of expression, design, and experience, garden designers before Repton argued that landscape design and landscape painting should be sister arts and rest on the same aesthetic rules. Repton's position was not merely an intellectual argument typical of the paragone, which aimed to promote the superiority of one medium or mode of expression, but rather an effort in criticism, to redefine professional practice among landscape designers.⁴

Repton argued firstly that the design process of a landscape painting and that of a landscape garden is different:

The spot from whence the view is taken is in fixed state to the painter; but the gardener surveys his scenery while in motion; and from different windows in the same front he sees objects in different situations; therefore, to give an accurate portrait of the gardener's improvement, would require pictures from separate window, and even a different drawing at the most trifling change of situation, the walks or the drives about each place.⁵

Thus, from the designer's standpoint, a landscape painter has to represent a single view at a single moment in time, while the landscape gardener has to shape a continuous journey through the garden over time, which is constantly changing and moving.

Repton also argued that there is an essential difference between painting and gardening; the former is a representation of reality while the latter is reality.⁶ In 1794, Repton wrote to Uvedale Price, a landscape designer who promoted the application of the picturesque to landscape design, claiming:

the comfort of a gravel walk, the delicious fragrance of a shrubbery, the soul-expanding delight of a wide extended prospect, or the grandeur of a view down a steep hill are all subjects incapable of being painted.⁷

Repton differentiated between a bodily experience of walking in a real garden and a visual experience of looking at a painting, claiming that a garden stimulates all five senses while painting stimulates only one. This is suggested in Joshua Cristall's *Capriccio Landscape with Castle* (fig. 2), which depicts two people sitting on a plateau and looking at the landscape from a distance. They are part of the



Fig. 2. Joshua Cristall, *Capriccio Landscape with Castle*, n.d., watercolor, private collection (cat. 21).

landscape and within this viewing experience, which corresponds to the design principle for landscape gardens that Repton objected.

Repton was fully aware of how people visited gardens by foot, horseback, or carriage; in matters of theory, he was perhaps more concerned with the experiences of those visitors in carriage because it was required to follow the path designed and controlled by the designer.⁸ Indeed, for each of his commissions, Repton created what he called a “Red Book” in which he wrote ideas for the gardens and the result of his improvements on a landscape, complete with “before” and “after” illustrations. In the “Red Book for Blaise Castle,” Repton made specific references to viewing the garden from carriage:

I must endeavour to display others from the windows of a carriage with all the interest of surprize and novelty...from this lawn the first appearance of the castle is most picturesque, because it presents the three turrets at once, and at this distance they appear of different heights.⁹

Thus, in spite of his criticism for projecting the aesthetics of painting and landscape design, he applies this principle on a series of views from the carriage, not just one. Instead of recognizing the value of the continuous scenes as a whole, which is what differentiates the experience in a garden from that of looking at a painting of it, Repton expects the visitor in the carriage to experience a garden in the same way he would experience a series of paintings. Although the visitor would move along the garden in carriage and see continuous views, Repton pointed out one specific view that was most picturesque and expected the visitor to stand at a fixed point to experience this predetermined panoramic view. The window of the carriage, in this case, acts like the frame of a painting, and visitor in the carriage is supposed to look at the view statically. Even though the garden is actual space and a

painting is a two-dimensional representation of it, the view is fixed in both cases. Here, Repton makes no mentioning of any other physical experiences as before, and he ignores the three-dimensionality of the garden.

In spite of Repton’s inconsistency regarding static views of the landscape, real as painted, he draws other distinctions in actual practice. For example, the landscape gardener must have the practical knowledge of other subjects, which include planting, digging, moving earth, surveying, mechanics, hydraulics, agriculture, botany, and the general principles of architecture.¹⁰ That said, Repton’s writing focuses largely on the formal elements of the design for a garden, which rarely includes any discussion of such practical matters. Despite his noting the need for a range of skills, Repton writes with a painter’s vocabulary and sensibility, using terms like “contrast,” “composition,” and “light and shadow.” This may be due, in part, to the comparatively undeveloped nature of landscape gardening criticism and its dependence on that of the two-dimensional pictorial arts.

Nevertheless, when Repton considers the practical side of landscape gardening, he turns to the painted picture for resolution in the end. For example, when writing about plantations on a hill, Repton recommends planting a few lines of trees instead of planting the whole hill, since the latter is unfeasible. But he then acknowledges that he could not reduce the view of a plantation on the hill to a fixed one. The lines of trees would not cover the whole surface of the hill, and it would look different from different perspectives and different heights. Thus it was difficult for him to construct a design without a fixed view. Repton described his considerations in the following:

This subject was elucidated by as many drawings as there were stations described; but as most of them were taken from the public road between Reading and Walingford, the effect of these plantations will be seen from thence; and I have availed myself, as much as possible, of those examples which, from their proximity to a public road, are most likely to be generally observed.¹¹

Repton’s statement that landscape gardening required much more practical knowledge than landscape painting might better be understood as an acknowledgement of the fact that what differentiated a painter and a gardener is the former deals with a flat surface while the latter deals with the actual space. It was the recognition of garden as an actual space that, according to Repton, made landscape gardening an independent art. Yet based on the solution that Repton offered for the plantation problem, he still treated the garden scene like a painting. He focused on the viewpoint from which the plantations on the hill would be most likely

viewed, and turned to drawings, rather than his own experiences of walking around the plantations, for answers. In theory, Repton claimed that the three-dimensionality of the garden is the key factor that separates two professions, but in practice he emphasized the representation of the garden as a two-dimensional plane.

Another example of how much emphasis Repton placed on pictures would be the illustrations in his own “Red Books.” In these sketches, he presents a scene as it appears “before” his improvements, and, with a second, smaller inset drawing that overlays the first drawing, showing how the view would appear “after” the improvements (figs. 3a–b, 4a–b, 5a–b). As these examples illustrate, Repton’s purposed “after” landscapes all include some picturesque features (e.g., the foreground made of shrubberies, the extend prospect of the lawn, and contrasting forms of architecture and trees). However, as we have seen, as soon as one changes his point of view within the garden, the picturesque quality would be lost.

Thus, despite his critique of previous and existing practice, Repton’s actual practice followed what his predecessors had been doing all along, designing a garden according to the rules of painting. It appears that Repton’s theory was separated from practice; he wrote about gardens as a real space but in practice treated them otherwise. They were:

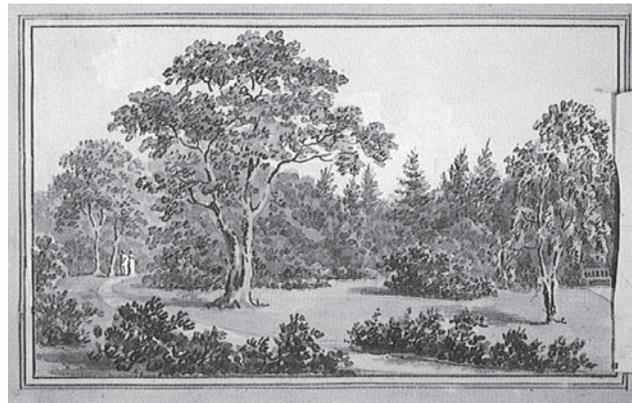
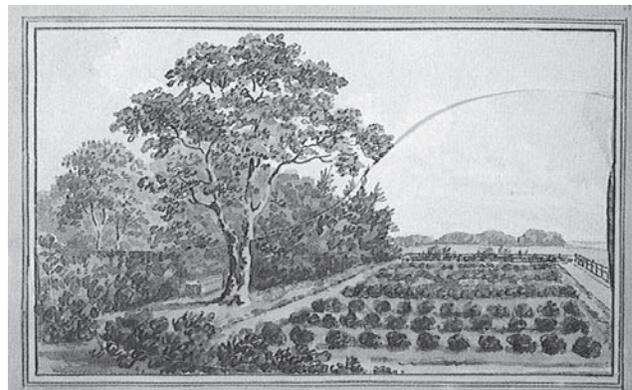
a complete system classed under general rules but, though daily experience convinces me that such rules do actually exist, yet I have found so much variety in their application, and so much difficulty in selecting proper examples without greatly increasing the number of expensive plate.¹²

As much as Repton wanted to form a consistent theory, he failed because he realized that the variety of problems in each garden cannot be solved with a single solution.

Repton was often regarded as the successor of Capability Brown, who, to a fault, regularly featured “circular clumps of trees, boundary ride or belt, serpentine rivers and undulating lawns brought up to the very walls of the house.”¹³ As put by Mr. Hussey:

Brown is a practical man inspired by a theory. But a theory that although derived from visual qualities had become intellectual and standardized.¹⁴

This standardized formula meant that his gardens, regardless of the variation in site, were designed in the same way, by adding the same features. Thus, his gardens tended to look the same. Repton, in contrast, sought to respond to the individual qualities of a given site. Repton’s thoughts regarding carriage roads demonstrate this point. He argued that the width of the road must depend on its



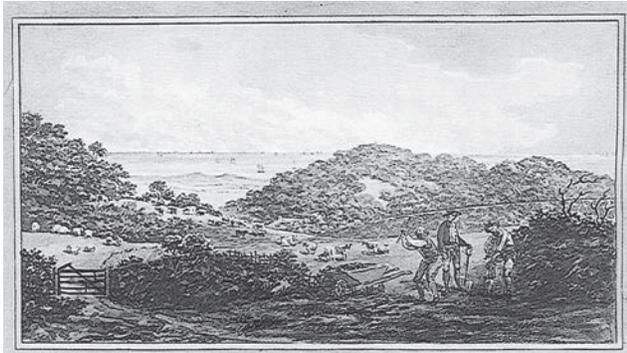
Figs. 3a–b. Humphry Repton, *View towards the South*, with and without overlay, from “Red Book for Wood Hall,” watercolor, 1807, private collection. Image from Stephen Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, fig. 92.

use and that there should be room for two carriages to pass if the road is much frequented. He added that the form of a road should not be too complicated to interfere with its function, for no one would use a circuitous road when a more direct is discovered.¹⁵

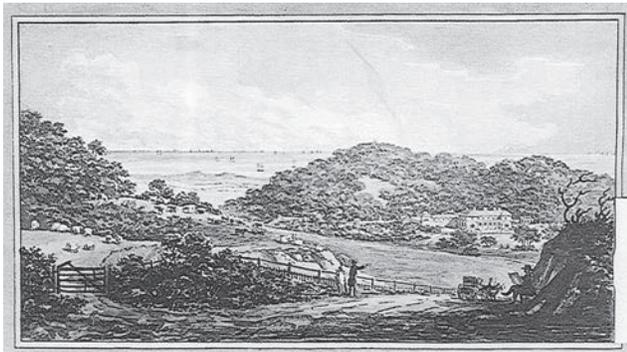
Repton’s consideration of the utility of a house and its garden resulted from his recognition that the living experience of the landowner is crucial to garden design. In *An Enquiry Into The Changes of Taste In Landscape Gardening*, he claimed that the picturesque should not sacrifice utility:

a dwelling-house is an object of comfort and convenience, for the purposes of habitation and not merely the frame to a landscape, or the foreground of a rural pictures. Utility must take the lead of beauty; and convenience be preferred to picturesque effect.¹⁶

Repton suggested that despite how much one values the aesthetics of an object in a landscape, one must recognize and prioritize its practical value, because the house should be seen as a place to live first, and then as an element in a view of the landscape.



View from the spot where the hill requires to be cut away to ease the road. This gives a general idea of the hill of Sheringham, before the hill.



View from the spot where the hill requires to be cut away to ease the road. This gives a general idea of the hill of Sheringham, before the hill.

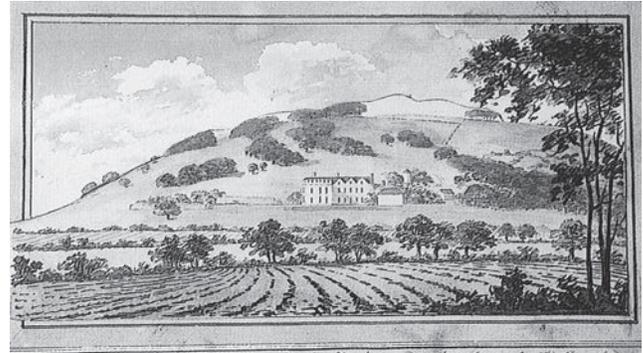
Figs. 4a–b. Humphry Repton, *Approach*, with and without overlay, from “Red Book for Sheringham,” watercolor, 1812, National Trust. Image from Stephen Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, fig. 102.

In his suggestions for improvements on landscape, Repton paid much attention to the house because he held that it should be the main subject. In his recommendations to the owner of Longleat, Repton stated:

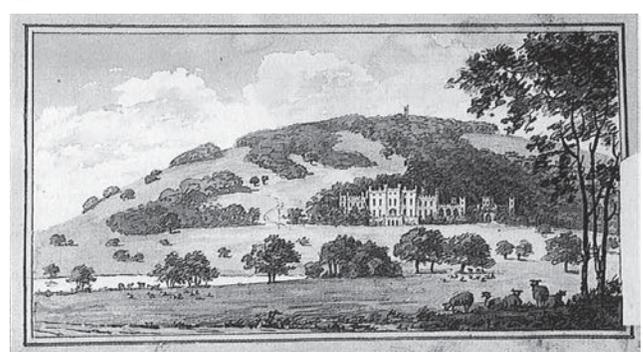
The first object of improvement should be to restore its greatness, by spreading its influence. A palace must not be a solitary object; it requires to be supported and surrounded by subordinate buildings, which, like the attendants on Royalty, form part of its state; but a building of greater length than the house becomes a rival, rather than an humble attendant.¹⁷

For Repton, the landscape was about the house, and other elements including the landscape were to embellish the house.

Regarding the landowners, Repton is constantly aware of the person who lives in the house. In the case of Langley, Repton’s decision to remove some rows of trees was made under the premise that it would not affect the general view from the house.¹⁸ Repton’s emphasis on the architecture distinguished his theory in landscape gardening from that of picturesque painting, in which the composition and the view from a distance was valued more than the appearance of each individual object. Repton was commissioned by the



View from the spot where the hill requires to be cut away to ease the road. This gives a general idea of the hill of Sheringham, before the hill.



View from the spot where the hill requires to be cut away to ease the road. This gives a general idea of the hill of Sheringham, before the hill.

Figs. 5a–b. Humphry Repton, *View towards the park*, with and without overlay, from “Red Book for Garnons,” watercolor, 1791, private collection. Image from Stephen Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, fig. 120.

landowner to improve the view, which included both the view the passer-by would see of the house and the garden view people inside the house would see. The magnificence of the house represented the social identity of its owner, which functioned not only as an aesthetic object but also a display of social status.

Repton’s definition of “habitable” involved not only the landowner but also the nearby community. Repton aimed to improve neighbor interactions, especially offering members of the lower class an access to the garden. He envisioned one of his commissions at Sherringham would be a source of happiness with mutual intercourse among the landlord, the tenant, and the laborer. Unlike the common practice at the time, Repton insisted that a garden should not be enclosed on itself but be a place where people of different class could mingle.¹⁹ His ideal landscape was not only visually pleasing, but also a landscape that could change moral character.

One of the challenges facing Repton was reconciling theory with practice. This was particularly difficult for Repton because at times he seems unable to find the right pictorial language to express his objective, to present the beauty of landscape that arised from experiencing it as an actual space:

I can show the effect of a new house instead of an old one, but I cannot describe those numberless beauties which may be brought before the eye in succession by the windings of a road, or the contrast of ascending and descending thro' a deep ravine of rich hanging woods.²⁰

Repton was aware that the beauty of a landscape differs from that of a painting, in that the experiences of moving in the landscape offers something that a static painting cannot. Moreover, Repton had to accommodate how people look at the landscape. Indeed, there are examples in which Repton expected the visitor to experience the garden from a certain distance, as if it were a painting.

Another problem of landscape gardening for Repton was to hide the boundary.²¹ In the "Red Book for Brandesbury," for Lady Salisbury, he purposed replacing the fence of the sixty-acre park with a ha-ha, a low earthen cut that creates a barrier without breaking the unity of the landscape that harmonizes the park with the lawn.²² Repton admitted that hiding the boundary is a device he used for deception:

in Landscape Gardening, many things may be deemed deceptions, by which we try to conceal the agency of art. We plant the hills to make them appear higher; we sink the fences to make the lawns appear larger; we open the banks of a brook to make it appear a river; nor is the imagination so fastidious as to reject well supported deceptions, even after the want of reality is discovered.²³

Repton stated that the art of landscape gardening largely depends on deception of the eye. Just as a painter hides his brushstrokes to remind viewers of the fact that they are looking at a flat surface, Repton hides the agency of his art to create an illusion of a scene that looked better than the real one. This element of illusion connects the experience of landscape painting to that of landscape garden. Repton's ideal visitor would be presented with artificial representations of natural scenes; although made up of natural materials, his garden would operate the same way a painting operates. Visitors would also respond to the landscape in the same way, knowing what they see was just an illusion, but still appreciating the illusion.

Repton expected the visitor to appreciate deception if it was well supported, thus he paid close attention to the effect on the eyes so much that he even used optics to perfect his design. Repton considered the difference between real and relative magnitude of the objects was the key factor in a viewer's understanding of the distance and dimensionality of them.²⁴ Repton's intent in proportion and scale reveals a painter's sensibilities, one in which neither the objects nor the

viewer move and the viewer can discern their sizes only in relation with each other, which, according to William Gilpin, is exactly how we should look at the landscape.

Gilpin's writings on picturesque travel shed light on how people experienced landscape scene:

This great object (beauty) we pursue through the scenery of nature; and examine it by the rules of painting...No two rocks are the same. They are varied, a second time, by combination; and almost as much, a third time, by different lights, and shades, and other aerial effects.²⁵

Visitors and tourists were taught by Gilpin to experience the landscape in a certain way, according to the disciplines of painting, and to judge whether the scene is pleasing to the eyes or not. When the picturesque aesthetics migrated into garden landscape, it kept its emphasis on visual qualities. Although Repton acknowledged that the garden had to be treated as three-dimensional space rather than a two-dimensional painting, his theories tend to revert back to paintings; the dominant influence of picturesque painting theory proved to be an overwhelming example. Consequently, garden landscape design became affiliated to painting theory rather than an individual practice subject on its own, despite their irreconcilable differences. However, Repton introduced the important landowner's perspective and taking convenience and living quality into consideration, which departs from picturesque painting theory.

As the designs for private gardens moved away from the rigid picturesque arrangements, so too the development of landscape painting changed. Artists such as John Constable and Joseph Mallord William Turner rejected picturesque compositions that strictly divide the picture into foreground, middle ground, and background. Instead they depicted what they saw in reality rather than images constructed on the basis of rules.

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- 1 William Gilpin, *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: to Which Is Added a Poem, on Landscape Painting* (London: R. Blamire, 1792), 3; for Kent, see Isabel Wakelin Urban Chase, *Horace Walpole: Gardenist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), 26.
 - 2 John Dixon Hunt, *Gardens and The Picturesque* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 107.
 - 3 Rensselaer W. Lee, "Ut Pictora Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting," *Art Bulletin* 22, no. 4 (1940): 197–269.
 - 4 Claire Farago, "Paragone" in *The Dictionary of Art* 21, edited by Jane Turner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 91–92.
 - 5 Humphry Repton, *An Enquiry Into the Changes of Taste in Landscape Gardening* (Farnborough: Gregg, 1969), 122.
 - 6 Repton, *An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste*, 122.
 - 7 Uvedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* [1794] (London: J. Robson, 1810) criticized Brown's landscape garden designs as rigid and unnatural and also said that the art of landscape gardening should follow that of landscape painting. Repton, *An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste*, 141–156, responded that not all ideas from landscape paintings are applicable to garden.
 - 8 Stephen Daniels, *Humphry Repton* (New Haven: Yale University, 1999), 47.
 - 9 John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis, *The Genius of the Place* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 364.
 - 10 Humphry Repton, *An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1907), 4.
 - 11 Repton, *The Art of Landscape Gardening*, 113.
 - 12 Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, 43.
 - 13 H. F. Clark, *The English Landscape Garden* (London: Pleiades Books, 1948), 27.
 - 14 Clark, *The English Landscape Garden*, 27.
 - 15 Repton, *An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste*, 108.
 - 16 Repton, *An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste*, 132.
 - 17 Repton, *An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste*, 29.
 - 18 Repton, *The Art of Landscape Gardening*, 26.
 - 19 Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, 96.
 - 20 Hunt, *Gardens and The Picturesque*, 161.
 - 21 Humphry Repton, *The Art of Landscape Gardening: Including His Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* [1794] and *Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* [1803], ed. John Nolen, (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1907), 7.
 - 22 For the purpose of the ha ha, see Chase, *Horace Walpole*, 25; Edward Hyams, *Capability Brown and Humphry Repton* (London: Dent, 1971), 138.
 - 23 Repton, *An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste*, 95.
 - 24 Repton, *An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste*, 75.
 - 25 Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 42.

Christopher Guy

The second half of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth in England marked a fundamental change in society from an economy based on agrarian activities to an industrial one. This change set forth profound shifts in social hierarchy, not to say that there was greater class mobility, but that the distinction between the landed elite and the nouveau riche industrialists began to blur. For landed gentry like Uvedale Price, these changes challenged the social order as they knew it, and raised the question of how to distinguish themselves from the nouveau riche looking to build homes in the countryside. Writing to the landscape gardener Humphry Repton, Price exclaimed:

should any sudden gap, any distinct undisguised line of separation be made, such as between noblemen and roturier [not of noble birth], the whole strength of that firm chain (and firm may it stand) would at once be broken.¹

Price's position was not unique; it was representative of the ideology of an entire class, one that felt its secure dominance and position were in jeopardy. Aware of the power amounted with land, Price and his contemporaries reinforced the "lines of separation" through real and represented images of the land, especially picturesque landscaping and painting. The picturesque mode relied on previously established social stratification, and through carefully constructed, exclusive landscapes, and romanticized images or rural peasantry. Practitioners of this mode glorified the former system of established families and celebrated the position of the landowner, while sharply defining and restricting actual living conditions of the rural laborer.

Some of the early theories of the picturesque appear in the writings of William Gilpin. In his *Essay on Prints* (1768), he describes it as "that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture."² This seemingly simple definition became one of the most important and most discussed artistic theories in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, leading to the publication of numerous essays and books addressing and discussing the value of the theory, and how it should best be represented.³

Indeed, Gilpin's *A View of Middleton Dale, Derbyshire* (fig. 1) shows many of the prescribed elements that epitomize picturesque landscape painting. In this watercolor sketch, Gilpin organizes the composition along a series of overlapping, alternating diagonal forms (in this case, cliffs and mountains) that recede into space. A light shines from right to left, illuminating the cliff in the background, and creating



Fig. 1. William Gilpin, *A View of Middleton Dale, Derbyshire*, n.d., graphite, gray wash on paper, private collection (cat. 28).

a pattern of light and dark plains that move the viewer's eye to the background. This method of layering diagonals and alternate planes of light and dark was an effective formula to create fore, middle, and background. Gilpin includes a path in the center of the composition that bends around the rock formation at the right, leading the viewer through the landscape, which has less to do with reality and more to do with that which is most pleasing.

In addition to watercolors such as *Middleton Dale*, Gilpin published, among other writings, his *Three essays: on picturesque beauty, on picturesque travel, and on sketching landscape*. The contents further refined the theory, and turned it into a prescribed, formulaic way to view, interpret, represent, and construct landscapes both in paint and in reality. The picturesque ideal helped shape the way landed gentry and wealthy urbanites related to the land and to the peasants who worked it. The picturesque mode of painting became interests of the property owners, and guides like the ones published by Gilpin became sourcebooks on how to formulate landscape images that presented an idealized image of nature, while simultaneously romanticizing and disguising the struggles of those who actually worked the land. These guides to the picturesque, and the paintings and landscape designs they helped shape, became a way for the wealthy to celebrate their own prosperity, which was largely dependent on the labor of small farmers and rural laborers.

The pleasure of the picturesque mode was in observing the beauty of nature and removing all things deemed to be less pleasing to the eye. It was not purely a question of seeking out the most beautiful of locations and translating the views accurately onto a painting, or into a garden, although there

were many prescribed locations from which the tourist was invited to paint. Ignoring or removing the uglier aspects of a scene and perfecting the composition were paramount to the creation of a view that was as pleasing as possible. In his essay, *Observations on the river Wye*, Gilpin expresses this by stating:

[nature] is seldom so correct in composition as to produce a harmonious whole...the artist...lays down his little rules, therefore, which he calls the principles of picturesque beauty, merely to adapt such diminutive parts of nature's surface to his own eye.⁴

This prescribed method of constructing an ideal landscape was quickly adapted into the art of landscape design, and the "picturesque landscape" became a popular method for the cultivation of fields and forests surrounding the country homes of wealthy urbanites, as well as powerful, established country families. An important figure in the discussion and theorization of the picturesque was Uvedale Price; his Foxley estate became an influential example of the picturesque landscape. Surveys of his estate, along with his writing and those of his contemporaries, help to elucidate the classist ideals of the picturesque mode and the manipulation of the land in order to benefit the land-owning class. The estate itself came to the Price family through marriage in 1679 and grew steadily for more than 150 years, reaching its peak in the 1850s, totaling 4,330 acres, mostly in one integrated property. The growth was made possible through inheritance, as well as the purchasing of smaller farms and properties surrounding the estate, both by Uvedale and his predecessors and successors.⁵ During his lifetime, Price worked to transform the estate into a cohesive, picturesque landscape. With help from his contemporary, Nathaniel Kent, a renowned agrarian reformer and operator of a major land agency, Price turned Foxley into an example of what could be achieved in landscape with sufficient resources.⁶

Price, although driven by picturesque vision, did not miss the opportunity to turn a profit while simultaneously improving his own view. Regarding pools that were to be constructed in one of the valleys at Foxley, Price claimed, "they will pay me ample interest for the money I paid by watering land and providing a harvest of fish."⁷ These features were built in 1800, following a decade in which the number of destitute families in every parish of the country increased.⁸ While the quality of life was worsening for the bottom rung of society, Price concentrated on perfecting the landscape, while still turning a profit by selling water and fish to the farmers and tenants who lived on and around his land.

Price's commodification of the picturesque reflects the shifting relationship between the landowners and their dependents from a paternalistic, mutually beneficial

relationship to that of a more economy-based, employer-employee relationship.⁹ This reflects the elitist foundations of picturesque theory, both in painting and landscaping, in which they valued the older order where the peasants could rely on the help of their land, confront the "aestheticization" of rural poverty in favor of a new, more distant and less mutually beneficial relationship. In *Hints to Gentleman of Landed Property*, Nathaniel Kent tells the landed gentleman that it was necessary to provide a small cottage and a few cattle because, when so provided for, "Laborers were so far from being prompt to riot that their attachment to their masters was exemplary."¹⁰ Providing homes and livestock to laborers may appear altruistic, however, it seems that such action shows a greater desire for self-preservation.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a series of enclosure acts converted thousands of acres of common land into real estate that was available for private purchase. The common lands had previously been maintained and used by the rural farmers. Once open to purchase, the cost of land increased and competition arose among the established country families, farmers, and wealthy urbanites, looking to purchase plots on which to build their own country homes.¹¹ Shaped by the popularity of the picturesque style, urban industrialists sought to carefully construct landscapes in the picturesque mode, which Price and his cohorts had defined as the sole right of the long-established country families, who looked down on the nouveau riche who were looking to find in the countryside respite from the urban centers. The picturesque, therefore, isolated the landed gentry from all other classes, not just the tenants and farmers who surrounded them. The practitioners of the picturesque mode, as interpreted by Price, saw the "transcendent viewing position...as the perquisite of the gentleman."¹²

Opening the commons to private purchase favored the wealthier farmers and gentry, while severely impacting the livelihood of the laborers, who could no longer make use of the land. The picturesque landscapes, constructed to look as if they were never touched by man, were in fact enclosed by walls, separating the landowners from their tenants. The Board of Agriculture's *Annals of Agriculture* states, "[by] nineteen out of twenty enclosure Bills the poor are injured, and some grossly injured."¹³ However, Arthur Young, the compiler and editor of that publication, wrote in 1799 that "I know nothing better calculated to fill a country with barbarians ready for any mischief than extensive commons and divine service only once a month."¹⁴ Such conflicting statements show the efforts of the landed gentry and agrarian writers to maintain the status quo, and clear separation of classes.

Picturesque landscaping further removed the wealthy from the poor through the treatment of industrial sites. The change from an agrarian economy to an industrial one led to the creation of new factories in the lands previously used for agriculture. For some, mainly the wealthy beneficiaries of industrialization, saw the factory as a crucial element of the new landscape and constructed their homes so as to command a view of them. The favorability of industry in landscape can be seen in the painting by Joseph Wright, *Joseph Arkwright's Mill, View of Cromford, near Matlock* (fig. 2), where the factory is prominently displayed underneath an illuminating full moon. Commenting on the same factory, Price had only negative things to say, claiming that nothing could be better at “disbeautifying” the landscape than the inclusion of a factory.¹⁵

Instead of celebrating the factories as a new opportunity for growth, and the creation of jobs for those who had been left jobless by enclosure acts and industrialized farming techniques, Price and the other practitioners of the picturesque saw only an eyesore in their perfected landscape. Gilpin echoes Price's sentiments:

[in] a moral view, the industrious mechanic is a more pleasing object than the loitering peasant. But in the picturesque light, it is otherwise. The arts of industry are rejected; and even idleness... adds dignity to a character.¹⁶

Despite the crippling poverty and economic injustices done to the rural farmers through enclosure, picturesque painting and landscaping continued to overlook their struggles and romanticize rural poverty. As Stephen Copley and Peer Garside note, the picturesque mode pertained to that “section of society with the leisure and resources to cultivate an aesthetic of redundancy...least implicated in the economic changes from which their own prosperity derived.”¹⁷ Country homes and enormous estates were growing and becoming more beautiful, all thanks to the subjugation of the rural farmer. The landed class did not suffer from economic change, and were able to flourish where the poor labored, thanks to the opening of the common lands to private purchase.

As a consequence of the enclosure acts and the concentration of land into the hands of a few wealthy families, the nature depicted in picturesque paintings was by and large private property. The images that were transmitting the ideal beauty of nature, the epitome of natural beauty, was, in fact, private property, often landscapes that had been manipulated or constructed by the landowner to fit that ideal. Painters were not recording nature in a true sense, they were altering nature, as per the guidelines set by Gilpin, in order to perfect what nature could not. Leonard Jackson described it as a



Fig. 2. Joseph Wright of Derby, *Joseph Arkwright's Mill, View of Cromford, near Matlock*, 1783, oil on canvas, private collection.

“physically constructed reality, with a socially constructed set of meanings.”¹⁸ In fact, Uvedale Price owned one of the most renowned lookouts in the country, a view from which one could gaze upon the picturesque beauty of his estate. Wealthy individuals hoping to learn the picturesque mode in order to celebrate their position as landowners could turn to any number of volumes that focused on the instruction of landscape painting. These guides, published by Gilpin, Cozens, and others were entrenched in the ideology of picturesque theory to guide and control the taste of the governing class, namely the landowners, whose success and position could be glorified through the art.¹⁹

Picturesque painting, like garden design, took measures to romanticize rural poverty, as well as demonstrate the desire of the landed gentry to maintain their position and their unwillingness to adapt to or even address the social and economic changes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like garden design, picturesque painting favored the wealthy, with a focus on private property, and a prescribed way in which to depict the laboring class. Inclusion of small cottages and humbler homes was a key element in painting, as Gilpin favored the inclusion of rough and broken objects, seeing them as especially picturesque.²⁰ One of the most popular painters in the early picturesque mode, Thomas Gainsborough, often includes small homes and hovels with the peasant inhabitants in front or near them. These rustic images make the quaint poverty of tenant farmers and other rural laborers the object of delight for the wealthy, who would have been able to afford the cost of a painting or the leisure of learning to paint their own.

The paintings of Gainsborough again provide an excellent example, unifying both elements of rural houses as well as representations of resting peasantry. His *Wooded Landscape*

with a Cottage and Shepherd (fig. 3) shows a hilly countryside scene in late evening, with the shepherd sitting on the ground with his back against the tree. He is not shown enjoying a game or appreciating the landscape, as representations of the upper class in landscape might. Instead, he is watching his flock of sheep graze in front of his humble cottage. The laborer cannot be separated from his labor. Even in repose, we are reminded that this anonymous man is a hardworking farmer, and his whole life must therefore be related to his work. The farmers and peasants are never far from reminders of their occupation, whether it is the sheep or cattle they tend, or the scythe used to harvest grain, the rural laborer is always represented with a clear link to their occupation. The tools of their trade must remain within reaching distance, so they may return to work at any moment. These reminders and representations remove the humanity and individuality from the laborer, which is replaced with their occupation as farmers. They have been reduced almost to the level of inanimate objects who can only serve one purpose, in this case, sustaining the agrarian economy while remaining impoverished, or at best, repressed by the governing landlords.²¹ Instead of the farmer, the human element of the painting, making up the central focus, is his sheep, the reminder of his place in society, that takes up the center of the image. The first thing the viewer notices is the labor of the man, with the man himself almost an afterthought, secluded to the right-hand side of the painting, blending into the tree that he rests on, becoming part of the landscape itself.

Although less explicitly prescribed than the representations of rural laborers, images of the wealthy similarly reinforce the social hierarchy and glorify the position of the landowner. They were much more likely to be shown facing the viewer, whereas peasants are almost always shown from behind or over the shoulder, an attempt to ensure their anonymity.²² Figures from the upper class, especially women, were easily recognizable and distinct from the peasants by their dress. Ladies were shown wearing their large sunhats, dressed often in white, a color associated with the purity and perfection, a perfect color for representations of ladies in high society. Wealthy figures are also able to observe the landscape and participate in the appreciation of natural beauty. Instead of becoming part of the background of the painting, wealthy figures are shown strolling through their picturesque gardens, sometimes at rest. Their rest, as one might expect, was also distinct from that of the peasants. Instead of being in between jobs or in the middle of working, like the peasants, wealthy lords and ladies can be seen appreciating the landscape. They are also allowed a more prominent position in the composition of the paintings. Whereas peasants often are obscured in shade or are literally marginalized to the sides



Fig. 3. Thomas Gainsborough, *Wooded Landscape with a Cottage and Shepherd*, c. 1748–1750, oil on canvas. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.



Fig. 4. Thomas Gainsborough, *View of Ipswich from Christchurch Park*, c. 1746-1749, oil on canvas, private collection.

of the composition, the wealthier, better-dressed figures often take up a more central location. In Gainsborough's *View of Ipswich from Christchurch Park* (fig. 4), as in *Church with Figures in Foreground* by Norman Garstin (fig. 5), the figures, rather than being staffage, are integral parts of the image, occupying a space in the middle foreground where the diagonals of paths and hills draw the eye, especially in Gainsborough's work. In his painting, a wealthy man and woman are stopped in the crossroads, the woman turns toward the viewer as the two engage in conversation. They are included as an important element of the whole image, rather than anonymous characters to be known only by their station in life.

The picturesque mode is an enticing method for the production of landscapes, both in actuality and as paintings.

The familiar scenes of rustic homes and the noble peasant, appealing compositions that have been constructed to be easily read, and the simple beauty of the method all played a part in making the picturesque one of the most popular and influential artistic modes of the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century. However, below the surface-level beauty are underlying themes of classism and glorification of the upper class, specifically the landed gentry. Romanticizing the homes and lives of the rural laborer, prescribing the methods by which they could rest, and purchasing land and taking it away from the landless laborers and farmers to turn into perfected picturesque estates are consequences of the classist ideologies implicit in the writings of picturesque theorists, especially Gilpin, Price, and Kent. Upper-class individuals created a method of landscape production that would glorify their position in society, while simultaneously, although perhaps unintentionally, trivialize the economic oppression of the lower rungs.



Fig. 5. Norman Garstin, *Church (St. Cuthbert, Wells, Somerset?) with Figures in Foreground*, graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 26).

- 1 Uvedale Price, "A letter to H. Repton, Esq." in *On the Picturesque: With an Essay on the Origin of Taste and Much Original Matter*, ed. Thomas Dick Lauder, (London: Wm. S. Orr and Co., 1842), 471.
- 2 William Gilpin, *Essays on Prints*, 4th ed. (London: Blamire, 1792), xii.
- 3 Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, Ltd., 1986), 83.
- 4 William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye and Several Parts of South Wales, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; Made in the Summer of 1770* (London: R. Blamire, 1782), 18.
- 5 Stephen Daniels and Charles Watkins, "Picturesque Landscaping and Estate Management: Uvedale Price and Nathaniel Kent at Foxley," in *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape, and Aesthetics Since 1770*, eds. Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 15.
- 6 Daniels and Watkins, "Picturesque Landscaping and Estate Management," 16.
- 7 Daniels and Watkins, "Picturesque Landscaping and Estate Management," 19.
- 8 Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 76.
- 9 Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 74.
- 10 Nathaniel Kent, *Hints to Gentlemen of Landed Property*, in "Picturesque Landscaping and Estate Management," 16.
- 11 Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 75.

- 12 John Barrell, "Visualizing the Division of Labour: William Pyne's Microcosm," *The Arts, Literature, and Society* (1990): 95–132.
- 13 Arthur Young, ed., *Annals of Agriculture and Other Useful Arts*, in *Landscape and Ideology*, 76.
- 14 Arthur Young, *General View of the Agriculture of the Country of Lincoln* (London Publishing Co.: 1799), 438.
- 15 Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 80.
- 16 William Gilpin, *Three Essays: in Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape* (London: R. Blamire, 1792), 45.
- 17 Copley and Garside, *The Politics of the Picturesque*, 7.
- 18 Leonard Jackson, *The Dematerialization of Karl Marx: Literature and Marxist Theory* (New York: Longman Group Limited, 1994), 114.
- 19 Jackson, *The Dematerialization of Karl Marx*, 112.
- 20 Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (London: Cass, 1927), 112.
- 21 Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 76.
- 22 Liu, *Wordsworth*, 76.

Claire Paulsen

England is... the stream, the tradition, the living continuity, of public opinion, public conduct, public intercourse and behavior of the English people towards one another and towards the hills and valleys, the waving trees and fair sunshine of this island.

—George Sturt, *Journals* (1916)¹

Aaron Edwin Penley's *Figures Conversing Near a Mill* (fig. 1) represents two people conversing on either side of a stone wall, taking a break from their work. They are dressed for working out of doors, and their agricultural instruments emphasize their role as cultivators of the land.² The mill and stone wall, however quaint to the modern viewer, would, to a nineteenth-century viewer, suggest notions of land definition, ownership, and economic and social value. Indeed, the concept of land ownership marked a significant change in English culture, beginning in the late eighteenth century with the introduction of rapid enclosure of the countryside, which allowed for common land to be acquired by the elite.³ With this land ownership came a corresponding increase in social and political power, which transformed the countryside into a commodity and place of power. Penley's watercolor subtly conveys the changed use of land in this period. This transformation of the countryside helped shape notions about the land, national identity, and aesthetic representations of it.

When presented with the depictions of the landscape, a typical Victorian viewer's reaction and understanding of the land would have been different from contemporary reactions today. A Victorian viewer's sensitivity to and response to such images was shaped by their cultural and social contexts, one that forms their visual culture, or what some social art historians have called the "period eye."⁴ Land held social and political power and the depiction of landscape incorporates these ideas and thoughts. Upon viewing such a painted landscape, an upper-class individual from the Victorian age would have thought "property," while today's viewer might respond with a sense of nostalgia and a bygone era. Images of the British landscape feature elements of the landscape that Victorian viewers would have understood, and by extension, shape a sense of themselves and their image of the nation.⁵ Depending on their place in the social hierarchy, viewers would have understood and perceived the landscape and images of it in different ways, contributing to a collective consciousness that responded to shifting relationships of societal and economic power.

These relationships enabled the landed elite to more fully express their position socially and politically in the nascent consumer society. Large estates began to be valued not only because of the economic power that came with the land but for their prestige and beauty.⁶ As these estates came to represent wealth and power, imagery of the landscape reflected these changes. For example, through an upper-class eye these estates were coded with pride and wealth, while those of the middle class saw them with longing and hope. Despite the varying ways in which different audiences regarded the landscape, they understood land through an economic, nationalistic claim. Thus, to some viewers, the stone hedge in Penley's watercolor calls to mind land ownership while the mill identifies the figures as England's producers and consumers on the land. As viewers came to regard the landscape and images of it through political and social perspectives, they form a relationship between the economics and aesthetics of the landscape, shaping a collective consciousness and national identity.

Topography

Ian Strang's *A Cotswold Village* (fig. 2), depicts a birds' eye view of the land, removed from the details of daily life. It depicts churches, cottages, and cultivated land—motifs familiar to British sensibilities—to craft an image that illustrates a human ordering of the natural environment to express a "simple literal truth."⁷ The image balances the goals of topographical drawing with the aesthetics of the landscape and the reality of land ownership and management in Victorian England. The drawing promotes the national identity of England through an accurate view of the countryside, manifested in cottages and agricultural fields.⁸



Fig 1. Aaron Penley, *Figures Conversing Near a Mill*, n.d., watercolor, private collection (cat. 48).

In understanding this image, it is important to note how the social climate of the time would have impacted the impression of this image. Each viewer would have distinct responses to it because of their perspective on the social hierarchy, particularly those who would have been privileged enough to view the drawing. In this way, the impression of the image would be decidedly similar across viewers, because those who were able to react to it were also those who valued the land for its social and political power. Because of this, the image promotes an idealized view of the countryside and the cultivation of the land, rather than showing the struggle and the daily life of the working classes. In this way, the image provides an appealing view of the land with its social and political associations, rather than the realities of those working on it. The image holds a range of meanings, including those connected to the political and cultural associations of the day. In a culture where land meant economic value, political power, and social status, renderings like *A Costwold Village* bring to the surface a wide range of issues that were central to British culture and identity.

The aesthetics of the English identity become distinctly different as one moves to the middle- and upper-class members. In the period of enclosure, the middle classes discovered the aesthetics of the countryside as they began to turn towards the landscape through a range of social activities, including domestic tourism. This aesthetic recovery enabled the middle classes to experience—however briefly—a landscape they no longer shared in common and could not acquire. For the elite, the land represented lasting economic value and provided aesthetic interaction with the landscape.

Collective Consciousness and The Landscape

The English national identity and collective consciousness is one of the most defining characteristics of English landscape imagery and is rooted in the close relationship between the state sanctioned religion and the private lives of its citizens.⁹ This unity is supported by the stability of England's power and long periods of success as a political nation.¹⁰ This is compounded by the British presence abroad through colonization. As the empire began to acquire and develop land on several continents, it was able to embrace the domestic landscape for its distinct qualities. In 1896, Mandell Ceighton noted:

The most important point about English history is that the English were the first people who formed for themselves a national character at all... no nation has carried its whole past so completely into its present; no existing institution, or right, or claim can be explained without going back a



Fig 2. Ian Strang, *A Cotswold Village*, n.d., graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 75).

long way...our long period of steady success [spares us] the centuries of oppression from barbarian conquerors, of long struggles to realize nation unity [that make others] fantastic, unreasonable, fanatical.¹¹

Among the institutions vital to British identity is the Church of England, which was central after Henry VIII's separation from the Church of Rome.¹² This identification of the country with the church was central to the British identity and contributed to the development of landscape imagery from the Georgian era and well past the Victorian period. Often, church and landscape are fused in paintings and drawings representing the land, demonstrating how closely they were identified with each other. The church had for so many years impacted the entirety of the landscape, as the church and the crown owned much of the land. The church was one of the first landowners in the country, and ecclesiastical buildings hold associations of land control and ownership. In this way, churches become important symbols of national identity, both because of the representation of the collective consciousness of religion, and the ownership of the land that it promoted.

Henry Barlow Carter's *A Country Church* (fig. 3) presents a church within a landscape, which features hills on the horizon, trees, and winding lands, all characteristic elements of the English landscape. The sky appears gloomy and dark—a knowing reference to the region's climate—which fosters a sense of national identity.¹³ The church is central to the land, and the indications of ownership with the fence in the background allow for a fusion of the identities in land ownership and in religious ideals. The combination of church, landscape, and atmosphere results in an image that inspires associations between viewer and country.

Aesthetics And Politics

The aesthetic and political connection with the landscape is important, because, while the national identity embodied all members of society, each social class interacted with the landscape in different ways. The national identity that was embodied in the beloved countryside was distinctly English.¹⁴ It was the native English landscape, characterized by its humble greenery and winding lanes, that allowed a unification throughout social classes.¹⁵ In uniting these classes through interactions with the land, the countryside became a place of national pride and collective identity.

The national identity that is reflected in the landscape is one that also holds great political and social value as well as symbolic power. While the aristocracy dwindled after the seventeenth century, England remained a society in which the landowning elite commanded wealth and political power and interacted with the land in ways that reflected their superior social standing.¹⁶ In contrast, the middle classes, who did not own land, interacted with the land, but in ways different than their elite counterparts. As land began to increase in value through enclosure, the middle class moved away from England's urban centers to experience the countryside, but not as landowners.¹⁷ For these upper and middle classes, interaction with the landscape was enjoyable. This was not always the case for those members of the lower class whose interaction with the landscape was vastly different from the landowning elite.

While English society was stratified, the distinction between the rich and the poor, or the landowning elite and the land-cultivating others, was more subtle than might appear at first.¹⁸ Some members of society viewed themselves as poor in comparison with their landowners, yet of a higher social class than those who worked for them. This fluid stratification enabled all interactions with the landscape to contribute to the national identity, from cultivating the land and contributing to its economic value, or owning the land as a source of wealth and power. With this fluid social hierarchy, the land in artistic renderings began to exhibit the fusion of these class identities. Within the changing social status and different experiences in the landscape, the national identity is formed and the landscape becomes a source of national heritage.

The countryside in which the national identity is embodied is one where all of the classes and class identities could interact with the landscape, both in economic modes and in aesthetic modes. The landscape was viewed as a cultural and aesthetic object, and as the countryside transformed into a location that was increasingly exclusionary through the process of enclosure, the English develop a relationship



Fig. 3. Henry Barlow Carter, *A Country Church*, n.d., watercolor on paper, private collection.



Fig 4. Samuel Baker, *Pont ar Eden, North Wales*, n.d., watercolor, private collection.

between actual loss and aesthetic recovery.¹⁹ In this relationship, the economy of the closed countryside compounds the aesthetic representations of the land in art, in order to create an overall understanding and image of Englishness in the countryside. Embodied in the imagery of landscapes is the political value each representation of land holds, and the aesthetic greatness that all members of society could understand as distinctly English. In this way, even as the lower and middle classes are increasingly excluded from the land, they find other ways to continue to participate in the landscape and identify with the collective consciousness that is embodied in the land.

Domestic Tourism

During the period of rapid enclosure, there was a drive to experience, if not own, the countryside on the part of the middle class in England. The middle class became tourists within their own country, visiting the countryside to look at picturesque scenery and to view the land and its ownership.²⁰ The middle class joined the upper classes in moments of



Fig 5. Robert Wallis after drawing by Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Lancaster, from Aqueduct Bridge*, 1827, engraving.

leisure and consumption of the landscape, but in ways that departed from those of the landed elite. While the upper class maintained a privileged position of economic mobility to travel freely and own land, the middle classes turned to domestic tourism as a way to collect landscape experiences, as a way to possess England and the land and to participate in the national identity.²¹

One type of domestic tourism that rose in popularity following the rapid enclosure of the countryside were tours that went in search of picturesque landscapes. Picturesque images were those that constructed and composed the landscape according to seventeenth-century notions of idealized nature, both in gardens, drawings, prints, watercolors, and oil paintings.²² These picturesque tours allowed mostly the upper classes to enjoy the landscape as a source of leisure, and was a way to interact with the land beyond their status as landowners. By aesthetically embracing the landscape through picturesque imagery and tours, they reinforced their identity within the landscape. The picturesque tours also allowed for the middle class to momentarily experience a piece of the landscape as if it were their own, and thus identify with it.²³

Samuel Baker's *Pont ar Eden* (fig. 4) demonstrates how such picturesque imagery promoted national identity. In this image, a rustic bridge spans the composition and the winding creek below. The grassy fields around the creek and trees frame the bridge, creating a balanced, idealized composition. The image promotes a national identity within the landscape because of the aesthetics, and the picture-perfect Englishness that it resembles. The image idealizes nature, making it in to a tourist commodity and a means to national identity. Artists capitalize on such nationalist and leisure desires through publications. For example, engravings in Joseph Mallord William Turner's *Picturesque Views in England and Wales* (fig.

5) provided those in the middle class an opportunity to visit, experience, and "own" a piece of the landscape.²⁴ By participating in this leisure activity, they elevated their social status, increasing their understanding of landscape aesthetics, a social imperative for the elite.²⁵ The collection of views in the picturesque tours and books provided a unifying force in the country.²⁶

In addition to the picturesque tours, the middle-class landscape tourists also visited the estates and gardens of the landed gentry. This type of tourism moved them through the private realms of the English landscape and into the lands of the elite.²⁷ In these tours, middle-class visitors identified with the landed elite in ways that were almost illusionistic experiences.²⁸ The tours allowed them to participate in the land and elite landownership even while situated below these elite and without land to own. An important part of this tourism is that in its very nature it allowed for an inclusion of the middle class in an increasingly exclusionary landscape, allowing them to experience property and private land ownership—however fleeting.²⁹ As fences and walls are added, compounding the idea of private land, the middle class began to enter and explore these private realms themselves in order to aesthetically recover the land that was otherwise beyond their grasp. This movement of actual loss and then an aesthetic recovery through these tours demonstrated how the commodification of the countryside affected different social classes in different ways.³⁰ In this relationship of loss and recovery, the national identity is born as the land is laced with political, social, and economic implications, no matter its depiction.

David Cox Jr.'s *Osmaston Hall* (fig. 6) demonstrates this aesthetic recovery of the lost land that is essential in domestic tourism. The graphite drawing represents a large mansion, surrounded by a trimmed and controlled landscape. The viewer participates in the landscape by essentially imagining himself as the owner. The sharply defined gardens illustrate the degree to which the landed elite exerted their hand on the English countryside.³¹ This control defined the property as well beyond what middle-class consumers hoped to one day possess. By entering, however briefly, into the private realm of the elite, the middle-class consumers were able to view the property for its aesthetics and riches. The mansion and the landscape demonstrate the social and political power that came with the economic commodification of the land.

The movement through these private locations on the part of the middle class gave them the ability to imagine themselves as included in this identity of riches and ownership. In their inclusion in the landscape and this private realm, they mask societal implications and the deeply rooted social and political contexts of the landscape.³² It is within domestic

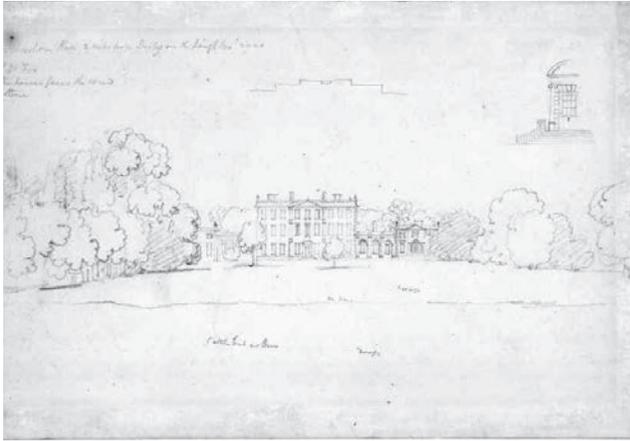


Fig 6. David Cox Jr., *Osmaston Hall*, n.d., graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 22).

tourism that these societal and political divides are simultaneously exposed and mitigated by the movement of the middle class through the landscape. The middle-class exclusion from the landscape and its need to search for the recovery through tourism exposes the divide in the political and social structures of the landscape. At the same time, because the middle class was able to recover this lost relationship in the land through domestic tourism, they are able to demonstrate how each class could still participate in the landscape and in the national identity.

Norman Garstin's *Church (St. Cuthbert, Wells, Somerset?) with Figures in Foreground* (fig. 7) demonstrates the relationship of the domestic tourists and sights that were embodied in the English landscape. In the image, two well-dressed women look out towards a church in the landscape. The figures are surrounded by the land, rolling hills, and trees. The gothic structure in the background evokes the central role of the English church in its deeply rooted identification within the landscape. The representation of the two women act as stand-ins for the viewer, and model the behavior of the landscape tourist. They "see" what the viewer "sees" reforming this identification with the land and one of England's most famous cathedrals.

Garstin's *Church with Figures* embraces the idea of visiting "authentic attractions" as a mode of embracing the wide range of values and identities that are reinforced in the landscape.³³ The drawing is a depiction of an actual location, and thus demonstrates the need and desire to see sights that define England. As the middle class began to travel through the countryside, they moved through both private and public sectors of the land, in order to both participate in the national identity. This national identity includes engaging in the private landscape as a way of longing and aspiring to the political and social power inscribed in land ownership. By



Fig 7. Norman Garstin, *Church (St. Cuthbert, Wells, Somerset?) with Figures in Foreground*, n.d., graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 26).

touring through these domestic spaces, classes participated in these worlds and were included in the interaction with the landscape. Visiting well-known English sights confirmed their notions of English history and heritage and encompassed the identity of all, shaping a collective consciousness.

Perhaps the most important part of these tours was the relationship between the economics of the closed land and the aesthetic recovery of the land through these tours. In order for the landscape to be the main source of English heritage, it was important that many classes be able to participate and engage in it, especially due to the fluid social hierarchy. Through these tours, every person could essentially "own" a piece of the landscape, whether through their own sketches from picturesque tours, sights they had collected, or books like *Picturesque Views in England and Wales* that allowed the English to experience the countryside through aesthetic representations. It is in the countryside that the English identity is born, through the ancestral legacy it provides and the collective consciousness that is woven within the winding hills.³⁴ It is within each individual interaction with the landscape, across social classes, and despite economic barriers that the countryside is able to include the Englishmen who identify with land ownership in its consciousness and collective identity.

The upper class and landed elite engage in the landscape through their land ownership, and are able to view the land as both a source of economic and political wealth, but also as a source of leisure. For the middle classes, the countryside illuminates how the economic exclusion from the land does

not hinder their ability to interact with the land; rather, they aesthetically are able to fulfill this identity through domestic tourism. By participating in the landscape as consumers, they are able to further the identity of the landscape as a commodity in England, and reinforce the political and social power it held. Finally, the lower classes interact with the rural landscape perhaps the most, as they are the ones that are cultivating the land, and working with it agriculturally every day. They are the integral producers in the economy of England, and as they continue to work on the land and identify with the aesthetics of their rural life, they are able to participate in the national consciousness. Even as their interaction with the landscape shows political and economic barriers, their engagement with the countryside enables them to have an understanding and affiliation with the national identity as the landed elite and touring middle class.

The English identity in the landscape is integral in their heritage and understanding of self. In the landscape lies a legacy, and a method in which the English define themselves. The landscape in England is both a cultural and aesthetic object, and as the countryside evolved economically and into a commodity, the use of landscape imagery allowed an aesthetic recovery of the land.³⁵ Through images of the land, English identity is promoted and reinforced; each holds implicit political, social, and economic associations that promote a sense of national identity and a collective consciousness.

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Sophie Weinstein

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, landscape painting flourished in the British Isles, which was influenced in part by the emergence and development of the Grand Tour and its local counterpart, domestic tourism. As Robin Simon has noted, the “Grand Tour was the engine of change” with regards to landscape painting abroad and at home.¹ This can be seen in the works of a number of artists including John Richard Coke Smyth (1808–1882), a member of the Royal Academy, whose sketchbooks illustrate aspects of a typical tour through Europe. A series of Smyth’s sketchbooks (c. 1851) document a stop in Geneva, with drawings that render the columns and façade of the famed Hotel de Ville (fig. 1) with hurried strokes of his pencil. Italy was also on his itinerary and Smyth followed the tradition of depicting the Bridge of Sighs (fig. 2) during his time in Venice. A visit to Tuscany was obligatory, where he sketched a popular



Fig. 1. John Richard Coke Smyth, *Hotel de Ville, Geneva*, n.d., graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 64).

panoramic view of Florence downstream along the Arno (fig. 3). While in Florence he also drew sketches of the Palazzo Vecchio (fig. 4). Other sketches reference stops in Salzburg (fig. 5) and Budapest (fig. 6). In other drawings, Smyth turned his eye to domestic landscapes and architecture of places such as Brighton (fig. 7) and Bridlington (fig. 8). However, like other artists, traveling abroad and working with continental scenes was important to Smyth’s development as an artist. British attitudes about landscapes in person, in paint, and in writing changed profoundly as a result of the Grand Tour. While this travel phenomenon changed the way the British sought out landscapes and portrayed them, artists such as Smyth absorbed and reworked these influences into their own characteristically English style of depicting landscapes and travel.

The phenomenon of the Grand Tour can be traced to Richard Lassels who wrote *Voyage of Italy* in 1670 and is often credited with coining the now widely accepted title.² While the Grand Tour is multifarious in nature and can be analyzed through many lenses, this study is primarily concerned with its influence on landscape painting and travel culture with regards to the British. From the perspective of artists in England, the Grand Tour can be defined as elongated trips throughout major European cities that

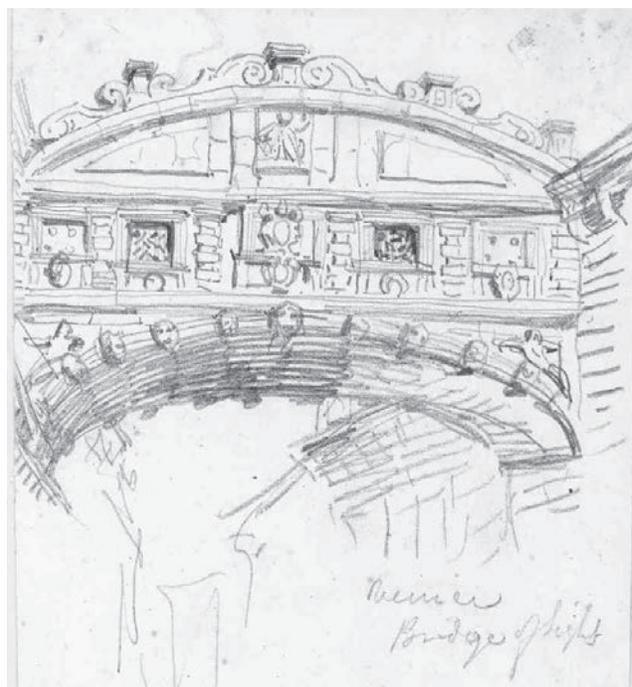


Fig. 2. John Richard Coke Smyth, *Bridge of Sighs, Venice*, n.d., graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 62).

typically began in France and saw tourists proceed south, crossing through the Alps and entering Italy. Many tourists participated in the Grand Tour as a means of social ascension. For well-to-do British men, participating in the Grand Tour was the final step in becoming a respected member of society and, “the education that it offered in politics, statecraft, antiquity and connoisseurship were all crucial attributes for the construction of elite manhood.”³ The elitist elements of the Grand Tour distance it from the pleasure driven motives of picturesque tourists. The Grand Tour’s innate priorities of social ascension were manifested in the practice of purchasing art abroad that depicted the famous destinations one visited. This act of traveling and consuming a landscape through *purchasing* it as a souvenir, then and now, remains a prevalent practice in travel culture. To travel and witness fantastic vistas is not enough, especially when the primary purpose of said trip is to scale the social hierarchy. The consumption of landscape as a commodity during the Grand Tour was a way for tourists to brandish their experiences and newfound knowledge of the Continent upon returning home. Because of the enthusiasm for souvenirs to boast about one’s experiences, Italy, and specifically Rome, became an ideal destination for tourists. For this reason, many British artists flocked to Rome, which sustained “visitors with trophies to line the halls of their stately homes and townhouses.”⁴ Landscape paintings provided tourists with the perfect memento of their travels that also suggested their new cultural superiority. Many artists capitalized on this phenomenon and followed tourists to Italy where there was no dearth of commissions.

Italy appealed to British tourists because of its rich art and architectural history set within the bucolic landscapes from Florence to Rome to Naples. From north to south there was no shortage of history to explore and tourists devoured the region’s rich past. This preoccupation with Italy demonstrates

the elite characteristics landscape took on during the Grand Tour as compared to the simpler aesthetic joys of domestic picturesque tourism. The ancient ruins in Italy symbolized the past greatness of the Roman Empire. When tourists purchased a landscape painting incorporating views of the Roman forum, they sought to identify with such places as a way to elevate their status. Similarly, tourists were encouraged to take home artifacts of recently excavated sites in Pompeii,



Fig. 3. John Richard Coke Smyth, *Florence from Cascine*, n.d., graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 59).



Fig. 4. John Richard Coke Smyth, *Interior Court, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence*, n.d., graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 60).

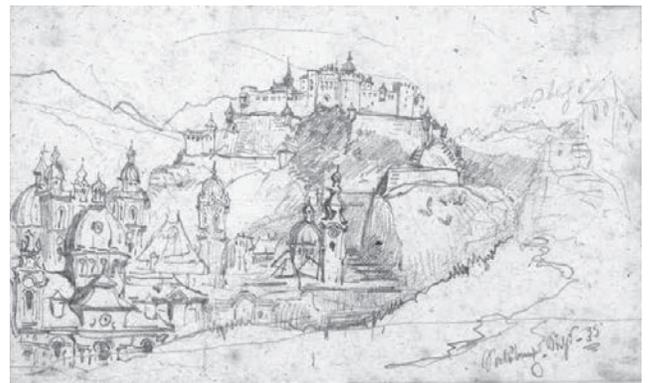


Fig. 5. John Richard Coke Smyth, *Salzburg*, n.d., graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 65).



Fig. 6. John Richard Coke Smyth, *Budapest*, n.d., graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 63).



Fig. 7. John Richard Coke Smyth, *Ouse Viaduct, Brighton*, n.d., graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 71).

not far from Rome, as souvenirs. Roman ruins symbolized, among other things, power, empire, success, and knowledge. When tourists returned home to Britain and hung a painting of Roman ruins on the wall, they proclaimed a level of their cultural expertise calculated to impress their guests.

Of those who worked abroad in the eighteenth century, the Welsh artist, Richard Wilson, was among the most prominent and sought after. Influenced by the travel phenomenon sweeping Europe, Wilson went to Italy in 1750 as a portrait painter. He traveled throughout Italy, eventually settling in Rome, where he focused on painting landscapes. In many ways, Wilson was a typical grand tourist because of his Welsh upbringing and lust for all things Italian. He received a remarkable number of commissions from prominent British tourists visiting Rome. Wilson came from a wealthy family and his privileged upbringing provided him with important connections to affluent travelers. Although Wilson was originally interested in portraiture, the more he traveled throughout Italy, and specifically spent time in Rome, he became increasingly inclined towards painting landscapes. This change in his work was a direct result of the Grand Tour and moneyed tourists' insatiable appetite for

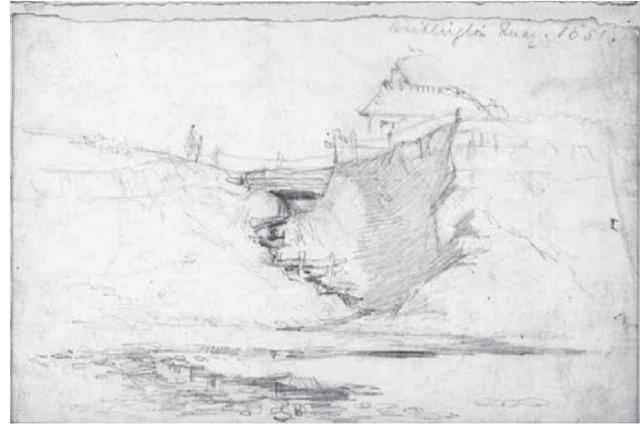


Fig. 8. John Richard Coke Smyth, *Bridlington Quay*, 1851, graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 68).

souvenirs. Moreover, regarding his development as an artist, “it seems probable that Wilson might not have advanced very far had he remained a portrait painter.”⁵ He produced numerous paintings of Rome and the surrounding Italian landscape. One such commission (fig. 9), he painted for Lord Dartmouth. This work combines the aesthetically pleasing characteristics of landscape with significant monuments of Rome.

The impact of the Grand Tour was felt at home as well. The exodus of commissions to Europe angered the artistic community remaining in Britain, which was documented in “pamphlets, newspapers, and prints of the period [that] reveal artists’ frustration at being passed over in favor of their continental counterparts.”⁶ Because of the desire for art representing scenes from abroad, important patrons turned their backs on Britain as they looked to the Continent. Those participating in the Grand Tour were among Britain’s social elite, the aristocracy, gentry, and wealthy merchants, and when they left Britain they took their funds with them.⁷ As a result, publications documented the sentiment that domestic contemporary art of the period as well as style and training suffered greatly.⁸ Alternatively, this history of British artists working abroad had a profound effect on the development of British landscape painting, and the impact of going abroad would ultimately be positive. Specifically, the many works that Wilson and his fellow artists created for tourists shaped travel culture and the genre of landscape painting in Britain because they marked a new way to experience and enjoy traveling through landscape imagery.

Indeed, for Wilson, his time in Rome led him to regard the Welsh landscape through fresh eyes. “His power, whether of hand or of mind, appears to have lain dormant until his visit to Italy and to Rome in particular.”⁹ Upon returning home to Wales in 1757, having honed his skills as



Fig. 9. Richard Wilson, *Rome: St. Peter's and the Vatican from the Janiculum*, c. 1753, oil on canvas, The Tate Britain, London. Photo: Tate, London / Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 10. Richard Wilson, *Holt Bridge on the River Dee*, before 1762, oil on canvas, National Gallery, London. Photo: © National Gallery, London / Art Resource, NY.

a landscape painter abroad, Wilson looked to his native landscape and began to transform the scope and spectrum of landscape painting.¹⁰ Prior to his time in Italy, Wilson paid little to no attention to the landscapes of North Wales.¹¹ Wilson's prowess in painting the Welsh landscape is evidenced by *Holt Bridge on the River Dee* (fig. 10). In this work, he treats the wilderness of Wales with the same dignity and detail as the Roman Campagna. Before working in Rome, Wilson may have overlooked this serene view of a lake and mountain, but after studying Italian landscapes he regarded his homeland with a more nuanced eye. Wilson's career illustrates how participating in the Grand Tour influenced British artists, and led them to view their native landscapes under new light. Wilson's career had a strong impact on Welsh artists who began to focus their creative spirits on their own landscape, turning the wilds of North Wales into a popular destination for picturesque tourists.¹²

For those who did not partake in continental travel, there were other means to draw upon the ideas and experiences of the Grand Tour without leaving England. The Reverend William Gilpin (1724–1804) was a British writer and artist who created many guidebooks for tourists seeking picturesque scenes in Great Britain. Although Gilpin never participated in the Grand Tour, his works were shaped by it. In the late eighteenth century, Gilpin began publishing a series of guidebooks throughout Great Britain that promised especially picturesque views and experiences. Gilpin's writing capitalized on the travel fad that swept Britain's upper class while simultaneously promoting the aesthetic qualities known as picturesque. His works provided various criteria by which to judge scenes for picturesque qualities and conceived a new aesthetic attitude towards landscape painting, which influenced English taste for more than a generation.



Fig. 11. William Gilpin, *Picturesque Capriccio*, n.d., ink and wash on paper, private collection (cat. 27).

Gilpin defined the picturesque as “that particular quality, which makes objects chiefly pleasing in painting,” and dedicated most of his life to expanding on that in his subsequent publications.¹³ The term picturesque remained ambiguous because of its multiplicity of meanings. In 1801, George Mason provided at least six different possible meanings: “what pleases the eye; remarkable for singularity; striking the imagination with the force of painting; to be expressed in painting; affording a good subject for a landscape; proper to take a landscape from.”¹⁴ Gilpin's definition is successfully illustrated in his own works of picturesque scenes such as *Picturesque Capriccio* (fig. 11). This drawing embodies the four main parts of a picturesque scene that Gilpin described in his guidebook, *Observations on the River Wye*. Gilpin defined the four parts as: “the area, which is the river itself; the two side-screens, which are the opposite banks, and mark the perspective; and the front-screen, which

points out the winding of the river.¹⁵ *Picturesque Capriccio* is a clear example of all four parts working harmoniously to create a picturesque landscape.

In 1792, Gilpin published *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty, On Picturesque Travel, and On Sketching Landscape*. The first essay, *On Picturesque Beauty*, provides the most clarity in any of his writings about his definition of the picturesque. His primary concern is distinguishing the differences between something that is beautiful and something that is picturesque. The essential difference between the two resides in texture; Gilpin explained that beauty is found in elegant or smooth objects while picturesque objects require a roughness.¹⁶ Gilpin emphasized the importance of roughness in scenes to create the ideal light composition that would create the correct variety of contrasts, not produced by smooth objects.

Because Gilpin's works emerge from the tradition of the Grand Tour, many of his aesthetic characterizations of the picturesque correspond with what tourists enjoyed viewing while in Italy, for instance. His fascination with the quality of roughness found in picturesque scenes translated to an appreciation of ruins and all that they could offer to the composition of a landscape. Gilpin rejected the smooth and solid structure in favor of the crumbling ruin for its picturesque qualities.

A piece of Palladian architecture may be elegant in the last degree. The proportion of it's [sic] parts—the propriety of it's [sic] ornaments—and the symmetry of the whole, may be highly pleasing. But if we introduce it in a picture, it immediately becomes a formal object, and ceases to please. Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet, instead of the chisel: we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps. In short, from a smooth building we must turn it into a rough ruin. No painter, who had the choice of two objects, would hesitate a moment.¹⁷

By praising the aesthetic characteristics of ruins, Gilpin aligns himself with the priorities of the tourists and artists who were working abroad in Italy. As explained through Wilson's career, pedaling Roman landscapes to grand tourists, ruins were included in paintings from the Grand Tour because of the history they suggested and conjured in the minds of the collectors. Gilpin was not concerned with the historical connotations ruins may have held, but instead, it was their quality of roughness that drew his attention. Even though Gilpin's inclusion of ruins in his landscapes was primarily because of their picturesque characteristics, he

acknowledged their status with regards to historic value.

But among all the objects of art, the picturesque eye is perhaps most inquisitive after the elegant relics of ancient architecture; the ruined tower, the Gothic arch, the remains of castles, and abbeys. These are the richest legacies of art. They are consecrated by time; and almost deserve the veneration we pay to the works of nature itself.¹⁸

Gilpin's guidebooks represent the impact of artists who participated in the Grand Tour and returned home with all of their newfound experience and beliefs about how to properly see a landscape. His career demonstrates the cross-fertilization of the foreign with the local. The notion of going to see landscape emerged from the Grand Tour but it took time for this idea to take root and flourish in Great Britain. Malcolm Andrews explained that for some time, “the tourist traveling through the Lakes or North Wales will loudly acclaim the *native* beauties of British landscape by invoking idealized *foreign* models,” instead of appreciating the aesthetic merit of domestic landscapes without referencing continental Europe.¹⁹ Using his definition of the picturesque, Gilpin was able to grow and shape the motivations for traveling at home to be principally the pursuit of landscape. Gilpin's writings suggest that travel was to be done in the pursuit of new vistas and he described the intentions of picturesque travel as searching after the effects of picturesque compositions.²⁰ In his 1782 book, *Observations on the River Wye*, he explored the notion of what it meant to travel and the goals of his guides.

We travel for various purposes—to explore the culture of soils—to view curiosities of art—to survey the beauties of nature—and to learn the manners of men; their different polities, and modes of life.

The following little work proposes a new object of pursuit; that of examining the face of a country *by the rules of picturesque beauty*: opening the sources of those pleasures, which are derived from the comparison.²¹

Gilpin defined the principles of picturesque beauty as they applied to landscape and specifically landscapes found within Great Britain. While Wilson created landscape paintings that popularized the picturesque and the concept of collecting scenes, Gilpin wrote guidebooks that analyzed what stylistic qualities made a view picturesque and provided examples of where to find such vistas. Gilpin published multiple guidebooks to various parts of Great Britain but he also defended the significance of picturesque tourism in his *Three Essays*. He argued the two main points to consider when discussing picturesque travel are its object and its sources of amusement. The object of picturesque travel is



Fig. 12. William Leighton Leitch, *Catania Looking Towards Syracuse*, n.d., graphite and gouache on paper, private collection (cat. 40).

pursuit of beauty of every kind and chiefly that which is picturesque beauty, as defined by Gilpin in part one of his three essays. In Gilpin's work, he reveals the major difference between domestic picturesque tourism and the Grand Tour. While the object of picturesque travel was pleasure in seeking out the grandeur of a picturesque landscape, the Grand Tour primarily dealt with elitism and the social hierarchical structure. "From the *objects* of picturesque travel, we consider it's [sic] *sources of amusement*—or in what way the mind is gratified by these objects," wrote Gilpin.²² The main sources of amusement arise from the expectation of new scenes, the pleasures of chase, the pleasure of representation and sketching, and in knowing objects and improving upon them with one's imagination.²³

While artists and tourists were seduced by Italy and other continental destinations during this period, their travels were eventually interrupted by political unrest in continental Europe. Gilpin's career coincided with this period of political turmoil which resulted in travel restrictions abroad. In Italy, the reassignment of regional controls resulted in significant changes for travelers. However, the most tumultuous situation was in France because of the outbreak of the French Revolutionary War in 1793. Fighting continued to break out sporadically, discouraging travel among the less adventurous.²⁴ Moreover, both the War of 1812 with the United States and the Napoleonic Wars with France further hindered the British ability to travel abroad. Between the years of 1807 and 1814, travel to the Continent essentially stopped and tourists were constrained to their homes.²⁵ Despite these setbacks, publications dedicated to travel continued to circulate and the British desire to tour the Continent remained prominent and travel was eventually resumed. While the political climate on the Continent kept many British travelers at home, this inability to travel abroad left some in search of opportunities to explore domestic vistas. England, Wales, and Scotland provided



Fig. 13. William Leighton Leitch, *A Castle by a River*, n.d., watercolor on paper, private collection (cat. 39).

British travel enthusiasts with options for scenic tourism that did not require international travel. For artists trained in landscape painting, their need to work also drove them to pursue native scenes.

Artists and writers alike capitalized on the opportunity to market domestic tourism amid periods of political unrest. During the late eighteenth century, traveling in pursuit of picturesque scenes became increasingly fashionable and accessible for tourists who could not go abroad for financial or political reasons. The new priorities of landscape painting, as learned from the Grand Tour, changed recreational travel.²⁶ The changes to domestic tourism correlated with "the emergence of the picturesque" which, "had a decisive impact on the way travel 'got done and written about.'"²⁷

Decades after Gilpin's death in 1804, his influence could be felt in landscape painting throughout the Victorian era. Indeed, William Leighton Leitch, an artist who traveled abroad and engaged the "elegant relics of ancient architecture" that Gilpin spoke of, sought to capture the grandeur of Italy in his works.²⁸ In *Catania Looking Towards Syracuse* (fig. 12), a panoramic sketch from one of his excursions to Italy, Leitch depicts a view from the ancient port city that tucks the famed ruins of Syracuse within the idyllic scenery of Southern Italy to create a scene that is aesthetically pleasing and infused with historical overtones. Leitch's career mirrors that of other British landscape artists who worked both at home and abroad. He was a product of the developing attitudes about the image of landscape and experiencing it that were being advanced during the eighteenth century. Leitch's watercolor, *A Castle by a River* (fig. 13), shows his transferring of skills from an Italian to a domestic landscape. Like his drawing of Syracuse, Leitch features architecture in the landscape, although in the domestic scene it is a ruined castle and not

ancient ruins. The ruined castle in the domestic landscape serves larger picturesque and historical ends.

Likewise, William Collingwood Smith, a British watercolor artist who spent much of his career traveling Europe during the Grand Tour, worked extensively creating landscape paintings throughout Great Britain. His drawing, *Ruins in Italy* (fig. 14), depicts ruins of Rome stoically located within the landscape. To the right of the scene one can see figures, possibly grand tourists, ambling along the road and taking in the sights.

British artists, writers, and tourists all contributed to the emergence of a new ideology about seeing landscape that flourished during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All three positions were tuned into new ways of consuming landscape because of the pervasive influence of the Grand Tour. Artists such as Wilson, Smith, and Leitch characterize the coalescing of foreign and domestic landscapes that shaped the experience of British landscape painting during the Victorian era. Gilpin inspired tourists and artists to see the British landscape in a new way. For those who traveled abroad and those who remained in Great Britain, Gilpin provided a model for the consumption of picturesque scenery. Together, these components of writing, depicting, and touring all emerged from the experience of the Grand



Fig. 14. William Collingwood Smith, *Ruins in Italy*, graphite, black chalk, gray wash, and gouache on paper, private collection (cat. 57).

Tour, with new modes of thought about landscapes that help shape the future of landscape painting in Great Britain.

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- 3 Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, 23.
- 4 Jason M. Kelly, "Rome and its British and Irish Artists, 1730–1750," in *Richard Wilson and the Transformation of European Landscape Painting*, op. cit., 39.
- 5 Simon, "Richard Wilson, Rome, and the Transformation of European Landscape Painting," 4.
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- 7 Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, 19.
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- 17 Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 7–8.
- 18 Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 46.
- 19 Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 3.
- 20 Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 41.
- 21 Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye*, 1.
- 22 Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 46.
- 23 Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 52.
- 24 Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, 10.
- 25 Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, 11.
- 26 Simon, "Richard Wilson, Rome, and the Transformation of European Landscape Painting," 26.
- 27 Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, 9.
- 28 Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 46.

Olivia Falcey

Of all the great things that the English have invented and made part of the credit of the national character, the most perfect, the most characteristic, the only one they have mastered completely in all its details so that it becomes a compendious illustration of their social genius and their manners, is the well appointed, well administered, well filled country house.¹

—Henry James

The English countryside and its architecture have long been a defining feature of British identity, one that reflects a range of societal values: morality, taste, needs, and economic status. Such values are conveyed most immediately through a building's style, which, during the Victorian age, was shaped heavily by the principles of Romanticism. This multifaceted style demonstrated a love of the land, of England, of past and tradition, and of old architectural styles, which often ran contrary to the advent of industrial materials and design. While the combination of past styles often resulted in eclecticism, the dominant trend was towards a revival of the Gothic style. Its popularity was based, in part, on the strength of attachment to tradition and local practice. As Charles Voysey notes, "the best architecture in the past has always been native to its country and has grown out of a thorough knowledge of local requirements and conditions."² Voysey argues that such "requirements include body, mind, and spirit. Conditions include Climate and National Character."³ His inclusion of "body, mind, and spirit" in requirements for a national architecture conveys the important role of Christianity in Britain. Indeed, such values were manifest in the English Gothic architectural style. Rooted in medieval ecclesiastical architecture, the English Gothic style began to win the favor of country homeowners, and eventually its popularity spread to government buildings. This aesthetic, symbolic of a national culture, was reinforced through its widespread use, and appears frequently in the work of countless British painters (fig. 1). This essay will consider the popularity of the Gothic style in Britain, beginning with an examination of the economic conditions that led to the development of the country estate and is followed by a study of the Gothic style in this rural context.

Town & Country: The Country House

The economic and cultural advances of nineteenth-century Britain were preceded by the eighteenth-century boom in agriculture, owing in equal part to the enclosure movement of common lands and improved methods in agriculture and

farming, which ultimately brought about an increase in wealth of landowners and estate owners.⁴ This newfound prosperity allowed homeowners to enjoy such luxuries as the rebuilding and restyling of homes as well as elaborate landscape and garden designs. Some wealthy members of the landed aristocracy went so far as to use their power to remove entire villages with the intent of improving the view of their estates.⁵ At times this ambitious rebuilding in combination with competition from neighboring estates would lead to bankruptcy, with homeowners spending well beyond their means.⁶ As Britain's agricultural bounty increased so did its capital gains, in turn feeding the Industrial Revolution, which allowed money to be brought in and circulated rapidly, and enabled capital accumulation as never before.

The industrial changes experienced by Britain during the nineteenth century posed a threat to the long-established British gentry, whose status was beginning to be replaced by nouveaux-riches industrial businessmen.⁷ Such industrialists built residences in the country that were not deemed true "country houses" because their owners had no deep-rooted obligation to the land; their wealth was derived from urban-based industries.⁸ The country home offered escape from filth, noise, and corruption of the industrialized city to "recreate some half-remembered image of the country mansion—or at least the country cottage."⁹

With the Industrial Revolution came the economic and cultural growth of cities throughout Britain, particularly London. Although it was the Elizabethan period when wealthy families began taking interest in spending more time in urban areas such as London, it was Britain's Georgian period when urban living became exceptionally popular.¹⁰ The Industrial Revolution intensified the taste for the rapidly changing cityscape. Not only was the court and central government centered in London—the seats of power and privilege—but it was also a mecca for social diversions and amusements.¹¹ These features, combined with the notable function of the city as a marriage market and the diverse opportunities for establishing new connections and alliances among wealthy families, increased the city's appeal. Consequently, it was customary for families who owned sprawling country properties to maintain seasonal residences in London, where they would make annual migrations, while their country homes remained their primary, year-round living residence.¹²

Nineteenth-century social life in Britain promoted interactions among members of the upper class, which



Fig. 1. Attributed to Henry Bright, *Ruined Abbey*, n.d., graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 13).

encouraged owners of country houses to consider and maintain the highly public façade associated with their great dwellings. Country homes were not simply a reflection of its owner's power, but also served as a place of pleasure and leisure. During the second half of the nineteenth century, home owners adapted their properties to meet their changing social needs. In London, wealthy families fostered connections among members of their class, coordinating visits to one another at their country homes. Country homes created a social environment where owners could impress their urban friends and introduce them to their neighbors in the country. This practice turned estates into social, cosmopolitan destinations that encouraged the spread of architectural styles.¹³ The symbolic status of the English house encouraged the urban elite to establish a home in the country.¹⁴ Rich merchants and bankers who earned their wealth in the city, and not from the land, commissioned "escapist rural retreats" where they could find peace from the hustle and bustle of city life.¹⁵ Their clients were indicative of the changes produced by the Industrial Revolution. The British economy was changing; money was earned through industrial, capitalist, and progressive endeavors rather than from

traditional, agrarian means as experienced by the peerage and landed gentry classes. This economic shift transformed British identity and its well-established relationship to the land.

Beyond modifying the British way of life and thinking, the Industrial Revolution also changed the function and aesthetic of the nation's architecture. The result of the Industrial Revolution was faster, more efficient production of material goods that eliminated the need for manual laborers and craftsmen, and encouraged the mass production of structural and decorative elements on the exterior and interior of buildings.¹⁶ Such contributing factors permitted more uniformity in design as well as the rapid spread of architectural styles; craftsmanship was no longer essential. These industrial advances brought about the transformation in the architecture of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English countryside.¹⁷

British Architectural Identity

The new influx of wealth and industry produced by Britain's industrialization resulted in rapid and unprecedented change throughout the nation and also inspired the pursuit of a true national style. Reacting to the rapid changes in British industry and production, architects responded by retreating to traditional forms.¹⁸ Disillusioned by the new systems generated by industrialism, architects saw new materials and techniques as threatening to their practice.¹⁹ In reverting to traditional architectural styles, architects established symbols of continuity in a world that lacked a stable connection to the past. By adopting long-established styles in civic architecture, architects were able to impart a sense of grandeur, prestige, and stability into their designs.

Preoccupied with glorified notions of the exalted past, British architects of the nineteenth century sought to express the notion of moral character and universal taste. They aimed to establish a domestic architectural design that was national, not regional, one that embodied the nation's reaction to industrialization.²⁰ What emerged was a Romantic, predominately Gothic style that cultivated the sense of a unified Britain, which was further bolstered through the image of the "English House."

The idea of the English House maintains a strong association with the cultural and architectural identity of Britain and in its intentions conveys the "belief in the sacredness of home-life," which could be expressed through architectural elements that revealed ecclesiastical associations.²¹ This "sacredness" of the British home was equally found in the nation's reverence of its country landscape. According to Dutton, "No nation has the love of country life more firmly implanted in its character than the English."²² Such passion



Fig. 2. William Cowen, *Malton Priory*, 1834–1835, graphite and ink on bristol paper, private collection (cat. 20).

for the countryside can be traced back to medieval Britain. Since then, the love of the country was expressed through the construction of an estate home, which serves as physical evidence of a family's appreciation for their surroundings. The marriage of the estate home and the country was so substantial, it was expected that anyone with money and power invested in a country estate as a familial asset.²³ The nineteenth-century growth and population increase in British cities and towns, brought about by the Industrial Revolution, led to the formation of urban slums, which encouraged the elite to maintain strong ties to the country.²⁴

Victorian Britain And The Gothic Revival

Estates and land were the physical embodiment of upper-class aristocratic values in Britain during the Victorian era. In the British countryside, owning land meant that one could have tenants and produce income through the rent paid by these tenants, who were a form of financial and political support for landowners.²⁵ Ownership of land and estates was regarded as visible evidence of a man's wealth and a symbolic showcase in which its owners could exhibit, entertain, and impress supporters and other powerful connections.²⁶ England's wealthy and aristocratic class placed a high value on land, status, and ambition. The size of an Englishman's home was seen as an expression of his ambition, and the type of house and architectural style chosen by the owner was considered a direct reflection of the power he was aiming to attain.²⁷ Meanwhile, a landowner who sought to rebuild and improve upon his home revealed a desire to inflate his status. Home reconstruction was particularly popular in Victorian era due to changing tastes and needs, and old aristocratic families remodeled in order to keep up with the new ones—that is, the houses of the nouveaux riches.²⁸



Fig. 3. Paul Sandby, *Strawberry Hill from the Southeast*, n.d., watercolor, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.

The evolution of the many British estate houses manifested itself in the period of Gothic architectural construction during the nineteenth century, which was marked by Britain's rejection of progress and modernism and its Romanticized view of tradition and the past. Caught among the past, present, and future of the nation, piety and commercialism in Britain were in a persistent state of confrontation.²⁹ Embracing the Gothic style and its associations with ecclesiastical architecture, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, a prolific architect of Catholic churches, was a firm adherent to the belief that the medieval architectural period was superior over all others. According to Pugin, the Gothic style conveys a sense of authority, dominance, and the permanence of the Christian doctrines. Seeking to adopt such virtues in a domestic context, Pugin hoped that the resounding morals associated with the Gothic architectural style would emerge once again in British culture.³⁰

Although unpopular in the eighteenth century,³¹ the Gothic style re-emerged with force during the nineteenth century, a period characterized by few significant architectural novelties.³² Traditionally associated with ecclesiastical architecture (fig. 2), the Gothic style places emphasis on height, space, light, airiness, and sheer size that suggests a sense of power and the “link between the Sublime and the gathering forces of capital.”³³ Gothic buildings also reveal a grotesque element—gargoyles, fantastic carvings, irregularities, and asymmetries—which become active creatures in their wild element, while revealing the “disturbed imagination” of the architect.³⁴ Described as the “sublime in stone,” Gothic architecture can be simultaneously beautiful and fear-inducing, reminding man of the forces beyond his grasp.³⁵ In translating the Gothic style to a domestic setting, simply applying its characteristic features to a rigid and ordered framework was not sufficient. The Gothic features

had to be arranged in a manner that created diversity, excitement, and surprise; qualities that, coincidentally, align with the picturesque, which reached its height of popularity during the early nineteenth century.³⁶ The Gothic revival, as adapted to domestic architecture, includes features such as high pitched roofs, dormers and gables, stone or polychrome brick walls, and stuccoed window and door ornamentation with factory-made foliage patterns.³⁷ Thanks to the Industrial Revolution, iron could be used to be contorted into different shapes and elaborate ornamental carvings such as tracery, moldings, ornamentation, and filigree to reflect Gothic stylistic elements once wrought in stone.³⁸ Through these stylistic elements, the house expresses sublime qualities of savageness, changefulness, naturalism, grotesqueness, rigidity, and redundancy.

While these Gothic stylistic hallmarks can be read as sublime, the Gothic style also maintained strong moral and religious associations. The decorative elements in combination with the emphasis on height demonstrate that architecture can act as an intermediary between man and God. The Gothic revival in architectural design and construction drew some of its strength from the Evangelical movement, which focused on the Puritan view of art as suspicious, because it was thought to give pleasure.³⁹ Art needed to have a moral purpose and benefit the forces of Christianity.⁴⁰ With the popularity of the Gothic style during the nineteenth century, Britain made its nation-wide return to the religious values and traditional British morals that had been challenged during the early phases of the Industrial Revolution. As Robert Furneaux Jordan notes, the Gothic Revival was born in “the flame of the English spirit,” rather than in early Victorian churches.⁴¹

The Gothic style not only appeared in churches and religious buildings, but also in secular buildings, such as governmental institutions and family homes. It appears first in the home of Horace Walpole, the author of *The Castle of Otranto: a Gothic Story*—the first “gothic” novel.⁴² In 1750, Walpole took it upon himself to “gothicize” his home, Strawberry Hill (fig. 3), which was constructed originally in the prevailing Georgian style,⁴³ commencing the eclecticism and style-mixing movement. Walpole modified it quite minimally, simply adding wooden Gothic window frames and a battlemented parapet.⁴⁴ The estate’s lack of symmetry indicated that the picturesque could become a distinct architectural style.⁴⁵ Despite minimal renovations, Walpole subsequently turned his estate into the first home to which the public could enter and tour for a fee.⁴⁶ This capitalizing decision on Walpole’s behalf acted as a catalyst for the spread of domestic Gothic architectural style throughout England. Although Walpole was a key figure in introducing the Gothic

style to England, the defining moment for the style came when London’s Parliament and law courts were destroyed by a fire in 1834.⁴⁷ The new building for the Houses of Parliament, designed by Charles Barry and Augustus Welby Pugin, pronounced Gothic as the official style of Britain.⁴⁸

Gothic Revival And British Identity

The Gothic influence reflected the shifting, evolving ideals of British society during the time, while also contributing to a unified national identity that valued righteousness, morality, and evoked a return to the height of Christianity’s popularity. Instrumental to shaping stylistic trends, members of British high society were expected to uphold a collective national identity as a highly moral, pious, and respectable social class, and they were able to communicate this through the use of Gothic style. They were absorbed with renewing an interest in medieval chivalry and replicating the splendor and authority of the Church.⁴⁹ Gothic style was a matter of religious principle, while stylistic elements from the Renaissance period were not only considered to be bad architecture but also immoral.⁵⁰ The Gothic style was concerned with a moral approach to plan and elevation, attention to materials and craftsmanship, and an air of honesty.⁵¹ Considered Britain’s version of the European idea of organic art, the Gothic embodied the academic ideals of beauty as truth and good through the honest use and display of materials.⁵²

Following the lead of architects and their patrons, the image of the Gothic style—in churches, abbeys, priories, castles, government buildings, private estates, and particularly as ruins in the wild landscape, were popular subjects among the nation’s growing ranks of professional and amateur painters—and their collectors, who drew inspiration from the style’s Romantic and rich historic associations. Samuel Henry



Fig. 4. Samuel Henry Baker, *Stanford Church*, n.d., graphite, ink, and watercolor on paper, private collection (cat. 6).

Baker's *Stanford Church* (fig. 4) and Norman Garstin's *Church (St. Cuthbert, Wells, Somerset?) with Figures in Foreground* conveys the appeal of Gothic structures (fig. 5). Indeed, such artistic representations of Britain's interest in the Gothic architectural style can be seen in countless drawings and paintings from the Victorian era (figs. 6–7). The presence of Gothic structures in paintings and drawings acknowledges the glory of the past while accentuating the style as the definitive aesthetic of Britain. In portraying Gothic architecture, British artists revealed an essential facet of the nation's aesthetic taste and reinforced the association between Gothic imagery and Britain's identity in the face of the Industrial Revolution.

The Gothic style was promoted through certain leading British architects and theorists, such as John Ruskin. Advocating for the Gothic revival and denouncing the effects of the Industrial Revolution, Ruskin believed architecture and the values of the architect were inherently linked:

A foolish person builds foolishly, and a wise one sensibly; a virtuous one, beautifully; and a vicious one, basely.⁵³

According to Ruskin, only men of good character could design good works of art—the morals of the artists or architect were considered to be inherently linked with his resulting work.⁵⁴ Good buildings could only be produced by a harmony between architects and patrons who shared true, moral, Christian intentions. Ruskin's deep disdain for the Renaissance and industrial civilization of the present shaped his promotion of the Gothic style, and also inspired important architectural figures that followed.⁵⁵ His *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) is a treatise on the essence of Gothic architecture that promotes sacrifice, truth, power, beauty, life, memory, and obedience as fundamental to good architecture.⁵⁶ This publication provided a set of guidelines for all architects building in the Gothic style, and emphasized the moral intentions that must support the construction of any Gothic structure. Ruskin believed that life was infused in anything that was handcrafted rather than machine-made.⁵⁷ His emphasis on morals proved to be resonant with the values of Victorian-era Britain.

Gothic architecture gave life to Ruskin's credence that "all good architecture is the expression of national life and character; and it is produced by a prevalent and eager national taste, or desire for beauty."⁵⁸ Such ideas flourished among his contemporaries, including Augustus Welby Pugin and William Morris. Pugin was a firm believer in the Gothic style as the only acceptable style of architecture in a Christian society, and was known to conflate the meanings of beauty and morality.⁵⁹ He soundly believed that "the degraded state of the arts in [Britain was] purely owing to the absence of Catholic feeling."⁶⁰ Not only did Pugin apply his theories to



Fig. 5. Norman Garstin, *Church (St. Cuthbert, Wells, Somerset?) with Figures in Foreground*, n.d., graphite on paper, private collection (cat. 26).



Fig. 6. William Henry James Boot, *Cirencester Church*, 1890, graphite, ink, gray wash, and gouache on paper, private collection (cat. 9).

the design of the Houses of Parliament, but he also received commissions from wealthy families to construct private chapels on their estate grounds.⁶¹ To Pugin, the Gothic style realized in the estate house meant carving and enrichment of the facade and interiors.⁶² Through Pugin's designs, estate owners could access the path to salvation, simultaneously washing away their sins.⁶³ William Morris, an architect working in the arts and crafts style, also drew inspiration from Ruskin. He promoted the idea of capitalism as destructive and a creator of ugliness, and placed a high value on craftsmanship in architecture. These manifestations of craftsmanship in the British Gothic house illustrated a certain degree of morality, piety, and wealth associated with age-old landed families, patriotism, and the continuity of British institutions.



Fig. 7. John Burgess the Younger, *Abbey with Figures*, n.d., graphite and white gouache on paper, private collection (cat. 15).

During the Georgian era, the Gothic style had become an appropriate, popular style for country houses of the wealthy, especially those of a romantic or eccentric disposition.⁶⁴ But as Britain entered the Victorian age, the Gothic style reasserted its earlier Christian associations. Both the Gothic and concurrent Neoclassical revival styles were popular choices for architects of the time, as both articulated a degree of respectability, intellect, and reverence for antiquity while symbolizing the power of its residents.⁶⁵ They also satisfied the Romantic visions of past civilizations. There even existed in some estates an eclectic mixture of Gothic and classical styles, or Gothic castles that were “Grecianized.” The mix of the two styles indicates that the Gothic had the potential to become the aesthetic equal of classical, and implied particular formal virtues surrounding its style.⁶⁶

In keeping with country values, the use of Gothic stylistic elements in the facade of an estate house implied good principles and reverence for God.⁶⁷ Features in Gothic style estates that conveyed a sense of Christianity included stone tracery and stained glass, both of which aroused a sense of piety. Not only did architects encounter the challenges of using Gothic ornamentation on the facades of the homes, but also in adapting the plan of the house to reflect its owner’s morals. Some architects working in the Gothic revival deemed porticoes and fortifications too imposing and as an aggressive and crude expression of authority, but architects of the English manor house found solutions to expressing the Gothic style through their towers, which hearkened back to Gothic spires on churches.⁶⁸ The incorporation of towers into the design of estates expressed a sense of powerful dignity and respectability in combination with practical usefulness—they could house the water tank for the house’s plumbing.⁶⁹ Architects also strived to express morality

in interior planning, for example, in the design of servant’s quarters. Women and men had sequestered living quarters and distinctly gendered working areas that reinforced traditional gender roles while also prevented the sexes from frequent interaction, distraction, and, perhaps, even sin.⁷⁰ As enforced by the estate family, servants in certain households had compulsory attendance at daily prayers and Sunday church services.⁷¹ Such approaches to design and implementation of moral regulations expressed total commitment to the symbolic nature of the Gothic style.

The Gothic style as adapted to the English house acted as the link between the elite of Victorian Britain and the values of the Church during the medieval period, bridging the moral gap that had been expedited by the effects of the Industrial Revolution. High British society of the nineteenth century was strongly tied to the Church, and the two empowered one another to remain in positions of control and authority. Many estates made outward displays of their connection to the Church through employing the Gothic style in the architecture of their homes. Members of the British elite who owned estate homes helped greatly in purveying the spread of the Gothic style and accompanying moral connotations as shown in their buildings and in their artistic renditions of their nation’s architecture.

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Caroline Fallon

William Gilpin, Paul Sandby, and Alexander Cozens digressed from the conventional, topographical style of landscape painting and practiced a range of different approaches that endorsed imagination and a departure from recording actual views of nature. Born in the same generation, Gilpin, Sandby, and Cozens represent an important current in landscape painting, one in which artists depart from the principle of truth to nature and advocate greater artistic invention as well as the application of intellectual thought to painting. These artists play an important role in promoting invention as an alternative to mimicking nature, a direction that eventually influenced a number of the Romantic landscape painters of the following centuries.

William Gilpin

Clergyman, schoolteacher, and amateur artist, William Gilpin was a primary advocate of the picturesque style of landscape painting.¹ Gilpin's approach provided both a method for analyzing and appreciating natural scenery.² In his publications, Gilpin defined the "picturesque" as, "that peculiar kind of beauty, which is agreeable in a picture."³ As applied to the composition of a painting, the picturesque was fundamentally the management and composing of mountains, trees, rivers, and spaces in a view through the use of light and shade, in order to evoke a feeling, such as tranquility.⁴ Gilpin's application of picturesque concepts would evolve the classical, harmonious landscape paintings of the seventeenth century into a rougher, more rugged, and unshaped scene.

Gilpin's *Picturesque Capriccio* (fig. 1), demonstrates his masterfully approach to composing a scene. The landscape is divided into sections with different gradations of light and dark. An aqueduct is framed in the distance by a dark foreground, a central river, and bright, luminous mountains in the background. Three slivers of land fall into the central river in an orderly fashion. Although Gilpin may have been inspired by a view in nature, the formulaic organization of the composition suggests the application of the picturesque mode.

Gilpin provided thorough instructions on the different kinds of picturesque, teaching eighteenth-century travelers how to look at the British countryside as a subject for painting. He applied his concept and principles to a series of widely-read summer tour guides through the scenery of the British Isles. All of Gilpin's tour guides, entitled *Observations Relative to Picturesque Beauty*, were illustrated with examples of picturesque landscapes. Equipped with Gilpin's directions,

images, and analyses, readers could participate in the elevated, high-status cultural pursuit of informed sightseeing in the countryside. Gilpin's manuals were highly successful because outdoor drawing and sketching were widely practiced as polite and improving activities by the growing middle and leisure classes.⁵ Indeed, tourism and amateur artistry was made possible by the commercialization of leisure and the popularization of the arts.⁶

However, *Observations Relative to Picturesque Beauty* were not actually travel guides, but instruction books about the proper way to view scenery and the principles for discovering the picturesque.⁷ His well-crafted, albeit highly formulaic, instructions did not advise readers to record an actual view, but, rather, to apply the principles of his picturesque method to create an aesthetically pleasing landscape. His readers were to pursue the picturesque, not an actual view of nature. Gilpin encourages his readers to arrange nature in an imaginative way and avoid the traditional, topographical approach to landscape:

He who works from the imagination, ... he who culls from nature the most beautiful parts of her productions, ... combines them artificially; and removing every thing offensive, admits only such parts, as are congruous, and beautiful; will in all probability, make a much better landscape, than he who takes all as it comes; and without selecting beauties, copies only what he sees presented in each particular scene.⁸

From Gilpin's perspective, nature was the point of departure for considering the picturesque. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Gilpin urged artists to meddle with landscape and avoid simply recording a view. Gilpin himself stated,

I am so attached to my picturesque rules, that if nature gets wrong, I cannot help putting her right.⁹

Interestingly, at the end of his publications, after enthusiastically encouraging his picturesque method, Gilpin concludes that there is no reasonable explanation or theory for the picturesque.¹⁰

Many of Gilpin's contemporaries published similar touring books, each with standardized images and an overuse of the term "picturesque," which rendered the concept nearly meaningless. The universality of the picturesque pursuit throughout Britain ultimately became subject to parody and ridicule.¹¹ Despite overuse, Gilpin's simple and engaging instructions continue in his original manner throughout his many volumes. In the end, Gilpin's prose



Fig. 1. William Gilpin, *Picturesque Capriccio*, n.d., graphite, ink and watercolor on paper, private collection (cat. 27).

compelled thousands of his readers to become tourists and to pursue the picturesque landscape as a complement to the real landscape.¹²

Gilpin's picturesque served as an interlude between the ideal classicism of Claude Lorrain's landscapes of the seventeenth century and the Romanticism of Joseph Mallord William Turner's paintings of the nineteenth century.¹³ Indeed, early in his career, Turner copied Gilpin's designs, regarding them as "model landscapes."¹⁴ However, he would later abandon the picturesque for the more expressive, sublime landscape in the Romantic period.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the term "picturesque" described a real, natural scene that looked as though it were derived from a picture or as though it were artificial. The term shifted towards meaning a landscape that was a potential subject for art work. The emergence of this concept of picturesque marks the beginning of the later eighteenth-century idea that nature and artifice share an "interactive relation."¹⁵ There was a shift in the century from the idea of copying nature to the idea of imagining nature. The development of the picturesque aesthetic is a step in the development of Romantic imagination. Although the picturesque is not as dramatic as the Romantic landscape, the picturesque encouraged a relationship between the natural landscape and the fabrication of landscape. Although Romantics often reacted against the picturesque style, the Romantic landscape follows from the picturesque.¹⁶ Picturesque theory urged artists to resist mimicry art and to distort nature.¹⁷ These themes were taken to a more spontaneous level in Romantic art.

Paul Sandby and Alexander Cozens

Like William Gilpin, Paul Sandby never made it to Italy. Nevertheless, his works display a large debt to the classical



Fig. 2. Paul Sandby, *The Gate of Coverham Abbey, in Coverdale, Near Middleham, Yorkshire*, c.1752, black chalk, watercolor, and gouache, British Museum, London. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

landscape tradition forged in Rome. Similar to his contemporaries, Cozens built on the study of paintings by seventeenth-century artists such as Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin, whose paintings were arriving in England in considerable numbers. On the basis of these works, Sandby developed a style that responded to the immense popularity of art inspired by the Grand Tour and Italian antiquity. Graham Reynolds describes this as "the style of the stay-at-home artists, who did not make the trip to Italy or fall under the spell of the Swiss Alps."¹⁸ But rather than simply copying views of Naples or Rome, Sandby turned to the domestic landscape, over which he imposes this Italianate manner. For example, in *The Gate of Coverham Abbey* (fig. 2), Sandby treats an English twelfth-century gateway of a Medieval abbey as though it were an ancient classical ruin. The gate is clearly in a crumbling state and there is an absence of obviously medieval features which would establish the appropriate age and place of the structure. This drawing of an English landscape reflects Sandby's interest in infusing imagined Italian features as well as the influence of contemporary Italian landscape painting by Marco Ricci.¹⁹ Sandby veered away from the customary topographical style by incorporating his own, imagined antiquity into his landscapes.

Later in his life, Paul Sandby would abandon the Italian influence he used so often. His watercolors acquired a more nationalistic approach to his landscapes.²⁰ Indeed, trees fascinated many British artists including Sandby, whose brother Tomas was deputy ranger of Windsor forest, and provided Paul with access to the majestic and fantastical beech trees at that location. But just as he applied an Italianate style to his representation of the local landscape, he applied a level of interpretation and distortion to these enormous, sprawling trees, which became almost a cliché in

his later work.²¹ This distortion of nature further illustrates Sandby's resistance to dry and conventional topographical practices of many British artists at the time.

Similar to Gilpin and Sandby, Cozens was also influenced by the classical landscape painters of the seventeenth century. However, unlike the other two, he had visited Rome and studied the ruins and works of contemporary landscape painters. Cozens's *Landscape with Ruined Temple* (fig. 3) is an example of his works from the Roman tour. However, despite classical nature of the scene, the round is purely of Cozens's invention and was not drawn from an actual landscape. The temple is rough and rugged, suggesting that Cozens was emulating the traditions of imaginative landscape established in the seventeenth century by artists such as Claude Lorrain and Gaspard Dughet. Although, Cozens employed formulas from past landscape masters, he pursued a conceptual rather than descriptive basis for the landscape. Cozens wanted to keep alive the doctrines of classical landscape painters but also to apply his own method of imagination, which is particularly evident in his later works.

Indeed, perhaps more than Gilpin and Sandby, Alexander Cozens eventually sought a completely different approach to creating imaginative landscapes, one that does not depend on describing a particular place. Rather than modifying and applying convents to actual views, Cozens experimented with chance and happenstance, introducing aspects into his landscapes that are entirely removed from visual experience. In 1786, in the last months of his life, Cozens published a manual on the topic of blot drawings called *A New Method of Assisting the Invention in Drawing Original Compositions of Landscape*.²² Here, he explained his technique using ink blots, which he referred to as a spirited sketch that would aid his students' inventions. These spontaneous "products of the unconscious" would encourage generalized landscapes.²³ However, Cozens wrote that the blot was "a production of chance with a small degree of design," and that the general form "may be conceived and purposely intended before the blot is begun." Cozens intended for the "accidental workings of the hand" to create the blots which would then be assisted with additional details.²⁴ Cozens explains that a "true blot is a mere assemblage of dark shapes or masses made with ink upon a piece of paper, and likewise of light ones produced by the paper being left blank."²⁵ He adds that "it gives an idea of the masses of light and shade, as well as of the forms, contained in a finished composition."²⁶

In Cozens's *A New Method*, he sought to distance his landscapes from direct imitation of nature. Such imitation was considered a mechanical exercise related to the origins of watercolor in map-making and surveying. He urged his pupils and readers to forget sketching directly from nature



Fig. 3. Alexander Cozens, *Landscape with Ruined Temple*, c. 1746–1750, ink and brown wash. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.



Fig. 4. Alexander Cozens, *Mountain Tops*, c. 1780, watercolor. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

and to develop inventive and ideal landscapes.²⁷ Unlike many of his contemporaries who were concerned with recording an actual view, Cozens advocated for invention and imagination. In *A New Method*, he remarks:

Composing landscapes by invention is not the art of imitating individual nature; it is more, it is forming artificial representations of landscapes on the general principles of nature...concentrating in each individual composition the beauties, which judicious imitation would select from those which are dispersed in nature.²⁸

Cozens suggests landscape drawings that copy a view lack invention because there is a scarcity of ideas and intellect. Although it was known that Leonardo da Vinci had advocated a method of stimulating imagination by observing the

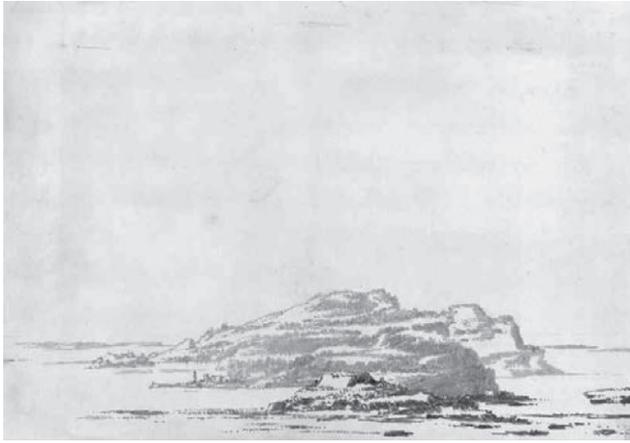


Fig. 5. Alexander Cozens, *Fantastic Landscape*, c. 1780–1785, gray wash, black wash, and graphite. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

fantastic and suggestive shapes of stains and marks on walls, suggesting things such as landscapes, battles, rocks, clouds, woods, and humorous faces, Cozens was then unaware of this practice.²⁹ However, after describing his *A New Method*, his attention was drawn to its similarity to Leonardo's suggestion.³⁰ Despite such an authoritative reference, *A New Method* was not always taken seriously and earned him the nickname, "Blotmaster-General to the town."³¹

Cozens's method found support a century later among landscape painters devoted to the sublime, and his work has been regarded as "earliest expressions of Romantic imagination."³² Turner was greatly influenced by Cozens's innovations and painted his watercolor landscapes and seascapes with similar results. However, Cozens starts with an indistinct blot and builds recognizable details into it, while Turner starts with recognizable forms and then dissolves them into something less defined. Nevertheless, Cozens and Turner are both influenced by images of Claudian landscapes that their imagination disintegrates and reconstructs into indistinct landscapes of the mind.³³ Cozens showed Turner the possibilities of an undefined style.³⁴

Cozens's *Mountain Tops* (fig. 4) reflects many of his intellectual concerns. Although there have been attempts to identify these mountains, Cozens most likely intended this scene to represent the general idea of mountains rather than specific peaks. This conclusion stems from his unpublished treatise *Various Species of Landscape Composition, in Nature* (c. 1770).³⁵ In this text, Cozens argues that nature possesses a universal language that brings to mind abstract ideas such as "liberty" or "public happiness." Although the text is entirely lost, we know of it from John Constable's notes that the mountains inspired "surprise, terror, superstition, silence, melancholy, power, strength."³⁶

Cozens's *Fantastic Landscape* (fig. 5) consists of blots made of short, feathery brushstrokes. This imaginary landscape can be read in a variety of ways. One may see it as an island, as a thick forest, or as vegetation on a rocky and barren bluff. Cozens believed that this ambiguity was an advantage because the experience of viewing the watercolor required intellectual engagement. Nevertheless, Cozens's work was "aimed at a narrow group of learned spectators who enjoyed an active role in completing one of his images with the aid of imagination."³⁷ Cozens argues that landscape should be subjective to the viewer. However, as demonstrated in *Mountain Tops*, he also argues that landscape should be generalized images of nature that evoke universal feelings. These two strains of thought may contradict each other but they are common themes of the sublime, which seeks both a personal and a communal response. Nevertheless, in driving both responses, Cozens was in favor of inventiveness, rather than recording an actual view. Hargraves notes:

Cozens stands at the beginning of the process that transformed the status of watercolor painting and helped watercolor artists be perceived as painters rather than mere draftsmen... For Constable and Turner, Cozens's insight that landscape compositions could carry serious moral messages was to assume central significance in their art.³⁸

Gilpin, Sandby, and Cozens each urged an imaginative approach to landscape painting as a means to promote ideas and diverge from a literal, topographical representation of nature. Gilpin introduced an approach to the picturesque, which is essentially the management of natural features in an aesthetic way. Initially, Sandby interpreted the English landscape along the lines of the Italian views and subsequently moved in more of a Romantic direction in his representation of trees. Cozens's blot method departs from a traditional optical approach to landscape sketching and advocates for one based on spontaneity and imagination. Their varying approaches to landscape painting illustrate a range of currents that emerged during the interval between the classicism of the seventeenth century and Romanticism of the nineteenth. Their work expanded and enlivened landscape painting of the late eighteenth century and set the groundwork for artists such as Turner and others in the nineteenth century.

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 - 36 Hargraves, *Great British Watercolors*, 14.
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 - 38 Hargraves, *Great British Watercolors*, 16.

Joelle Paull

Farther: as the admiration of mankind is found, in our times, to have in great part passed from men to mountains, and from human emotion to natural phenomena, we may anticipate that the great strength of art will also be warped in this direction; with this notable result for us, that whereas the greatest painters or painter of classical and mediæval periods, being wholly devoted to the representation of humanity, furnished us with but little to examine in landscape, the greatest painters or painter of modern times will in all probability be devoted to landscape principally.¹

– John Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (1884)

The five volumes of *Modern Painters* were published between 1843 and 1860, a time of spiritual and social unease in Britain.² Modernization, capitalism, and increasing globalization that came with the rise of imperialism in the eighteenth century all contributed to the Victorian milieu.³ Writers and artists such as Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) and John Ruskin (1819–1900) saw in literature and art the power to directly affect societal change.⁴ Arnold and Ruskin, the preeminent British critics of the second half of the nineteenth century, reflected upon the generation of artists before them by holding on to a vision of the past, championing artists of the early nineteenth century who valued above all observation of nature and the landscape. Arnold, a poet in his own right, writes strongly in defense of William Wordsworth, praising him for his expressive abilities. For Ruskin, it is the painter Joseph Mallord William Turner whose efforts to render the forces of nature mark a highpoint of achievement in the visual arts in Victorian Britain. To Arnold, Ruskin, and other Victorian critics, the landscape—and questions of man's presence therein—held the answer to the societal woes of the time. Their writings are rooted in a tradition in which the landscape had become an increasingly significant subject in literature, art, and literary criticism. Not only did they write in the defense of their chosen artists, but also in the defense of criticism itself.

The Sister Arts

The tradition of art criticism in Britain arose in the mid-eighteenth century and is closely linked to literary criticism, the rise of landscape painting as a genre, and the establishment of art and watercolor societies in Britain.⁵ Accompanying the rise of art criticism in Britain (as in previous centuries in Italy and France) is the practice of comparing the sister arts. This notion of the sister arts was famously expressed in Horace's phrase "*ut pictura poesis*" (as is painting so is poetry) and later developed during the

Renaissance and continued to figure prominently into writing on art and literature well into the eighteenth century.⁶

There have been many attempts to compare painting and poetry in nineteenth-century Britain, most of which directly compare poems and paintings, words for colors, structures for compositions. Proponents of this type of analysis suppose that ideas and practices are shared across the arts and that ideas that drive them appear similarly in the style and form. While on a surface level these connections appear convincing, a closer examination reveals the weakness of this analytical approach and leads to the conclusion that the actual style and structure of painting and poetry at this time have little in common. Ultimately, it becomes clear that the concept of *ut pictura poesis* was suited only to drawing comparisons between narrative paintings and epic poetry. Nature, landscapes, pastoral poetry, and the odes of the Romantics fall well outside of these original goals.⁷

An examination of the broader subject of landscapes—rather than their particulars—reveals that comparisons of the sister arts are more rewarding. Returning to the passage of *Modern Painters* cited at the beginning of the essay, Ruskin wrote:

[I]n representing human emotion words surpass painting, but in representing natural scenery painting surpasses words, we may anticipate also that the painter and poet (for convenience' sake I here use the words in opposition) will somewhat change their relations of rank in illustrating the mind of the age; that the painter will become of more importance, the poet less; and that the relations between the men who are the types and first fruits of the age in word and work,—namely, Scott and Turner,—will be, in many curious respects, different from those between Homer and Phidias, or Dante and Giotto.⁸

While it is often difficult to draw a direct connection between artist and poet in the nineteenth century, the language used to discuss both art forms offers us insight into the two. Wordsworth and other Romantic writers were well aware of this. In fact, they struggled to break free of the confines of the kind of pictorial language that used terms like "painting" and "coloring" to describe their poetry. This task would prove challenging for the Romantics as painting and visual language were both immediate and familiar to their readers. However, presenting poetry or a landscape in visual or pictorial terms was thought to be limiting to the Romantic



Fig. 1. Willim Gilpin, *Picturesque Capriccio*, n.d., graphite, ink, and wash on paper, private collection (cat. 27).

poet who sought to capture the physiological effects of a landscape.⁹ Ruskin used this language when he wrote, “coloring of Scott and Byron is full and pure; that of Keats and Tennyson rich even to excess.”¹⁰ In this passage he connected color in both painting and poetry to the emotional state of the artist and to expressing something greater in society. It also speaks to the fluidity of criticism, art criticism in this case, drawing from a wide range of sources.¹¹

The Influence of Wordsworth, Turner, and Landscape

Not only did the literature and art of which Ruskin and Arnold wrote share a common vocabulary, it also shared a common subject—landscape. Wordsworth and Turner, and subsequently Arnold and Ruskin worked within a strong tradition of landscape painting in Britain beginning in the mid 1700s with the rise of the picturesque. Wordsworth and Turner, as well as Coleridge and Constable, were all born between 1770 and 1776 into a culture that was already immersed in the art of the landscape and questions of the representation of beauty.¹² Both Wordsworth and Coleridge were not only familiar with the writing of William Gilpin and others on the picturesque, but surrounded by it (fig. 1).¹³ Jason Goldsmith cites a line from a letter of Coleridge where he sarcastically observes “Ladies reading Gilpin’s &c while passing by the very places instead of looking at the places.”¹⁴ The Lake Poets were often at odds with the picturesque tourism the region inspired, yet not entirely divorced from it. Some of Wordsworth’s early works reflect this connection to the tradition of the picturesque in watercolor painting. Similarly, Turner, like many other artists who would later break away from the tradition of the picturesque in landscape painting, was no stranger to the topographical and picturesque landscape tradition.



Fig. 2. Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Transept of Tintern Abbey, Monmouthshire*, exhibited 1794, watercolor on paper, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Photo: V&A Images, London / Art Resource, NY.

A comparison of the earlier works of both Wordsworth and Turner—created at a time when the picturesque was still at its height of popularity in Britain—to the later works of the two shows the extent to which both artist and poet broke from tradition. Early works by Wordsworth and Turner feature serene landscapes, ruins, and other picturesque tropes. Two of Wordsworth’s early works that are often pointed to as coming from a tradition of the picturesque are “Tintern Abbey” published in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) and his *Guide to the Lakes*, first published in 1810. Wordsworth ends “Tintern Abbey” with,

We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came,
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love, oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake.¹⁵



Fig. 3. John Burgess the Younger, *Figures on Road, possibly Lake District*, n.d., private collection (cat. 16).

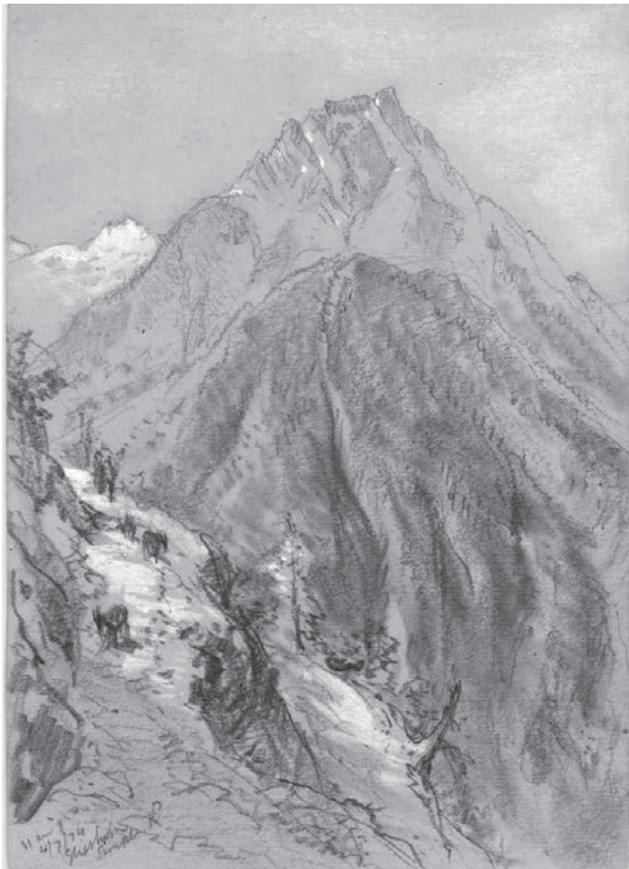


Fig. 4. William Collingwood, *Glisshorn/Simplon*, 1874, private collection (cat. 58).

Here Wordsworth records an experience at the famed picturesque ruin. Turner produced multiple views of Tintern Abbey in that same decade, exhibiting *Inside of Tintern Abbey* at the Royal Academy in 1794 (fig. 2).¹⁶ While Turner's early work on the subject does not evoke the experience of Wordsworth, they share a common interest in the subject



Fig. 5. Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Seascape with Storm Coming On*, c. 1840, oil on canvas, Tate Gallery, London. Photo: Tate, London / Art Resource, NY.

and the compelling appearance of the ruined abbey as glorious, bathed in light.

Wordsworth joined in the picturesque tour mania that brought artists and writers to Tintern, publishing his own guide to the region he grew up in (fig. 3). *Guide to the Lakes* includes directions as guides of the towns and places that lined the lakes and his observations of the scenery. The objective was to inform picturesque travelers of all that the region could offer if they were to simply look around.¹⁷ Both Wordsworth and Turner extensively toured the British countryside and the continent, spending large amounts of time in the early nineteenth-century Alps, touring the scenery and searching the natural landscape for inspiration (fig. 4).¹⁸ However, where the picturesque sought to improve upon the landscape and looked for views worthy of painting, Wordsworth, in *Guide to the Lakes* and his recordings of walks through the countryside in verse, asks the reader to experience nature rather than improve upon it.¹⁹ Similarly, Turner's *Inside of Tintern Abbey* shows beginnings of his inclinations to depict atmosphere, with the soft light streaming through the ruins of the Abbey. Wordsworth and Turner, like many artists of the time, began to experiment with different modes of expression, while continuing to incorporate elements of the picturesque in their work, even as they began to experiment with different modes of expression.

In their criticism, Arnold and Ruskin focus on later works that delve more deeply into the power of nature and the human experience. Both Wordsworth and Turner explore ideas of the sublime, as theorized by Edmund Burke decades before, but in these late works they have little to do with one another.²⁰ In works starting as early as the 1810s, Turner

embraced the sublime (fig. 5). Wordsworth's *Prelude*, published posthumously a decade later, hints at the sublime by examining man's relationship to nature but does not fully enter the realm of the sublime as fully as Turner later would. In his "Preface to the *Poems of Wordsworth*," Arnold wrote,

The cause of its greatness is simple, and may be told quite simply. Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it.²¹

He also discusses Wordsworth's deep connection to nature and wrote that "[it] arises from two causes; from the profound sincerity with which Wordsworth feels his subject, and also from the profoundly sincere and natural character of his subject itself." Where Arnold praised Wordsworth, Ruskin, in writing "Of Truth and Tone," notes that the use of tone and color makes its greatest impact when taken in as a whole. He wrote, "[T]he best proof of the grammatical accuracy of the tones of Turner is in the perfect and unchanging influence in all his pictures at any distance."²² The expressive quality both writers found in the works as a whole would become commonplace in the Romantic era. Wordsworth and Turner died a year apart, in 1850 and 1851. Ruskin and Arnold, who were acquainted with the artists, would inherit this tradition.²³

Turner and Wordsworth would have a strong influence on Ruskin and Arnold from an early age. John Ruskin was born in 1819 and met Turner in the last decade of Turner's life in the 1840s.²⁴ However, his introduction to the works of Turner began much earlier, when for his thirteenth birthday he received a book on Italy with illustrations done by Turner.²⁵ Ruskin also began writing poetry and like so many of his contemporaries toured the Lake District at a young age. He would later travel to Italy on multiple occasions.²⁶ His writing on Italy and architecture, such as *The Stones of Venice* (1851–1853), was used as guides by travelers wanting to learn more about the architecture of the Italian cities they visited.²⁷ As a painter, the works of Turner heavily influenced Ruskin's work, especially in his use of color. Born three years after Ruskin in 1822, Arnold was born into an environment surrounded by picturesque landscapes and the writers who sought inspiration from them. He was born in the Lake District and during his childhood the Arnold family would often visit their country house at Fox How, where Arnold came into contact with Wordsworth and others in his circle on many occasions. Matthew Arnold's father, Thomas Arnold

was the headmaster of the Rugby School and was well acquainted with the poet.²⁸ Wordsworth, as Matthew Arnold writes in the opening to his "Preface of the *Poems of Wordsworth*," had not experienced the same widespread success as Byron and, according to Wordsworth himself, "his poetry had never brought him enough to buy his shoe-strings."²⁹ Although Wordsworth had achieved some popularity, Arnold wrote at a later time in support of the poet who had fallen out of favor. Even in his writing on Byron in his *Essays in Criticism*, Arnold cannot help but continue to praise Wordsworth. He wrote:

I esteem Wordsworth's poetry so highly, and the world, in my opinion, has done it such scant justice, that I could not rest satisfied until I had fulfilled, on Wordsworth's behalf, a long cherished desire;—had disengaged, to the best of my power, his good work from the inferior work joined with it, and had placed before the public the body of his good work by itself.³⁰

Although he felt Byron and Wordsworth stood out among their contemporaries, even in writing on Byron he found a way to champion Wordsworth. Both Ruskin and Arnold were familiar with their subjects from a young age and learned from them as adults, and as such approach their subjects in a uniquely personal way. The expressive power of the works of Wordsworth and Turner made a lasting impact on the young men.

The Rise of Criticism

The writing of Arnold and Ruskin can also be placed within the tradition of literary and art criticism that exploded in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries alongside the rise of landscape painting and the rise of literary magazines and publishing houses in Britain. From the outset, the two forms of criticism were connected. Even by the late nineteenth century, when art criticism became more formalized, many essays on art were published in literary magazines, which had reached a new popularity in the nineteenth century. Martin Hardie cites an article on Turner and the "powerful attraction of colours" in his painting published in the *Literary Gazette* in 1823.³¹ Ruskin himself devotes sections of *Modern Painters* to the discussion of literature in regards to the modern mind.³² This perhaps is the greatest connection between painting and poetry in the nineteenth century. Art was often described in literary terms as there was already an established vocabulary. While literary theory and critical analysis help give form to the discipline of art criticism in the mid-eighteenth century, by the nineteenth century the two stand side by side. The fifteen discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds given to the Academy during the course of the eighteenth century

serve as later inspiration to both art and literary critics alike.³³

From the beginning, artists and writers used criticism as a means of elevating their medium and generating public interest. Wordsworth himself was a prolific critic, and along with Coleridge and others, generated numerous essays on the powers of poetry, writing both on past generations of British poets and his contemporaries. Like many of his fellow practicing critics and artists, Wordsworth was concerned with presenting the theories with which he approached his own work.³⁴ Arnold, in his essay on *The Function of Criticism in The Present Time*, praised Wordsworth for his critical writing.³⁵ There is a clear tendency in both literary and art criticism of the early nineteenth century for artists and writers to promote themselves or their friends or to present the viewers' religious or political ideologies. By the turn of the century, reviews came to have great influence over their readers. Poets lamented that bad reviews affected their sales, and often published self-reviews, wrote extensive criticisms, and criticized the culture of criticism that arose in the eighteenth century.³⁶ Like the art of the period, criticism eschewed the part for the whole and focused on the impact on the viewer. That is, art criticism of the nineteenth century strayed away from detailed observation of the work and tended to focus on the effect on the viewer. Thus it can be said that the Romantic ethos of Wordsworth and Turner allowed for the rise of the critic as the focus turned to how to experience the work.³⁷ The viewer or the public takes on an even more important role when we consider the goals of many of the nineteenth-century critics were the same as in the eighteenth century to promote—British artists over other European artists.

The Role of the Critic in the Victorian Era

This is the trajectory of criticism in the arts that Arnold and Ruskin inherited in the middle of the nineteenth century. Both Arnold and Ruskin, in their personal biases and reverence of Wordsworth and Turner, had their own agendas and at times are prone to exaggeration. They both have a personal interest in their subjects, as discussed above, and a national one. The Victorian era marks a time when critics not only wrote in the defense of the arts, but in the defense of criticism itself. Arnold cited Goethe's critical mind as the source of inspiration in his poetry, he wrote,

[I]n modern times, very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies that a great critical effort behind it; else it must be a comparatively poor, barren and short-lived affair. This is why Byron's poetry had so little endurance in it, and Goethe's so much;

both Byron and Goethe had a great productive power, but Goethe's was nourished by a great critical effort providing true materials for it, and Byron's was not; Goethe knew life and the world, the poet's necessary subjects, much more comprehensively and thoroughly than Byron. He knew a great deal more of them, and he knew them much more as they really are.

It has long seemed to me that the burst of creative activity in our literature, through the first quarter of this century, had about it, in fact something premature; and that from this cause its productions are doomed, most of them, in spite of the sanguine hopes which accompanied and do still accompany them, to prove hardly more lasting than the productions of far less splendid epochs. And this prematureness comes from its having proceeded without having its proper data, without sufficient materials to work with. In other words, the English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force did not know enough.³⁸

Arnold faults Wordsworth for not having an interest in books and learning. He examined social history in conjunction with criticism, eventually stating that criticism "value[s] knowledge."³⁹ He condemned criticism of the first quarter of the century "because criticism has so little kept in the pure intellectual sphere" and "has so ill accomplished, in this country, its best spiritual work."⁴⁰ He lamented the writing published in the journals of the time that sought only to find commercial success for their artists. Arnold called for a return of genuine criticism in the Victorian era that expresses large ideas and is confrontational, although he remains deeply influenced by his personal experience and cannot bring himself to criticize Wordsworth too strongly.

What for Arnold are "true materials" and knowledge of the world, become "truth" for Ruskin in *Modern Painters*. Truth in art to Ruskin was the "faithful statement, either to the mind or senses, or any fact of nature."⁴¹ Ruskin's fascination with truth in art can be extended across both the arts and society as a whole at the time. At a time when the future was uncertain and the national identities were in question, art held the answers for Ruskin. Turner became his model rather than the picturesque views of Gilpin because they capture something of the truth. Crucial here is his distinction between imitations. To Ruskin, imitation is "easy."⁴² He stated,

Imitation can only be of something material, but truth has reference to statements both of the qualities of material things, and of emotions, impressions, and thoughts. There is a moral as

well as material truth,—a truth of impression as well as form,—of thought as well as of matter; and the truth of impression and thought is a thousand times the more important of the two. Hence, truth is a term of universal application, but imitation is limited to that narrow field of art which takes cognizance only of material things.⁴³

For Ruskin, as for Arnold with Wordsworth, Turner eclipses many artists of the eighteenth century and his contemporaries in his ability to paint the truth. It is the landscape artist's responsibility to express these truths, to both faithfully record nature and to use nature to inspire the viewer to experience the same experiences of the artist.⁴⁴ Once again for Ruskin, as for so many others of his age, the artist's ability to commune with the viewer become of the utmost importance.

Like Arnold and others, Ruskin chose to weigh in on the art of criticism itself, taking issue with the direction of criticism in the first half of the nineteenth century. He wrote:

[T]he whole tone of modern criticism—as far as it is worthy of being called criticism—sufficiently shows it to proceed entirely from persons altogether entirely unversed in practice, and ignorant of truth...not distinguishing that which is really exalted and valuable in the modern school, nor having any just idea of the real ends or capabilities of landscape art[.]⁴⁵

He continued to condemn the critic for valuing history painting over great landscapes. Ruskin believed the critic had the power to inform public taste and thus, in undervaluing great landscape painting, often elevates the “fool above man of mind.”⁴⁶ Once again we see these early Victorian critics determined to harness the power of criticism to influence the public. Ruskin's insistence that the best critics are artists themselves further illustrates Arnold's belief that creativity and criticism work best when working in conjunction with one another. If criticism is the link between the public and the artist, then poor criticism disadvantages the public.

Rosenberg, in his compilation of Ruskin's writings, states that “*Modern Painters* is the last great statement of the English Romantic renovation of sensibility.”⁴⁷ He also notes a changing sensibility in Ruskin's work over the five volumes of *Modern Painters*, what he calls a shift in interest “from art to society.”⁴⁸ Although Ruskin and Arnold lived and wrote in the beginning of the Victorian era, their early works like *Modern Painters* (1843–1860) and *Essays in Criticism* (1865) look fondly back on the Romantic tradition and can still be placed within it. Rosenberg notes the evolution from Romantic to Victorian within the volumes of *Modern Painters* itself and signals a later shift in both Arnold's and Ruskin's

work to political discourse. Perhaps they found that as the century progressed and the twentieth century loomed nearer and nearer, literature and art could no longer fully express what they needed to say. They stopped solely looking back and began focusing on the social needs of the present and future. In his comments on the state of humanity in the modern era, Ruskin writes,

The elements of progress and decline being thus strangely mingled in the modern mind, we might beforehand anticipate that one of the notable characters on our art would be its inconsistency; that efforts would be made in every direction, and arrested by every conceivable cause and manner of failure; that in all we did, it would become next to impossible to distinguish accurately the grounds for praise or for regret; that all previous canons of practice and methods of thought would be gradually overthrown, and criticism continually defiled by successes which no one had expected, and sentiments which no one could define.⁴⁹

This feeling that Ruskin writes about—being caught between the past and the present—is evident in the critical writing of the time. There were many directions of thought in the Victorian era, as Ruskin indicates in the passage above. Ruskin and Arnold represent one that sought to reintroduce color and sincere observations of nature that border on spiritual into society. Even Arnold, with his deep admiration of Wordsworth, finds something lacking in his critical mind.

The idea that “progress and decline being thus strangely mingled in the modern mind”⁵⁰ in many ways captures the perspectives of both Arnold and Ruskin. On the one hand, they are looked back to the generation of artists before them and attempted to hold on to their Romantic ideas of nature and the state of man. In times of change or advancing technology there is often a tendency to revert back to older ways of thought and to romanticize the past. It is no coincidence that the Victorian era witnesses the revival Gothic architecture, in part championed by Ruskin.⁵¹ The same is true in literature as Tennyson and others retreat to distant pasts. Poetry is no longer about the beautiful British lakes, which Wordsworth praised.⁵² However, they seek through criticism to give it greater social significance in the present. Landscape and the natural world and our experience of it are meant to rescue the Victorian viewer and reader from ever increasing distance between nature and society. This is one approach to the arts and criticism in the late nineteenth century. It is an attempt to locate and re-orient the individual and a nation in the works of the Romantic artists that came before.

- 1 John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3 vols. (London and New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1884), 3:259.
- 2 J. L. Bradley, ed., *John Ruskin: The Critical Heritage* (London and New York: Routledge, 1984), 30–31.
- 3 Stephen Gurney, *British Poetry of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), 134, writes that critics such as “Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, and William Morris” were concerned with the same societal woes that plagued Karl Marx.
- 4 Both Arnold and Ruskin wrote extensively on a variety of subjects and would later turn towards political commentary.
- 5 Marjorie Munsterberg, “The Beginning of British Art Criticism in the 1760s,” *The British Art Journal* XV, no. 1 (2014): 82–94.
- 6 Quintus Horatius Flaccus (Horace), *Ars Poetica* l. 361; Rensselaer W. Lee, “Ut Pictora Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting,” *Art Bulletin* 22, no. 4 (1940): 197–269.
- 7 In contrast, the *paragone*—the ancient and Renaissance practice of arguing the superiority of one artistic media over another, largely to demonstrate the intellectual foundation of the media in general—played an important role in advancing the interests of watercolor painters, most of whom were landscape painters. See Claire Farago, “Paragone,” in *The Dictionary of Art*, vol. 24, edited by Jane Turner (Oxford: Grove/Oxford University Press), 90–91. Michael Rosenthal, “Landscape as High Art,” in *Glorious Nature: British Landscape Painting 1750–1850* (Denver: Denver Art Museum and New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1993), 13–30.
- 8 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:259.
- 9 James A. W. Heffernan, “Preface,” *The Re-Creation of Landscape: A Study of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Constable, and Turner* (Hanover and London: Dartmouth College and the University Press of New England, 1985), xviii.
- 10 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:257.
- 11 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:257–307. Ruskin, in this chapter “Of Modern Landscape” and the following one on “The Moral Landscape,” considers poets in relation to painting and landscape.
- 12 Heffernan, *The Re-Creation of Landscape*, xvii.
- 13 James A. W. Heffernan, “Wordsworth and Landscape,” *The Oxford Handbook of William Wordsworth*, edited by Richard Gravil and Daniel Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 614.
- 14 Letter CVI, 760. 5 ½ 16, as cited in Jason N. Goldsmith, *Wordsworth’s “Lyrical Ballads”* in *Oxford Handbook of William*, 210.
- 15 William Wordsworth, “Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13 1798,” in *Lyrical Ballads* (London: J. & A. Arch, 1798), lines 152–160.
- 16 Martin Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain: The Romantic Period*, 2 vols., ed. Dudley Snelgrove, with Jonathan Mayne and Basil Taylor (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1967), 2:24. Artists and writers commonly regarded Tintern and other ruins and relics as a source of inspiration in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- 17 William Wordsworth, *The Illustrated Wordsworth’s Guide to the Lakes*, ed. Peter Bicknell (New York: Congdon & Weed, Inc., 1984), 7–30.
- 18 Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, 2:28–29.
- 19 Uvedal Price, “An Essay on the Picturesque, as compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape (1794),” in *Romanticism: A Sourcebook*, ed. Simon Bainbridge (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 187–189. In this essay, published the same year Turner exhibited *Interior of Intern Abbey*, Price writes of Gothic architecture and its picturesque qualities: “In Gothic buildings, the outline of the summit presents such a variety of forms, of turrets and pinnacles....” This contemporary writing illuminates the culture that both Wordsworth and Turner were working within. Price—in Bambridge’s words—situates the picturesque “between beauty and sublimity....” Wordsworth and Turner in their early work lie somewhere between the picturesque and the sublime.
- 20 Edmund Burke, “A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757),” in *Romanticism: A Sourcebook*, ed. Simon Bainbridge (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 176–177. Burke defines the sublime as “Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort of terrible, or conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror....”
- 21 Matthew Arnold, “Preface” to the *Poems of Wordsworth*, chosen and edited by Matthew Arnold (1879),” in *Matthew Arnold’s Essays in Criticism: First and Second Series*, introduction by G. K. Chesterton (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1964), 307. Arnold, “Preface” to the *Poems of Wordsworth*, 309.
- 22 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 151–152, describes in great detail the effects of seeing Turner’s painting at a distance: “We approach only to follow the sunshine into every cranny of the leafage, and retire only to feel it diffused over the scene, the whole picture glowing like a sun or star at whatever distance we stand, and lighting the air between us and it; while many of the best pictures of Claude must be looked close into to be felt, and lose light every foot that we retire.”
- 23 Arnold, “Preface” to the *Poems of Wordsworth*, 294; Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, 43.
- 24 Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, 2:43.
- 25 John D. Rosenberg, ed., *The Genius of John Ruskin: Selections from His Writings* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), 9.
- 26 Bradley, *John Ruskin: The Critical Heritage*, 30.
- 27 Elsa Damien, “Ruskin vs. Murray: Battles for Tourist Guidance in Italy,” in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 32, no. 1 (2010): 19–30.
- 28 Park Honan, *Matthew Arnold: A Life* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1981), 36–40.
- 29 Arnold, “Preface” to the *Poems of Wordsworth*,” 293–294, describes Wordsworth’s account of a pilgrim to Rydal asking him “if he had ever written anything besides the *Guide to the Lakes*.”
- 30 Matthew Arnold, “Preface” to *Poetry of Byron*, chosen and arranged by Matthew Arnold 1881, *Essays in Criticism: First and Second Series* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1964), 315.
- 31 Hardie, *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, 2:30.
- 32 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:248–279.
- 33 Munsterberg, “The Beginning of British Art Criticism in the 1760s.” Early reviews often appeared in the forms of letters to the editor and were often anonymous. It was only later that writers began to attach their names to their opinions on works of literature and art.
- 34 Paul M. Zail, *Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), ix–xvii.
- 35 Arnold, “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” in *Matthew Arnold’s Essays in Criticism*, 10.
- 36 Nicholas Mason, *Literary Advertising and the Shaping of British Romanticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 118–142.
- 37 Munsterberg, “The Beginning of British Art Criticism,” 82–92.
- 38 Arnold, “The Function of Criticism,” 12–13.
- 39 Arnold, “The Function of Criticism,” 19.
- 40 Arnold, “The Function of Criticism,” 21.
- 41 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:21.
- 42 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:20.
- 43 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:21.
- 44 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:44.
- 45 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:419.
- 46 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:418.
- 47 Rosenberg, *The Genius of John Ruskin*, 19.
- 48 Rosenberg, *The Genius of John Ruskin*, 19.
- 49 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:256–257.
- 50 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:256.
- 51 Rosenberg, *The Genius of John Ruskin*, 9–14.
- 52 Gurney, *British Poetry of the Nineteenth Century*, 131–153.

A British Sentiment

Landscape Drawings and Watercolors 1750–1950

Exhibition Catalogue

FROM THE COLLECTION OF JOHN HARBOLD

ANWS Associate, New Watercolour Society

AOWS Associate, Old Watercolour Society

ARA Associate, Royal Academy

ARHA Associate, Royal Hibernian Academy

ARWS Associate, Royal Watercolour Society

FSA Fellow, Society of Antiquaries

OWS Old Watercolour Society

POWS President, Old Watercolour Society

RA Royal Academy

RE Royal Society of Painter Etchers

RBA Royal Society of British Artists

RI Royal Institute

RSA Royal Scottish Academy

RWS Royal Watercolour Society



Artist unidentified

1

Fittleworth Common, 1947

Graphite and watercolor on paper, 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.
(20.9 x 26.3 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Fittleworth Common ii.iv.47
15.00–16.00 B.S.T. SUNæ



2

Watermills and a Tower on a Hillside, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (24.7 x 20.2 cm)



George Arnald, ARA

(1763–1841)

3

Soissons, 1818

Graphite and gray wash on paper, 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.
(13.5 x 21.4 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Soissons [brown ink] Aug 8



Samuel Henry Baker, RE

(1824–1909)

4

Llangollen, 1864

Graphite and watercolor on paper, 6¾ x 11½ in.
(17.0 x 28.3 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] SH Baker Llangollen Oct. 4th / 64



5

Park Lane, Aston, Birmingham, 1852

Black chalk and graphite on tan paper, 11½ x 9¼ in.
(28.2 x 23.7 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Park Lane Sept 11th/52



6

Stanford Church, n.d.

Graphite, ink, and watercolor on paper, 6¼ x 9½ in.
(16.0 x 23.2 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] S H Baker Stanford Ch



George Barnard

(1807-1890)

7

Llangollen Bridge, 1837

Black chalk, graphite, gray wash, and white gouache on gray paper, 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

(27.5 x 37.5 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Llangollen Bridge Aug 1837



Ferdinand (Edmund) Becker

(active 1780-1812)

8

Borrowdale, n.d.

Graphite, gray ink, watercolor wash on paper, 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

(15.0 x 19.0 cm)

Inscription: [brown ink] Borrowdale



William Henry James Boot, RI

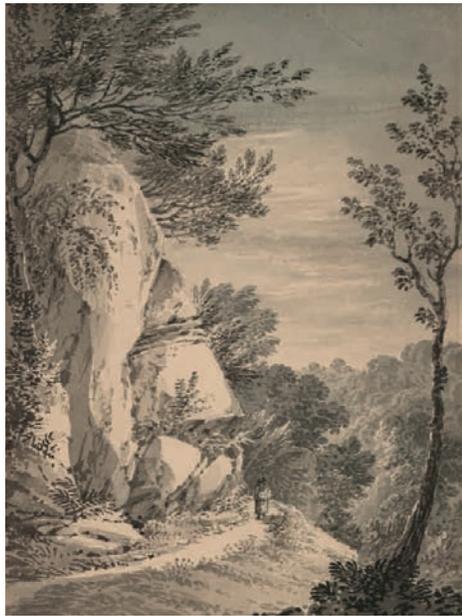
(1848-1918)

9

Cirencester Church, 1890

Graphite, ink, gray wash, and white gouache on paper, 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (16.7 x 23.7 cm)

Inscription: [ink] W H J Boot



Rev. James Bourne

(1773–1854)

10

Rocky Path in a Wooded Valley, n.d.

Graphite and watercolor on paper, 11½ x 8½ in.
(29.0 x 21.5 cm)



11

Hartwell, n.d.

Gray wash on paper, 4⅞ x 7⅞ in. (12.4 x 18.1 cm)
Inscription: [ink] Hartwell



Henry Charles Brewer, RI

(1866–1943)

12

Inner Temple Hall and the Lamb Building, 1941

Graphite, watercolor, and gouache on paper,
21⅞ x 15⅜ in. (53.9 x 38.9 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Henry C. Brewer, RI. June . 1941.
[verso, ink stamp of Censorship Bureau]



Henry Bright, attributed to
(1810–1873)

13

Ruined Abbey, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (22.1 x 16.5 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Bright-



William Henry Brooke, ARHA

(1772–1860)

14

Houses in the High Street, Hastings, c. 1842

Graphite, ink, and watercolor on paper, 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.

(13.3 x 20.7 cm)



John Burgess, the Younger, AOWS

(1814–1874)

15

Abbey with Figures, n.d.

Graphite and white gouache on paper, 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.

(21.2 x 27.7 cm)



16

Figures on a Road, possibly Lake District, n.d.

Graphite and white gouache on gray paper, 7½ x 10¾ in.
(19.0 x 27.5 cm)



Henry William Burgess

(c. 1792–1839)

17

Deer in a Wood (Windsor Forest?), n.d.

Graphite on paper, 13⅛ x 18⅞ in. (33.2 x 48.1 cm)
Inscription: [verso, graphite] H. W. Burgess



John Wilson Carmichael

(1799–1868)

18

Holy Island, n.d.

Graphite and sepia wash on paper, 3¾ x 6 in.
(9.5 x 15.2 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Holy Island



19

Bellister Castle, n.d.

Graphite, gray wash, white gouache on tan paper, 3 x 3 in.
(7.8 x 7.8 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Bellister Castle



William Cowen

(1791-1864)

20

Malton Priory, 1834/1835

Graphite and ink on bristol paper, 17¼ x 22⅝ in.
(43.8 x 57.5 cm)

Inscription: [ink] Wm. Cowen. 1835 [graphite, cancelling date] 1834.



Joshua Cristall, POWS

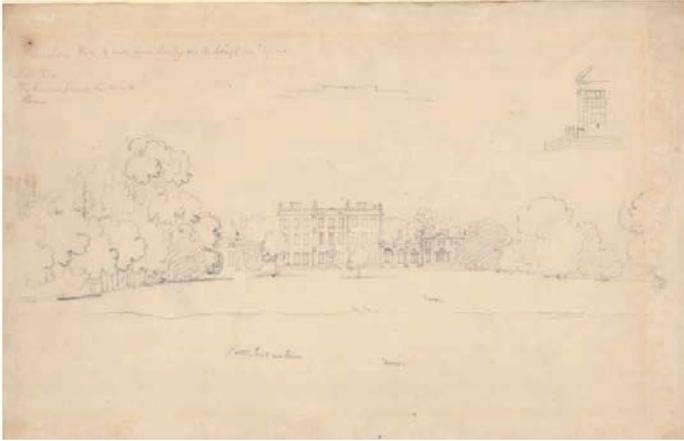
(1767-1847)

21

Capriccio Landscape with Castle, n.d.

Sepia wash on paper, 5½ x 8 in. (13.9 x 20.5 cm)

Inscription: [ink] Joshua Cristall



David Cox Jr., ARWS

(1809–1885)

22

Osmaston Hall, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 7 x 10⁷/₈ in. (17.7 x 27.5 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Osmaston Hall 2 miles from Derby on the Loughbro' road / Resd W. Fox the house faces the road / stone [artist's notes on features in the land]



Charles Cundall, RA, ARWS

(1890–1971)

23

Houghton, n.d.

Graphite and watercolor on paper, 9³/₄ x 14⁷/₈ in.

(24.5 x 37.8 cm)

Inscription: [verso, ink] artist's stamp [verso, graphite] Houghton



Edward Duncan, RWS

(1803–1882)

24

Ploughing, n.d.

Graphite and ink on paper, 5³/₄ x 9¹/₈ in. (14.6 x 23.1 cm)

Inscription: Artist's chop



Henry Edridge, ARA

(1769–1821)

25

A Farmyard, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 8¾ x 11¾ in. (22.1 x 29.9 cm)

Inscription: [ink] Edridge



Norman Garstin

(1874–1926)

26

Church (St. Cuthbert, Wells, Somerset?) with Figures in Foreground, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 9¾ x 9¼ in. (24.7 x 23.6 cm)

Inscription: [verso, graphite] Norman Garstin



Rev. William Gilpin

(1724–1804)

27

Picturesque Capriccio, n.d.

Graphite, ink, and watercolor on paper, 6½ x 9¼ in. (17.6 x 23.6 cm)

Inscription: [blind embossed stamp]



28

A View of Middleton Dale, Derbyshire, n.d.
Graphite, gray wash on paper, 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
(11.2 x 16.0 cm) oval

Inscription: [ink] W. Gilpin. [verso, ink] A scene in
Middleton dale Derbyshire W. G. Lym[ingto]n



Arthur Glennie, RWS

(1803–1890)

29

Procida, n.d.
Graphite on paper, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (9.1 x 18.8 cm)
Inscription: [graphite] Procida



John Glover, OWS

(1767–1849)

30

Penmachno Mill, n.d.
Graphite and ink on paper, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (8.9 x 11.2 cm)
Inscription: [ink] Penmachno Mill



Col. Robert Charles Goff, RE

(1837-1922)

31

Villa Medici, Rome, 1904

Graphite on paper, 7 x 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (18.6 x 25.2 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] VILLA MEDICI Rome. R Goff
31.1.1904



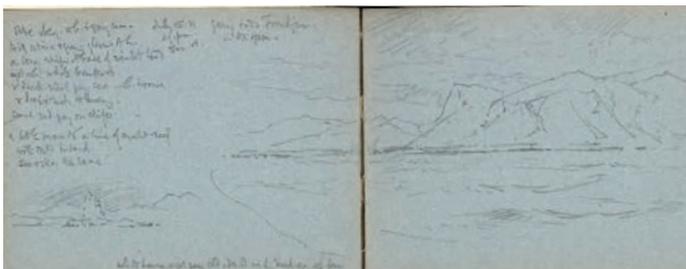
Harriet (Lister) Green

(1751-1821)

32

Mountainous Landscape, n.d.

Sepia wash on paper, 6 x 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (15.2 x 20.2 cm)



William Matthew Hale, RWS

(1837-1929)

33

Norway, 1911

Sketchbook, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 in. (14.0 x 18.0 cm)

Inscription: [graphite, fol. 1r] July 11.11 [fol. 19r]
July 29.11 6:30.a.m. Tilbury.



Charles E. Hannaford, RBA

(1863–1955)

34

Beached Boat with St. Michael's Mount, n.d.

Graphite and watercolor on paper, 5½ x 7¾ in.
(13.9 x 19.3 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] C...R Sh..u.



William Henry Harriott

(?–1839)

35

Grotto of Posilipo, 1833

Graphite on paper, 9 x 7 in. (23.0 x 17.7 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Grotto of Posilipo 1838 W.H.H.



Adrian Hill

(1895–1977)

36

English Oak, 1948

Black chalk and graphite on paper, 13 x 10¼ in.
(33.0 x 26.0 cm)

Inscription: English Oak . August . 1948. Adrian Hill



John Adam Houston, RSA, RI

(1812–1884)

37

Cochem, 1846

Graphite, watercolor, and gouache on paper, 6½ x 10 in.
(15.6 x 25.4 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] AJH July 7th/46



James Kerr-Lawson

(1865–1939)

38

Gondola on the Bacino, n.d.

Ink and gray wash on tan paper, 8¾ x 14¼ in.
(22.2 x 36.4 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] J Kerr-Lawson



William Leighton Leitch, RI

(1804–1883)

39

A Castle by a River, n.d.

Watercolor on paper, 10¾ x 14¾ in. (26.5 x 37.5 cm)



40

Catania Looking Towards Syracuse, n.d.

Graphite and white gouache on gray paper, 9¼ x 13½ in.
(23.4 x 34.5 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Catania looking towards Syracuse
[ink] artist's chop



Henry Harris Lines

(1800–1889)

41

A Makeshift Bridge, 1853

Graphite on tan paper, 10¾ x 15 in. (27.2 x 38.0 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] This bridge destroyed 1880 August
6th, 1853



42

A Rural Scene with Wash on the Line, 1875

Graphite and watercolor on paper, 12¼ x 16⅞ in.
(31.2 x 42.2 cm)

Inscription: [ink] HH Lines 1875 [verso, graphite]
August 23



William Alison Martin

(1878–1936)

43

Near Crickieth, North Wales, 1918

Graphite and watercolor on paper, 11½ x 15¾ in.
(28.0 x 40.0 cm)

Inscription: [ink] W Alison Martin 18



William Monk, RE

(1863–1937)

44

Eton, 1925

Graphite on paper, 9½ x 12¾ in. (24.1 x 31.8 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] W. Monk June 18 25



Tom E. Mostyn, ROI

(1864–1930)

45

Winter, n.d.

Ink on bristol paper, 8½ x 11½ in. (21.1 x 28.4 cm)

Inscription: [ink] TOM E. MOSTYN.



John Claude Nattes

(c. 1765–1822)

46

At Twicken from the Garden of Dean Paul Esqr, 1805

Graphite and ink on paper, 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (26.3 x 40.0 cm)

Inscription: [ink] At Twicken Drawn from the Garden of Dean Paul Esqr June ye 2nd 1805



Francis Nicholson, OWS

(1753–1844)

47

Malham Cove, Yorkshire, n.d.

Gray and yellow wash on paper, 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.

(21.0 x 29.6 cm)



Aaron Edwin Penley, ANWS

(1807–1870)

48

Figures Conversing near a Mill, n.d.

Graphite, gouache, and watercolor on paper, 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.
(18.8 x 27.2 cm)

Inscription: [ink] A Penley



Henry Martin Pope

(1843–1908)

49

Bishopston Valley, n.d.

Graphite with monochrome wash on paper, 9½ x 6¾ in.
(24.3 x 17.2 cm)



Robert Taylor Pritchett, FSA

(1828–1907)

50

Veblungnes, Norway, n.d.

Graphite and watercolor on tan paper, 4⅞ x 7 in.
(12.6 x 17.8 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] VEBLUGNESS [verso, drawing, graphite] FLADMARK. 13/5/1815



Samuel Read, RWS

(1815–1883)

51

Ponte Vecchio, Florence, 1869

Graphite and gouache on tan paper, 3½ x 5 in.
(8.8 x 12.6 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Florence Apr 3/69



Ramsay Richard Reinagle, RA

(1775–1862)

52

Beverley Hall, Yorkshire, n.d.

Sepia wash on card, 1½ x 2¼ in. (3.0 x 5.8 cm)

Inscription: [ink] Beverley Hall, Yorkshire./Seat of York, Esqu



John Lewis Roget

(1828–1908)

53

On the Coquet, near Warkworth, 1886

Graphite and watercolor on paper, 9½ x 13½ in.

(24.2 x 34.4 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] on the Coquet, near Warkworth .

August 1886



William Collingwood Smith, RWS

(1815–1887)

54

Cader Idris, n.d.

Watercolor on paper, 13¾ x 19¾ in. (34.0 x 49.2 cm)

Inscription: [verso, graphite] Cader Idris Collingwood Smith

[ink]Collingwood Smith



55

A Castle, n.d.

Graphite, gray wash, and gouache on gray paper,
4 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (11.7 x 18.2 cm)



56

Ilfracombe, South Devon, n.d.

Watercolor on paper, 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (16.7 x 51.4 cm)
Inscription: [ink] C. Smith



57

Ruins in Italy, n.d.

Graphite, black chalk, gray wash, and gouache on tan paper,
5 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (14.4 x 18.3 cm)



William Collingwood, RWS

(1819–1903)

58

Glisshorn/Simplon, 1874

Graphite and gouache on tan paper, $7\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{8}$ in.
(18.6 x 13.2 cm)

Inscription: [graphite]...4/7/74 Glisshorn Simplon



John Richard Coke Smyth

(1808–1882)

ITALY

59

Florence from Cascine, n.d.

Graphite on paper, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$ in. (11.5 x 17.2 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Florence from Casine.



60

Palazzo Vecchio, interior, Florence, n.d.

Graphite on paper, $5\frac{7}{8} \times 4$ in. (15.0 x 10.0 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Florence.



61

St. Mark, Venice, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 6½ x 3⅞ in. (16.6 x 9.9 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] St. Mark. Venice



62

Bridge of Sighs, Venice, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 6¾ x 4⅜ in. (17.4 x 11.1 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Venice Bridge of Sighs



NORTHERN EUROPE

63

Budapest, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 3⅞ x 6½ in. (9.8 x 16.7 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Pesta from the other side



64

Hotel de Ville, Geneva, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (17.3 x 11.2 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] a Geneva Hotel de Ville



65

Salzburg, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (10.0 x 16.7 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Salzburg.....35



66

Belvedere, Vienna, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (8.5 x 13.8 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Belvedere-Vienna



BRITISH ISLES

67

Arundel Castle, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 4¼ x 7 in. (11.0 x 18.0 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Arundel.



68

Bridlington Quay, 1851

Graphite on paper, 3½ x 5½ in. (9.1 x 14.0 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Bridlington Quay. 1851.



69

Burlington Abbey, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 3⅞ x 5½ in. (9.2 x 14.0 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Burlington Abbey. Town. 18.



70

Flamborough Head, Yorkshire by the Sea, 1851
Graphite on paper, 3½ x 5½ in. (9.2 x 14.0 cm)
Inscription: [graphite] Flamborough Head. 1851



71

Ouse Viaduct, Brighton, n.d.
Graphite on paper, 4¾ x 7½ in. (11.2 x 18.1 cm)
Inscription: [graphite] Preston Brighton



72

Preston, Brighton, n.d.
Graphite on paper, 4¾ x 7 in. (11.2 x 18.0 cm)
Inscription: [graphite] Preston Brighton



73

Roundhill, New Forest, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 7 in. (11.2 x 18.0 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Roundhill. M...pton



Nathaniel Sparks, RE

(1880–1956)

74

Shops, Bristol, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (23.5 x 17.7 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] The Cotton of Xmas Shops, Bristol.
No. 37. Nathaniel Sparks.



Ian Strang, RE

(1886–1952)

75

A Cotswold Village, n.d.

Graphite on paper, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (24.7 x 34.7 cm)

Inscription: [graphite] Ian Strang ... [erasure ...192.] ...
[on mount] A Cotswold Village



Alexander Edward Waite

(1888–1958)

76

The Road to Corfe Castle, n.d.

Graphite and watercolor on paper, 9 x 11 in.

(22.7 x 28.1 cm)

Inscription: [watercolor] AE. WAITE



Josiah Wood Whymper

(1813–1903)

77

Haytime, n.d.

Watercolor on paper, 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (17.3 x 38.5 cm)



William Lionel Wyllie, RA, RI

(1851–1931)

78

Globe Stairs, n.d.

Ink on paper, 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (15.6 x 24.6 cm)

Inscription: [ink] globe stairs [graphite] W L Wyllie



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