

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
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DAVID COX (1783-1859) RECONSIDERED:
LANDSCAPE, THEATER, AND THE BOOK OF NATURE

By

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This dissertation is dedicated to my family, both living and deceased.

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Ad majorem Dei gloriam

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have hailed David Cox (1783-1859) as one of the pillars of English landscape painting of the early nineteenth century, together with John Constable and J.M.W. Turner. Working primarily in watercolor, Cox celebrated the English landscape in naturalistic pictures that exhibited both a reliance on and a radical departure from the earlier topographical tradition. This dissertation contextualizes and brings into sharper focus the means by which Cox's naturalism was primarily achieved, through a roughness of brushwork and a mastery of color. He perfected a style that was based on both the topographical and the picturesque traditions while going beyond their theoretical strictures to incorporate the effects of atmosphere, wind, and light. The resulting body of work privileges both an accurate depiction of actual places and of these transient "effects," as Cox described them.

This study argues that Cox's naturalism was informed by two aspects of his life that have largely been overlooked in the literature: his experience as a theatrical scene painter and his deep and reverent religious faith. The dissertation engages in an analysis of historical, cultural, and biographical circumstances that explains how Cox negotiated a hybrid place between the theoretical debates over ideal landscape versus picturesque landscape painting. Drawing from primary sources, it posits Cox's compositions as derivative of elements of both schools, refined by copying Old and Contemporary Masters, yet pursuing independent choices in depicting nature truthfully and without the manipulations of antecedent schools and models.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars have hailed David Cox (1783-1859), together with John Constable and J.M.W. Turner, as one of the pillars of English landscape painting of the early nineteenth century.¹ Working primarily in watercolor, he celebrated the English landscape in pictures that exhibited both a reliance and a radical departure from the earlier topographical tradition, and perfected a style that was based on both the topographical and the picturesque traditions and went beyond their strictures to incorporate the effects of atmosphere, wind, and light.²

Throughout this dissertation, I use the term “naturalism” to describe Cox’s approach to the depiction of landscape in watercolors as well as in oils. I do not use the term merely in reference to subject matter (i.e. that Cox painted nature) but rather how he painted nature. Nicolas Poussin, for example, painted nature. The 2008 exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art was entitled “Poussin and Nature. Poussin’s landscapes certainly portrayed a natural world using compositional formulae derived from the pastoral or the ideal landscape traditions. His landscapes featured mythological or historical narratives. While natural in subject matter, they were painted with great precision, and mastery of outline, following established academic traditions. I would not use the term naturalism to describe them.

In applying the term “naturalism” to Cox’s works, I refer to his depictions of nature under the full range of atmospheric conditions, such as transient images of wind, rain and light. The resulting body of work privileges both an accurate depiction of actual places and of these transient “effects” (as Cox described them). This “naturalism” was primarily achieved through the roughness of brushwork and a mastery of color.

This dissertation will examine the antecedent schools of landscape painting, both English and Continental, that informed Cox’s work, in his subject matter and in his working methods.

One modern critic even ventured to call Cox a “precursor of the Impressionists.”³ We need not go that far. Cox was a student of those that went before him in the field of landscape painting, and I will discuss specific instances of how he absorbed and re-formed the traditions that preceded him.

Of singular influence in this process of absorption and reformation was the burgeoning exhibition and print culture in England during Cox’s artistic coming of age. Throughout his life, Cox was a frequent visitor to art exhibitions in London and elsewhere.⁴ He also exhibited continuously from 1805 until his death in 1859, principally at the Society of Painters in Water Colours in London, and elsewhere.⁵

The thesis of this dissertation is tripartite. I will first argue that through copying the Old Masters, including Nicolas Poussin and Gaspard Dughet, Cox achieved compositions that are both topographical and within the picturesque tradition, executing them with a looseness of brushstroke that was both modern and referential to the past, informed by the recurring academic debates of line versus color, reason versus emotion, and permanent form versus fleeting effects.⁶ A second theme that I will present is that the dominant features of Cox’s naturalism in landscape painting can be traced to his experience early in his artistic life as a scene painter in theaters in Birmingham, London, and elsewhere. Finally, I will place Cox’s naturalism firmly in the context of Christian religious thought regarding nature as God’s Second Book, a concept that can be traced from the post-Council of Trent writings of Cardinal Federico Borromeo through Dutch Protestant religious thought of the seventeenth century, to English popular religiosity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁷ When placed in this context, Cox’s predilection for naturalistic landscape can be appreciated as a consequence of his deep religious faith.

My approach differs from the traditional narrative progression from topography to the picturesque to Romanticism and finally to Impressionism in accounting for the naturalistic impulse in English landscape painting. I propose that the debate over Picturesque theory in England in the late eighteenth century was essentially a replay of the seventeenth-century debate of Poussinisme versus Rubenisme: William Gilpin, for example, one of the great proponents of Picturesque theory was criticized for his careless brushstrokes and lack of outline.⁸ Following Gilpin's example, Cox defined nature with color, not line. This approach freed him to create what he himself called "pictures of the mind," which carefully replicated the effects in nature of atmosphere, wind, and rain, as much on paper and canvas as in theater stages.⁹

The term "picturesque" was first used in gardening and landscape design in reference to the spatial composition of landscape in the works of Continental Old Master artists such as Claude Lorrain, Dughet, and Poussin.¹⁰ Cox looked at the works of these Old Masters for compositional guidance in his landscape paintings.¹¹ Cox's oeuvre illustrates a reaction to the conventional thinking regarding Old Master models as advocated by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and I will discuss instances of both imitation and naturalistic enhancement.¹²

The posthumous biographies of Cox, primarily the one by Neal Solly of 1875 and the other by William Hall of 1881, are essentially synoptic and predictable, yet they are rich primary sources that are essential in developing the themes of this dissertation.¹³ The challenge of my research and this writing is to present the naturalism of Cox in a contextual setting of matters not previously explored, or at least underexplored by modern scholars. Nineteenth-century biographies of Cox all mention his youthful experience as a theatrical scene painter – but do not explore the naturalistic approaches to stage design and production that were coming to full flower in the last three decades of the eighteenth century.¹⁴

Those same biographies mention Cox's career as a drawing master and his admiration of the Old Masters without discussing the artistic milieu, exhibition culture, collecting habits, influence of the Grand Tour, print culture, and landscape design theories all abounding in England during Cox's formative years as an artist.¹⁵

The biographies also mention that Cox was a deeply religious man – but modern scholars never examine English religious thought that may have informed his approach to landscape painting, or his views on the society he lived in and the market demands that played on his artistic endeavors.¹⁶

Modern scholarship of Cox has seldom strayed far from the nineteenth-century biographies. Additionally, modern critical analyses of the social context for the rise of landscape painting have seldom considered much beyond a Marxist or economic analysis, focusing on the impact of aristocratic ownership of land, industrialization, and Parliamentary enclosure of previously accessible common lands.¹⁷ My goal here is simple: to develop and illustrate a multivalent context for naturalism in landscape painting and in Cox's work that has been heretofore missing.

Methodological approach

In completing my work on Cox, I have adopted a social and historical contextual analysis as my principal method of discerning those factors which informed Cox's naturalism. This context is established in part by documents from the period including Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses on Art, the writings of art theorists of the period, including William Hazlitt, William Gilpin, and Jonathan Richardson, and other writings in the press and by artists and collectors.¹⁸

I will examine the availability of Old Master works at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by illustrating works that informed Cox from the records of the Royal Academy, the

British Institution, the Dulwich Picture Gallery, and prints after Old Masters that were widely available.¹⁹ The world of exhibitions is particularly important in developing the context of what art David Cox was exposed to, where and what he exhibited, market forces that may have shaped his undertakings, and how his work was received.

I will develop the religious context for naturalism in landscape painting by examining religious writings of the period and its precedents, particularly in seventeenth-century Holland and eighteenth-century England.²⁰ No scholarly work on Cox has heretofore addressed the world of the theater in which he first started to paint. This theatrical context will be developed by examining archival stage scenery designs and drawings of the period, as well as the plays that were being performed and the pervasive influence of one artist who bridged the divide between the world of the stage and the production of art for the public marketplace: Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg, whose work Cox undoubtedly knew.²¹

Last, but equally important, is the examination of the geography of the land. Cox traveled extensively throughout England and Wales in the last fifty years of his life, to sketch and paint in oils but principally in watercolor. Much like David Japes examined the topographical landscapes of William Payne (1760-1830) by visiting identifiable sites and assessing their topographical veracity in Payne's work, I have visited identifiable places painted by Cox to determine what manipulations, if any, he engaged in to achieve what I have called the painterly picturesque. I will illustrate the same with photography.²²

It is my stated purpose to achieve a more complete and multivalent demonstration of the world in which Cox lived and worked, and to answer new questions about the naturalism of his landscapes which earned him the label of "painter of sun, wind and rain."²³

State of the literature

Theories on the rise of landscape painting in England before and during Cox's advent on the English art scene have mostly been addressed in writings about Richard Wilson, John Constable, and J.M.W. Turner. The scholars who have explored this development include David Solkin, Ann Bermingham, Andrew Hemingway, and most recently, Ian Waites.²⁴ The Yale Center for British Art organized in 2014 the most recent exhibition of the work of Richard Wilson, entitled "Richard Wilson and the Transformation of European Landscape Painting" with an accompanying catalogue with scholarly essays, edited by Martin Postle and Robert Simon.²⁵ Wilson, Constable, and Turner all have their exalted place, of course. But I will also discuss the most seminal of all English landscape painters: George Lambert, who has received scant attention from contemporary scholars.²⁶ In doing so, I will propose for Lambert the well-deserved recognition that has been denied him in the literature. Lambert is an essential artist if we are to understand the context of landscape painting in England that informed Cox's work.

Most of the scholarly literature on the naturalism of David Cox's landscapes takes the fact for granted and fails to deconstruct its sources. Contemporary scholars writing on Cox include Stephen Wildman, Richard Lockett, and John Murdoch, co-authors of a bicentennial exhibition catalogue of Cox's work. Most recently, the critical literature was augmented by Scott Wilcox, Greg Smith, and again Stephen Wildman, co-authors of a recent monograph on Cox published on the occasion of an exhibition in 2008 at the Yale Center for British Art.²⁷

In 1983, the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery organized an exhibition on the bicentenary of Cox's birth. The catalogue published on that occasion was the first publication of import on the artist since Trenchard Cox's illustrated monograph in 1947.²⁸ Trenchard Cox (no relation to the artist) wrote essentially a biographical study of Cox's life and works. He drew

principally from two nineteenth-century biographies of Cox, by N. Neal Solly in 1875 and William Hall in 1881.²⁹ Both Solly and Hall knew Cox personally during his lifetime. Trenchard Cox's monograph also features some 54 illustrations drawn from the collection of what was then called the City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham, and from private collections. Trenchard Cox's work is useful for placing particular works in biographical context, and supplying a useful compendium of biographical sketches drawn from the cited biographies. Although very useful for its contents, it does not purport to engage in art historical criticism that evaluates Cox's works in theoretical ways or in modern methodological analyses such as the issues identified here.

The Birmingham catalogue, *David Cox: 1783-1859*, while organized chronologically around biographical data, does present incisive art historical criticism of the artist and his works.³⁰ John Murdoch, in a chapter titled "Cox: Doctrine, Style and Meaning" places Cox firmly in the aesthetic discourse surrounding Edmund Burke and his *Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, and in the formulation of Picturesque theory by Uvedale Price. Murdoch links Cox's naturalism to the sensory qualities of the Picturesque, although he rejects the notion that Cox was an antecedent to the Impressionists.³¹

Richard Lockett contributed two chapters that expanded on Trenchard Cox's biographical treatise of a quarter century earlier.³² One discusses Cox's visit to a number of stately homes, most notably Haddon Hall. The other discusses the artist's experience as a drawing master, and Cox's publications of instructional manuals for painting landscapes in watercolors. Lockett deftly points out how those drawing manuals explain Cox's goal as a landscape painter: "to [convey]... to the mind the most forcible effect which can be produced from the various classes

of scenery; which possesses the power of exciting an interest superior to that ... resulting from any other effect....”³³

Stephen Wildman authored the catalogue entries for the 139 or so pictures in the exhibition.³⁴ This was the first comprehensive look at Cox’s oeuvre, presented in chronological order, and conveying much information about circumstances of creation, provenance, and biographical context. Wildman’s great contribution was his stylistic and formal analysis of the pictures, which presents an excellent basis for the inquiries addressed in my dissertation.

Another twenty-five years lapsed before the next major monograph appeared: the catalogue edited by Scott Wilcox, which accompanied the Cox Exhibition at the Yale Center for British Art.³⁵

Titled *Sun, Wind, and Rain: The Art of David Cox*, the catalogue again draws from the nineteenth-century biographies and the 1983 bicentennial catalogue, but explores specific topics with critical precision. Wilcox, in his chapter on “The Works of the Mind,” explores Cox’s intentions as an artist and the reception of his works. His thesis is organized around Cox’s response to contemporary criticism of his works and style: “They [his critics] forget that they are the work of the mind, which I consider very far before portraits of places....”³⁶

Wilcox, perhaps the leading Cox scholar today, presents an extensive account, firmly anchored in the biographies by Solly and Hall, of the artist’s stylistic developments and the reception of his works by collectors, fellow artists, and art critics. His discussion of the young Cox’s copying of a yet unidentified painting by Gaspard Dughet leads directly to my discussion of Cox’s copying Old Masters and painting from nature in Chapter 3 of my dissertation, and the identification of both the original Dughet and Cox’s watercolor copy, which informed Cox’s naturalization and Anglicization of his own original compositions in later paintings.³⁷

Greg Smith's contribution to the Yale catalogue is a chapter entitled "Humble Origins and Heroic Struggles: The Young Landscape Watercolorist as a Moral Example." Fundamentally biographical, the chapter examines the vicissitudes that shaped Cox's life, from his youth in Birmingham to his early years in London. Smith hints at a possible influence on Cox's turn to naturalism: what he terms "the landscape artist's struggle to transcend an urban upbringing," and he also briefly recounts Cox's youthful experience as a theatrical scene painter.³⁸ The former suggestions would seem to point the way to critical theories espoused by Andrew Hemingway that naturalistic landscape painting arose primarily as a reaction to an urban capitalist society that supplanted nature with industrialization, a point of view that my analyses demonstrate is either incomplete or incorrect.³⁹ Smith's abbreviated observation about David Cox and theatrical scene painting leads directly to my assessment of how that experience affected Cox's naturalistic impulses.⁴⁰

Précis of chapters

The dissertation aims to contextualize the development of David Cox's naturalistic depictions of the British landscape in both watercolors and oils in four chapters, each dealing with distinct aspects of his working methods and audience. The self-evident fact that Cox brought a persistent naturalism to British landscape painting has been often noted in the literature. The formative forces which brought this about have not been systematically investigated. It is my goal to bring about a unified theory of Cox's artistic development as a painter of landscapes. I propose to do this in four substantive chapters.

Chapter 1 examines the antecedents to Cox in landscape painting and landscape theory in England of the eighteenth century. This will include an evaluation of the academic dictates of Sir

Joshua Reynolds and Gilpin's advocacy of picturesque theory as well as close examination of the artistic production and nascent naturalism in the works by Lambert and Wilson.

Chapter 2 focuses on the artistic milieu in London during Cox's formative years as an artist, and his exposure to landscape paintings and compositions by both Old Masters and his contemporaries. The discussion will review the exhibition and print culture in London and how Cox both copied and transformed the works of Old Masters including Poussin, Dughet, and Hobbema, and contemporaries including Turner and J.S. Cotman. Notably, I will illustrate how the naturalistic impulse accompanied the transformation of the "classical" or "ideal" landscape formula into the depiction of British scenery, or, as the poet Blake would call it, "England's green and pleasant land."

While the critical literature generally notes the naturalism of Cox's landscapes and compares it favorably to that found in Dutch works, there has been scant examination of the works of others available to Cox during this early period and how these may have informed Cox's works.

The chapter will also explore Cox's relationship with other watercolor artists who also exhibited in London during this period, and Cox's response to landscape paintings by masters old and recent and his evolving naturalism as a result of his close observation of nature.

Chapter 3 examines Cox's earliest artistic endeavor as a theatrical scene painter in Birmingham, London, and with traveling theatrical troupes. This fact has been mentioned in the late nineteenth-century biographies of Cox, and in the two main monographs on the artist, in 1983 and 2008. Yet neither biographical accounts nor the critical literature has addressed the subject of theatrical scenery of the period and of the naturalistic theatricality of Cox's early landscape paintings, mostly in watercolor. This chapter will explore the relationship between the

practice of theatrical scene painting and Cox's approach to landscape painting throughout his long career.⁴¹

Chapter 4 provides further contextual analysis of Cox's naturalism and predilection for landscapes. I will note in passing that William Gilpin, the great theorizer of the Picturesque, was an ordained minister.⁴² Cox was, by all accounts, a deeply religious man.⁴³ His biographer, Neil Solly, pointedly noted that "Cox's work carries you in spirit to the very scene itself... [t]he divine voice of the water and the wind."⁴⁴ Cox's brush yielded landscape imagery which depicted nature as the eye saw it. Naturalistic imagery of landscapes, though secular in subject matter, could also be seen as "models of religious imagery," as Walter Melion has noted in a different context; landscapes could serve as displays of the works of God the Creator of the world, and could provoke meditation in prayer.⁴⁵ I will contextualize Cox's naturalistic landscapes precisely as a mode of religious imagery, as suggested by Melion and others.

¹ The three artists were near contemporaries. David Cox was born in Deritend, a suburb of Birmingham, England, in 1783; he died in 1859 in Harborne, Birmingham. John Constable was born in East Bergholt, Suffolk, England in 1776 and died in Hampstead, London in 1837. J.M.W. Turner was born in London, in 1775, and died in Chelsea in 1851. See, generally, N. Neal Solly, *Memoir of the Life of David Cox* (London: Rodart Reproductions, 1973); Michael Rosenthal, *Constable* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987); Anthony Bailey, *Standing in the Sun: a Life of J.M.W. Turner* (London: Pimlico, 1998).

² The topographic tradition in English landscape painting is discussed in an essay by Anne Lyles in Andrew Wilton and Anne Lyles, *The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750-1880* (Munich: Prestel, 1993), 79-87. The picturesque approach to landscape painting, which is discussed at length in my Chapter 3, is based largely on the writings of William Gilpin, Uvedale Price, and Richard Payne Knight; see Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1989). David Cox's insistent naturalism, which is the overall theme of this dissertation, is widely recognized, most recently in Scott Wilcox, ed., *Sun, Wind, and Rain: The Art of David Cox* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

³ Gérald Bauer, *David Cox, 1783-1859* (Arcueil Cedex, France: Éditions Anthese, 2000). Bauer suggests in the book's subtitle that Cox was a "précurseur des impressionistes."

⁴ William Hall, *A Biography of David Cox* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co. 1881), 156-159.

⁵ For a compilation of exhibition records, see Antique Collectors' Club Research Project, *The Royal Watercolour Society: The First Fifty Years 1805-1855* (Woodbridge: The Antique Collectors' Club Ltd. 1992) 57-68. Also, Hall, *A Biography of David Cox*, 22-23.

⁶ A concise description of the line versus color academic theory debate is found in Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France 1500 to 1700* (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), 345, as well as entries by Sylvain Kerspern in Jane Turner, ed. *The Grove Dictionary of Art*, s.v. "Poussinisme" and "Rubénisme" (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 2002). See also Pierre Rosenberg and Keith Christiansen, *Poussin and Nature: Arcadian Visions* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), and Anne French, *Gaspard Dughet called Gaspar Poussin 1615-75: A French Landscape Painter in Seventeenth Century Rome and his Influence on British Art* (London: Greater London Council, 1980).

⁷ For a discussion of post-Council of Trent views of nature in a Roman Catholic sensibility see Pamela M. Jones, "Federico Borromeo as a Patron of Landscapes and Still Lifes: Christian Optimism in Italy ca. 1600," in *Art Bulletin* 70, no. 2 (1988), 261-272. Dutch Protestants developed a similar approach, as discussed in E. John Walford, *Jacob van Ruisdael and the Perception of Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 15-28. English religiosity with regard to landscape painting was most recently discussed in Estelle Lovatt, "Worshipping Nature's Glory," *Art of England* no. 99 (February 2013): 16-23.

⁸ Sir Joshua Reynolds was critical of the “picturesque” as characteristic of an “inferior order.” See William Gilpin, *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape* (London: R. Blamire, 1794), 34-36.

⁹ Wilcox, *Sun, Wind, and Rain*. Cox was likely influenced by the naturalism in late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century theatrical stage design, such as introduced by Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg. See Bailey, *Standing in the Sun*, 39.

¹⁰ The relationship of painting and garden design embodied in the term “picturesque” is not unique to the West. Late in the Ming Dynasty the painter-turned garden designer Ji Cheng wrote *Yuan Ye*, a manual for garden designers. The title is translated as *The Craft of Gardens*. Nancy Berliner describes it as the “earliest known Chinese garden manual” and dates it to 1631. In it, Ji Cheng relates the comment by a visitor that one of the gardens Ji designed “was just like a painting by Jing Hao or Guan Tong.” Nancy Berliner, et al., *The Emperor’s Private Paradise: Treasures from the Forbidden City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 61-62. The Chinese artists of the period understood the concept that creating a garden based on landscape paintings brought about the amalgamation of arguably unrelated arts: painting, landscape, and poetry.

¹¹ As early as 1719, the term “picturesque” was used by the Abbé du Bos in a French text entitled *Réflexions Critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture*: he argued, “I call picturesque composition the arrangement of objects that ought to be in a painting to create the overall effect of the picture. A good picturesque composition is one where the eye is struck by its grand effect....” The quote is discussed in Andrew Wilton, *Turner and the Sublime* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 47, note 27. Jonathan Richardson, writing in 1722, invokes the motifs of the great classical landscape painters admired by English Grand Tourists: “Of all the Landskip-Painters Claude Lorraine has the most Beautiful and Pleasing Ideas; the most Rural, and of our own Times... So has Nicolas Poussin, and the landskips of the Latter are usually Antique, as is seen by the Buildings, and Figures. Gaspar’s Figures are Such, otherwise he has a Mixture of Nicolas and Claude. Salvator Rosa has generally chosen to represent a sort of wild, and savage Nature; his Style is Great and Noble; Rubens is pleasant, and loves to enrich his Landskip with certain Accidents of Nature, as Winds, a Rain-Bow, Lightening, etc.”; Malcolm Andrews, ed. *The Picturesque: Literary Sources and Documents*. (East Sussex: Helm Information Ltd. 1994), 67. John Dixon Hunt points out that the term “pittoresco” was in use in Italy by the early eighteenth century as well, specifically dealing with a “painterly style” of broad strokes; John Dixon Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 12-13.

¹² For example, in Chapter 3, I will discuss Cox’s copying of Gaspard Dughet, Meindert Hobbema, and even his contemporaries, J.M.W. Turner and John Sell Cotman, as he worked out his naturalistic enterprises in watercolor.

¹³ The earliest was Solly, *Memoir of the Life of David Cox*. Subsequently William Hall substantially drew on Solly; William Hall, *A Biography of David Cox* (London: Cassell, Peter, Galpin & Co., 1881). Later still, biographies by G.R. Redgrave and F. Gordon Roe added little to what was reported by Solly: Gilbert R. Redgrave, *David Cox and Peter de Wint* (New York: Scribner and Welford, 1891); F. Cordon Roe, *Cox the Master: The Life and Art of David Cox (1783-1859)* (Leigh-on-Sea, U.K.: F. Lewis Publishers, Ltd., 1946).

¹⁴ Wilcox and his co-authors report Cox's work in the theater, but do not discuss how the experience affected his developing naturalism in painting; Wilcox, *Sun, Wind, and Rain*, 73-74, 88-89, 240-241.

¹⁵ For artistic milieu see William T. Whitley, *Art in England*, 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930) and William T. Whitley, *Artists and their Friends in England 1700-1799*, 2 vols. (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1928). For exhibition culture see Algernon Graves, *A Century of Loan Exhibitions 1813-1912* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1913). For collecting habits see Frank Herrmann, *The English as Collectors* (New Castle: Oak Knoll Press, 1999). For the Grand Tour see Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) and Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: the Grand Tour in the Eighteenth-Century* (Chalford, U.K.: Sutton Publishing, 2007). For print culture see Louise Lippincott, *Selling Art in Georgian London: The Rise of Arthur Pond* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). For landscape design see J.D. Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape: Poetry, Painting and Gardening during the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) and John Dixon Hunt, *Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge, U.S.: The MIT Press, 1997).

¹⁶ There is a paucity of biographical evidence here. Solly reports that Cox's mother had "highly religious feelings" and that he "often articulated a good deal of his success... to the right principles which she instilled in his mind in early years"; Solly, *Memoir of the Life of David Cox*, 2; Solly calls him a "truly religious man, *ibid.*, 137; was a very regular attendant at church, *Ibid.*, 175; and his last words on his deathbed were "God bless you" *Ibid.*, 301. For historical/social context see Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the rise of natural science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); and Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁷ The Marxist or politico-economic approach is exemplified by Andrew Hemingway, *Landscape, Imagery and Urban Culture in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); David Solkin, *Richard Wilson: The Landscape of Reaction* (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1982); and Ian Waites, *Common Land in English Painting: 1700-1850* (Suffolk, U.K.: The Boydell Press, 2012).

¹⁸ For Farington, see Joseph Farington, *The Farington Diary*, 8 vols. ed. James Greig. (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1923) and Evelyn Newby's excellent index Evelyn Newby, *The Diary of Joseph Farington: Index* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984). For the others, see Duncan Wu, *William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Gilpin, *Three Essays*; and Carol Gibson-Wood, *Jonathan Richardson: Art Theorist of the English Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

¹⁹ Algernon Graves has compiled a multi-volume set on loan exhibitions including the Royal Academy and the British Institution, from 1813 to 1912: Graves, *A Century of Loan Exhibitions*. For the Royal Watercolour Society see Antique Collectors' Club Research Project *The Royal Watercolour Society*. For Dulwich Picture Gallery see Richard Beresford, *Dulwich Picture*

Gallery: Complete Illustrated Catalogue (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1998) and John Ingamells, *Dulwich Picture Gallery* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2008).

²⁰ E. John Walford addresses this in Walford, *Jacob van Ruisdael*, and cites Pamela Jones's work on Federico Borromeo, Johns, "Federico Borromeo," 261-272. See also Pamela M. Jones, *Federico Borromeo and the Ambrosiana: Art, Patronage and Reform in 17th-Century Milan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

²¹ Oliver Lefeuvre, *Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg* (Paris: Arthena, 2012); Andrew McConnell Stott, "Stage Light," *Lapham's Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (2012): 213-221.

²² For Japes's monograph on Payne, see David Japes, *William Payne 1760-1830: Topographer and Artist of the Picturesque* (London: John Spink Publishing, 2013). I have accumulated a portfolio of photographs of Cox venues taken during a visit to Wales in 2013.

²³ Stephen Wildman, Richard Lockett, and John Murdock, *David Cox. 1783-1859* (Birmingham, U.K.: Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1983); Wilcox, *Sun, Wind, and Rain*.

²⁴ For Solkin's work, see David H. Solkin, "Richard Wilson and the British Landscape" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1978); David H. Solkin, "Richard Wilson's Variations on a Theme by Gaspard Dughet," *Burlington Magazine* 123, no. 940 (1981): 410-414; David H. Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); David H. Solkin, ed. *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Solkin, *Richard Wilson*. For Bermingham's work, see Ann Bermingham, ed. *Sensation & Sensibility: Viewing Gainsborough's 'Cottage Door'* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). For Hemingway's work, see Andrew Hemingway, "Regarding Art and Art History" *Art Bulletin* 94, no. 2 (June 2012), 163-165; Hemingway, *Landscape, Imagery and Urban Culture*. For Waites' work, see Waites, *Common Land in English Painting*.

²⁵ Martin Postle and Robin Simon, eds., *Richard Wilson and the Transformation of European Landscape Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2014).

²⁶ The only monographic work on Lambert worth noting is by Elizabeth Einberg, "Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of George Lambert," *The Walpole Society* 63 (2001).

²⁷ Wildman, Lockett, and Murdock, *David Cox 1783-1859*; Wilcox, *Sun, Wind, and Rain*.

²⁸ Trenchard Cox, *David Cox* (London: Phoenix House Limited, 1947).

²⁹ Solly, *Memoir of the Life of David Cox*; Hall, *A Biography*.

³⁰ Wildman, Lockett, and Murdock, *David Cox. 1783-1859*.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 9-19.

³² Ibid., 21-33.

³³ Ibid., 26. Cox's *Treatise* has been published in facsimile edition. David Cox, *A Treatise on Landscape Painting in Water Colours*, Edited by Geoffrey Holme (London: The Studio, Limited, 1922).

³⁴ Wildman, Lockett, and Murdock, *David Cox. 1783-1859*, 45-134. Wildman most recently wrote an essay on David Cox for an exhibition catalogue for Brenau University Galleries, in which he urged that "Work is still needed to return David Cox to his deserved place as the rostrum of nineteenth-century British painting"; Brenau University Galleries, *The Melting Touch of Nature*, (Exh. Cat. Gainesville, Georgia: Brenau University, 2001).

³⁵ Wilcox, *Sun, Wind, and Rain*.

³⁶ Ibid., 1.

³⁷ Ibid., 16-19. My discussion of Cox copying Dughet (and Cotman) is indebted to personal communications with the late Andrew Wyld (1949-2011), dealer and connoisseur, whose "eye" for David Cox's work was widely recognized, and who was recruited by Scott Wilcox to vet pictures for the 2008 Yale exhibition. Susan Sloman, "Andrew Wyld (1949-2011)" in Christie's *Andrew Wyld: Connoisseur Dealer, Part I, Tuesday 10 July 2012 at 2:00 p.m.* (London: Christie, Manson & Woods, Ltd., 2012), 8-13.

³⁸ Wilcox, *Sun, Wind, and Rain*, 85-95. Smith's contrasting of Cox's "urban upbringing" to his naturalism in landscape recalls Hemingway's similar position on naturalistic landscape, which pervades his 1992 treatise. Hemingway, *Landscape, Imagery and Urban Culture*. A similar position is advanced by Waites with respect to the enclosure of common land and creeping urbanization in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth's centuries: Waites, *Common Land in English Painting*, 145.

³⁹ Hemingway's approach is essentially Marxist. He notes in his preface that "[m]y hope is that this book will contribute to the type of dialogue on the nature of bourgeois society which can inform a renewed socialist politics. At this moment in time [1992], it seems more necessary than ever to say this." Hemingway, *Landscape, Imagery and Urban Culture*, xvii. This was the time in Britain just after the end of the Margaret Thatcher years, and the continuation of her conservative ("right-wing") regime under Prime Minister John Major. The book was also published just months after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

⁴⁰ Smith quotes Solly to note that "[h]is practice in scene-painting was regarded by him [Cox] as merely a stepping-stone to something higher, he had set his heart on becoming a landscape-painter...." Wilcox, *Sun, Wind, and Rain*, 88-89. Smith points out that there was a similarity between Cox's landscapes as early as 1810 and "the coarseness of scene-painting"; Ibid., Smith then comes tantalizingly close to opening up the discussion of theatrical scenery developed in Chapter 3 of my dissertation.

⁴¹ Cox was in London in 1804-1814; he was in Hereford in 1814-1827, after which he again moved to London, where he lived until 1841. Wilcox, *Sun, Wind, and Rain*, vii-xi.

⁴² Gilpin, *Three Essays*. Gilpin wrote works of theology as well as essays on the Picturesque.

⁴³ Solly, *Memoir of the Life of David Cox*, 305-306.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 311.

⁴⁵ Walter S. Melion, review of *Federico Borromeo and the Ambrosiana: Art Patronage and Reform in the 17th Century Milan*, by Pamela M. Jones, *Art Bulletin* 77 (June, 1995), 324-329.

CHAPTER 1

NEITHER THIS NOR THAT: DAVID COX'S HYBRIDIZED APPROACH TO LANDSCAPE PAINTING

Introduction

By the time Cox was born in 1783, landscape painting was an established genre in Great Britain. It was the subject of theoretical debate amongst artists, critics, and the art consuming public. Cox was, to be sure, both aware of and through his artistic output, a participant in that debate.

The great question that dominated this theoretical debate revolved around the conventional, conservative propositions of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the upstart pronouncements of the Reverend William Gilpin and his insistence on the application of the Picturesque aesthetic in the representation of landscape. Reynolds advocated for the ideal or classical landscape; Gilpin rejected the ideal for the Picturesque.¹ The debate, however, was not a simple “black or white” value choice, as we will examine in this chapter. Lost in this debate was the very English tradition of the topographical depiction of landscape, that is, the notion of faithfulness in composition to the observed arrangement of landscape features.² Contrary to oft-expressed criticism that he advocated a slavish adherence to copying the idealized landscaping of the Old Masters, Reynolds also advocated the study of nature, albeit within limits. Conversely, contrary to the repeated observation that Gilpin manipulated topographical landscape features to fit a picturesque formula at the expense of observed nature, Gilpin’s advocacy of “roughness,” particularly expressed in brushstrokes, enabled landscape painters like Cox to further a naturalism that was created with a close observation of nature *and* topography.

Cox’s *Windy Day – Moor Landscape* illustrates his hybrid approach to landscape painting (1854; Fig. 1.1).³ There is nothing recognizable in this composition that identifies with the ideal

landscape, save perhaps the repoussoir trees on the right. There is little of the Picturesque manipulation of landscape elements to achieve a “pleasing effect,” save perhaps the very loose brushstroke with a roughness which on close examination eliminates all evidence of outline. Yet the image is instantly recognizable as depicting wind, a setting sun, and two travelers struggling to keep their balance as they venture into moorland against the blowing wind. If one considers *Windy Day – Moor Landscape* in the context of Reynolds and Gilpin in the discussion that follows, one can readily conclude it is a departure from both landscape traditions, but with vestigial references to each.

Windy Day – Moor Landscape is signed “David Cox” and dated 1854. In a much earlier landscape, *Storm on the Coast near Hastings*, painted in 1813, Cox abandoned any reference to earlier models and executed a wholly atmospheric composition (Fig. 1.2).⁴ The only narrative component is pushed to the margins. There are ships in distress off the coast, overwhelmed by storm waves, and a barely discernible multitude has gathered on a cliff edge to witness the impending shipwreck. Ideal landscape formulas are absent; picturesque arrangements of the landscape are not evident. The picture is all about a massive cliff, crashing waves, and wind-driven rain. There is no discernable outline to any of the features in the landscape, other than Cox’s use of color in loose brushstrokes to give shape to the objects depicted. How Cox arrives at his approach, and what circumstances informed his choices, are the subject of the next three chapters. However, to understand what makes Cox different, one must first look at what he is different from.

The theoretical debate between Reynolds and Gilpin has heretofore been thought of as pertaining largely to composition and subject matter. I propose to contextualize the landscapes of Cox as occupying hybrid ground, partaking of both Reynolds’s and Gilpin’s advice and

negotiating between the two a position that portrayed truth-in-nature and employed the Picturesque brushstroke. In this chapter, I will set forth those elements of the theoretical debate that confronted Cox and formulate the proposal that Cox's study and copying of both "Old" and contemporary Masters was an essential, foundational step in his development of a naturalistic style of landscape painting. Detailed discussion of a number of Cox's works which were the product of study and copying will be covered in Chapter 2.

An understanding of the persistent influence of Gilpin's picturesque advocacy will be presented in this chapter in my discussion of a satirical illustrated poem popular in the 1820s, *The Tour of Dr. Syntax through London*. The poem's narrative also sheds light on the art exhibition culture in that metropolis at the time of Cox's residence there. Cox was an active participant in the London art scene— and he was no doubt exposed to the multiplicity of works of all the Old and contemporary Masters he studied and copied.

In addition to the two theoreticians, Reynolds and Gilpin, this chapter also considers two important antecedent painters: George Lambert, who I propose to be the first great (and often overlooked) English landscape painter of the eighteenth century, and Richard Wilson, critically (at Lambert's expense) considered the greatest English landscapist of the same century. The reason for doing this is to highlight how different Cox's approach to landscape is when contrasted with his predecessors. I will consider landscape works by Lambert before undertaking a close examination of Wilson as a practitioner of the Picturesque. My intent is to discuss what Cox may have learned from Lambert and Wilson while forging his own vision of landscape paintings.

Sir Joshua Reynolds and the idealized landscape

Reynolds died on February 23, 1792 when Cox was but nine years old. An obituary that appeared in the *General Evening Post* on February 25 of that year noted that

If we are to judge from his discourses, of the sentiments he entertained respecting the great masters, Michelangelo appears to have been the god of his idolatry. His style seemed to swell with the fullness of his mind, when he treats of the grandeur of that artist's conceptions. Raphael the President points to as the model of *perfect outline*, who gives the happiest *contour* to his objects.⁵

Reynolds was the conservative voice of the Royal Academy. His was the academic voice of the recurring debate of "line versus color" that I will examine later. Suffice it at this time to point out Reynolds's advocacy of the "perfect outline" that yields a happy "contour." The artist, art critic, and advocate of "modernity," John Ruskin (1819 – 1900), in the first volume of his monumental work *Modern Painters* published in 1843, expresses an almost direct retort to Reynolds's views when he pronounces that "the mindless copyist studies Raffaele, but not what Raffaele studied."⁶

Reynolds did in fact counsel the observation of nature, but with qualifications. As President of the Royal Academy, he delivered an annual Discourse most years of his tenure. There were fifteen in all, starting in 1768 and concluding in 1790. The *Discourses* laid out for students of the Academy his teachings on artistic theory and art appreciation. In *Discourse II*, he offers the following advice with respect to how a student is to consider the works of the masters:

Comparing now no longer the performances of art with each other, but examining the art itself by the standard of Nature, he corrects what is erroneous, supplies what is scanty, and adds by his own observation [of Nature] what the industry of his predecessors may have yet left wanting to perfection.⁷

This qualified endorsement of the observation of nature is further addressed in *Discourse III*. There, Reynolds cautions students against strict imitation of an Old Master, noting that they

should not preclude themselves “from the abundance and variety of Nature.”⁸ At the same time, however, Reynolds cautions that “I will now add that Nature herself is not to be too closely copied.”⁹

The underlying reason appears to be that Reynolds recognizes that “deformity” exists in nature, and the artist after acquiring a knowledge of nature and its imperfections, should then strive to “correct” those deformities to a perfect state called “ideal Beauty.”¹⁰ Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, published in 1757, anticipates Reynolds’s pronouncements but states that “deformity” (Burke’s term, as well as Reynolds’) “is opposed, not to beauty, but to the complete, common form.”¹¹

Reynolds’s “perfect state of nature” is that which the artist creates by correcting what he observes in nature, to achieve beauty. Burke, however, ultimately appears to reject this notion: his heading of Part III Section IX of his *Enquiry* is titled “Perfection not the Cause of Beauty.” Yet, Burke and Reynolds meet on common ground when Burke identifies “Beauty” with “Smoothness”:

The next property constantly observables in such objects [of Beauty] is Smoothness. A quality so essential to beauty that I do not now recollect anything beautiful that is not smooth.¹²

If roughness is the antithesis of smoothness, one must recall that Reynolds rejected Gilpin’s “picturesque” as the antithesis of the beautiful. Gilpin, as I will discuss in the next section of this Chapter, advocated “roughness” in the depiction of a picturesque landscape.¹³ His advocacy of roughness appears to be a direct response to Burke’s commentary that

In trees and flowers, smooth leaves are beautiful; smooth slopes of earth in gardens; smooth streams in the landscape; For to take any beautiful object, and give it a broken and rugged surface . . . it pleases me no longer.¹⁴

Reynolds would have agreed.

The artist and art critic William Hazlitt (1778-1830) was brutal in his critique of Reynolds's and Burke's dogmatic advice that Beauty is achieved when the artist corrects the "deformities" of nature in the landscape, and achieves smoothness. Hazlitt wrote in 1814 that

We should never have seen that fine landscape of . . . [Rubens] in the Louvre, with a rainbow on one side, the whole face of nature refreshed after the shower . . . if instead of painting what he saw and what he felt to be fine, he had set himself to solve the learned riddle proposed by Sir Joshua, whether accidents of nature should be introduced in landscape since Claude had rejected them.¹⁵

Hazlitt was referring to *Landscape with Rainbow* (c. 1635) then at the Louvre, now on long-term loan to the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes, France (Fig. 1.3). Rubens's landscape, which Hazlitt no doubt saw when he visited Paris and the Louvre in 1802 during the short Peace of Amiens between Britain and France, illustrates a basic tenet of Hazlitt's artistic preferences. Writing in *The Champion*, in 1814, Hazlitt noted that "Nature contains both large and small parts – both masses and details; and the same may be said of the most perfect works of art."¹⁶ In Hazlitt's view, Reynolds's insistence that the "whole of art does not consist in copying nature" is an error, in fact, what he calls "an error on the worst side."¹⁷

Closer to Cox's circle was the artist and poet William Blake (1757-1827), an intimate friend of John Varley, from whom Cox took drawing lessons, and through whom Cox was likely familiar with Blake. Blake had much to say about Reynolds's ideas on nature. He owned the 1798 edition of Reynolds's collected *Discourses*, which he annotated, c.1808, in marginalia.¹⁸ Blake was perhaps even more derisive than Hazlitt in assessing Reynolds. Again, dealing with what Sir Joshua called "deformities" in nature, Reynolds had previously written in *Discourse III*,

There is a rule, obtained out of general nature, to contradict what is to fall into deformity.¹⁹

To which Blake replies in a handwritten comment on the margins,

What is General Nature? is there Such a Thing? What is General knowledge? is there such a Thing? Strictly Speaking All Knowledge is Particular²⁰

Reynolds continued to advise that the artist must

by diligent attention acquire a clear and distinct idea of beauty . . . [and] . . . reduce the varieties of nature to the abstract idea . . .²¹

Blake wrote on the margins, “What Folly.”²²

Reynolds’s dogmatic approach and advocacy of depicting nature in an idealized form in *Discourse III* eventually led to his criticism of fellow academician Richard Wilson. In *Discourse XIV*, Reynolds bemoans the fact that Wilson was guilty of introducing “gods and goddesses,” whom he calls “ideal beings,” into scenes which were “by no means prepared to receive such personages”; the problem there was that Wilson’s “landskips were in reality too near common nature to admit supernatural objects.”²³ Reynolds continued in this *Discourse* to lambast the Dutch School by asserting that when Dutch landscapes attempt to depict “poetry” they “become only an object of laughter.”²⁴ Reynolds’s criticism of what he regards as the “inferior schools” seems to know no bounds. He dismisses Dutch and Flemish landscape paintings “not even excepting those of Rubens” as unfit for poetical subjects.²⁵

Reynolds had been dead for two decades when the young Cox arrived in London at the start of his long artistic career. While Reynolds’s dogmatic “landskip” teachings were still in vogue, and Cox did in fact follow Reynolds’s advice to study the Old Masters (as well as “contemporary masters”), he rapidly evolved his landscape compositions into naturalistic and English works that came to be regarded along with the works of Turner and Constable as the paradigm of modernity. I will discuss Cox’s naturalistic impulse, fashioned from his experience as a theatrical scene painter and executed from direct observation of nature and topography, in more detail in Chapter 3. Before I discuss the particular influence of Cox’s theatrical experience

on his landscapes, I propose to place Cox's naturalism in context with the Picturesque aesthetic of William Gilpin.

William Gilpin and the Picturesque Landscape: painting and garden design

William Gilpin was born in 1724 and died in 1804; beginning in 1748, and continuing for the next five decades, his writings about the Picturesque, provided a counterpoint to Edmund Burke's propositions of the Sublime and the Beautiful.²⁶ Such was his influence on eighteenth-century artistic theory and landscape design that the debate over landscape depictions in art and landscape garden design continued well into the nineteenth century, decades after his death, and Reynolds'. To understand Cox, one must look to Gilpin's tenets and discern which of these informed his work, and which did not.

One of the earliest definitions of the term "picturesque" in the art of painting dates to 1719 in a French text entitled *Reflexions critiques sur la poésie* by the Abbé du Bos:

J'appelle composition pittoresque, l'arrangement des objets qui doivent entrer dans un tableau par rapport à l'effet general du tableau. Une bonne composition pittoresque est celle dont le coup d'oeil fait un grand effet²⁷

The use of the term in English landscape painting, however, was predated by its use in garden and landscape design. It is clear that landscape designers and patrons looked to Old Master landscape paintings and sought to recreate them in the physical landscape of their gardens and parks. The object was to create a vista that recalled a painting.

As I will now discuss, the arrangement (or rearrangement) of landscape elements for effect was, in the eighteenth century, as much an element of picturesque garden design as of landscape painting. Sir John Vanbrugh, the designer of Blenheim Palace wrote to the Duchess of Marlborough in 1709:

I hope I may be forgiven, if I make some faint Application of what I say of Blenheim, to the Small Remains of Ancient Woodstock Manour . . .

That Part of the Park which is Seen from the North Front of the New Building, has Little Variety of Objects Nor dos the Country beyond it Afford any of Value, It therefore Stands in Need of all the helps that can be given, which are only Five; Building, And Plantations[.] These rightly dispos'd will indeed Supply all the wants of Nature in that Place. And the Most Agreeable Disposition is to Mix them: in which this Old Manour gives so happy an Occasion for; that were the enclosure filled with Trees (principally Fine Yews and Hollys) Promiscuously Set to grow up in a Wild Thicket . . . it wou'd make One of the Most Agreeable Objects that the best of Landskip Painters can invent.²⁸

Although he does not use the term “picturesque,” Vanbrugh’s advocacy of the retention of the old ruined manor is compared to the best that “Landskip Painters” can invent, and is wholly consistent with the Abbé du Bos’ admonition to arrange objects in a painting for effect.

Jonathan Richardson, writing in 1722, invokes the motifs of the great landscape painters admired by the Grand Tourists:

Of all the Landskip-Painters Claude Lorrain has the most Beautiful and Pleasing Ideas; the most Rural, and of our own Times . . . So has Nicholas Poussin, and the landskips of the Latter are usually Antique, as is seen by the Buildings, and Figures. Gaspar’s Figures are Such, otherwise he has a Mixture of Nicolas and Claude. Salvator Rosa has generally chosen to represent a sort of wild, and savage Nature; his Style is Great, and Noble; Rubens is pleasant, and loves to enrich his Landskip with certain Accidents of Nature, as Winds, a Rain-Bow, Lightning, etc.²⁹

Another critic, Joseph Addison, contemporaneously anticipates picturesque aesthetics when he notes with regard to landscapes:

We find the Works of Nature still more pleasant, the more they resemble those of Art: For in this case our Pleasure rises from a double Principle; from the Agreeableness of the Objects to the Eye, and from their Similitude to other Objects . . . Hence it is that we take Delight in a Prospect which is well laid out . . . in those accidental Landskips of Trees, Clouds and Cities, that are sometimes found in the Veins of Marble; in a Word, in any thing

that hath such a Variety or Regularity as may seem the Effect of Design in what we call the Works of Change.³⁰

The garden design – landscape painting analogy used by Richardson and Addison was also drawn by garden designer William Shenstone in 1764:

Landskip should contain variety enough to form a picture upon canvas; and this is no bad test, as I think the landskip painter is the gardener's best designer. The eye requires a sort of balance here; but not so as to encroach upon probable nature . . . Ruinated structures appear to derive their power of pleasing, from the irregularity of surface, which is variety; and the latitude they afford the imagination, to conceive an enlargement of their dimensions, or to recollect any events or circumstances appertaining to their pristine grandeur.³¹

I note here that Shenstone in garden design privileges “irregularity of surface,” a proposition not unlike the “roughness” advocated by Gilpin in pictorial execution.

Picturesque beauty is again related to garden design and painting by Thomas Whately, who specifically used the term “picturesque” to define his ideals,

But regularity can never attain to a great share of beauty, and to none of the species called picturesque; . . . That a subject is recommended at least to our notice, and probably to our favour, if it has been distinguished by the pencil of an eminent painter, is indisputable; we are delighted to see those objects in the reality, which we are used to admire in the representation; . . . The greatest beauties of nature will often suggest the remembrance; for it is the business of a landskip painter to select them; and his choice is absolutely unrestrained; he is at liberty to exclude all objects which may hurt the composition; he has the power of combining those which he admits in the most agreeable manner; he can even determine the season of the year, and the hour of the day, to shew his landskip in whatever light he prefers.³²

Understanding the historical interrelationship between landscape design and painting contextualizes Gilpin's development of picturesque landscape painting theory, as I discuss in the next section. It also provides the context for Cox's compositional choices and his preference for the natural over the manipulated landscape.

Gilpin's codification of the Picturesque aesthetic

For Gilpin, picturesque landscape painting starts with an appreciation of the existing topography, which is then altered by the painter to achieve a “pleasing” effect. The picturesque painter alters the depiction of landscape on canvas or paper, just as the garden or landscape designer changes the actual landscape by earth moving or plantings to achieve the Picturesque effect. The concept was understood throughout the eighteenth century, particularly by Richard Wilson, reportedly a learned man of letters, who was surely conversant with writings on Picturesque theory and its tenets.³³ Picturesque aesthetics had been “codified” by William Gilpin in his numerous tracts in the middle to late 1700s. Gilpin had summarized the Picturesque painters' alterations of topography in the interest of “effect” as follows:

With all this magnificence and beauty, it cannot be supposed that every scene which these countries [regions] present is correctly picturesque. In such immense bodies of rough-hewn matter, many irregularities, and even many deformities, must exist, which a practiced eye would wish to correct. Mountains are sometimes crowded – their sides are often bare, when contrast requires them to be wooded . . . By the force of this creative power an intervening hill may be turned aside; and a distance introduced. This ill-shaped mountain may be pared, and formed into a better line. To that, on the opposite side, a lightness may be given by the addition of a higher summit. Upon yond bald declivity, which stretches along the lake, may be reared a forest of noble oak; which thinly scatter'd over the top, will thicken as it descends; and throw its vivid reflections on the water in full luxuriance. The line of water too, which perhaps is straight, the imagination will easily correct. It will bring forward some bold promontory, or open some winding bay. . . It will proceed even to the ornaments of art. On some projecting knoll it will rear the majesty of a ruined castle, whose ivied walls seem a part of the very rock, on which they stand.³⁴

Gilpin, then, has summarized in this passage the various painterly “inventions” to an observed landscape that would render the painting of it “picturesque,” where faithfulness to topography would not. In his *Essay on Picturesque Beauty*, Gilpin first noted that in examining

what he calls the “real object” one finds that “one source of beauty arises from... smoothness or neatness.”³⁵ He acknowledges that this comports with Burke’s notion of beauty (and Reynolds’, I would add). However, Gilpin adds that “roughness forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful and the Picturesque.”³⁶ He also introduces the idea of the less than desirable emotional reaction to works which lack roughness as “recommend[ing] them more to our admiration than our love.”³⁷ Gilpin proposed that the roughness which is a feature of picturesque beauty is the result of a deliberate act of the painter: “in landscape universally the rougher objects are admired, which give the freest scope of execution;”³⁸ By doing so, the artist “conceives the very truth itself [of his subject] concerned in his mode of representing it.”³⁹ I propose that Gilpin is addressing here the brushstroke. The roughness he speaks of is not restricted to the physical condition of the object itself, but rather to its “execution” or “mode of representing it” which is wholly within the control of the artist as he draws or paints. Cox adopts this approach from the earliest time of his artistic endeavors. It is evident in his pencil sketches and in his application of watercolor pigments to the paper. Later in life, he equally applies a free hand to oil painting. His technique will be more fully explored in Chapter 3.

Aside from roughness, Gilpin also addressed a second tenet of picturesque theory, which is composition. He objects to the following in no uncertain terms:

[I]n landscape painting smooth objects would produce no composition at all. In a mountain-scene what composition could arise from the corner of a smooth knoll coming forward on one side, intersected by a smooth knoll on the other, with a smooth plain perhaps in the middle, and a smooth mountain in the distance? The very idea is disgusting.⁴⁰

“Disgusting” is a strong word indeed. To avoid this, Gilpin advised that the painter must introduce variety, contrast, and the “effect of light and shade.”⁴¹ And, he points out that roughness of execution allows for variety in colouring, whereas smooth objects are typically

uniform in their colour.⁴² The effect of light and shade that Gilpin endorses is evident in the landscapes of Cox, again, from the earliest times in his career.⁴³

Reynolds vs. Gilpin

One senses a self-conscious element of rivalry and competition in a remarkable exchange between Gilpin and Reynolds. Before publication of Gilpin's *Essay*, he forwarded a copy of it to Reynolds so as to receive the latter's *imprimatur*, or so he claims.⁴⁴ Reynolds, in his response to Gilpin dated April 19, 1791, dismissed the "picturesque" as applicable to the "inferior" schools:

The works of Michelangelo, Raphael, etc. appear to me to have nothing of it whereas Rubens, and the Venetian painters may almost be said to have nothing else.⁴⁵

Reynolds retorts that "uniformity of colour, and a long continuation of lines" produces "grandeur." And, as if not worthy of further engagement with Gilpin, he adds, "I had an intention of pointing out the passages that particularly struck me, but I was afraid to use my eyes so much."⁴⁶

In contrast to Reynolds's pronouncements in his *Discourses*, Gilpin produced notebooks to illustrate the proper approach to landscape painting. One such example, in the collection of the Gainsborough House Museum in Sudbury, England, contains multiple pairs of landscape drawings, with Gilpin's handwritten instructions on how to change an ordinary composition into an object of picturesque beauty. The notebook is entitled *Remarks, with corresponding Examples, on a few different modes of composition in Landscape*.⁴⁷ In one such example, he compares two drawings, labeled "9" and "10." Drawing number 9 is presumably a topographic composition depicting a ruined church in a flat landscape (c. 1780s; Fig. 1.4). The drawing already exhibits the roughness of brushstrokes which is the first element advocated by Gilpin for picturesque beauty. But Gilpin finds drawing number 9 "disagreeable" because "All ye lines follow each other horizontally; and ye building is carried too far into ye picture." He continues

in his own handwritten notation to discuss the second drawing, number 10: “The composition in No. 10 is greatly improved by giving more variety to ye lines; and bringing ye building more to ye left,” (c. 1780s; Fig. 1.5).

Gilpin in effect takes a topographical composition, places the ruined church on a slope above the approaching figures, frames the left side of the composition with a repoussoir tree, and introduces a high mountain in the distance which is indistinctly (roughly!) depicted with atmospheric perspective by depicting it with lighter shading.

Another Gilpin drawing in the Morgan Library illustrates the elements of picturesque composition (c. 1780s; Fig. 1.6). *Picturesque Landscape with Old Castle* is annotated in Gilpin’s hand on the back of the drawing (c. 1780s; Fig. 1.7). Gilpin sets forth the compositional formula of using trees and bushes to frame the picture and break up the continuity of foreground, middle, and far distance to achieve a pleasing effect. What is striking about the finished composition is the loose brushstroke that creates the roughness advocated by Gilpin. This manipulation of topography for picturesque effect is a basic tenet of picturesque theory of painting, just as much as the Picturesque theory of landscape design in gardens and parks. The landscapes of Cox are for the most part true to topography in composition, but executed with the roughness of brushstroke and surface characteristics advocated by Gilpin. The resulting works are ones that are true to nature and to natural effects, as we shall see in later chapters.

Gilpin’s legacy in popular culture

William Gilpin died in 1804. The picturesque aesthetic did not die with him. William Combe (1742-1823), together with Thomas Rowlandson, (1756-1827) published a series of satirical books on the popular craze for the Picturesque, centered on the adventures (and sometime misadventures) of the fictional character of the “Reverend Dr. Syntax,” a cleric based

on the real Reverend Gilpin. Those books, *The Tour of Dr. Syntax in Search of the Picturesque* (1812), *The Tour of Dr. Syntax in Search of Consolation* (1819), and *The Tour of Dr. Syntax in Search of a Wife* (1821) consisted of poetical narratives by Combe and satirical illustrations by Rowlandson.

Rowlandson's Dr. Syntax was a lanky, white-haired elderly gentleman in drab black clerical garb, and usually carried a walking stick that doubled as a pointer when necessary. He is often depicted with a retinue of admirers or a rapt audience attentively listening to him preach the artistic virtues of the Picturesque. The publication of these satirical works underscores the obvious: the popular craze for the Picturesque and the notoriety of the Rev. Gilpin for years after his death were still very much in evidence in the 1820s, and thus were still the proper subject of satire. It hardly needs to be pointed out that there is no market for satire of matters not present in the public discourse.

Satire of Gilpin and the Picturesque extended beyond the works of Combe and Rowlandson. An anonymous imitator of Combe published *The Tour of Dr. Syntax Through London* in 1820.⁴⁸ The book-length narrative poem was illustrated in the manner of Rowlandson. An examination of this book yields useful information to contextualize Cox's exposure to the metropolis' artistic discourse during his residence there.

The frontispiece of *The Tour of Dr. Syntax Through London* depicts three foppishly dressed sycophants guided by Dr. Syntax in front of a grand sculpture of Britannia sitting with astonished eyes atop a pedestal (1820; Fig. 1.8). London Bridge and the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral loom in the background.

The London of this book is the London of Cox, who lived in the City or its outlying communities from 1804 to 1814 and again from 1827 to 1841. The aesthetic debates over the

Picturesque would, to be sure, have been reflected in the art exhibition culture that existed in the city, and of which Cox freely partook.⁴⁹ The narrative poem tells how Dr. Syntax visits an exhibition – crowded with visitors.

Our happy pair, with hearts elate,
Set out upon their expedition,
To figure at the Exhibition.

Rattled the coach along the Strand,
And reach'd the pillar'd dome so grand,
That rears o'er father Thames's side
Its columns, once of royal pride,
Wonder of art, the house of stone,
Which though its outside black is grown,
Has, like a saint, an inside bright,
All glowing with celestial light;
The light that, seraphic wings,
Mild genius sheds on mortal things,
Teaching, with pencil from the skies,
A thousand beauteous forms to rise,
That hold a most delightful strife,
And give to nature mimic life.

The “Exhibition” referenced in the poem is no doubt the Annual Exhibition of the Royal Academy (“RA”) at Somerset House. The RA occupied Somerset House from 1780 to 1836, located along the Strand, overlooking the River Thames. This is confirmed in the poem, which describes the venue as the “pillar'd dome so grand” reached by “the coach along the Strand,” rearing “o'er Father Thames' side.”⁵⁰ The popular appeal of these exhibitions is highlighted by what happened to Dr. Syntax and his wife when they reach the Royal Academy:

Coaches on coaches crowded on
Along the gate-way's sounding stone,
And our good couple in a crack
Found hundreds pressing at their back.
Ma'am knew not scarcely what to do,
Old soil'd her gown, or tore her shoe,
And others squeez'd her black and blue.

The satirist here is poking gentle fun at the substantial crowds that attended these exhibitions with such enthusiasm and haste that the masses (“hundreds pressing at their back”) tore Mrs. Syntax’s outfit and left her “black and blue.”⁵¹

The RA Exhibitions featured catalogues for sale as noted in the poem: “Buy, though ‘tis dear, a Catalogue ... and then you’ll see who are th’ Exhibitors.”⁵² Catalogue in hand, Dr. Syntax, shown in the illustration accompanying the poem, explains to Mrs. Syntax the merits of a large landscape (1820; Fig. 1.9). The narrator continues:

Our Doctor, mean time, was not dull
To find the grand and beautiful
Courting in painting, as in rhyme,
The picturesque and the sublime.⁵³

This poem, thus provides contextual evidence for the culture of the art exhibition in early nineteenth-century London, Cox’s London: the venues, the crowds, the instructive exhibition catalogues, the popular knowledge of artistic theories. Dr. Syntax is described in the narrative addressing depictions of landscape: “A thousand beauteous forms to rise, that hold a most delightful strife, and give to nature mimic life.”⁵⁴ As to still life painting: “that thus to labor on an onion, cabbage or turnip or a carrot, is what some people may will stare at.”⁵⁵ And as to history painting: “such pictures might be full of spirit, and boast historic truth and merit, but he or she must own, who scans, They’re fit but for republicans.”⁵⁶

The poet even takes a swipe at the English predilection for landscapes inspired by Dutch paintings; he describes pictures at the Exhibition that are

... views, God help us! Sure I am
From the very heart of Rotterdam,
With frippery to turn our brain
And charm us into Dutch again.⁵⁷

The satirical notes are well and good, but the poem ultimately notes the one element of landscape painting that is prevalent in the work of Cox: that the Picturesque in fact is informed by the naturalistic depiction of nature. The poet thus describes,

To nature now we turn our song...
Mistress of all, good Mother Nature, I
Really love thy ev'ry feature.⁵⁸

George Lambert: nascent naturalism

To better understand the antecedents which informed landscape painting in the earliest decades of the nineteenth century, I turn now to a discussion of two of the great and nearly exclusively landscape painters in England of the eighteenth century. Richard Wilson (1713-1782) is well known, the subject of exhibitions and monographs. The other and earlier one is George Lambert (1700-1765), much less known and written about, yet seminal in the development of the naturalistic landscape. Wilson is highly important in the development of landscape painting in England; the discussion that follows seeks to recover Lambert's position as the first to confront the issue of naturalism and create the aesthetic foundation for Cox's art.

In contrast with George Lambert, Richard Wilson is recognized as the artist who firmly established landscape painting as a peculiarly English enterprise. His membership as a founder of the Royal Academy elevated his craft and all but guaranteed that he would be noticed—not only by the public that thronged to the exhibition rooms at the Academy and elsewhere, but also by the artists of the next generation.

While giving Wilson his due, modern scholarship has largely overlooked, if not dismissed, the seminal role played by George Lambert, particularly in emphasizing a naturalism in the depiction of landscape without resorting to the Picturesque manipulations of Wilson, which I will illustrate in the next section of this Chapter.

Lambert was born thirteen years before Wilson, twenty-three years before Reynolds, and twenty-four years before Gilpin. He was an established artist in London when Wilson was still in his youth. One can reasonably conclude that he developed as an artist independent from his junior contemporaries that I have just listed. Also notably, he was dead four years before the chartering of the Royal Academy in 1769, and before the Reynolds/Gilpin theoretical debate.

Robin Simon, writing in the catalogue that accompanied the 2014 Yale exhibition *Richard Wilson and the Transformation of European Landscape Painting*, notes that the “rise of landscape” in Britain really began “in Rome in the 1750s, where Wilson remained until 1757,” after which he returned to England following a six-year sojourn.⁵⁹ He points out that prior to Rome, Wilson was best known as a portrait painter “of some success.” Yet Lambert, in the 1720s, 1730s, and 1740s was painting classical landscape scenes of great sensitivity and naturalistic “effects,” decades before Wilson, as I will illustrate.⁶⁰ Simon largely dismisses Lambert, stating that by 1753, Wilson’s landscapes “display the most profound understanding of tone and aerial perspective... [and] render irrelevant a comparison with works by any earlier British landscape artist.”⁶¹ Of Lambert, Simon says,

The landscapes of George Lambert up to this date [1753], for example despite their ingenious attempts at echoing the effect of Claude Lorrain and their occasional portrayal of specific locations in England, entirely lack Wilson’s understanding of the tone, aerial perspective, color and light.⁶²

In another essay in the exhibition catalogue, Paul Spencer-Longhurst, when praising the panoramic format of a Wilson landscape, calls Wilson’s depiction “highly innovative,” “compared, for the example with Wilson’s contemporaries such as George Lambert. . .”⁶³ Missing in these appraisals of Lambert is any substantive reference to his work as a theatrical

scene painter, and how many of his landscape paintings (as with Cox) are informed by his experience in the theater. I will deal with this directly in Chapter 3.

A somewhat more balanced – although still one-dimensional – view of Lambert was undertaken by David Solkin in the more recent *Art in Britain: 1660-1815*.⁶⁴ Solkin recognizes Lambert’s landscapes as following the formats of Gaspard Dughet, or even Claude Lorrain; but, true to Solkin’s Marxist approach to artistic production, he relates his landscape paintings to the status of Lambert’s patrons and the economy of their estates, what he termed the “well-ordered state” of “leisured cultural consumers and actual agrarian capitalists.”⁶⁵ He, like Simon and Spencer-Longurst, notes that Lambert “throughout his career earned his bread and butter working as a scene painter for the London stage.”⁶⁶ But they all overlook the impact that theatrical scene painting had on landscape picture painting, from Lambert down to Cox.

Three Lambert paintings that predate the landscapes of Wilson show the naturalistic impulse that we will see in later landscapes by Cox: Lambert’s *Capriccio with Classical Sarcophagus*, *Evening Landscape*, and *Landscape with Storm* (1736; Fig. 1.10; 1747; Fig. 1.11; and 1740; Fig. 1.12).⁶⁷

Capriccio with Classical Sarcophagus and Beeston Castle in Figure 1.10 is a large and carefully executed landscape in the classical landscape tradition. It is oil on canvas, and measures 33 by 39 ¼ inches. It is signed in the center foreground “G. Lambert 1736.” Elizabeth Einberg includes it in the catalogue raisonné of Lambert works.⁶⁸ The size suggests an exhibition piece.

The composition is certainly derived from any number of seventeenth-century *Et in Arcadia Ego* paintings, and at least one version by Nicolas Poussin (c. 1638; Fig. 1.13). It certainly evidences Lambert’s awareness of earlier models. But, comparing the present work to

the one by Poussin, one can easily establish deviations from the latter's work. Lambert's work may be derivative, but not imitative.

Poussin's picture places the figures front center, and his depiction of the landscape is but a backdrop to the figural narrative which is the subject of the picture. Three shepherds, in classical garb, are shown a sarcophagus by an elegantly-dressed female guide, where they become aware of the "et in arcadia ego" inscription, signifying that even in Arcadia, there is death.⁶⁹

The composition is static – almost like a sculpted relief. The natural landscape is perfectly still, as well. The foliage is detailed; the tree trunks and branches are idealized. The scene setting is of a perfect world, and Poussin is crafting, by juxtaposition, the jarring notion that even in that perfect world, there will be death.

Lambert, on the other hand, recedes the figures surrounding the classical sarcophagus to a diminished position within the natural landscape. The narrative recedes as well. This is no pastoral Arcadia: the repoussoir tree on the left has a broken stump where the trunk originally bifurcated. There is no repoussoir tree on the right - only the remains of another blasted tree trunk. A ruined castle sits on the hill overlooking the central middle ground water feature. Urban structures lie in the valley beyond.

The narrative of Lambert's painting is at present unknown. The inscription on the sarcophagus is not legible (if it ever was). The three figures surrounding it are dressed differently. One is a shepherd leaning on a staff. A second maybe a monk holding long pole that may be a processional cross or more likely a weapon, perhaps a halberd. A discordant note is sounded by the third figure—a helmeted soldier in armor that is neither standing, nor kneeling,

but rather defenselessly sitting on the ground, and pointing to the inscription on the funeral monument.

A possible reading is that we are looking at a vanquished soldier, whose halberd has been taken from him by the monk figure and who is invoking the image of death through his gesture toward the sarcophagus. The shepherd leaning on his staff possibly represents the audience for this post-Arcadian narrative.

If the ruined castle is indeed Beeston Castle, as has been suggested by Einberg, it is worth noting that the fortification, which dates to the thirteenth century, and was previously the site of a Stone Age fort, was appropriated by King Henry III in that century and remained in royal hands until it was captured and partially demolished by Parliamentary forces during the English Civil War in 1645.⁷⁰ If so, Lambert's subject also appears to be following history painting formulations.

Lambert is working, to be sure, in the tradition of the ideal landscape. The naturalistic impulse in landscape depiction, however, is also clearly evident: the ravages of time and conflict on the ruined castle; the ravages of nature on the trees (the blasted stump and trunk); the changing course of nature (a sensitively-painted rainstorm in the far distance). The naturalism of the scenery is understored by the realism of the depiction of a tree by the water's edge with the true-to-life reflection of the tree on the water.

A second landscape by Lambert shown in Figure 1.11, is included by Einberg in the catalogue raisonné. The work, entitled, *Evening Landscape*, is signed and dated 1747.⁷¹ Another large and carefully executed work, it is oil on canvas and measures 34 ¼ by 40 inches, essentially the same dimensions as *Capriccio with Classical Sarcophagus*. Both pictures are

finished works of substantial size, suitable for the exhibition rooms or a great house, suggesting upper class patronage.

This work departs from both ideal landscape and history painting traditions. A defined naturalistic depiction of landscape is found here: the delicate pink hues of an evening sky, the blasted repoussoir tree trunks as silent witnesses of storms past, a rushing torrent beneath a footbridge. A grouping of figures—a woman, a child, a seated companion—stop for a rest on the road, above a lake on whose shore two shepherds tend their sheep, and a hay-laden wagon ascends from fields in the distant valley on the far ground.

The compositional formula may recall that of the classical or ideal landscape; but this is not “Arcadia,” but rather a contemporary scene with figures dressed in the eighteenth-century rustic outfits. Lambert thus illustrates another tendency that accompanied the naturalistic impulse: namely the rejection of the classical features of the ideal landscape to capture everyday scenery and folk.

Also predating Richard Wilson’s landscapes is the third painting of our discussion, Lambert’s *Landscape with Storm* of 1740 (Fig. 1.12).⁷² This painting measures 33” by 39”, roughly the same exhibition-sized work as the other two Lamberts discussed in detail above. The pictorial elements in this work anticipate the same features in much of Cox’s works: a blasted tree in the foreground, gathering storm clouds, a stiff wind blowing against both trees and figures, rushing waters in a stream at lower left, rays of sunlight through the storm clouds, and a rustic wooden bridge in the far distance.

The date of this painting—1740—predates the landscapes of Wilson; it may be somewhat informed by depictions of stormy classical landscapes by Gaspard Dughet, such as

Landscape: Storm (Fig. 1.14).⁷³ Yet, as we have seen with the three paintings discussed above, Lambert, in his maturity transforms the classical landscape format into depictions of the English countryside, preserving the naturalistic “effects” evident in his earlier work while further anglicizing his subject matter.

A case in point is Lambert’s *Moorland Landscape with Rainstorm* of 1751 (Fig. 1.15). The rain is seen advancing from the far ground to the front rocky promontory, the lit sky beyond the rain, and the windswept figures in the foreground. What we have here is not a classical or ideal landscape, but rather, a very English picture depicting a recognizable English landscape type, the windswept moor. Einberg even speculates that a man-made construction in the middle ground “could be a sheep pen.”⁷⁴ The gallery label for this work, when exhibited at the Tate Britain in 2004, stated:

This painting presents the landscape without the sorts of buildings—palaces or an aristocratic estate—which traditionally featured in such views. Is this evidence of a new appreciation of nature for its own sake? Certainly, landscape became the focus for discussions about the relationship between painting and poetry, and aesthetic ideas such a beauty and the sublime.⁷⁵

Particularly noteworthy in this landscape is the broadness of the moorland made evident by the skillful placement of the foreground promontory and the low horizon. This would seem to be a large picture, yet the vast expanse of the landscape is conveyed in a small painting, indeed, measuring only 12” x 16 5/8”. The small size of this work suggests that it may have had different and perhaps more modest patronage than the large pieces I have discussed here.

The gallery label pointed out that “Lambert’s method was to make a pencil drawing of a location which he worked up in oils later in his studio.”⁷⁶ The point not to be overlooked is that Lambert sketched from nature, as did Cox, and would later work up a finished picture in his studio. Confirmation of the sheep pen suggestion by Einberg is ascertainable: I here present a

modern photograph of an extant sheep pen in the north of England that on close examination corresponds to the depiction in Lambert's picture (Fig. 1.16).

Two other paintings by Lambert illustrate the "Englishness" of his landscapes and nascent naturalism. These are two views of *Box Hill*, in Surrey, England. Each is from a different view point (both 1733; Figs. 1.17 and 1.18). The topographical accuracy of both views is ascertainable from modern photographs (Figs. 1.19 and 1.20). The effects visible in the skies of both paintings are mirrored in the photographs. Lambert here made no attempt to follow a formulaic composition after Claude, or Dughet. Each painting represents a view of the English landscape rendered in a naturalistic style without classicizing figures or nature.

Lambert's *Landscape with Storm* with all of its "effects" of nature anticipates by nearly one hundred years the sobriquet applied to Cox as the painter of "sun, wind and rain." Its relationship to Dughet is also worth noting, as we will see in Chapter 2 where I discuss Cox's copying of a Dughet landscape. The two views of *Box Hill* also reveal Lambert's and Cox's common ground in painting topographical landscapes with naturalistic effects. Lastly, *Moorland Landscape with Rainstorm*, with its small format and anti-picturesque composition, anticipates in every way what I call the hybridized landscapes of Cox.

Richard Wilson: Earth-mover in the Picturesque tradition

To better understand Cox's departure from landscape conventions that preceded him, it will be useful to consider the characteristics of the Picturesque approach in painting as applied by Richard Wilson. I will examine a series of paintings of Caernarvon Castle, Wales, by Wilson, to illustrate that he was a consistent practitioner of the Picturesque. I will assess his variations and deviations from actual topography in the Caernarvon pictures, and show how his compositional dogmatism was reflected in his depictions of the castle at the expense of pictorial

naturalism and topographical accuracy. Wilson's adherence to picturesque theory stands in contrast with the nascent naturalism of Lambert, or for that matter, with the sometime-naturalism in the work of an Old Master that Cox copied, Gaspard Dughet.

Although Richard Wilson is recognized as one of the great British painters of the eighteenth century and has often been called "the father of British landscape," he remained until recently largely ignored in the scholarship of the previous thirty-five years. The only serious attempt at a *catalogue raisonné* remains W.G. Constable's *Richard Wilson* published in 1953, now over half a century old.⁷⁷ In 1982, an exhibition devoted to works by Wilson was organized by the Tate Gallery in London, accompanied by an insightful catalogue by David H. Solkin, *Richard Wilson: The Landscape of Reaction*.⁷⁸ Little was published in the literature of the 1990s about Wilson. More recently, Wilson enjoyed a rediscovery of sorts in a major exhibition at the Yale Center for British Art in 2014, with a comprehensive catalog edited by Robin Simon and Martin Postle.⁷⁹

W.G. Constable and Solkin, then, are the starting points for any inquiry into the art of Richard Wilson. Other articles have focused on Wilson's "Italian period" (1750 – 1757), when the artist resided in Italy and absorbed the classical landscape tradition of Claude Lorrain and Gaspard Dughet.⁸⁰ Art historians have noted that Wilson applied this "Italianate landscape style" to classicize British landscape subjects upon his return to England from Rome in 1757. Much of the scholarly literature has concentrated on such a stylistic analysis, to the exclusion of other influences. But Wilson painted landscapes before his Italian sojourn and certain compositional elements of the Picturesque are common in some of his landscapes before and after Italy. One favorite subject which he painted throughout his career was Caernarvon Castle

in his native Wales. I will focus on these paintings to posit Wilson as a master of the Picturesque aesthetic, namely in the manipulation of landscape topography for picturesque effect.

By examining the various versions of *Caernarvon Castle* which Wilson painted before and after Italy we can assess the artist's application of the theory of the Picturesque as proposed by William Gilpin. While individual paintings have been discussed in the literature, this analysis will present perhaps for the first time all extant paintings of this subject by Wilson examined as a group. This comparative approach will form the basis for my argument that Wilson was absorbing throughout his career the contemporaneous aesthetic cult of the Picturesque and that the various representations of *Caernarvon Castle* are but picturesque variations on a theme. Along the way, I will argue that at least one other "river and castle" Wilson landscape catalogued in Constable's 1953 monograph is a previously misdescribed *Caernarvon*, in much the same way that a *Conway Castle* at the Yale Center for British Art can also be suggested as another variation of *Caernarvon*.

I will illustrate this analysis by comparing Wilson's compositions to the topographical layout of the Caernarvon site, and will look to eighteenth-century textual sources on picturesque aesthetics to shed light on Wilson's manipulations of the landscape for pictorial effects. What will emerge is less of a stylistic analysis of Wilson as a "Grand Style" landscape painter and more of Wilson as a follower of the Picturesque aesthetic. Cox, however, looks not necessarily at Wilson, but at what Wilson was looking at and executes the same with topographical accuracy but with a naturalism made possible by the "roughness" of the Picturesque.

Wilson's picturesque manipulations of Caernarvon Castle

The lack of a workable *catalogue raisonné* of Wilson paintings requires that I organize the various depictions of Caernarvon Castle in table form, for clarity and ease of reference. I

will also assign to them Roman numerals, and refer each entry to Constable’s monograph, Solkin’s monograph, or both, as described in Table 1.

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Literature Source / Title</u>	<u>Size (in.)</u>	<u>Last Reported Location</u>
<i>Caernarvon I</i> ⁸¹ (Fig. 1.21)	1745-50	Constable, Pl. 32a as <i>Caernarvon Castle</i>	25 ½ x 41	Yale C.B.A.
<i>Caernarvon II</i> ⁸² (Fig. 1.22)	(1760s)	Constable, Pl. 32b as <i>Caernarvon Castle</i>	24 x 54	National Museum of Wales, Cardiff
<i>Caernarvon III</i> ⁸³ (Fig. 1.23)	1764-5	Constable, Pl. 30b as <i>Conway Castle</i> Solkin, Cat. 115 as <i>A</i> <i>Summer Evening</i>	23 ¾ x 45 ¾	Yale C.B.A.
<i>Caernarvon IV</i> ⁸⁴ (Fig. 1.24)	1765-6	Solkin, Cat. 118 as <i>Caernarvon Castle</i>	39 x 49 ½	Private Collection
<i>Caernarvon V</i> ⁸⁵ (Fig. 1.25)	(1760s)	Constable Pl. 51a as <i>River and Ruined Castle</i>	39 x 50	Agnew and Sons

Caernarvon I is dated to the decade before Wilson went to Italy (c. 1745-50; Fig. 1.21).⁸⁶ As to *Caernarvon II*, Solkin notes that topographical features such as the three-turreted Eagle Tower, nearby Tut Hill, and the Isle of Anglesey are more or less accurately described, but that “in most other respects his landscape is pure invention.”⁸⁷ The “important lesson” he draws from this is that Wilson “was rarely, if ever, particularly concerned with topographical fact.”⁸⁸ If this is true as to I, it applies equally to the undated *Caernarvon II* in the National Museum of Wales (c. 1760s; Fig. 1.22).⁸⁹

In *Caernarvon III*, Wilson has preserved the rough compositional outlines of I and II, but rendered the castle structure virtually unrecognizable: the Eagle Tower has lost, for example, its

distinctive three turrets, a fact that may have led the painting to be titled *Conway Castle* until Solkin proposed it as another version of Caernarvon (1764-5; Fig. 1.23).⁹⁰

Caernarvon IV is different in viewpoint and topographical description from I-III (1765-6; Fig. 1.24). Solkin notes that the picture “adheres closely to topographical fact.”⁹¹ If this is so, however, I suggest that *Caernarvon V*, which Constable titles *River and Ruined Castle* and has been previously thought of as Dolbadarn Castle, is in fact a variation of *Caernarvon IV* (c. 1760s; Fig. 1.25). Viewpoint and compositional similarities are self-evident, albeit with Wilson distorting the architecture of the castle in a way similar to his rendering of *Caernarvon III*.

It should be obvious at this point that the degree of faithfulness to the topography of the Caernarvon site is an important factor to be considered in “reading” Wilson’s numerous depictions of the subject insofar as alterations of the topography might indicate a picturesque intent. I also note that the historical significance of Caernarvon was an important consideration in Wilson’s choice of subject matter as it pertained to its tourist destination character. I will now review both.

Caernarvon Castle was built by the English king Edward I, commencing in 1283 and continuing until 1327. It was designed to house the seat of English government in Wales and as a royal residence. Edward I’s son and future king, Edward II, was born there in 1284 and was the first English prince to receive the title “Prince of Wales.”⁹² Caernarvon was built on a strategic site, at the mouth of the Seiont River, where it empties into the Strait of Menai which separates Anglesey Island from the mainland of Gwynedd, in northwest Wales.⁹³ The castle itself contains several towers and turrets, the most distinctive being the Eagle Tower, which served as the royal residence. That tower’s three turrets are an appropriate reference point from which to identify divergences from actual topography in pictorial representations of the castle.

There is a town of Caernarvon immediately adjacent to the castle, which can be seen in an engraving by John Boydell dated 1749, *A North West View of Caernarvon Castle* (Fig. 1.26).

Because of its geographically strategic and historically important associations, Caernarvon Castle was thus a natural stopping-place for domestic British tourism in the eighteenth century, and a desirable subject for artists catering to this clientele. Malcolm Andrews reports that between 1730 and 1850, no fewer than 88 views of Caernarvon were published as prints, with the only “strong competition” coming from Tintern Abbey at 79 prints.⁹⁴ It is not surprising, then, that Wilson painted as many as five versions of *Caernarvon* during his active period, before and after going to Italy. It is not surprising that Cox toured and spent much time in Wales during the last six decades of his life. Wales was the domestic equivalent of the European Alps, particularly when the continent was inaccessible to the English during the Napoleonic Wars.

Wilson’s application of Picturesque aesthetics in Caernarvon depictions

From the previous discussion of Gilpin and the Picturesque, one can identify a number of elements of picturesque aesthetics in Wilson’s paintings: Picturesque landscape composition begins with topography, but envisions the arrangement (or rearrangement) of elements to achieve a “pleasing” effect. A pleasing effect is present in elements of nature to the extent that they resemble elements of art (“art resembles life” and “life resembles art”). Elements of landscape can be added or deleted to achieve “balance.” Ruined structures add to the Picturesque quality of a painting by either adding irregularity or variety to the composition, or by recalling the past grandeur of the structure. These elements are at work in every one of Wilson’s depictions of *Caernarvon Castle*.

Caernarvon I and *II* are compositionally similar. They depict a somewhat ruined castle of many turrets across at a pleasant embayment. The horizon line is broken on the right by a prominent hill. The foreground is populated by contemporary characters – an artist sketching and his companion in *I*, a mother with two children in *II*. A scarce view of modest dwellings is visible to the right of the castle, and a number of small watercraft on the shore or in the middle and far distances. A *repoussoir* tree frames the composition on the lower right hand corner of the image. There is no hint of a town in sight.

Boydell's 1749 engraving of Caernarvon is roughly contemporary to Wilson's *Caernarvon I*. Boydell's view, depicting the castle from across the River Seiont, clearly shows the town of Caernarvon and the castle in a good state of preservation. Wilson in all of his depictions (I-V) has omitted the town. This is a topographical alteration that must have been contrived for picturesque effect. This manipulation recalls a later text, the novel *Northanger Abbey*, by Jane Austen, in which the heroine offers social criticism of the Picturesque movement, as has been noted by literary critic Jonathan Wordsworth:

Catherine Morland finds herself in *Northanger Abbey* excluded on a walk with the Tilneys, because they are 'viewing the country with the eyes of persons accustomed to drawing.' Picturesque tourists were assumed always to have their sketchbooks, always to be 'taking' views. Because they drew, they could be addressed as practitioners. Tilney (though Catherine doesn't draw) talks to her 'of foregrounds, distances, and second distances; side-screens and perspectives; lights and shades'—so effectively, Austen tells us, 'that when they gained the top of Beechen Cliff, she voluntarily rejected the whole city of Bath, as unworthy to make part of a landscape'⁹⁵

Like Catherine Morland rejecting the city of Bath as a subject of landscape, Wilson has dismissed the town of Caernarvon as unworthy of being in the *Caernarvon Castle* pictures.

The ruined castle, which if we are to believe Boydell's depiction, was not a ruin at the time Wilson painted his landscapes, was another picturesque invention. Again, Gilpin provides the guideposts regarding "picturesque" architecture:

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 the two objects, would hesitate a moment.⁹⁶

Wilson has done precisely what Gilpin would have advised him to "do" to Caernarvon Castle: in *Caernarvon II, III* and *V*, the castle is barely recognizable – so much so that Constable called *III* "Conway Castle" and *V* "River and Ruined Castle."

All five *Caernarvon* depictions show the castle situated on what appears to be a quiescent curved bay, with the Strait of Menai beyond the castle, right below the Isle of Anglesey horizon. A reference to an aerial photograph, however, shows the location of the castle on a river, which flows, more or less perpendicularly to the Strait of Menai and not in a curving way (Fig. 1.27). This again recalls Gilpin's advice that "the line of water, too, which perhaps is straight, the imagination will easily correct . . . open some winding bay" ⁹⁷

The surprising "restoration" of Caernarvon Castle to intact architecture in *Caernarvon IV* is, according to Solkin, probably due to the wishes of Wilson's likely patron, James Bridges, 3rd Marquess of Caernarvon. Solkin notes that the depiction "corresponds to that notion of social perfection which was so important to patrician landowners of eighteenth-century Britain."⁹⁸ That may be so, but the composition nevertheless continues to exhibit picturesque elements, including the mouth of the Seiont River made narrow, an encroaching hill on the left which is in reality not directly across from Eagle Tower, the elevated foreground (again, not topographically correct) and the omission of any hint of Caernarvon town.

I suggest here that the quest for the Picturesque, rather than the preservation of the patrician ideal as suggested by Solkin, is at work in all of Wilson's *Caernarvon* pictures. While Gilpin published his famous tracts late in Wilson's career, as well as after Wilson's death, the aesthetics which Gilpin articulated were developing, if not already in vogue, from early in the eighteenth century. The rise of picturesque tourism also changed the makeup of the market for painted landscapes. Malcolm Andrews has noted that:

The vogue for the Picturesque may have had its origins in a predominantly patrician or squirearchical interest-group (the Grand Tourists, the Landowning commissioners of landscape paintings from Wilson and Lambert); but as the popularity of Picturesque tourism grew so its devotees expanded in social range (barristers, journalists, clergymen [such as Gilpin], shopkeepers, clerks).⁹⁹

If this was indeed the case, considering Wilson's *Caernarvon* pictures gives us an indication of the societal shift noted by Andrews, where the intended audience was more "democratic" and less aristocratic, making Lambert and Wilson key precursors to the next generation of landscape artists, principally the landscape watercolorists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Cox was one of those – but his landscape depictions departed radically from Wilson's.

Much has been said of Wilson as the painter of Italianate classical landscapes. Solkin, for example, describes *Caernarvon I*, a pre-Italy landscape, as "a classical landscape, based upon a compositional formula by seventeenth-century master Gaspard Dughet."¹⁰⁰ Malcolm Warner, describing *Caernarvon I*, states that "although the handling of details is raw and rustic by the standards of his later compositions, the overall design recalls those French painters whose work was the touchstone of classical landscape, Claude Lorrain and Gaspard Dughet."¹⁰¹

I do not mean to overlook the influence of Claude and Gaspard on Wilson – he himself has acknowledged it, noting, as reported by Solkin that he "admired Claude for air" and Gaspard

for “composition.”¹⁰² But the continued emphasis on the “classical” landscape aspects of Wilson’s work while overlooking or downplaying the “picturesque” aspects yields an inaccurate picture and certainly does not set the proper context for the work of Cox. Wilson’s early biographer Wright rejected the so-called Claudian comparison when he wrote in 1824:

Wilson has been called the English Claude; but how unjustly, so totally different their style . . . Claude sometimes painted grand scenes, but without a mind of grandeur; Wilson, on the contrary, could infuse a grandeur into the meanest objects; Claude, when he drew on the bank of his own ideas, was a mere *castrato* in the art . . . Claude was rather the plain and minute *historian of landscape*; Wilson was the *poet*.”¹⁰³

Ironically, Sir Joshua Reynolds called these landscapes unworthy of poetry. Wright also called Wilson the “master of the Picturesque.”¹⁰⁴

Our discussion of the five *Caernarvon Castle* paintings by Richard Wilson is intended to restore a balance between the view of Wilson as an Italianate classical landscapist and Wilson as a master of the Picturesque. I believe the evidence of the texts describing picturesque aesthetics closely matches Wilson's alterations of Caernarvon topography to achieve what the Reverend William Gilpin went on to describe as a “pleasing effect.”

I note one final irony. Late in his career, back in England, Wilson continued to paint scenes of the Italian countryside. One of them, dating to 1770-75, was *A View of Lake Agnano*, near Naples (Fig. 1.28). The composition looks anything but classical, Italianate, Claudian, or Gaspardian. Rather, one could easily mistake it for a painting of the Lake District in Northern England. Here we have nothing less than Wilson “anglicizing” an Italian landscape subject. The composition recalls one of the earliest documented Wilson pre-Italy landscapes, *A View of Dover*, also at Yale (1746-47; Fig. 1.29). After closely inspecting both paintings, I have come to

the conclusion that Wilson came full circle from his earliest beginnings as a landscape painter, when he was much closer to Lambert, to the twilight of his career.

What Wilson began in the anglicizing of landscape compositions, Cox, as I will demonstrate in the chapters that follow, pursued with a consistent vigor. I have now presented the theoretical debate between Reynolds and Gilpin on their preferred depiction of landscape, and have examined the approaches of the two most important practitioners of landscape painting that preceded Cox. Wilson has been near-universally acclaimed as the “first” great English landscape painter. I have undertaken to recover Lambert as the “first” and his work as the equal of Wilson’s.

Conclusion: between the ideal and the Picturesque

In this chapter, I have contextualized Cox’s artistic endeavors beginning in the first decade of the nineteenth century by framing the historical and artistic context into which he came: a vibrant and popularly accessible theoretical debate over the merits of competing approaches to landscape painting. We have seen how the Picturesque aesthetic encompasses two different concepts: that of composition and the not necessarily concurrent “rough” brushstroke.

Cox negotiated a hybrid position between Reynolds and Gilpin, and borrowed from Lambert and Wilson to create something new. This hybrid ground was true to topography and depicted nature as Cox saw it, with all of its effects, deformities, and imperfections. My contextual analysis places us in a better position to gauge Cox’s innovations. It is looseness, roughness, and even abstraction of brushstroke that underlie Cox’s persistent naturalism.

In the next chapter, I will specifically illustrate this paradigm by close examination of works by Cox and his relationship with Old and Contemporary Masters. It would be difficult to fully appreciate the significance of Cox’s achievements without understanding the social context

and artistic precedents from which he emerged on the nineteenth-century scene as one of the artists dubbed a “Modern Painter” by John Ruskin.¹⁰⁵

End Notes To Chapter 1

¹ A good discussion of the elements of the ideal landscape is found in Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape: Annibale Carracci, Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). With respect to the ideal landscape tradition in Great Britain, see David C. Ditner, "Claude and the Ideal Landscape Tradition in Great Britain," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 70, no. 4 (1983): 147-163. A good discussion of the relationship between the ideal landscape and depictions of nature in the work of Nicolas Poussin is found in Keith Christianson and Pierre Rosenberg, *Poussin and Nature: Arcadian Visions* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Arts, 2008). For a thorough discussion of the theory of the Picturesque as advocated by William Gilpin, see Malcolm Andrews, ed. *The Picturesque: Literary Sources and Documents* (East Sussex: Helm Information Ltd., 1994), and Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1989).

² No artist in eighteenth-century England better represents the topographical tradition than Paul Sandby. A comprehensive monograph of the works of this artist is John Bonehill and Stephen Daniels, eds. *Paul Sandby: Picturing Britain* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2009). The essay "Man in the Landscape: The Art of Topography" by Anne Lyles in Andrew Wilton and Anne Lyles, *The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750-1880*, (Munich: Prestel, 1993) provides a good survey of the topographical school in England in the eighteenth century.

³ Agnew's, *English Watercolours and Drawings* (London: Thos. Agnew & Sons Ltd, 1999). The watercolor drawing is illustrated as Figure 67, titled "Travellers by a Signpost on a windy Heath – Evening." It is signed and dated "David Cox 1854." Agnew's is one of the oldest fine art dealers in the United Kingdom. The 1999 catalogue illustrated Agnew's 126th Annual Exhibition. The head of Agnew's British watercolours and drawings department from the early 1980s until 2004 was the late Andrew Wyld (1949-2011). After leaving Agnew's, he founded WS Fine Art in London, and headed that firm until his death. Wyld was personally known to the author of this dissertation. Works from his collection and his gallery inventory were auctioned by Christie's in July, 2012.

⁴ This watercolor drawing is executed in the dark browns and yellow colors that are typical of Cox works of this early period. The atmospheric effects of wind and rain are brilliantly executed as in Cox's later works.

⁵ Joseph Farrington, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1819), 134.

⁶ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Volume 1* (London: George Allen, 1906), 5.

⁷ Robert Wark, ed., *Sir Joshua Reynolds: Discourses on Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 27.

⁸ Wark, 41.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Wark, 44-45.

¹¹ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 93.

¹² Burke, 103.

¹³ The complete text of Reynolds's letter to Gilpin, dated April 19, 1791, and Gilpin's reply of May 2 of that year are in the Appendix to this Dissertation as Document 1. Gilpin published the exchange in *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel and on Sketching Landscape* (London: R. Blamire, 1794).

¹⁴ Burke, 103-104.

¹⁵ Wark, 323-104.

¹⁶ Wark, 327.

¹⁷ Wark, 326.

¹⁸ Wark, 284-319.

¹⁹ Wark, 298.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Wark, 299.

²² Ibid.

²³ Wark, 255.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Wark, 256.

²⁶ Jane Turner, ed. *The Grove Dictionary of Art*, s.v.: "Rev. William Gilpin" (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 2002).

²⁷ "I call picturesque composition the arrangement of objects that ought to be in a painting to create the overall effect of the picture. A good picturesque composition is one where the eye is struck by its grand effect . . ." (Author's translation). The quote is discussed in Andrew Wilton, *Turner and the Sublime* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 47, at note 27.

²⁸ Malcom Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 63-64.

²⁹ Andrews, 67.

³⁰ Andrews, 66.

³¹ Andrews, 79.

³² Andrews, 85.

³³ Adrian Bury, *Richard Wilson R.A.: The Grand Classic* (Leigh-on-Sea, U.K.: F. Lewis Publishers, 1947), 13-4. Bury reports that Wilson received a classical education from his clergyman father, and that he could “quote passages from Horace extempore.”

³⁴ William Gilpin, *Observations on Cumberland and Westmoreland, 1786*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Poole, U.K.: Woodstock Books, 1996), 3-4.

³⁵ William Gilpin, *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape* (London: R. Blamire, 1794), Essay I, 4.

³⁶ Gilpin, Essay I, 6

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Essay I, 17.

³⁹ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 20.

⁴² Ibid., 21.

⁴³ The subject is discussed more extensively in Chapter 3 of this Dissertation.

⁴⁴ Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 34. Gilpin describes his motive and publishes it along with Reynolds’s response, and his own rebuttal.

⁴⁵ Ibid. The letters are reproduced in Appendix 1 to this Dissertation.

⁴⁶ Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 35.

⁴⁷ The author examined this manuscript notebook, courtesy of Hugh Belsey of the Gainsborough House Museum in Sudbury, England. Belsey discusses the images that follow in “Drawings for

the Love of It: For Late Eighteenth Century Amateurs” in Margaret Barlow, et al. eds., *The Melting Touch of Nature* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau University Galleries, 2001), 15-16.

⁴⁸ Imitator of William Combe, *The Tour of Doctor Syntax Through London, or The Pleasures and Miseries of the Metropolis. A Poem* (London: J. Johnston Publisher, 1820). The poem is illustrated by an anonymous artist, imitating the works of Thomas Rowlandson. It is noted to be in the third edition. Published years after Gilpin’s death, it serves to illustrate the continuing public awareness of Gilpin’s theories of the Picturesque.

⁴⁹ *The Tour of Doctor Syntax*, 143-155.

⁵⁰ *The Tour of Doctor Syntax*, 143.

⁵¹ *The Tour of Doctor Syntax*, 144.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *The Tour of Doctor Syntax*, 147.

⁵⁴ *The Tour of Doctor Syntax*, 143.

⁵⁵ *The Tour of Doctor Syntax*, 145.

⁵⁶ *The Tour of Doctor Syntax*, 147.

⁵⁷ *The Tour of Doctor Syntax*, 146.

⁵⁸ *The Tour of Doctor Syntax*, 156. The poem apparently makes reference to a specific landscape by J.M.W. Turner. On page 152, the narrator tells:

Our Madam’s head, to shew her skill,
Went round and round,, just like a mill,
She caught a view of Richmond-hill :*
A spot she oft heard prais’d for beauty,
And which she thought ‘twas now her duty
To see, . . .
To talk of picturesque effect, . . .
With wood and water, country villas,
And winding Thames’s drooping willows.

In a footnote to the poem, the author indicates that Mrs. Syntax was speaking of a work by Turner. He cannot help but suggest improvements to make the painting more picturesque, as he states:

* A noble *indication* of the artist's talent for local nature, which with sweetening and a little more aerial tinting, would most certainly be one of his finest prospects.

⁵⁹ Martin Postle and Robin Simon, *Richard Wilson and the Transformation of European Landscape Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 1-30.

⁶⁰ The best scholarly publication on Lambert is Elizabeth Einberg, "Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of George Lambert," *The Walpole Society* 63 (2001): 111-199. I will discuss specific Lambert landscapes in the pages that follow.

⁶¹ Postle, 8.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Postle, 313.

⁶⁴ David H. Solkin, *Art in Britain: 1660-1815* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 2015)

⁶⁵ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 116.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 115.

⁶⁷ Figure 1.10, Lambert's *Capriccio with Classical Sarcophagus*, is included in the catalog raisonné compiled by Elizabeth Einberg, 138.

Figure 1.11, Lambert's *Evening Landscape*, is also included in the catalog raisonné. Einberg, 156.

⁶⁸ Einberg, 138.

⁶⁹ Christiansen and Rosenberg, *Poussin and Nature*, 83.

⁷⁰ Peter Hough and Laurence Keen, *Beston Castle, Cheshire: A Report on the Excavations 1968-85* (Swindon, U.K.: English Heritage, 1993), 215.

⁷¹ Einberg, 156.

⁷² Einberg, 144.

⁷³ Marie-Nicole Boisclair, *Gaspard Dughet: Sa Vie et Son Oeuvre (1615-1675) 1614-1675* (Paris: Arthena, 1986), 297.

⁷⁴ Einberg, 158.

⁷⁵ www.tate.org.uk, George Lambert, *Moorland Landscape with Rainstorm*.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ W.G. Constable, *Richard Wilson* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953).

⁷⁸ David H. Solkin, *Richard Wilson: The Landscape of Reaction* (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1982).

⁷⁹ Postle, *Richard Wilson*.

⁸⁰ Postle, 1-30.

⁸¹ Constable, 173.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Constable, 170-71.

⁸⁴ Solkin, 223.

⁸⁵ Constable, 184.

⁸⁶ Solkin dates *Caernarvon II* to 1744-45 on the basis of “its close stylistic affinities to *Westminster Bridge Under Construction*, which Solkin illustrates as cat. No. 5. *Caernarvon II* differs from *Caernarvon I* in only very slight details, namely the presence of small boats in the River Seiont, and very slight differences in the foreground figures and boats on the near shore. Stylistically and compositionally, *I* and *II* are difficult to tell apart. I examined *Caernarvon I* at Yale, and found it consistent with Solkin’s description and assessment of *II*, and I concur with the date given for it by Yale. See Malcom Cormack, *A Concise Catalogue of Paintings in the Yale Center for British Art* (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 1985), 250-51.

⁸⁷ Solkin, *Richard Wilson*, 148.

⁸⁸ Solkin, 148. I would note however, that Wilson took topography as the starting point from which he made alternations for the sake of picturesque effects. I would suggest that Wilson was concerned with topographical fact, but not bound by it.

⁸⁹ Solkin, 148-49. Solkin dates the Cardiff version (*Caernarvon III*) to the early 1760s. Compositionally, *I*, *II*, and *III* are very similar, and I would not rule out an earlier date. Constable does not date the picture.

⁹⁰ Solkin, 223. Solkin calls it, “an ideal landscape.” I examined this picture at Yale and found it to be closer in handling of the paint and in compositional structure to *Caernarvon I* than Solkin reports. While I would call *Caernarvon IV* a picturesque variation on a theme, I do not mean to imply that the term “picturesque” is antithetical to the notion of “classical landscape.” The picturesque aesthetic is to this writer actually derivative from the “classical ideal” in a subtle way: the picturesque painter looks for topography that resembles “painting” (i.e., classical

landscape) and then alters its elements to make it “picturesque” (i.e., even more picture-like). My point is that the starting point is nature, not an imaginary construct of landscape.

⁹¹ Solkin, 226. Solkin suggests that Wilson’s close adherence to topographical fact was due to the picture’s patrician patron. I find only the castle architecture to correspond to topographical detail.

⁹² Malcolm Warner and Julia Marciari Alexander, *This Other Eden: Paintings from the Yale Center for British Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 68-69. A thorough discussion of the building of Caernarvon Castle is found at J.G. Edwards, et al., *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Caernarvonshire* (London: HMSO, 1960), 124-50, and at Frances Lynch, *A Guide to Ancient and Historic Wales: Gwynedd* (London: HMSO, 1995), 161-65.

⁹³ Lynch, *Gwynedd*, 163.

⁹⁴ Andrews, 131-32.

⁹⁵ Gilpin, *Observations on Cumberland and Westmoreland, 1786*, 3-4.

⁹⁶ Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 7-8.

⁹⁷ William Gilpin, *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772* (London: R. Blamire, 1786), 120.

⁹⁸ See end note 103, above.

⁹⁹ Malcolm Andrews, ed., *The Picturesque: Literary Sources and Documents* (East Sussex: Helm Information Ltd., 1994), 22.

¹⁰⁰ Solkin, 148.

¹⁰¹ Warner and Alexander, 68.

¹⁰² Solkin, 15.

¹⁰³ T. Wright, *Some Account of the Life of Richard Wilson, Esq. R.A.* (London, 1824), 63-64.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Ruskin, *Volume I*, 5.



Figure 1.1 David Cox, *Windy Day – Moor Landscape*, 1854. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.



Figure 1.2 David Cox, *Storm on the Coast near Hastings*, c. 1813. Watercolor on paper. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, U.K.



Figure 1.3 Peter Paul Rubens, *Landscape with Rainbow*, c. 1635. Oil on canvas. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Valenciennes.



Figure 1.4 William Gilpin, *Landscape with Ruined Church*, c. 1780s. Watercolor on paper. Gainsborough's House Museum, Sudbury, U.K.



Figure 1.5 William Gilpin, *Picturesque Landscape with Ruined Church*, c. 1780s. Watercolor on paper. Gainsborough's House Museum, Sudbury, U.K.



Figure 1.6 William Gilpin, *Picturesque Landscape with Old Castle*, c. 1780s. Watercolor on paper. Morgan Library, New York, New York.

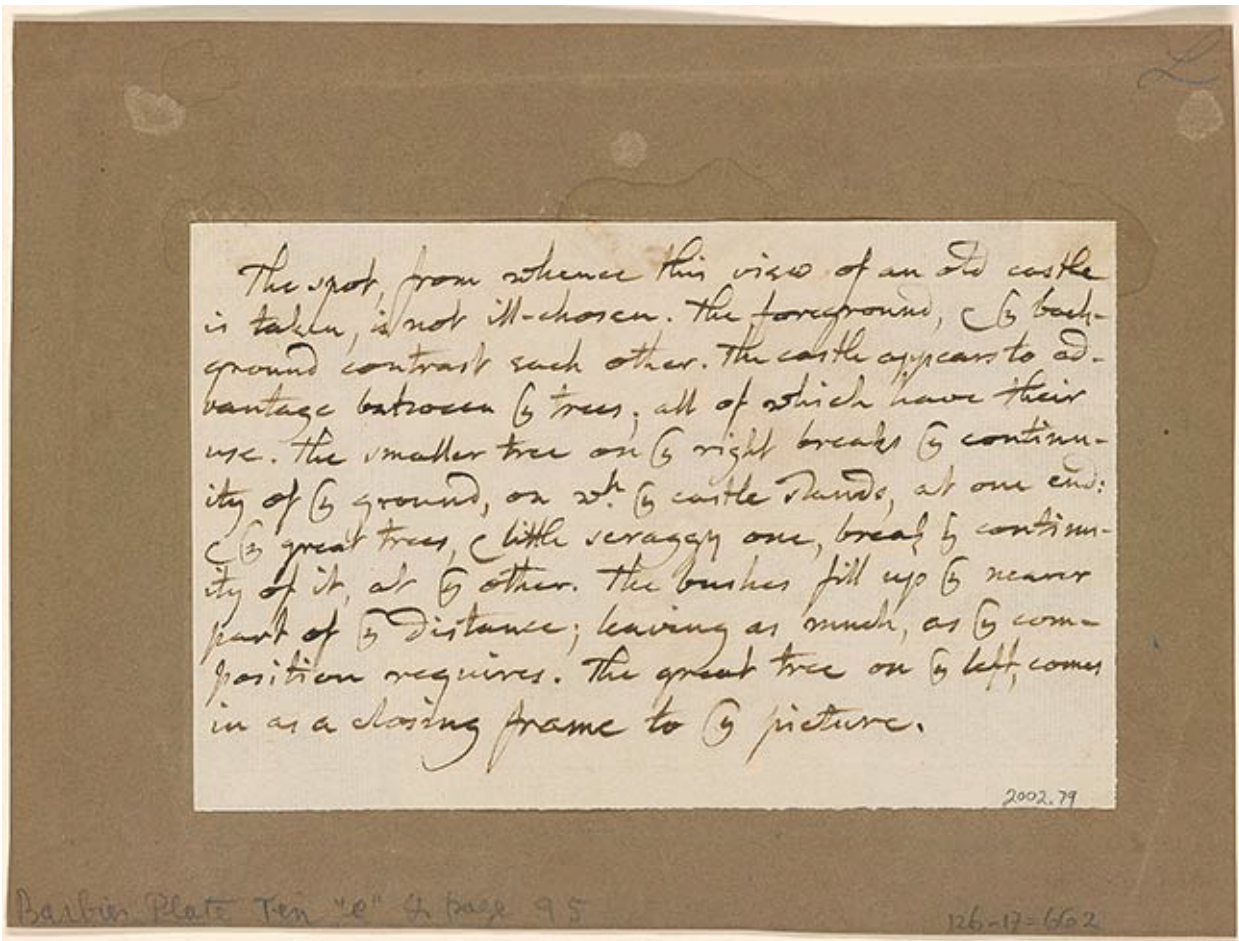


Figure 1.7 William Gilpin, *Notes on Picturesque Landscape with Old Castle*, c. 1780s. Ink on paper. Morgan Library, New York, New York.

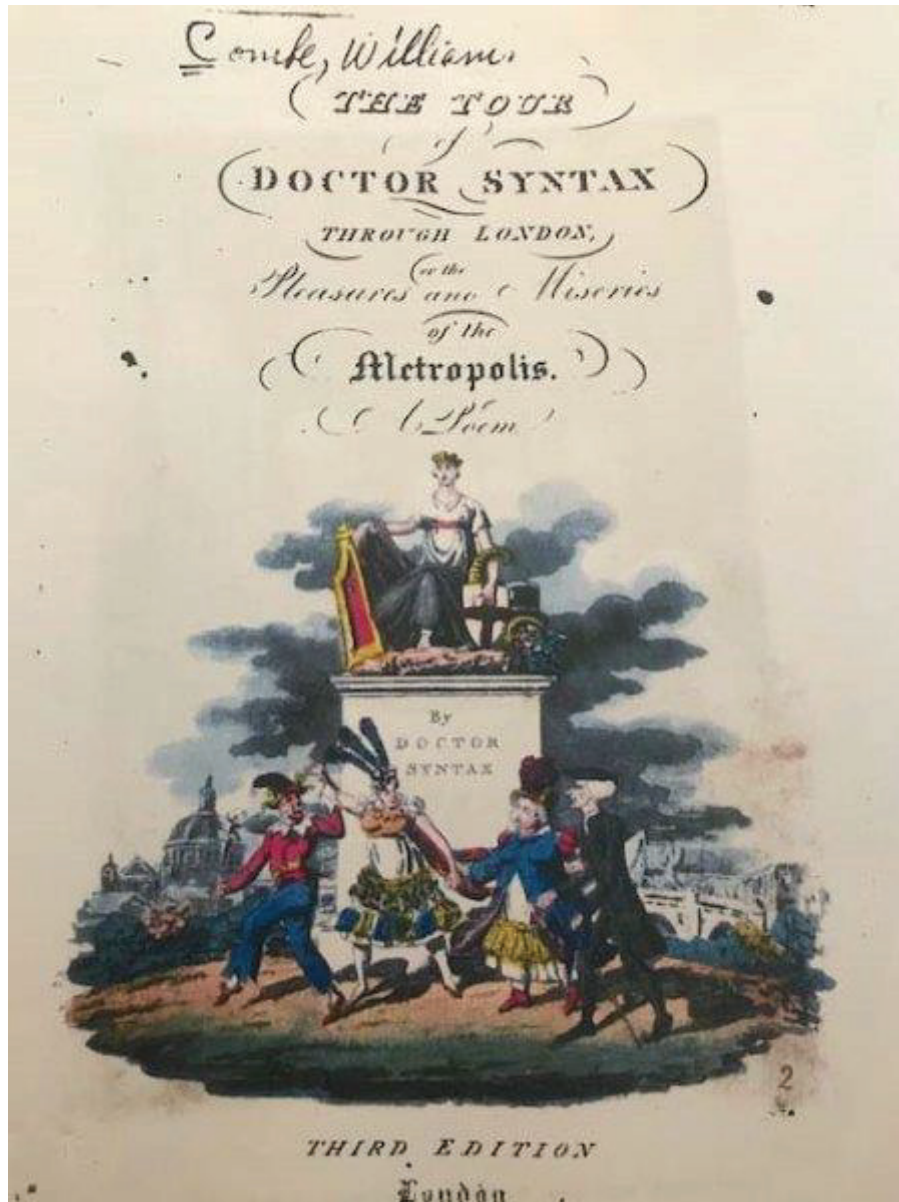


Figure 1.8 Anonymous imitator of William Combe, *Frontispiece of The Tour of Doctor Syntax Through London* (Cheapside, London: J. Johnston Publisher, 1820).



Figure 1.9 Anonymous imitator of William Combe, *The Tour of Doctor Syntax Through London* (Cheapside, London: J. Johnston Publisher, 1820).



Figure 1.10 George Lambert, *Capriccio with Classical Sarcophagus and Beeston Castle*, 1736. Oil on canvas. Private collection.



Figure 1.11 George Lambert, *Evening Landscape*, 1747. Oil on canvas. Private collection.



Figure 1.12 George Lambert, *Landscape with Storm*, 1740. Oil on canvas. Location unknown.



Figure 1.13 Nicolas Poussin, *et in Arcadia Ego*, c. 1638. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 1.14 Gaspard Dughet, *Classical Landscape with Storm*, c. 1660s. Oil on canvas. Hermitage, St. Petersburg.



Figure 1.15 George Lambert, *Moorland Landscape with Rainstorm*, 1751. Oil on canvas. Tate Britain, London.



Figure 1.16 Contemporary photograph of a Sheep Pen, Yorkshire Dales.



Figure 1.17 George Lambert, *A View of Box Hill*, 1733. Oil on canvas. Tate Britain, London.



Figure 1.18 George Lambert, *A View from Box Hill*, 1733. Oil on canvas. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut.



Figure 1.19 Contemporary photograph of Box Hill, Surrey.



Figure 1.20 Contemporary photograph of The View from Box Hill, Surrey.



Figure 1.21 Richard Wilson, *Caernarvon Castle, I*, c. 1745-50. Oil on canvas. Yale center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut.



Figure 1.22 Richard Wilson, *Caernarvon Castle, II*, c. 1760s. Oil on Canvas. National Museum of Art, Cardiff, Wales.



Figure 1.23 Richard Wilson, *Caernarvon Castle, III*, c. 1764-65. Oil on canvas. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut.



Figure 1.24 Richard Wilson, *Caernarvon Castle, IV*, c. 1765-66. Oil on canvas. Private collection.



Figure 1.25 Richard Wilson, *Caernarvon Castle, V*, c. 1760s. Oil on canvas. Location unknown.

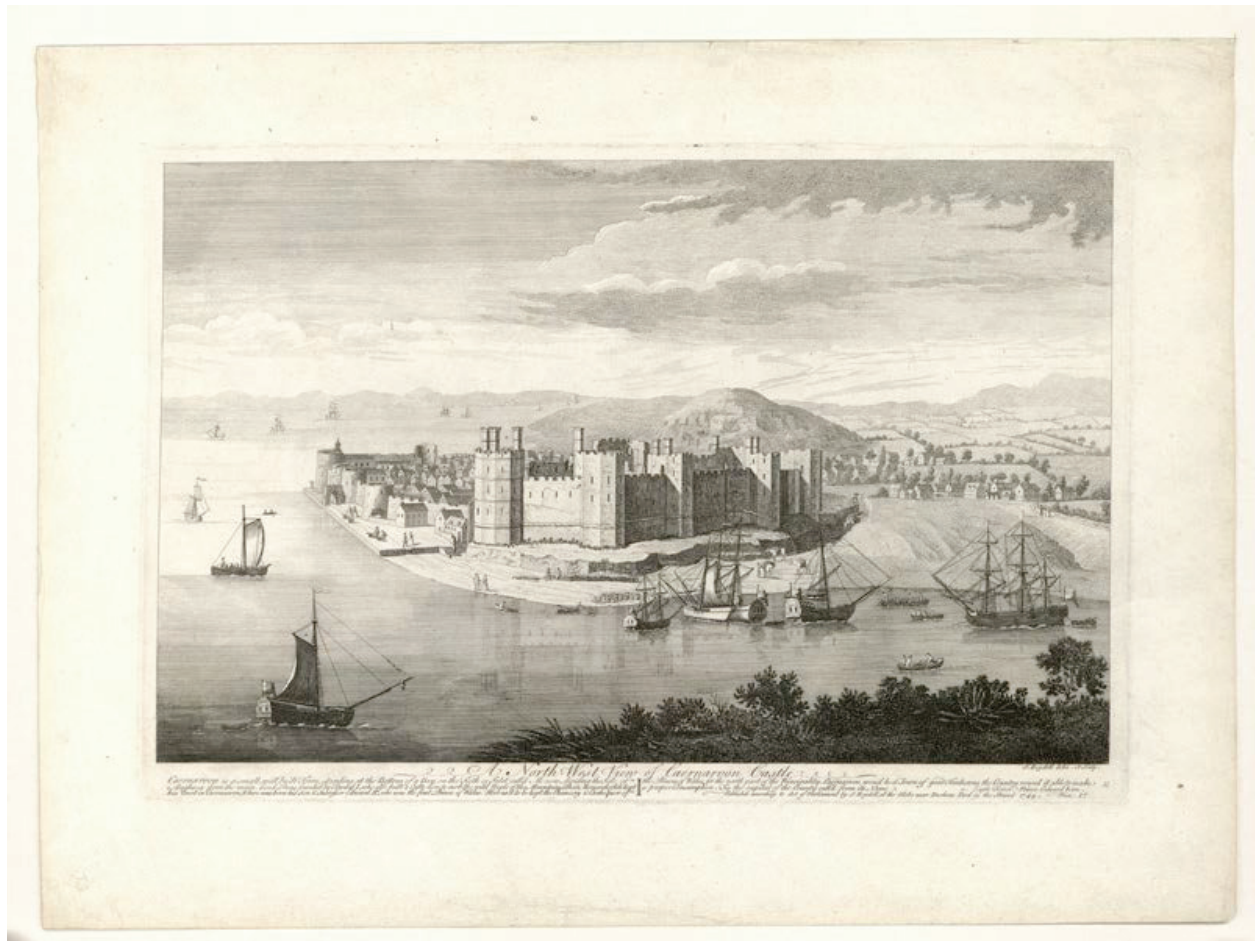


Figure 1.26 John Boydell, *A North West View of Caernarvon Castle*, 1749. Engraving on paper. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Wales.



Figure 1.27 Contemporary photograph, aerial View of Caernarvon Castle.



Figure 1.28 Richard Wilson, *A View of Lake Agnano*, c. 1770-75. Oil on canvas. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut.



Figure 1.29 Richard Wilson, *A View of Dover*, c. 1746-47. Oil on canvas. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut.

CHAPTER 2

COPYING FROM MASTERS OLD AND CONTEMPORARY TO CREATE SOMETHING NEW

English Landscape was invented by gardeners imitating foreign painters who were evoking classical authors. The whole thing was brought home in the luggage from the Grand Tour. Here, look – Capability Brown doing Claude, who was doing Virgil. Arcadia! And here, ... untamed nature in the style of Salvator Rosa.

Tom Stoppard, *Arcadia*

Introduction

In Chapter 1 I touched on the relationship between garden design and the works of the Old Masters, particularly in landscape painting. In his play *Arcadia*, Tom Stoppard forcefully acknowledges this relationship, and links it to the collecting habits of Englishmen on the Grand Tour. Although Italy was the principal destination of the English Grand Tourists, and the Old Master landscapes produced there (so-called “Italianate” pictures) were brought back to England and absorbed in the areas of painting and gardening, other influences existed. Other landscape painting traditions, particularly from France and the Low Countries, also informed the English taste.

John Dixon Hunt has commented that with regard to garden design “English virtuosi . . . would know a range of Dutch and Flemish landscape images.”¹ He further noted that the English word “landscape,” or as earlier spelled “landskip,” was in fact an “Englished” version of the Dutch word “landschaps,” a term that went beyond the meaning of the subject (the land itself) to encompass “a description or depiction of the land.”² English collectors in the eighteenth century imported and amassed great numbers of Dutch landscapes, in addition to works purchased on the Grand Tour, particularly in Italy.³

In England, garden patrons and designers imitated the painted continental landscapes brought into the country. Artists studied and copied them. George Lambert for example copied in 1745 Nicolas Poussin's *Diogenes Throwing Away his Bowl* (1647), the former presently in the collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2). He also painted *Classical Landscape with the Temple of the Sybil* after a similar composition by Claude, *Landscape with the Father of Psyche Sacrificing to Apollo* (c. 1750s; Fig. 2.3 and c. 1660s; Fig. 2.4).

When Cox arrived in London in 1804, the metropolis was the center of artistic production – and consumption – in all of England. The Royal Academy had been established for forty years. Artists worked from studios that were scattered throughout the city and picture dealers sold their wares to a public eager to collect and display their acquisitions. Private collections were also made available for public viewing.⁴ Additionally, public venues, such as the British Institution and the Dulwich Picture Gallery, provided opportunities to appreciate and copy the works of Old Masters as well as contemporary artists.⁵ My task here is to examine how the landscape paintings of Dutch and Italianate Old Masters informed the landscape depictions of Cox and others, and how Cox transformed those influences into his very English naturalistic landscape imagery.

Young Cox was without doubt attuned to the ongoing theoretical discussions of art, particularly in the depiction of landscape. I reviewed in Chapter 1 the great debate between Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Reverend William Gilpin: whether to copy the Old Masters and thereby create an ideal landscape, or to observe and paint from nature, with all its imperfections and “accidents” truthfully depicted, albeit with intentional manipulations to render the landscape “picturesque.”

Cox engaged with both theoretical approaches. Biographer Neil Solly reports that as early as 1804, Cox painted “directly from nature” and sold his drawings “at very low prices” through London picture dealers.⁶ At the same time, Cox also took Reynolds’s advice and keenly studied and copied the Old Masters, particularly for composition. It was a practice he continued throughout most of his adult life. He was also in dialogue with contemporary artists, such as Turner and John Sell Cotman, and copied their works even as he developed his own artistic style and compositions.

In this chapter I will examine Cox’s practice of copying works by both Old and Contemporary Masters. My goal is to illustrate that in copying the works of others, Cox made choices that took him away from the mere reproduction of images towards a naturalistic transformation of the landscape. I will first set the context for this practice by reviewing the artistic influences of both the continental Grand Tour and the advent of domestic touring in England and Wales.⁷ In executing these transformations, he produced a body of work that satisfied a market demand for landscape paintings. This demand was served by the availability of reproductive landscape prints of works by both Old and Contemporary Masters. Cox was a participant in the emerging print culture, both as a consumer and a progenitor.

Rome, the grand tour and the old masters

The election in 1740 of Benedict XIV Lambertini to the papacy had a considerable impact on the Grand Tour – particularly as to British travelers. Previous popes had supported the claims of the Stuart line to the throne of England, and Rome and the Papal States were not hospitable to British travelers aligned with the Hanoverian monarchy. Benedict XIV started a process of rapprochement with Britain, which, as reported by Christopher Johns, intensified after the defeat of the Jacobites at the Battle of Culloden in 1746.⁸ Richard Wilson, as mentioned

previously, traveled to Rome and settled there for the better part of the 1750s. Benedict was a man of letters, who corresponded with the major figures of the Enlightenment. Horace Walpole once characterized him as “a censor without severity, a monarch without favorites and a pope without a nephew, a man whom neither wit nor power could spoil.”⁹

Given a receptive climate, many other British painters traveled to Rome in the mid-eighteenth century, including Alexander Cozens, Jonathan Skelton, Thomas Patch, Joshua Reynolds and Allan Ramsay, where, like Wilson, they became acquainted firsthand with the Roman Campagna and the remains of classical antiquity, which had been the favoured subjects of Italianate classicists such as Claude Lorrain and Gaspard Dughet.¹⁰

Mary Woodall has noted that Italy was the “natural venue of English collectors” in the eighteenth century. While on the Grand Tour,

they formed their taste by studying classical sculpture and architecture, and in memory of their visits they bought landscapes by Claude le Lorrain, Gaspard Poussin and Salvator Rosa, hoping to bring Italian light to the walls of the great country houses which they built on classical lines.¹¹

But, as Woodall also notes, critics such as Horace Walpole bemoaned the lack of British painters choosing British landscape subjects: “in a country so profusely beautiful with the amenities of nature we had produced so few good painters of landscapes.” Walpole blamed this dearth of British landscapes on the demand for Italianate compositions, which he maintained resulted in the neglect of “our verdant lawns, rich vales, fields of haycocks and hopgrounds.”¹² Wilson, of course, catered to the demands of the Grand Tour market in producing Italianate classical landscapes while in Rome. Upon his return to England, however, he again began to paint British landscape subjects, albeit in the “Italianate” style.

In the early nineteenth century, as discussed above young artists had access to the works of the Old Masters through the frequent exhibitions at London venues such as the Royal Academy and the British Institution and at private collections. Prior to coming to the Dulwich Picture Gallery, the Bourgeois collection was open to the public by appointment.¹³ In the archives of the Dulwich Picture Gallery, for example, there is a remarkable hand-written illustrated catalogue of the Bourgeois collection. These works formed the bulk of a bequest to that Gallery, the first public art museum in Great Britain. Before going to Dulwich, the collection was available for public viewing by appointment at the Bourgeois mansion on Charlotte Street in London.¹⁴ Figure 2.5 illustrates how the Old Master paintings were hung for viewing c. 1813; additional pages from the catalogue are included in Appendix 2 of this dissertation. The appetite for Old Master landscapes was also satisfied by the wide availability of reproductive prints.

Reproductive prints after old masters: Cox and Dughet

A vibrant market existed for reproductive prints. These could be acquired and carefully studied by collectors and artists alike. Solly records that shortly after moving to London, Cox acquired a volume of etchings after Old Master paintings known as *Pond's Etchings*.¹⁵ Cox evidently studied these etchings for composition, light and shade.¹⁶ The etchings were derived from paintings in English collections by Gaspard Dughet, Salvator Rosa, and Claude Lorraine; they were published in the period from 1741 to 1746. Examination of these works sheds light on Cox's compositional models from an early artistic age. Later in life, Cox would refer to these even in his artistic maturity.

Forty-four plates comprise the series published by Charles Knapton and Arthur Pond; most of the sheets measure 16 x 22.5 inches, with the engraved plate in each measuring 12 x 15.75 inches.¹⁷ All are exclusively landscapes in the classical or "ideal" landscape manner (c.

1800; Fig. 2.6). Nine of the plates are landscapes after Claude Lorrain. Rembrandt is represented by one plate, showing a broad view of the Dutch landscape with a characteristically low horizon. Giacomo Cortesi (1621-1672) [Jacques Courtois], Filippo Lauri (1623-1694) and Salvator Rosa (1615-1673) are each represented by one plate. Significantly, thirty-one of the plates are after Gaspard Dughet, (1615-1675) [referred to in Pond's edition as Gaspard Poussin].

The publication of these plates underscores a number of obvious points. First, all of the paintings after which the plates were engraved were in English collections, each identified by title and specific owner. Second, all are landscapes. Third, they are all (except for the lone Rembrandt) depictions of classical landscapes by seventeenth-century artists working in Italy.

The compilation of Pond's Etchings establishes a *prima facie* case for the collecting habits in the English art market in the eighteenth century. The paintings in English collections were, to be sure, linked to acquisitions by English travellers on the Grand Tour and to post-Tour market demands back in England.¹⁸

In his book on the Grand Tour, Jeremy Black records a letter from one Lord Nuneham, who wrote to his sister in 1775:

I am in high spirits at the thought of seeing in so short a time, ever since I can remember I have been wishing to go into a country, where my fondness for painting and antiquities will be so indulged, I expect every day a letter from Mr. [George] Knapton with a catalogue of all the finest galleries and his remarks on them, for I intend not only to improve my taste, but my judgment, by the fine originals I expect to see there, I have attempted all sorts of paintings since I left England.¹⁹

George Knapton (1698-1778), who is referenced in Lord Duneham's letter, was an English artist and connoisseur, who was a founding member of the Society of Dilettanti in 1736.²⁰ Also, as a founding member of the Roman Club in London in the early 1720s, Knapton

travelled to Italy at least twice. He was an advisor and cataloguer of a number of aristocratic collections, eventually becoming Surveyor to the King's Pictures in 1765.²¹

Of greater interest to the topic at hand, one must note that George Knapton was the brother of Charles Knapton, the co-publisher of the very *Pond's Etchings* acquired by Cox in 1804. The Knapton brothers thus provide a direct link to the Grand Tour and the foundation of a market in England for Old Master paintings and prints.

Young artists like Cox had multiple avenues of exposure to the works of the Old Masters, including the flourishing production of prints. *Pond's Etchings* was but one of many such publications. Another contemporary compilation of Old Master engravings is worth considering. I refer now to the *Collection of Landscapes, After Original Pictures, By Claude Le Lorrain and Gaspar Poussin* published in 1801 by Alderman and Josiah Boydell, in London.²²

Fifty engravings make up the set. Eleven are by Claude, and thirty-nine are by Dughet. An extant example of this compilation was once in the collection of Princess Marie-Caroline de Bourbon-Sicile, duchesse de Berry.²³ The acquisition of this volume by a prominent member of the French Royal family underscores the artistic value of the work; the princess had a close involvement with artists in England. Her portrait was painted by Thomas Lawrence in 1825. She was also a collector of landscape paintings, including three by Jacob van Ruisdael.²⁴

The Boydell publication, along with *Pond's Etchings*, provides unequivocal affirmation of the *primus inter alia* status of Old Master landscape painters that served as a model for English artists: namely, Gaspard Dughet. A remarkable 31 of the 44 etchings by Pond were after Dughet; an equally remarkable 39 of 50 etchings in Boydell are by Dughet as well.

The works of Dughet, then, are an essential ingredient in understanding the English passion for landscape, the market demands for Old Master landscape paintings, and the

opportunities for their study by a new generation of artists, Cox's generation, in formulating their approach to landscape.

The importance of Dughet, whose work has been virtually overlooked in the literature and in the world of exhibitions in the past half-century, was last recognized in 1971 in the small but significant show at Kenwood House in London entitled, "Gaspard Dughet, called Gaspar Poussin, 1615-1675: A French Landscape Painter in Seventeenth-Century Rome and His Influence on British Art."²⁵ The insightful catalog by Anne French serves a starting point to examine not only Dughet's works (fifty or so in the exhibition) but works by other artists that were looking at Dughet, including Lambert, Wilson, and Gainsborough in the eighteenth century, and Cox's contemporaries like Francis Danby, Cornelius Varley and John Sell Cotman in the nineteenth century.²⁶ Thomas Gainsborough, for example, copied Dughet's *Landscape near Albano* (19 x 26 inches) in a small and very atmospheric drawing measuring 8 ¾ x 11 ¾ inches (c. 1650s; Fig. 2.7 and c. 1760s; Fig. 2.8).

Dughet's influence on Cox was apparently profound. Solly relates the story of the young Cox visiting a picture dealer in Soho shortly after arriving in London in 1804, and copying a landscape by Dughet.²⁷ This exercise and the resulting work illustrate Cox's absorption of Dughet and his subsequent transformation of the same with his characteristic naturalism and Englishness in landscape depictions. Before I closely examine Cox's copying of the Dughet, I will first address one important reason for the demand for domestic landscapes of England and Wales. This aspect of artistic production informed Cox's transformations of the Dughet model he copied into naturalistic depictions of domestic landscapes.

Picturesque tourism in England and Wales

Just as the eighteenth century saw the flourishing of the continental Grand Tour, the domestic tourist industry in Britain enjoyed a comparable development. Jonathan Wordsworth has noted that “picturesque theory” was related to the experience of British painters resident in Rome in the mid-eighteenth century, including Wilson and John Robert Cozens.²⁸ He quotes a letter written by one John Brown in 1753 which suggests that,

the full perfection of Keswick [Derwentwater, in the Lake District of Northern England] consists of three circumstances, beauty, horror and immensity . . . To give you a complete idea of these . . . would require the united powers of Claude, Salvator and Poussin.²⁹

Brown clearly understood the models of these Italianate Old Masters and suggested their approach to landscape should be applied to depictions of the landscape of England.

William Gilpin, who incorporated the ideas of John Brown in his *Lakes Tour* travel guide in 1772, was besides the previously cited books and albums and essays on picturesque art theory, also a prolific author of travel books which “inaugurated the vogue for Picturesque tourism in Britain.”³⁰ As early as 1748, Gilpin anonymously wrote *A Dialogue Upon the Gardens . . . at Stow*, which he had visited earlier in the decade. Gilpin went on to write a series of volumes entitled *Observations, relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty*, which included tour books to the Lake District and to Wales.³¹ Picturesque tourism in Britain created a demand for British landscapes, as much as the Grand Tour fostered the demand for Italianate classical landscapes. These are the two markets Wilson played to when he returned to Britain by 1758.

The Grand Tour facilitated the availability of Old Master models for the emerging school of landscape painting in Britain. Cox availed himself of the opportunity to travel extensively at home, even as he toured on the Continent twice in his life.³² He had a deep and recurring

attraction to the Welsh landscape. From 1806 to near the end of his life in the 1850s, Cox visited Wales nearly every year.

Print culture in early nineteenth-century London certainly extended beyond reproductions after the Old Masters. The demand for English landscape compositions generated a domestic body of work complementing touring guides. One example of this was *The Romantic and Picturesque Scenery of England and Wales*, a volume of coloured plates from drawings by Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg, published in London in 1805.³³

The volume was produced in association with Robert Bowyer, an English painter of miniatures and publisher of prints who founded the “Historic Gallery” in Pall Mall.³⁴ Bowyer’s gallery also became the venue for exhibiting the original works after which his prints were made. Cox surely was acquainted with both the gallery and de Loutherbourg’s volume.

A number of the plates are devoted to picturesque scenery in Wales, including Nant Mill on the road to Beddgelert, Tintern Abbey, Mount Snowdon, Chepstow Castle, Llyn Ogwen, a River Llugwy, Cataract and Conway Castle. We recall that Cox made his first sketching trip to Wales in 1805. Exhibition records reflect that he painted and exhibited pictures of all of these locations.³⁵ We also recall the attraction of Wales to the English, based on its antiquity and “wildness,” discussed in Chapter 1. The plates in de Loutherbourg’s volume are representative, to be sure, of the artistic interest in the landscape scenery of Wales, which as we have discussed, dates back at least to the works of Richard Wilson and to the Picturesque touring advocacy of William Gilpin.

Cox’s lifelong engagement with the landscape of Wales is certainly understood as a consequence of these and other similar popular conceptions. Wales in particular became the destination of would-be Grand Tourists who could not visit Europe during the French Revolution

and the Napoleonic wars.³⁶ Images in De Louthembourg's volume are also suggestive of theatrical scene design, a relationship that will be explored in Chapter 3.

Cox's first reported copying of an old master: Dughet

That Cox made copies after the Old Masters has been noted in the literature.³⁷ The circumstances and artistic consequences of this copying have not been fully explored. We turn here to Cox's biographers, and to the first instance of copying reported by Cox biographers and acknowledged scholars.

In his biography of Cox, Neil Solly relates that Cox started making drawings for sale at London dealers shortly after moving to London in 1804. One of these dealers was a man named Simpson, who owned a gallery on Greek Street, in Soho. Solly relates the following incident:

Mr. Simpson was pleased with what the young artist brought, but he told him that he thought his art knowledge would be much improved by copying the works of some of the old masters. Cox having replied that he should like nothing better if the opportunity of doing was so offered. Mr. Simpson, who possessed a fine landscape by Gaspar Poussin, gave him permission to make a copy of it, provided he liked to do it in his shop. . . Cox made a very good copy of the oil picture in water-colours. . . It represents classical figures, and a flock of sheep passing by a pool, with old buildings and trees in the distance. The composition is good, and the colour rich but rather dark.³⁸

Simpson's advice to Cox echoed Joshua Reynolds's similar didactic encouragement to copy the Old Masters, discussed in Chapter 1. It is important to note, in context, that Cox was also, as recalled by Solly, "sketching from nature."³⁹

Which Dughet picture he copied, and how that exercise affected his subsequent endeavors, has been explored by present-day scholars, most notably Scott Wilcox in his insightful essay in the catalogue of the 2008 Cox exhibition at the Yale Center of British Art in

New Haven, Connecticut.⁴⁰ I will here examine Wilcox's thesis on this subject, and offer a new and different proposal.

The factual predicates for an examination of Cox copying Dughet can be broken down into these singular and undisputed facts, as related by Solly: (1) Cox copied a Dughet oil painting; (2) his copy was executed in watercolors; (3) the painting included "classical figures;" (4) it included a flock of sheep, (5) passing by a pool; (6) with old buildings (7) and trees in the distance. Solly states that Cox's copy had good composition "and the colour rich but rather dark."

While Wilcox acknowledged that "neither Cox's watercolor nor the Dughet that he copied" have been positively identified, he proposed Cox's *In Windsor Park* as corresponding to the composition of the Dughet copied by Cox (1807; Fig. 2.9).⁴¹ Having settled on *In Windsor Park* as derivative of Cox's copy of Dughet, Wilcox clearly studied Dughet's oeuvre and proposed Dughet's *Landscape with a Shepherd and His Flock*, also known as *Landscape near Albano*, as Cox's model (Fig. 2.7).⁴² The same Dughet had been copied by Gainsborough. There appear to be plausible compositional similarities between that Dughet and Cox's *Windsor Park* watercolor, principally the presence of a shepherd leading a flock of sheep through a wooded landscape. Wilcox also notes that: (1) "Although they [shepherd and flock] are moving in opposite directions, the poses of the shepherds are also quite close"; (2) "The arrangement of trees is likewise similar"; (3) Dughet's landscape offers a "glimpse of a distant mountain."⁴³

These observations are, in this writer's opinion, somewhat strained. I would note the following:

1. The poses of the shepherds are not similar. In the Dughet, the shepherd appears to be waving to two or more lounging bystanders. In the Cox the shepherd is gesturing and pointing the flock forward down the road.
2. Solly noted that the flock of sheep was "passing by a pool." There is no body of water in the Dughet proposed by Wilcox.

3. Solly notes that the Dughet copied by Cox had “old buildings and trees in the distance.” There is only a distant mountain in the distance of the Dughet proposed by Wilcox. There are no man-made structures visible or identifiable in that picture.

I emphasize that Solly specifically notes that Cox copied the Dughet in Simpson’s shop. While there may be compositional elements present in the works discussed by Wilcox, one cannot be said to be a copy, or even variations based on a copy of the other.

A more complete and convincing discussion of Cox’s subsequent variations on a theme, which both Solly and Wilcox discuss, will be achieved if the Dughet that Cox copied can be identified with more certainty. After all, Solly has noted that “The influence of this picture may be traced in some of Cox’s works painted shortly afterwards” and that “Soon after Cox completed his copy of the [Dughet]. . . he made a large drawing, about 16 by 20, in rivalry of that work.”⁴⁴

The drawing “in rivalry” of the Dughet is identified by Solly as a composition depicting Kenilworth Castle, with a flock of sheep and shepherd, discussed below as Figure 2.13. Wilcox discusses this picture in some depth, rejects it, and in my opinion correctly dates and identifies the picture Cox painted in rivalry of the Dughet as the *In Windsor Park* of 1807 (Fig. 2.9).⁴⁵ *In Windsor Park* contains all of the elements described by Solly in the Dughet painting which Cox copied, but not in the Dughet that Wilcox suggests. But if Cox did not copy Wilcox’s proposed model, which Dughet, then?

My search for that answer began in the comprehensive *catalogue raisonné* of Dughet’s works compiled by Marie Boissclair.⁴⁶ It ended, successfully, at the British Museum in London. The extensively illustrated catalogue raisonnée by Boissclair afforded this writer the opportunity to review over dozens of images of paintings by Dughet, and many but not all known prints after Dughet. A visit to the Prints and Drawings Room at the British Museum supplemented the

compilation by Boisclair, so as to study their extensive collection of Old Master prints circulating in London in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One print, at the British Museum, listed by Boisclair (but not illustrated) as “G.185 *Passage avec un Arc Naturel*” was particularly intriguing because it contained all of the elements described by Solly as present in the Dughet copied by Cox.⁴⁷

Print G. 185 indeed contains classical figures including two or more shepherds, a flock of sheep, a pool of water, a man-made structure suggesting a building in ruins, and flanking trees in the distance (Fig. 2.10). The print, engraved by D. Martin in 1766, was, according to Boisclair, given the English title *Ruins of Ancient Bath*. Boisclair notes that it was after a painting in the collection of a Dr. Paul Rety in Montreal, and that it was sold at Christies in London as Lot 87 in an auction on March 20, 1964.⁴⁸ A telephone inquiry to the auction house by this author revealed that the lot was actually withdrawn from the sale and returned to the consignor.⁴⁹ The painting’s whereabouts are presently unknown. A further inquiry revealed that the auction house did not have in its archives from half a century ago an image of the painting. So, assuming a print to be the reverse or mirror image of the painting after which it was engraved, what did the original Dughet work look like?

I loaded the image of the print onto a desktop computer unit, and “flipped it” to reverse the picture. The result is shown in Fig. 2.11. It became immediately clear that an early Cox watercolor of circa 1806 matched the reverse image of the Dughet print exactly. The watercolor, recognized by Cox scholar Stephen Wildman as based on an Old Master print, was exhibited at Brenau University in Gainesville, Georgia in 2001 as *Shepherds and Flock in a Classical Landscape*, Cat. No. 10 (c. 1766; Fig. 2.12).⁵⁰

Boisclair describes the Dughet painting of print G. 185 as measuring 19 x 24.5 inches. The Cox watercolor is roughly 13 1/2 x 15 inches. The colors are muted, and rather dark browns and greens, corresponding to Solly's observation where he notes "and the colour rich but rather dark." What is abundantly clear is that the watercolor is a faithful copy of the original Dughet painting, which is now plausibly identified albeit through the print.

The identification of the copied Dughet work further clarifies Scott Wilcox's analysis of Cox's derivative compositions which "anglicized" the subject and naturalized the classical Dughet landscape: Windsor Castle and Kenilworth Castle.⁵¹ A clear compositional and stylistic progression is now evident: Although the color scheme of the now "lost" Dughet painting is not ascertainable, Cox honed his technique by careful copying of the Old Master. But he did not rest there. It is not to be forgotten that by the time he copied Dughet in Simpson's shop in Greek Street, he was already sketching from nature and selling his drawings in London galleries, include Simpson's. The copying of the Dughet was tempered by Cox's nascent naturalistic impulse derived from a close observation of nature.

A careful examination of the Dughet print reveals an exactitude of line, which presumably was also found in the painting: every leaf and blade of grass, anatomical detail of the sheep, and sharp corners of the building blocks of the man-built ruins is evident. Not so in the Cox derivations. The loose brushstrokes, and the predominance of color over line speak to an early naturalism that is hinted at, but not yet fully expressed in the Dughet copy. Assuming the accuracy of dating of those derivative works proposed by Wilcox, I will now examine the consequence of Cox's copying Old Masters. I will later consider a similar analysis of Cox's copying of Contemporary Masters.

As Wilcox has pointed out, *In Windsor Park* of 1807 predates the “Kenilworth Castle” which Solly identifies in his Cox biography of being derivative from Dughet. Having identified the original Dughet work as “Ruins of Ancient Bath” we can now draw upon the compositional elements of the later Cox works and appreciate how they are directly related to the Dughet composition.

The Cox watercolors in Figs. 2.9 and 2.12, both dated 1806-1807, have a closely observed and depicted flock of sheep proceeding from right to left, down a road toward an architectural feature in the central middle ground. Shepherds tend to the sheep at the front and back of the flock, guiding their charges down the path. Sheep and shepherds pass a pool of water on the right. Dense trees and foliage on the right and left middle ground frame the architecture and guide the eye to the middle vanishing point, as if following the sheep and shepherd.

These compositional elements are substantially in the Dughet painting, but with a difference. While *Ruins of Ancient Bath* is clearly a landscape in the classical/ideal landscape tradition, with shepherds in classical garb and an architectural feature recalling ancient ruins, Cox translates the subsequent scenes to rural England. Two English castles, Windsor and Kenilworth, stand in place of the ruins of an ancient bath. The shepherds are replaced by figures dressed in English country garb. There is greater gradation of light and shadow. The brushstrokes are looser, more abstract. Cox’s sky is soft, with muted washes and clouds formed by the negative space of untinted paper.

The trees and dense vegetation of the middle and far ground are designated as amorphous masses of brown and green, with little attention paid to the details of trunks, and even less to details of leaves. This blending of colours to give shape, rather than careful outline of forms, is Cox’s way of declaring his independence from Reynolds’s dictates. His break with academic

standards recalls an incident involving another artist, William Hazlitt, which matches Cox's approach to copying the Old Masters and deriving compositions therefrom. It confirms the independent agency and choice of technique of Cox.

The impulse to create naturalistic derivations in copying exercises

William Hazlitt (1778 – 1830) was a journalist, artist, and art critic. His criticism of Reynolds and the Royal Academy, as what he called the “hucksters of fine arts” was made clear in an article published in 1816 in *The Examiner*.⁵² When the young Hazlitt went to Paris in 1802 during the so-called Peace of Amiens, he needed a permit to access the Louvre and to copy paintings by the Old Masters in that collection.⁵³ There, he was, in a sense, following the tradition of copying Old Master works, as advocated by Reynolds. But with a difference. Hazlitt obtained the necessary permit by means of a letter of introduction to J.F.L. Merimée, (1757-1836), a French academic artist and professor in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris.⁵⁴

During one occasion, when Hazlitt was at work in the Louvre, Merimée came by and inquired of Hazlitt's opinion of the Old Master French landscape paintings. Duncan Wu, editor of the collected writings of Hazlitt, reports the conversation that ensued that morning in 1802 as follows:

Hazlitt: It [the landscape painting] is too clear.

Merimée: Mais, c'est impossible.

Hazlitt: What I mean is that the various parts of the several objects are painted with too much distinctness across the picture; the leaves of the trees in shadow are as distinct as those in the light, the branches of the trees at a distance as plain as those nearby. Perspective arises in this picture only from the diminution of objects, and there is no interposition of air . . .⁵⁵

And Hazlitt continued,

Look, there: one cannot see the leaves of a tree a mile off.⁵⁶

Wu reports that Merimée “shook his head, despairing of his young friend.”⁵⁷ The young Englishman’s approach corresponded to Cox’s own. Hazlitt’s comments on classical landscapes at the Louvre illustrate that he had the same bias toward naturalism, the same adherence to colour over line, that Cox exhibits in his landscapes derived from copying Dughet. Above all, those comments stand for an advocacy of atmospheric perspective that recreates landscape as the eye sees it in nature.

The binary of compositional imitation but with the naturalistic depiction of what Cox called “effects” (and Reynolds would call “deformities”) was summed up in a posthumous article on Cox written by the art critic of *Blackwood’s Magazine* in 1859:

[Cox’s works are] like the voice, gentle and low, which finds its way where the loud shout or the glaring colour cannot enter. The ear and the eye . . . feel the melting touch of nature.⁵⁸

Cox’s initial exercise of copying Dughet continued to inform his later compositions. The *Kenilworth Castle* of 1830, which Solly mentions in his biography of Cox, preserves the shepherd and flock of sheep of the 1807 versions, as well as the framing masses of trees and the central castle in the far ground (1830; Fig. 2.13 and 1807; Fig. 2.9, respectively). Two later versions of the same composition significantly simplify the scene. *Kenilworth Castle* c. 1857 is a small, 7 ½ X 10 ¾ inch drawing with rapidly sketched pencil and black chalk jagged lines barely suggestive of the masses of trees, architecture, even the two, possibly three figures coming out of the picture towards the viewer (c. 1857; Fig. 2.14).⁵⁹ That rough sketch was typical of Cox’s *plein air* work, rapidly executed on the spot and finished with thin washes of colour later. It seems unlikely, however, that this was in fact an outdoor sketch, if as it appears, it is derivative of the Dughet composition of half a century before. This picture, then is suggestive that the impulsive, sketchy way in which Cox recorded the natural world *en plein air*

was also employed to imbue his “works of the mind” with the same naturalistic effect which he recorded in direct observation. His naturalism, then, has become not an incident of observation, but a deliberate re-creation of nature even when not directly observed. The same “effects” are seen in another late *Kenilworth Castle* of 1857-59, a larger (20 1/8 x 28 5/8 inches) more finished watercolor that again is likely a “work of the mind. (1857-59; Fig. 2.15)”⁶⁰

Cox continued to copy Old Master paintings throughout his life. It is well documented that he copied Nicholas Poussin’s *Landscape with a Man Washing His Feet at a Fountain* of ca. 1648 sometime in the early 1820s (Fig. 2.16).⁶¹ Cox’s copy is instructive in illustrating his transformative naturalism (c. 1820s; Fig. 2.17).⁶² The Poussin is large, 29 1/8 x 39 1/2 inches oil on canvas, but Cox’s watercolor is only 11 3/4 x 15 5/8. Remarkably, Cox achieves a degree of balance, depth and texture by the looseness of brushstroke, gradations of colour, and spatial composition that renders it a naturalistic view into a classical landscape seemingly frozen as in relief sculpture in the original Poussin.

The same transformation of an Old Master is evident in Cox’s copy of Meindert Hobbema’s *The Avenue at Middleharnis*, of 1689 (Fig. 2.18).⁶³ In this case, Cox is copying a Dutch landscape, not an ideal landscape. As with his copy of Poussin discussed above, Cox transforms a large and carefully painted landscape measuring 40 3/4 x 55 1/2 inches into a loose, evanescent and highly atmospheric watercolor measuring only 11 1/8 x 16 1/4 inches (c. 1835; Fig. 2.19).⁶⁴

The Cox version of Hobbema places the viewer in closer contact with the landscape – it is more immediate, and surrounding of the hypothetical position of the viewer. The town on the far-distant horizon is indistinct in the way Hazlitt’s trees a mile away would be seen – not clearly delineated, but melting into the sky where sky meets earth.

There are other previously unreported instances when Cox sought out Old Master paintings for copying. The Trustees of Dulwich College in Dulwich, the village south of London where Cox lived from 1809 until 1814, administer the Dulwich Picture Gallery. This gallery was the first public museum in Britain, which opened towards the end of Cox's residence in Dulwich. The Bourgeois-Desenfans bequest of Old Masters was housed and exhibited here.⁶⁵ It was the practice of the Trustees to make works available to the Royal Academy in London for students to study. They also made specific works available to artists for study and copying.⁶⁶ Records of these instances were kept by the Trustees, and are available to modern scholars for inspection in the Dulwich archives.

On November 10, 1827, Cox visited the Dulwich Picture Gallery and sought and obtained access to the following Old Master painting. The Trustees

Ordered that Mr Cox have permission to copy in watercolours the picture marked in the Bourgeois catalogue as 148 P.Potter
[signed] John Allen, et al.

The entry is shown in Fig. 2.20, dated on the day of Cox's visit.

In another instance, Cox visited Dulwich with William Radcliffe (1783-1855) of Birmingham. Radcliffe was an artist and engraver friend of Cox, who engraved many of Cox's works for publication.⁶⁷ His relationship to Cox is discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation. Cox was a frequent visitor to Radcliffe's home, and Radcliffe was Cox's frequent traveling companion. The archives of the Dulwich Picture Gallery contain the following entries for June 6, 1829, recording a visit by Radcliffe and Cox:

June 6. 1829 Ordered that Mr. W. Radcliffe have permission to copy in watercolours the picture by Murillo marked in the Bourgeois Catalogue No 237.

[signed] John Allen

and also

June 6. 1829 Ordered that Mr. Cox have permission to copy in watercolours the picture by S. Rosa marked in the Bourgeois Catalogue 236.

A photograph of those archival entries is shown in Fig. 2.21, dated on the day of Cox's visit.

The finished copies made by Cox of Paulus Potter and Salvator Rosa are presently unknown. The likely Potter that Cox copied, a part of the Bourgeois bequest, is presently attributed as "After Potter" in the Dulwich collection (c. 1650; Fig. 2.22). It is noteworthy that the picture chosen by Cox to copy depicts cattle, a frequent Cox subject. A drawing by Cox of a bullock, dated to the late 1820s, may in fact have been a sketch after the Potter (Fig. 2.23).⁶⁸ If so, Cox intended to anglicize the scene: instead of the low horizon of the Dutch landscape by Potter, the bullock drawing has the faint outline of a high hill in the distance, surmounted by a crenellated castle (Fig. 2.24, detail). The crenellated structure suggests an English subject, namely Bolsover Castle, as shown in a contemporary photograph of the castle. (Fig. 2.25).

Cox and the copying of contemporary masters: Turner

Cox's compositional exercises were not limited to "Old" Masters. There are other unreported instances of Cox copying "contemporary" masters.

Solly's biography reports that Cox was one of the earliest subscribers to Turner's *Liber Studiorum*, which first appeared in 1805-06.⁶⁹ Cox recalled visiting Turner's gallery room and reading a prospectus of that work which Turner had hung on the walls.⁷⁰ It must be recalled that Cox was a young, struggling artist at that time, and the subscription to the *Liber Studiorum* probably did not come at an affordable price, but subscribe he did. Cox admired Turner, and for years would visit Turner's annual exhibition of his new works.⁷¹ As his friendship with Turner,

who was eight years his senior, grew, the older artist nicknamed younger Cox “Daniel,” in an apparent sign of affection.⁷²

Turner and Cox shared a mutual friend in James De Maria, the Birmingham scene painter, for whom Cox worked before coming to London in 1804. We will discuss De Maria’s relationship with Cox in Chapter 3.⁷³ Cox certainly looked to Turner for inspiration and for copying. Turner was not an “old master” as such, but a master nevertheless, and Cox sought to learn from him, both through the *Liber Studiorum* subscriptions and from the copying of actual works.

Solly, for example, relates that Cox was so taken with Turner’s *A Harvest Dinner, Kingston Bank* that he could think of nothing else for days (1809; Fig. 2.26). Cox is said to have executed a drawing in imitation of Turner’s work; although as Solly points out

The original painting by Turner is quiet in tone, and Cox’s drawing is perhaps rather more sunny.⁷⁴

Cox’s copy is presently unlocated. What we have here is yet another instance of compositional replication but enhanced naturalistic effects, as were seen in earlier copying of works discussed above. The same occurs in another, previously unpublished and unreported work by Cox after Turner. The work in question is Turner’s *Borthwick Castle* of 1818, and Cox’s copy of it (c. 1818; Fig. 2.27 and c. 1819; Fig. 2.28).⁷⁵

Turner’s version bears all the incipient hallmarks of atmosphere that later in his career exploded across the canvas or paper in a blaze of light. The work, a watercolor on paper, is 7 x 10 3/8 inches and is inscribed “Turner” at the lower left corner. The castle is rather brightly lit, as are the distant hills. There are two horses fording the stream in the foreground, one with a rider; another rider has dismounted, with his back to the castle, guiding the lead horse by the reins.

This last individual appears to be dressed in Scottish tartans – the picture, after all, was meant to

be an illustration for publication in *The Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland*, published the next year.⁷⁶

Cox's version is also a watercolor. It is indistinctly inscribed but dated 1819. It measures 6 ¾ x 10 3/8 inches, roughly the same size as Turner's. Cox, however, creates a more dramatic sense of atmosphere. Turner's sky is not quite as stormy. Cox envelops Borthwick Castle in a dark storm cloud with heavy rain behind the building. The castle itself is brightly lit on the right, but, partly in dark shadow, sharply demarcated by a shadow line that runs from the top to the bottom of the castle wall.

The figure on foot is no longer facing the lead horse and rider, but rather has his back to the horses and the viewer, and is seen coming onto the stream bank, heavily laden with a bulky sack, as he makes his way toward the castle. An even more naturalistic touch is evident in the reflections on the water of the horse and man carrying the bulky sac. Cox adds another personal touch, as if to advertise the fact that his work is not an exact copy of Turner's: the colors of the two horses are reversed. Turner's first horse on the right of the picture is white; the second horse is brown. In the Cox picture, the first horse is brown, the second is white.

Cox and the copying of contemporary masters: Cotman

If Cox's copy of Turner's *Borthwick Castle* illustrates compositional replication but enhanced naturalistic effects, there is yet another example where Cox shows himself to be a master in his own right, replicating a complex and detailed composition with such exactitude that it could be mistaken as an original and not a copy. Such is the case involving John Sell Cotman's *The High Street of Alençon* of 1820 (Fig. 2.29).

Cox and John Sell Cotman were fellow members of The Old Watercolour Society, and were friends in London during Cox's second residence in that city.⁷⁷ Solly recounts that on one

occasion, in 1838, Cotman planned to travel with Cox on a sketching trip from London to Birmingham and other points in that vicinity. For reasons not stated, Cotman was not able to go. Cox later moved from London to Harborne, near Birmingham, in 1841.⁷⁸

Cotman is well known for his sketching tours of Normandy, from which he produced images for two volumes of etchings entitled *Architectural Antiquities of Normandy* published in 1822.⁷⁹ In 1820, he painted a highly complex work which was exhibited as *The High Street of Alençon* (*Alençon I*; Fig. 2.29). The painting, watercolor on paper, measures 17 x 23 inches. It shows a complexly lit street in that town in Normandy. Shops rise on the left and on the right, a Gothic church portal on the left, and secular buildings down the street to a central vanishing point. A thin overcast of clouds covers a deep blue sky, with birds in flight around the spires of the church. Townspeople mill around the street, most in the traditional costumes of Normandy. Some are shopkeepers or tradesmen, others obviously customers of the various shops, and yet others disembark from a horse-drawn *diligence*.

There is an outstanding variety of textures represented in the painting: the coarse fabric of the townspeople's costumes, the delicate gothic tracery of the medieval church, the glass window panes, the shop signs, the compacted dirt surface of the street, the deep shadows and sunlit masonry of the building surfaces. The work is a masterpiece of detail, done in the exacting medium of watercolors.

A nearly identical watercolor was published in 1998 as by Cotman (*Alençon II*; c. 1830s; Fig. 2.30).⁸⁰ The work was previously exhibited also as by Cotman at the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, "Coronation Exhibition, No 42," in 1953.⁸¹ Except for a few insignificant differences, it is an exact replica executed with all of the complexities of Fig. 2.28.

There is a previously unremarked passage in Sidney Kitson's *The Life of John Sell Cotman* which is worth mentioning here. Kitson discusses the version at the Birmingham Art Gallery as an authentic autograph original. He calls it a "drawing which arrests attention by reason of its sheer accomplishment."⁸² It is signed and dated.

Kitson reports that there is also an "elaborate study" for *Alençon*, but not a copy, since there are significant differences in the details of the architecture and in the townspeople milling about. Then he adds that "[a] third version, which once belonged to David Cox was sold at Christies earlier than 1937 in London as a work by Cox." Kitson improbably notes that it is unlikely

that Cox would have had the patience or the special aptitude to make a meticulous copy of so complicated a specimen of a colleague's work.⁸³

Kitson speculates, based strictly on the quoted premise, that the work is "most probably" by Cotman or by his son Miles Edmund Cotman, and guesses that it must have been "bought" by Cox when the three artists were living London and were friends.⁸⁴ I disagree. This could hardly be a correct attribution because if by Cotman, he would have likely signed it, as with *Alençon I*; furthermore, the younger Cotman never exhibited his father's aptitude for detail.

Kitson is correct that Fig. 2.28 is a meticulous copy of Fig. 2.27. However, he underestimates Cox's talent and ability. He reports that Cox once owned *Alençon II*. But he fails to mention what Trenchard Cox, the Director of the *Birmingham Art Gallery*, wrote in his 1947 monograph on Cox: that *Alençon I*, the Birmingham original, was once in Cox's possession.⁸⁵ He does not seem to be aware of *Alençon II*, but casually mentions that "the comradeship between Cox and Cotman resulted in mutual admiration of their works" and that Cox copied Cotman's *Blue Afternoon* which is presently housed in the National Museum of Wales.⁸⁶

Cox would hardly have acquired two Cotman *Alençon* watercolors, *I* and *II*. *Alençon II* is too complex a work to be by the younger Miles Edmund Cotman, a moderately talented artist who was not the equal of his father. As I have noted, *Alençon I* is signed; *Alençon II* is not. If Cox admired Cotman enough to copy *Blue Afternoon*, it is reasonably plausible that he also copied *Alençon I* when it was in his possession. The earlier attribution to Cox of *Alençon II* at an earlier sale cannot be dismissed out of hand. More recently, the late Andrew Wyld, who advised Swiss connoisseur Gerald Bauer, opined that the work Bauer had published as by John Sell Cotman (*Alençon II*) was in fact by Cox. Bauer lost interest in the work, and Wyld handled the sale to a subsequent buyer, and attributed it to Cox.⁸⁷ Andrew Wyld, a prominent London dealer and collector, was renowned as an expert on Cox, and authenticated many a Cox during his long career at Agnew's and later at the WS Fine Art gallery in London.⁸⁸ His attribution is more credible than Kitson's dismissal of Cox.

One final note on this attribution: whoever painted *Alençon II* must have had *Alençon I* close at hand to be able to execute such a meticulous copy of such a complex work and have been a painter of great ability. We now know that Cox was such an artist. Why would Cox have executed such a copy as suggested by Andrew Wyld? Perhaps, as Trenchard Cox and Kitson have noted, out of mutual admiration for his friend. Or perhaps, as an exercise in copying to enhance his own skills.

Conclusion: the meaning of copying

In this chapter I have reviewed Cox's practice in studying and copying both Old Masters and the works of contemporary masters, as an exercise in composition and colour. A significant contribution to the literature on Cox is the identification of the Gaspard Dughet painting that was Cox's first reported exercise in copying. This identification had long eluded Cox scholars. We

can now understand how Cox used that original composition to develop his own take on the depiction of the English landscape.

Cox's practice of copying contemporary masters gives evidence to his emphasis on the depiction of atmosphere; this is particularly evident in his copying of works by Turner and Cotman as discussed above. My discussion also suggests a plausible reattribution of a work thought to have been by Cotman which should now be attributed to Cox, namely the *Alençon II* cityscape.

Here we also come full circle to the pronouncements of Sir Joshua Reynolds, one in particular which explains why Cox copied the works of Old and New masters. Reynolds wrote in Discourse VI:

Invention is one of the great marks of genius: but if we consult experience, we shall find it [is] by being conversant with the inventions of others that we learn to invent; as if by reading the thoughts of others we learn to think.⁸⁹

We know that Cox copied Dughet, N. Poussin, Hobbema, Potter, Rosa, and Turner, and at least one other Cotman. In copying these, and possibly others, he validates the originality of his prodigious creation of his own works. He was genius enough to copy. And to invent.

¹ John Dixon Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 14-17.

² Hunt, 14.

³ Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: the Grand Tour in the Eighteenth-Century* (Chalford, U.K.: Sutton Publishing, 2007), 277-302. See also Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

⁴ For example, the Bourgeois/Desenfans collection, prior to its transfer to the Dulwich Picture Gallery, was available for public viewing by appointment, at the mansion on Charlotte Street in London. Appendix 2 to this dissertation illustrates three pages from the catalogue to the collection while on Charlotte Street. See also Michiel Jonker and Ellinoor Bergvelt, *Dutch and Flemish Paintings: Dulwich Picture Gallery* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2016), 11-20.

⁵ Richard Beresford, *Dulwich Picture Gallery: Complete Illustrated Catalogue* (London: Unicorn Press Ltd., 2002). This catalogue contains a concordance of catalogue numbers of the collection when it was hung at the Bourgeois/Desenfans mansion on Charlotte Street and in subsequent hangings at the Dulwich Picture Gallery. With regard to another prominent venue in London, see Thomas Smith, *The Collections of the British Institution* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1860). In particular, this comprehensive volume contains a catalogue of the “summer exhibitions of works of ancient masters, and deceased British artists from 1813-1859,” at pages 139-213.

⁶ N. Neal Solly, *Memoir of the Life of David Cox* (London: Rodart Reproductions, 1973), 15.

⁷ Black, 338-363. Black notes that “the French revolution was to wreck the Grand Tour.”

⁸ Christopher M.S. Johns, “The Entrepôt of Europe: Rome in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Art in Rome in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Edgar Peters Bowron and Joseph J. Rishel (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2000), 26-27.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 556-557. Mary Woodall has noted that in discussing the influence of Claude and Gaspard Poussin on the development of Wilson’s style it is important to remember the contribution made by the Dutch school; “Wilson particularly admired the golden light of Cuypp and like Gainsborough he evidently studies the techniques of such painters as Jacob Ruysdael, particularly the treatment of foliage.” Mary Woodall, *Richard Wilson and his Circle* (London: The Tate Gallery, 1949), 7. Wilson himself acknowledged his admiration for the Flemish Baroque painter Joos Mompert. T. Wright, *Some Account of the Life of Richard Wilson, Esq. R.A.* (London, 1824), 39-45. For a discussion of the Picturesque as a British national style, see Jacques Carré, “Le Pittoresque, Art National Britannique?” *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique*, III, no. 3 (1985): 39-53.

¹¹ Woodall, *Richard Wilson*, 6.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See generally, Jan Piggott, *How a King's Art Collection Came to London: The History of the Dulwich Picture Gallery* (Dulwich: Friends of Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2012); John Ingamells, *Dulwich Picture Gallery* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2008); Francesco Nevola, *Soane's Favourite Subject: The Story of Dulwich Picture Gallery* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2000); Richard Beresford, *Dulwich Picture Gallery: Complete Illustrated Catalogue* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1998).

¹⁴ See Appendix 2 to this dissertation.

¹⁵ Solly, 16.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Charles Knapton and Arthur Pond, *Pond's Etchings*. Engravings on paper. (www.edpollack.finearts.com).

¹⁸ Black, 287-302.

¹⁹ Ibid., 287.

²⁰ *The Grove Dictionary of Art*, s.v.: "George Knapton" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Private collection.

²³ For a biography of the duchesse de Berry, see Vincent Cronin, *The Romantic Way* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1966).

²⁴ Seymour Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael: A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings, Drawings and Etchings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 44, 100, 244.

²⁵ Anne French, *Gaspard Dughet, Gaspard Poussin, 1615-1679: A French Landscape Painter in Seventeenth Century Rome and His Influence on British Art* (London: The Greater London Council, 1980).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Solly, 16.

²⁸ William Gilpin, *Observations on Cumberland and Westmoreland, 1786*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Poole, U.K.: Woodstock Books, 1996), 2-3.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Malcolm Andrews, ed., *The Picturesque: Literary Sources & Documents* (East Sussex: Helm Information Ltd., 1994).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 12-15.

³² Cox made his first visit to Wales in 1805. Solly, 17. In 1826, he made his first trip to the Continent, crossing from Dover to Calais and visiting Holland, Belgium, and France. *Ibid.*, 49. His attachment to the small village of Betws-y-coed is legendary. Solly, 158, 180. He visited Betws until very near his death; his last visit was in 1856 and Cox died in 1859.

³³ Philippe Jacques de Loucherbourg, *The Romantic and Picturesque Scenery of England and Wales* (London, 1805). I have examined the book in a private collection.

³⁴ *The Grove Dictionary of Art*, s.v.: “Robert Bowyer”

³⁵ Solly, Appendix 1, 318-326.

³⁶ Black, 338.

³⁷ Scott Wilcox, ed., *Sun, Wind, and Rain: The Art of David Cox* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 16-20, 30-31.

³⁸ Solly, 15.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Wilcox, 1-67.

⁴¹ Wilcox, 16.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Solly, 16.

⁴⁵ Wilcox, 16-19.

⁴⁶ Marie-Nicole Boisclair, *Gaspard Dughet: Sa Vie et Son Oeuvre: 1614-1675* (Paris: Arthema, 1986).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 366

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Author’s personal inquiries with Christie’s Auction House in London.

⁵⁰ Margaret Barlow et al, eds. *The Melting Touch of Nature* (Gainesville, Georgia: Brenau University Galleries, 2001), 43. This early Cox watercolor was discussed by Stephen Wildman,

(the curator of the 1983 Cox bicentenary exhibition at the Birmingham Museum) in his essay also entitled “The Melting Touch of Nature” in Barlow, 18. The picture was also exhibited at the FSU Museum of Fine Arts, “18th-19th Century Study Exhibition” curated by Aaron de Groft, October 19 – November 17, 2002.

⁵¹ Wilcox, 16-19.

⁵² *The Grove Dictionary of Art*, s.v.: “William Hazlitt”

⁵³ John Grainger, *The Amiens Truce: Britain and Bonaparte, 1801-1803* (Woodbridge, N.J.: Boydell Press, 2004). Duncan Wu describes the visit to Paris in some detail.

⁵⁴ “Jean-Francois-Leonor Merimée” www.merimee.culture.fr.

⁵⁵ Duncan Wu, ed., *William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 80-82.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ *Blackwood’s Magazine*, August 1859, 142, cited in Stephen Wildman “The Melting Touch of Nature: David Cox” in *The Melting Touch of Nature*, eds. Margaret Barlow et al. (Gainesville, GA: Brenau University, 2001), 21.

⁵⁹ Christie’s, *Andrew Wyld: Connoisseur Dealer, Part I* (London: Christie’s, 10 July 2012), 92, Lot 106. This watercolor bears the impeccable provenance of the late Andrew Wyld (see Chapter 1, end note 3). Wyld’s expertise on David Cox was recognized by Scott Wilcox, curator of the 2009 Cox exhibition at the Yale Center for British Art. Wyld vetted the entire Cox collection at the Birmingham Art Gallery for selected inclusions in the Yale catalogue

⁶⁰ Wilcox, 19.

⁶¹ Wilcox, 20.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Wilcox, 30-32.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ingamells, *Dulwich Picture Gallery*.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Solly, 25, 47-48, 59, 66, 82.

⁶⁸ With John Phillips, London, 1987, purchased that year from Andrew Wyld at Agnew’s, London; subsequently in a private collection, New York City to 2007, when sold to another

private collection through Thos. Deans and Company of Florida, London and Edinburgh (now in Atlanta, Georgia, www.thomasdeansfineart.com)

⁶⁹ Solly, 27-29.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Franny Moyle, *Turner: The Extraordinary Life and Momentous Times of J.M.W. Turner* (New York: Penguin Press, 2016), 362-363.

⁷³ Moyle, 26.

⁷⁴ Solly, 28-29.

⁷⁵ Cox's copy of Turner was featured in Andrew Wyld, *100 British Drawings and Watercolours, 19th Nov. – 17th Dec., 2008* (London: WS Fine Art Ltd, 2008) No. 19

⁷⁶ Ian Warrell, ed., *J.M.W. Turner* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007), 102. Turner completed the watercolor in 1818, and its engraving, *The First of the Ten Part Provincial Antiquities*, was completed in 1819. Cox clearly copied Turner's *Borthwick Castle* from the original and not the engraving.

⁷⁷ Sydney D. Kitson, *The Life of John Sell Cotman* (London: Rodart Reproductions, 1982), 275, 296, 310.

⁷⁸ Solly, 87-88.

⁷⁹ Timothy Wilcox, *Cotman in Normandy* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2012).

⁸⁰ Gérald Bauer, *Le Siècle d'or de l'aquarelle anglaise: 1750 – 1850* (Bibliothèque de l'image, 2003), 90. Catalogue No. 110, therein illustrated.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Kitson, 274.

⁸³ Kitson, 275.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Trenchard Cox, *David Cox* (London: Phoenix House Limited, 1947), 86.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Personal communication with Andrew Wyld. The author had many communications with Mr. Wyld in the 15 years prior to his death, and one meeting with him in New York City during Master Drawings week during 2006-2010.

⁸⁸ Susan Sloman, “Andrew Wyld (1949-2011)” in Christie’s, *Andrew Wyld: Connoisseur Dealer, Part I, Tuesday 10 July 2012 at 2:00 p.m.* (London: Christie, Manson & Woods, Ltd., 2012).

⁸⁹ Robert Wark, ed., *Sir Joshua Reynolds: Discourses on Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 98.



Figure 2.1 George Lambert, *Diogenes Throwing Away his Bowl After Poussin*, 1745. Oil on canvas. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 2.2 Nicolas Poussin, *Diogenes Throwing Away his Bowl*, c. 1647. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 2.3 George Lambert, *Classical Landscape with the Temple of Sybil*, c. 1750s. Oil on canvas. Buscot Park, Faringdon, U.K.



Figure 2.4 Claude Lorrain, *Landscape with the Father Psyche Sacrificing to Apollo*, c. 1660s. Oil on canvas. Anglesey Abbey, Cambridgeshire, U.K.

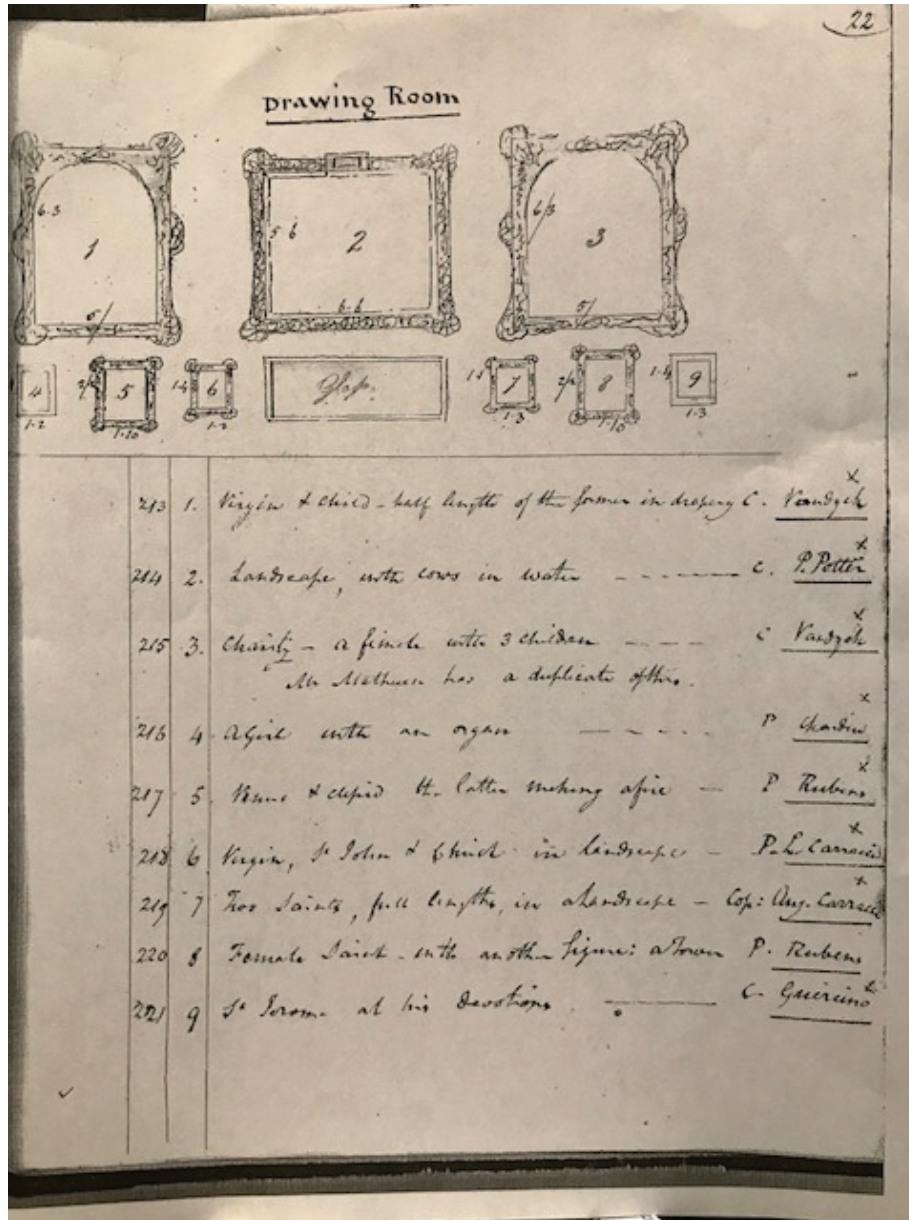


Figure 2.5 Unknown Hand, *Bourgeois Collection Catalogue illustration*, c. 1810. Ink on paper. Dulwich Picture Gallery Archives, Dulwich, U.K.



Figure 2.6 Charles Knapton and Arthur Pond, *Pond's Etchings: Classical Landscape after Gaspard Poussin (Dughet)*, 1741. Engraving on paper. Edward T. Pollack, Portland, Maine.



Figure 2.7 Gaspard Dughet, *Landscape with a Shepherd and His Flock (Landscape near Albano)*, c. 1650s. Oil on canvas. National Gallery, London.



Figure 2.8 Thomas Gainsborough, *Landscape near Albano*, c. 1760s. Graphite pencil on paper. H. Bliss Collection, U.K.



Figure 2.9 David Cox, *In Windsor Park*, c. 1807. Watercolor on paper. Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, Birmingham, U.K.



Figure 2.10 David Martin after Gaspard Dughet, *Print G. 185: Ruins of Ancient Baths*, 1765. Engraving on paper. British Museum, London.



Figure 2.11 David Martin after Gaspard Dughet, Flipped version of *Print G. 185: Ruins of Ancient Baths*, 1765. Engraving on paper. British Museum, London.



Figure 2.12 David Cox, *Shepherds and Flock in a Classical Landscape*, c. 1806. Watercolor on paper. Private Collection.



Figure 2.13 David Cox, *Kenilworth Castle of 1830*, c. 1830. Watercolor on paper. Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, U.K.



Figure 2.14 David Cox, *Kenilworth Castle of 1857*, c. 1857. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.



Figure 2.15 David Cox, *Kenilworth Castle of 1857-59*, c. 1857-59. City Museum and Art Gallery, Worcester, U.K.



Figure 2.16 Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with a Man Washing His Feet*, 1648. Oil on canvas. National Gallery, London.



Figure 2.17 David Cox, *Landscape with a Man Washing His Feet After Poussin*, c. 1820s. Watercolor on paper. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut.



Figure 2.18 Meindert Hobbema, *The Avenue at Middelharnis*, 1689. Oil on canvas. National Gallery, London.



Figure 2.19 David Cox, *The Avenue at Middelharnis After Hobbema*, c. 1835. Watercolor on paper. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut.

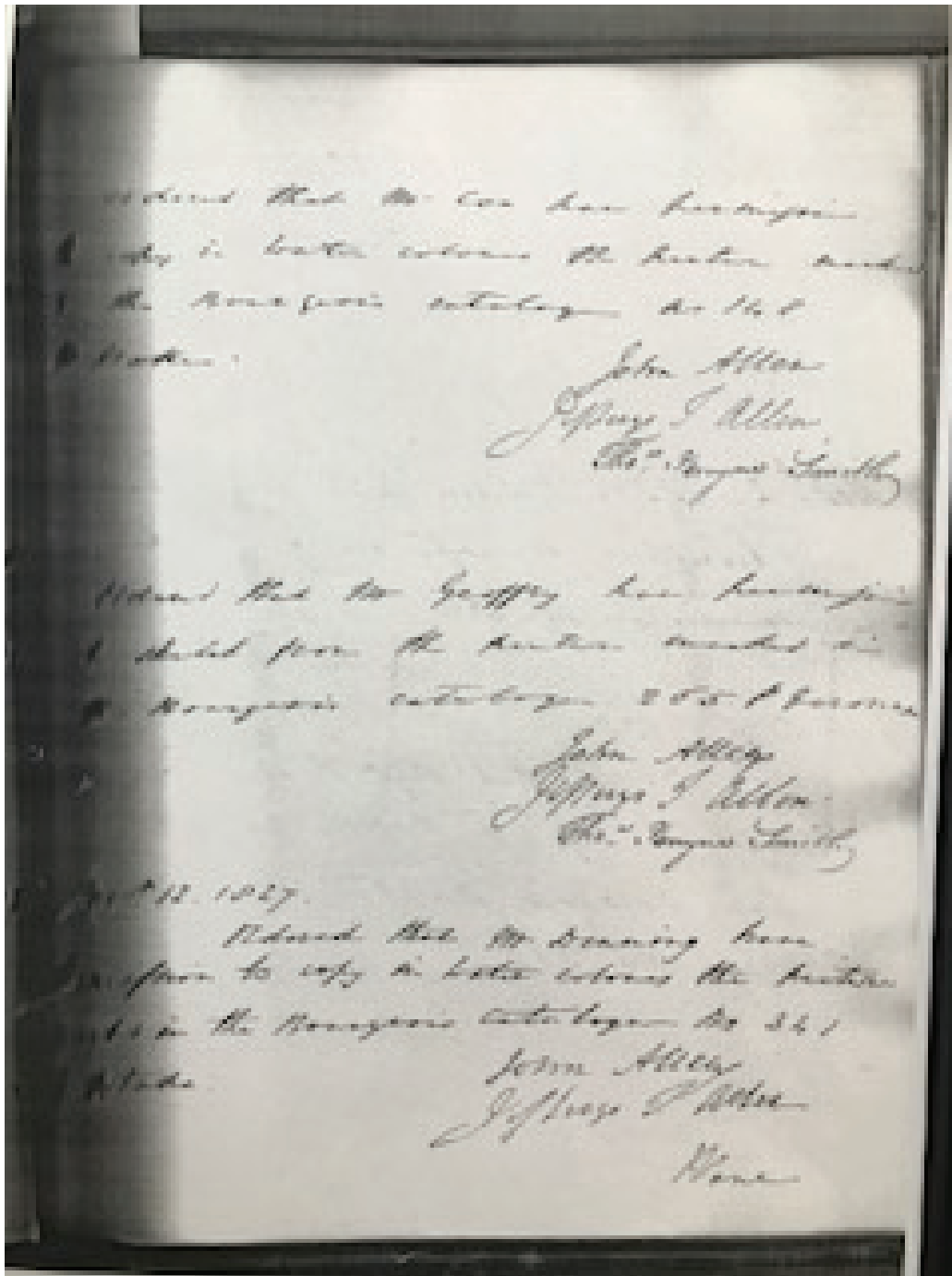


Figure 2.20 Dulwich College Archives, Entry of permission for Cox to copy catalogue item 148; photograph of original document. Dulwich Picture Gallery, Dulwich, U.K.

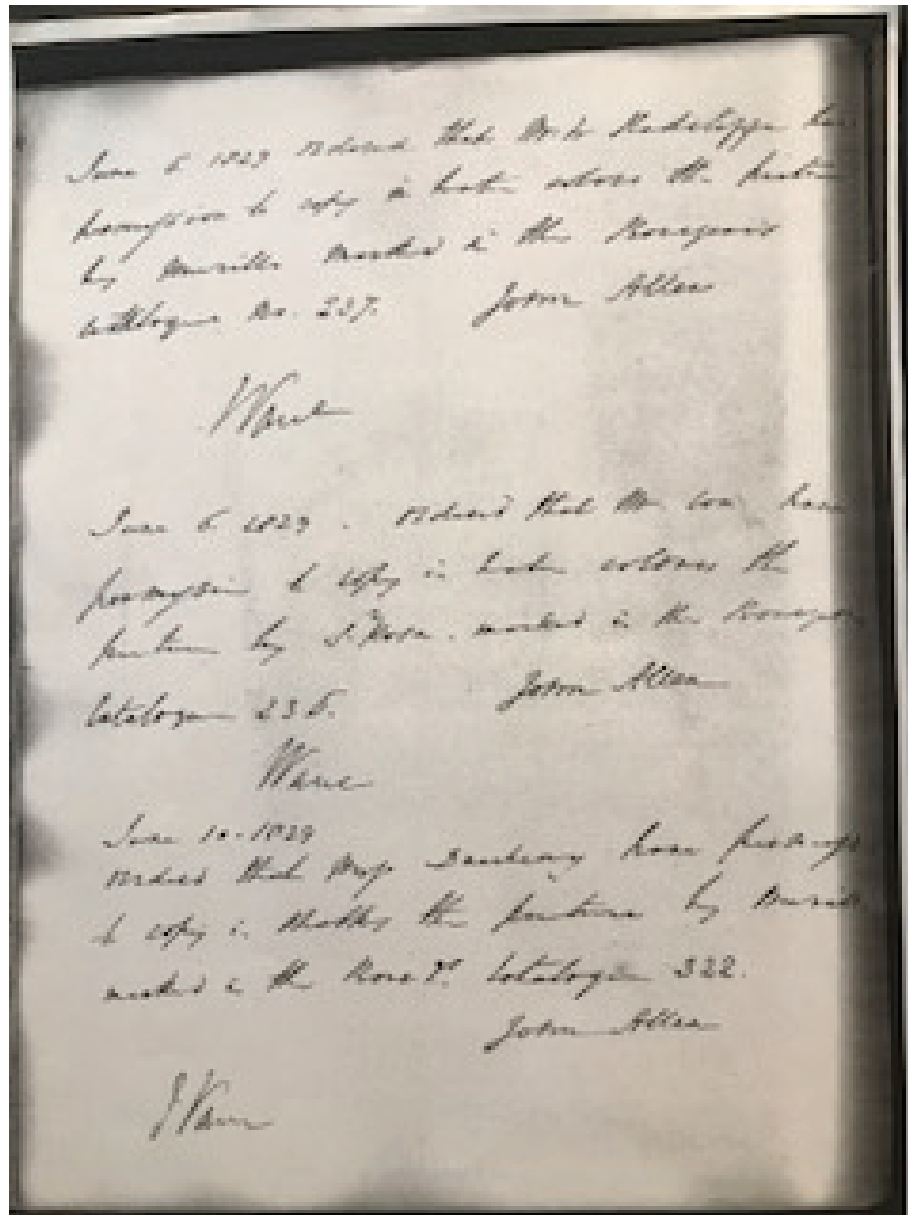


Figure 2.21 Dulwich College Archives, Entry of permission for Cox to copy catalogue item 236; photograph of original document. Dulwich Picture Gallery, Dulwich, U.K.



Figure 2.22 Originally attributed to Paulus Potter, *Cattle and Sheep*, c. 1650. Dulwich Picture Gallery, Dulwich, U.K.



Figure 2.23 David Cox, *A Bullock*, c. 1820s. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.



Figure 2.24 David Cox, Detail of Figure 2.23, *A Bullock*, c. 1820s. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.



Figure 2.25 Contemporary photograph of Bolsover Castle.



Figure 2.26 J.M.W. Turner, *A Harvest Dinner, Kingston Bank*, 1809. Oil on canvas. Tate Britain, London.



Figure 2.27 J.M.W. Turner, *Borthwick Castle*, 1818. Watercolor on paper. Tate Britain, London.



Figure 2.28 David Cox, *Borthwick Castle After Turner*, 1819. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.



Figure 2.29 John Sell Cotman, *The High Street of Alençon, Alençon I*, 1820. Watercolor on paper. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, U.K.



Figure 2.30 David Cox (attributed to), *Alençon II*, c. 1830s. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.

CHAPTER 3

THE THEATER AND THE EASEL: TRUTH TO TOPOGRAPHY AND TRUTH TO NATURE IN COX'S LANDSCAPES

In truth to nature, the works of Cox should be ranked especially high. Truthful they are if anything – truth not worked out with careful and laborious stippling, but conveyed as if by inspiration, in a rapid, almost loose manner . . . full of . . . sympathy with nature in all her moods and aspects.

N. Neal Solly, 1873

Introduction

In this Chapter I explore the relationship between theatrical scene painting and easel landscape painting in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. I propose that naturalistic and atmospheric effects introduced on stage were reflected in the depiction of landscape. I will suggest that the critical link between the two existed in the persons of landscape painters who were also theatrical scene painters. One such person was David Cox. I will advance the thesis that a significantly overlooked influence on the naturalism of Cox's landscapes was his work as a theatrical scene painter early in his artistic career.¹

To re-contextualize the naturalism that Cox encountered in the theater, I will consider the innovations of Phillippe Jacques de Louthembourg both in his collaborations with David Garrick at Covent Garden and in his *Eidophusikon*. The “effects” of nature achieved in the theater are precisely the effects that Cox strove to convey in his landscapes.

After reviewing the biographical accounts of Cox's early experiences in the theater, I will next consider a number of landscapes by Cox that illustrate how he creates naturalistic “effects” on paper and on canvas that are reflective of “truth in nature”: light and shadow, reflections on water, wind and rain, topographical accuracy, and atmospheric perspective. This emphasis on technique will extend the discourse beyond the descriptive, formal analysis that has prevailed in

the Cox literature to date by placing him in the context of theatrical innovations that preceded him and continued to inform his approach to landscape painting.

Evidence for this influence exists in primary source accounts, namely, Cox's biographers and at least one critic. Equally important evidence can be found in Cox's paintings themselves, for the naturalistic effects that were prevalent in theatrical productions were also present in Cox's landscapes. Much of the history of theatrical scene design is afflicted by the loss of what were viewed as ephemeral works. Unfortunately, none of Cox's scene paintings appears to have survived. Cox's scene painter master was James de Maria (1771-1851), for whom he worked early in his career. The loss of these paintings was regretted by Cox himself. As Solly recounts, "Even to a late period of his life, Cox was never tired of speaking of De Maria's works, and after regretted that they had probably been long since destroyed."² Surviving examples by a few others, notably de Louthembourg, can be found reduced to prints, drawings, and maquettes and can be studied in print rooms of public museums, such as the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.³

Cox's watercolor of *Llanrwst Market Place, North Wales* resembles a theatrical set (1805; Fig. 3.1).⁴ A central space in the foreground corresponds to the center stage floor where the dramatic action would take place. Architectural "wings" depicted on the stage right and the stage left of the composition correspond to the same elements of a theatrical performance space. The composition is done in one-point linear perspective so as to suggest to an audience that they are part of the performance space.

This is easily confirmed by an examination of John Inigo Richards's intimate set design for *The Maid of the Mill* at Covent Garden theater in 1765, preserved as an engraving at the

British Museum (Fig. 3.2).⁵ The same compositional elements as the Cox watercolor are present there.

On the other hand, sometimes a scene design aims to suggest the “great outdoors” or the suggestion of deep space utilizing atmospheric perspective and a distant far ground. Cox’s watercolor of *Carthage: Aeneas and Achates* of 1825 is a fairly typical composition of Cox’s Middle Period and resembles the broadly expansive set design for outdoor dramatic action (Fig. 3.3).⁶ This composition is likewise consistent with Richards’s set design for *Ramah Droog*, also staged at Covent Garden, in 1798 (Fig. 3.4).⁷ The scene depicted would serve as a believable backdrop for a performance where the action is situated in wide-open spaces, just as in Cox’s *Carthage*.

Cox was conscious of the relationship between landscape easel painting and theatrical scene painting. Evidence of this is related by Cox’s biographer Solly, who recalls that Cox used to compare the landscapes of De Maria to “Wilson in colour, and to Claude in composition.”⁸ Cox was clearly aware that the relationship extended beyond composition (“Claude”) to Wilson (“colour”). *Carthage* is assuredly Claudian in composition. Cox, however, goes beyond Wilsonian colour, and paints a landscape of blended images and sketchy brushstrokes. This imbues the scene with great depth through atmospheric perspective, in ways that Wilson’s landscapes did not exhibit. We see the same indistinct far ground in Richards’s *Ramah Droog*.

The two examples by Cox we have looked at so far reflect, to be sure, the composition of theatrical scenery. As we will further examine, the “colour” of Cox’s landscape paintings aims at naturalistic effects. The relationship between scenery design and landscape painting depicting atmospheric effects was also acknowledged by Cox. As Solly recalls, Cox would describe a landscape scene painted by De Maria with a “detailed account of its effect and breadth.”⁹

The convergence of the worlds of theatrical scene painters and easel painters

The world of the theatrical scene painter and the easel landscape painter were overlapping spheres of endeavor, certainly by the early eighteenth century. A large number of scene painters were also easel painters—usually landscape painters. This biographical fact is often noted, but modern scholarship has not meaningfully explored the consequences of this duality. George Lambert, whose seminal landscape paintings were discussed in Chapter 1, was also a theatrical scene painter, as were many others, including William Hodges (1744-1797), Philippe Jacque de Loutherbourg (1740-1812), Nicholas Dall (1706-1776), Robert Carver (1730-1791), and Michael Angelo Rooker (1746-1801).¹⁰ Others, more contemporary to Cox, included Alexander Nasmyth (1758-1840), David Roberts (1796-1864), and Clarkson Stanfield (1793-1867).¹¹

David Solkin dismisses scene-painting merely as a “bread and butter” economic earning endeavor that allowed someone like George Lambert to pursue easel painting of landscapes as a part-time occupation.¹² Little or no mention is made in the art historical literature as to how scene-painting norms and techniques informed the choices made by these artists in depicting easel landscapes. A pursuit closely aligned with theatrical scene painting was the creation of the painted panorama of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Easel artists, such as Thomas Girtin (1775-1802) also engaged in painting panoramas, as I will discuss later in this Chapter.¹³ These panoramas were essentially stage sets in the round, where the audience experiences 360° immersion in a realistically depicted landscape, a kind of “virtual reality” where a performative visit through topographically depicted geography took place.

The techniques and effects of theatrical scene painting no doubt reached beyond the stage through friendships between people of the theater and easel painters. Turner was a close friend

and associate of a pre-eminent theatrical scene painter, de Maria whom I mentioned previously.¹⁴ This is the same de Maria who years earlier had employed the young Cox as an assistant scene painter at Macready's theater in Birmingham, and who renewed his friendship with Cox years later as a result of Cox's friendship with Turner.¹⁵

George Lambert reconsidered as a scene painter

I previously discussed Lambert's landscapes as precedent for Cox's work. I referred to Robin Simons's criticism of Lambert as lacking an "understanding of tone, aerial perspective, color and light."¹⁶ I disagree with this assessment. If we examine two of Lambert's landscape paintings through the prism of theatrical scene design, we can recover a sense of naturalism in Lambert that Simon overlooks and Cox likely embraced.

The two paintings in question are *A View of Box Hill, Surrey*, of 1733 and *A View of Copped Hall in Essex*, of 1746, both at the Tate Britain Gallery in London (Figs. 3.5 and 3.6). The two paintings are broad panoramic views of identifiable topographical features. These two landscapes have vaguely distorted compositions that hint at what could be described in modern terms as "fish-eye" distortions where the center far-ground appears to slightly bulge out of the presumably straight-line horizon. Such views, from relatively low viewpoints would surely never reflect the slightest curvature of the earth.

I propose that these two landscape compositions be considered as stage scenery designs laid out on a flat canvas. With little manipulation of these images, we can convert each of them to a theatrical stage set by segmenting the paintings into a central panel backdrop with two wing panels creating a three-dimensional stage set (Figs. 3.7 and 3.8). What is illustrated in these manipulations to some extent with Figure 3.7, but particularly well with Figure 3.8, closely resembles surviving maquettes of de Louthembourg stage designs, such as his *Maquette for*

Omari of 1785 (Fig. 3.9). Each image becomes instantly readable, with the optical illusion of a curved horizon eliminated. The viewer is transported “into” the landscape, and realistic perspective, reflective of natural conditions, is immediately created. This is the same effect that brings a theater audience into the three dimensional space of the dramatic action performed on stage. Whether or not Lambert created these with theatrical stage design in mind may never be known, but this exercise in manipulation suggests that the theatrical scene aesthetic of Lambert may have carried over to his easel paintings.

Innovation in theatrical effects: de Louthembourg at Drury Lane and Covent Garden

De Louthembourg was an artist who achieved fame not only as a painter of easel pictures, but as an innovative, if not revolutionary designer of stage scenery and special effects, in close association with actor and theatrical entrepreneur David Garrick at the Covent Garden Theatre.¹⁷ De Louthembourg also created a visual spectacle which he called the *Eidophusikon* that combined painted scenes, movable parts, and light and sound effects to create a constructed naturalistic experience for the viewing public. Thomas Gainsborough for example, was so taken with the *Eidophusikon* spectacle that he was a frequent visitor.¹⁸ The innovative use of light and transparencies to mimic nature which he experienced in the *Eidophusikon* may have led Gainsborough to construct his own theatrical and naturalistic “viewing box” using candles and paintings on glass.

Another aspect of theatrical staging that must have informed landscape painters such as Cox was the innovative creation of atmospheric effects—lights, sounds, wind, and nighttime effects—that were created on stage to complement the painted backdrops, all in imitation of nature.

De Louthembourg was born in Strasbourg and was established enough in France as a (mostly) landscape painter to be elected a member of the French Academy of Painting. In 1771, he transferred to England, and was promptly engaged by David Garrick as a scene painter in Garrick's Drury Lane Theatre.¹⁹ Garrick was by then the preeminent actor and theatrical producer of the English stage. De Louthembourg became more than a scene painter: he and Garrick teamed up to produce highly innovative theatrical experiences that departed from the traditional background "stock trappings" that were merely a backdrop to the acting performances in a play. De Louthembourg combined realistic painted backdrops with light and sound effects to mimic the natural world. The resulting spectacles had all of the "effects" and "accidents of nature" that were being contemporaneously criticized by Sir Joshua Reynolds as discussed in the previous chapter.

Garrick in collaboration with de Louthembourg implemented a number of technological innovations to create realistic (i.e., naturalistic) settings for theatrical performances. The previously static candles on metal rings that were used for lighting were altered into movable objects that were raised and lowered to create different lighting effects.²⁰ De Louthembourg introduced the use of transparencies with different colour schemes and painted scenery to change times of day and even seasons of the year.²¹

In the periodical "Nature and Art," published in 1866, not long after Cox's death, reviewer Dutton Cook published a highly descriptive account of de Louthembourg's innovations.²² These innovations, introduced in the eighteenth century, were still current and in vogue throughout Cox's life. As to the lighting effects, Cook reported

Before his lamps he placed slips of stained glass—yellow, red, green, blue, and purple; and by shifting these, or happily combining them, was enabled to tint his scenes so as to represent various hours of the day and different actions of light.²³

Storm effects were produced in realistic fashion:

The lightening quivered through the transparent canvas of the sky. The waves, carved in soft wood from models made in clay, coloured with great skill and highly varnished to reflect the lightening, rose and fell with irregular action, flinging the foam now here, now there, diminishing in size and fading in colour as they receded from the spectator.²⁴

The reviewer even coined a new term, “the picturesque of sound,” to describe the sounds of nature:

“He introduced a new art: *the picturesque of sound*.” That is to say, he simulated thunder by shaking one of the lower corners of a large thin sheet of copper suspended by a chain; the distant firing of signals of distress he imitated by striking, suddenly, a large tambourine with a sponge affixed to a whalebone spring— [...] producing a curious echo, as from cloud to cloud, dying away in the distance.²⁵

And he further describes other devices for creating naturalistic effects:

The rushing sound of the waves was effected by turning round and round an octagonal pasteboard box, fitted with shelves, and containing small shells, peas, and shot; while two discs of strained milk, suddenly pressed together, emitted a hollow, whistling sound, in imitation of loud gusts of wind. Cylinders loosely charged with seed and small shot, lifted now at one end, now at the other, so as to allow the contents to fall in a pattering stream, represented the noise of hail and rain.²⁶

Ultimately, the use of the candles on a metal rig was replaced by the invention of the Argand Lamp by an associate of de Louthembourg. This new device allowed for more intense and focused projections, which, as Shearer West has described, resulted in “more dramatic chiaroscuro effects on the stage.”²⁷

The developments in scenographic effects to mimic nature were accompanied by an emphasis on topographical accuracy in the depictions of landscape. Again, de Louthembourg was a key influence on this development. Many of the depictions of landscape used in productions at

Drury Lane were based on de Louthembourg's on-site sketches.²⁸ As Kathryn Barush has pointed out, de Louthembourg's production of *The Wonders of Derbyshire* in 1779, a pantomime performance, was staged in topographically accurate sets based on de Louthembourg's own published drawings and engravings.²⁹

Beyond the stage: de Louthembourg's *Eidophusikon* and Gainsborough's *Exhibition Box*

As de Louthembourg's public notoriety grew, he created a new artistic production, no longer associated with the theatrical stage itself, but using the same techniques to create a naturalistic experience for the viewing audience, *sans* actors. This was the *Eidophusikon*.

Best characterized as an "installation," it was first installed and opened to the public in February, 1781. Ann Bermingham has rightly characterized it as "de Louthembourg's masterpiece in landscape, the summation of all the innovative stage magic he had wrought at Drury Lane as well as in his earlier exhibition paintings."³⁰ It went on to play for an astonishing nineteen years, albeit in different formats, until it was destroyed in a fire which started in a nearby building.³¹

All of the stage innovations in light and sound were used in the *Eidophusikon* to animate a series of painted images in flats and three dimensional landscape models (1781; Fig. 3.10).³² The first two editions of the *Eidophusikon* stress that the viewing experience involved *moving pictures* and were meant to reproduce natural phenomena.³³

The art world indeed took notice. Sir Joshua Reynolds praised de Louthembourg and urged Royal Academy students to investigate for themselves and attend the exhibition to study the effects of nature.³⁴ Thomas Gainsborough frequented the installation and praised these effects.³⁵ In a further exploration of creating natural effects in paintings, Gainsborough constructed an *Exhibition Box* that allowed for landscapes, painted on glass transparencies, to be viewed under different light regimes created by candles strategically placed in the back of the

box. Jonathan Mayne's publication in 1965 for the Victoria and Albert Museum first brought modern scholarship attention to this ingenious contraption.³⁶ Figure 3.11 shows Gainsborough's Exhibition Box, on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Gainsborough surely took inspiration from the *Eidophusikon*, for the *Exhibition Box* was also created in 1781.

The backlighting of landscape features created in the *Exhibition Box* was effortlessly depicted by Cox, as I will discuss later in this chapter. For example, one sees the backlighting on foliage on trees in *Gainsborough's Box* in 1871 as illustrated in Figures 3.12 and 3.13 also dated to 1781 from the Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition of those landscapes on glass. The wall text in the museum gallery indicates that "Gainsborough's aim was clearly to lighten and dramatize his effects of light."³⁷

The theatrical revolution led by Garrick and de Louthembourg went beyond naturalistic effects to include geographical and topographical accuracy.³⁸ I previously noted that de Louthembourg, as an easel painter, sketched on location. From these sketches he produced stage sets at Drury Lane. This surely did not escape the attention of Cox, and we find in many of his works the same accuracy of topographical of features we have noted in Garrick and de Louthembourg's productions on the London stage.

Performative spaces for viewing painted landscapes: the Panoramas

If the developments in the theatrical stage encouraged artists to imitate the effects of nature, the impulse towards topographical accuracy and naturalistic effects also extended to landscape painting presented "in the round"; most notably in the *Panorama of London* by Robert Barker of c. 1790 and an equally ambitious *Panorama of London* by Thomas Girtin c. 1800.³⁹

We can be reasonably certain that Cox was familiar with the display of Panoramas. Cox's first theatrical scene painting master and a mutual friend of Turner, James de Maria, created a

Grand Panorama of Paris and Environs in London in 1802, shortly before Cox's arrival in the city.⁴⁰ Other London panoramas were produced by Richard Reinagle (1775-1862) and Thomas Horner (1775-1844) in the first three decades of the nineteenth century; Cox, to be sure, would also have been familiar with these.⁴¹ Reinagle, for one, was a member of Society of Painters in Watercolour from 1805 on. He became its President in 1812, the same year Cox joined the Society.

Although the physical components of Barker's and Girtin's panorama exhibitions have long since been lost, we know what they looked like through surviving aquatints and watercolors. Figure 3.14 is an aquatint that illustrates a panoramic view of London along the River Thames, from St. Paul's Cathedral to London Bridge and Southwark, by Barker.⁴² Figure 3.15 is a watercolor drawing by Girtin representing the portion of his Panorama showing a view along the Thames River from Queenhithe to London Bridge.⁴³

The immersive, performative function of viewing one of these panoramas can be reconstructed by considering the plan view of how Barker's *Panorama of London* was displayed, as shown in Figure 3.16.⁴⁴ A reconstruction of the round building where Barker's Panorama was displayed is shown in Figure 3.17.⁴⁵

A visitor would enter the building and be ushered to the central platform in the round. As he moved, the viewing perspective would shift re-creating an actual experience of viewing the city from a conjectural vantage point. The believability of a visitor's transit through the landscape of a Panorama would have depended on both the accuracy of the topography and the naturalistic effects the visitor would have encountered in the natural landscape. The surviving illustrations that accompany this text exhibit both characteristics.⁴⁶

Cox and the theater

There may be no better acknowledgment of the unequivocal relationship between Cox's experience as a scene-painter and his landscape easel paintings in watercolors and oils than in a review of an 1810 exhibition that included works by Cox. The review by an anonymous author appeared in the June 1810 edition of *Ackerman's Repository of Arts*. The reviewer noted:

The drawings of the president, Cox, are very numerous. They are characterized by a sportive simplicity and airiness of touch, and a judicious management of light and shadow, happily productive of those evanescent appearances which are peculiar to the cloudy atmosphere of England. He has a certain wildness of imagination which delights in the solitary scenes of nature, and a felicity in tracing the general and familiar features of landscape. His great fault is a careless haste and sketchiness of finish, by which works betray, on a close inspection, the coarseness of scene-painting. He ought to remember that the distances of Claude are produced with the same care as his fore-grounds, and owe their effect more to a minuteness of detail, than to an indiscriminating and cloudy confusion of objects.

The reviewer's terms of note include: "careless haste," "sketchiness," and "the coarseness of scene-painting." He reminded Cox that Claude's "minuteness of detail" is to be emulated, lest the end result be "an indiscriminating and cloudy confusion" of the depicted objects. The reviewer clearly falls in Sir Joshua Reynolds's camp of dogmatic artistic pronouncements on the proper way to depict landscape. The roughness he criticized is the salient feature of Gilpin's picturesque advocacy.

But even in criticism, the reviewer acknowledged that Cox captures the "evanescent appearances which are peculiar to the cloudy atmosphere of England," that is, naturalistic "effects"; he also acknowledged Cox's "felicity in tracing the general and familiar features of landscape," that is, topography. This contemporary review is confirmatory of one aspect of this

author's thesis herein, namely that Cox's theatrical scene painting experience is central to his formation as a painter of naturalistic landscape.

The study of perspective, and an understanding of its application to depictions of landscape, was equally important in the fields of scene painting as well as easel painting, and Cox was adept at both. Edward Edwards (1738-1806) was a London painter, drawing master and engraver who was an Associate Member of the Royal Academy.⁴⁷ Edwards taught Perspective at the Royal Academy and published in 1803 *A Practical Treatise of Perspective*.⁴⁸

Edwards wrote that:

The study of Painting has ever been ranked among the noblest exertions of human genius; for to excel in this art, requires a mind sufficiently vigorous to combine the study of nature with a knowledge in many sciences, the union of which is necessary to direct and mature the talents of a Painter.⁴⁹

Edwards continues with the following instructions, which highlights the importance of Cox's experience as a scene painter.

To these he must add a competent knowledge of Perspective, at least so much of the science as will . . . dispose various objects in his pictures with propriety and truth.

Perspective, to be sure, was a key element in the believability of stage scenery as in easel landscape painting. Cox understood this. Edwards footnoted the previous quote by referencing a treatise on the principles of *Practical Geometry* by a Dr. Brook Taylor, which he instructs painters to learn. This passage brings to mind an incident that Solly recounts in his biography of Cox. Having been advised by his wife that he should advertise to teach perspective as a drawing master, Cox procured a number of books in London to perfect his knowledge of the subject.

Solly recalls:

Cox had never learned geometry, and he did not know exactly what to expect; but he sat down after tea to study his new

acquisition. He soon found he had got more than he had looked for; the longer he endeavored to master the propositions, the more the difficulties increased. At last his head began to ache, and his courage to fail, and, after one or two more useless attempts, he shut the book up with an exclamation of disgust, and flung it from him in despair. The partition of the room in which he sat was old, and being merely composed of lath and plaster, the book—flying like a shot—made a hole through it, and fell down inside the battens. Cox, in his humorous way, used to tell this story with much glee in after life, remarking that without doubt the book was still lying where he had flung it. The experiment was, however, in other respects more successful, as Cox soon got pupils, to whom he taught the elements of perspective—builders, and the more respectable class of artizans, who required to make drawings and elevations in connection with their work.⁵⁰

It is entirely plausible that Cox owned these works, and indeed, that the very book he flung in despair was one of these two treatises by Edwards and Taylor.

Again, the relationship between landscape painting and scene painting is evident here.

Edwards's treatise contained the following advice to the painter who had mastered perspective:

Thus qualified, he may proceed to the composition of a picture, in which he must always regulate his work by the following reflections: Let him suppose that the canvas or tablet on which he intends to paint, is the proscenium of a theater, whereon some dramatic scene is to be exhibited; that the figures he paints are the personae dramatis, the back ground and decoration are the scenes, and himself a spectator, viewing the action from the best station or point of view that can be chosen.⁵¹

This advice undoubtedly rang true and appropriate to Cox the scene painter, and continued to be implemented in his landscapes in watercolor as well as in oils.

The reference by Solly to Cox's teaching of "artizans, who required to make drawings and elevations in connection with their work" is yet another indication of what contemporary scholar Iain Pears has called the "tight relationship" between painters as an artisan class and painters engaged in a "liberal art."⁵² Pears noted that by the end of the eighteenth century, only the painter of theatrical scenery remained as the pre-eminent occupier of the middle ground

between art and trade.⁵³ He attributed this pre-eminence to the rise of the theater after the Stuart Restoration in the late seventeenth century. He cited the example of George Lambert, but noted that scene painters “scarcely achieved respectability.”⁵⁴ Pears noted that the term scene painter “settled down as a frequently used epithet of abuse hurled at artists whose work was considered inadequate.”⁵⁵ Perhaps this ancient prejudice continues to be reflected in Robin Simon’s and David Solkin’s assessments of the work of Lambert.⁵⁶

Cox’s naturalism

Solly devotes a substantial portion of the first chapter of his biography of Cox to his early experience in the theater. His initiation into the world of theatrical scene painting came through his introduction to the Birmingham Theatre manager, one Macready, by Cox’s cousin Allport.⁵⁷ His first job was to grind colours for the scene painters; that income also enabled young Cox to continue taking drawing lessons from Birmingham drawing master Joseph Barber.⁵⁸

Solly recognized early in his biography one key thesis of this dissertation. He notes that “the *broad* and *effective* style of scene painting took a great hold on his [Cox’s] imagination.”⁵⁹ Through Macready, Cox met James De Maria, previously discussed in this Chapter, who also provided an artistic “bridge” between Cox and Turner.

Solly, in the very next page, again reminds us that:

The facility and ease of handling, as well as the mastery of effect, which are learnt by scene painting, and which Cox had the opportunity of studying under a good master, greatly assisted him in his subsequent career.⁶⁰

Again, Solly’s emphasis on “ease of handling” (brushstroke) and “mastery of effect” (the naturalistic depiction of natural phenomena) highlights the obvious thesis of this chapter regarding Cox’s approach to the depiction of landscape, which modern scholarship has

consistently overlooked: Cox's naturalism is a direct and proximate result of his theatrical scene painting experience.

Cox's rendering of *A Windy Day in Wales* speaks to Solly's astute observations regarding Cox and scene painting (c. 1840s; Fig. 3.18).⁶¹ The composition depicts a Welsh cottage in a mountain hollow by a rocky road; figures in the foreground go about domestic chores. There is a clothesline on the rise above the cottage, strung between the trunks of trees. The entire scene is windblown: the branches on the trees lean with the wind, the figures' cloaks blow in the wind. The clouds swirl above the scene. A remarkable effect of windblown laundry hanging on the line is achieved with maximum economy of brushstroke and watercolor pigment.

Two details of the painting give evidence to the supremely loose brushstroke and abstract application of color, with nary a line or outline of anything that is depicted. It is as if the wind had been captured in a painted image – which was, of course, Cox's deliberate program in painting the scene (c. 1840s; Fig. 3.19, detail). Figure 3.20, a detail of *A Windy Day in Wales* also remarkably captures the shadow of the peasant woman on the rocky ground behind her.

A Windy Day in Wales could well have served as a theatrical scene backdrop, and perfectly conforms to the "ease of handling" and "mastery of effect" described by Solly. And lest the observation be made that the observed features and looseness of that work were the inevitable result of the watercolor medium, one need only to consider a similar composition executed by Cox in oil, also known by the same title (c. 1840s; Fig. 3.21, detail).⁶² The same effects are found in the version in oil.

Cox's work for Macready lasted approximately four years; he left that employ after a quarrel with the theatrical entrepreneur, but Solly notes that during that time Cox "gained much experience in producing scenic effects."⁶³ This experience as a scene painter would inform the

rest of his artistic career, and he came to regard it as a “stepping-stone to something higher,” namely landscape painting. Cox left Birmingham upon termination of his employment by Macready, and obtained temporary employment as a scene painter in London and regional theaters in Surry and Swansea.⁶⁴

London, however, presented a myriad of opportunities for Cox to engage in the vibrant artistic life of the metropolis. We discussed in Chapter 2 Cox’s copying of old and contemporary masters; we also know of his sketching from nature, and in 1805, of his first of many sojourns in Wales. Yet he would return on occasion to theatrical scene painting. Solly records a transaction in 1808 where Cox was paid for “painting 310 yards of scenery at 4s. pr square yard, £62.00.”⁶⁵ Cox was already 25 years old, living in London, about to be married, and fully engaged as an easel painter of landscapes.

As previously discussed, the naturalism which Cox espoused in his depictions of landscape pertained not so much to subject matter, but to his techniques in depicting nature. To be sure, landscape painting is inherently the depiction of “nature” – whether the artist is painting hills or valleys, trees or grasslands, cattle in the fields or birds in the air, quiet ponds or flowing rivers. The idealized landscapes of say, Poussin or Claude, were generally props in a narrative, or compositional devices. Cox’s naturalism is best described as “truth to Nature,” as we will examine in the following examples.

Cox: truth to topography

We previously examined the picturesque aesthetic advocated by William Gilpin, and illustrated it by considering Richard Wilson’s paintings of Caernarvon Castle. The picturesque painter may start with topography, real or imaginary, but alters it for “picturesque” effect. In the course of a discussion regarding Wilson between this author and Mark Pomeroy, Archivist of the

Royal Academy, Pomeroy remarked, “Ah yes, Richard Wilson: he was a great earth-mover, wasn’t he.”⁶⁶ The picturesque landscape painter, as with the picturesque garden designer, did not hesitate to move hills or mountains in a landscape, or create rivers or bridges where there were none, for “picturesque” or “pleasing” effect. In contrast, not so with Cox. He saw nature and liked what he saw. He engaged in close observation and strove to recreate his observations in landscape depictions that were true to topography and true to natural atmospheric effects.

Mount Snowdon from Capel Curig is one such landscape (1835; Fig. 3.22).⁶⁷ On the road from Betws-y-coed to Llanberis, one passes by the hamlet of Capel Curig. Cox painted this highly atmospheric view of Mount Snowdon, the highest peak in England and Wales. In the picture foreground, the waters of Llynau Mymbyr lake provide a watering place for a group of cattle drovers, traveling west toward Llanberis. Mount Snowdon rises dramatically along the far distance, in shades of blue and gray blending—melting one might say—into the changing hues of the cloudy sky. There is a sharp colour contrast between the foreground and the far ground, encompassing all the gradations of atmosphere.

Truth to topography? Yes. Figure 3.23 is a photograph taken by the author from more or less the same vantage point from where Cox painted Mount Snowdon.⁶⁸ All of the compositional and atmospheric effects which Cox captures in his landscape painting are evident in the photograph. For Cox, nature as observed was good enough to paint without deliberate alteration.

Cox also painted a view of Harlech Castle, built the thirteenth century on the southwest side of Mount Snowdon, on the Welsh coast (c. 1830s; Fig. 3.24).⁶⁹ As seen in Cox’s landscape, the many-turreted castle sits on a promontory above the floodplain of the Afon Dwyryd river.⁷⁰ A winding road along a ridge to the south leads to the castle. The atmospheric effects are, as with the picture of Mount Snowdon, depicted in color gradations from brown to blues and grays. Two

travelers have stopped to gaze upon the broad vista toward the castle and the heights of Snowdonia. As with the previous depiction, Cox stayed true to topography. Figure 3.25 is a photograph taken by the author of the same vista painted by Cox.⁷¹ Although the landscape has become re-forested to a significant extent, all of the compositional and atmospheric effects are readily recognizable.

Other examples abound. Figures 3.26 and 3.27 represent a Cox depiction of Pembroke Castle, c. 1810, and a photograph of the same scene.⁷² Figure 3.28 is a pencil drawing of the river Llugwy from the Pont-y-pair Bridge at Betws-y-coed, c. 1840.⁷³ Figure 3.29 is a photograph taken by the author from the same vantage point. Figures 3.30 and 3.31 represent a landscape showing Bolsover Castle from the south, c 1840, and a modern photograph of the castle from the same southern vantage point.⁷⁴

In every painted image paired with a modern photograph, it is evident that the landscapes painted by Cox are topographically accurate and executed in a free painterly style that accurately depicts atmosphere and changing light and sky conditions. The execution of these landscapes directly relate to the theatrical scene painting approaches which Cox learned early in his career: the “broad” and “effective” style which Solly commented on and I discuss in the previous sections of this chapter.⁷⁵

We should also recall that topographical accuracy corresponds to the emphasis on the depiction of actual places which prevailed in theatrical scenery, as discussed above in relation to de Louthembourg’s work at Drury Lane and in the success of “panorama” installations by Robert Barker, Thomas Girtin, and others.

Cox: truth to light and truth to wind

The lighting techniques of theatrical scene design were aimed at creating realistic, believable natural effects on stage. This same goal was equally at play in Cox's landscapes, informed, to be sure, by his work in the theater. If a painter is to be "true to nature" then naturalistic depictions of light are essential in creating believable landscapes.

Cox published *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect* in 1813.⁷⁶ In this work, he devotes a substantial number of illustrations to create temporal effects. These include "Effect, Morning," "Effect, Mid-Day," "Evening," and "Twilight."⁷⁷

Figures 3.32 and 3.33 are the text and illustration of *Effect, Morning*, c. 1813. As with the other cited illustrations, Cox focuses primarily on light effects during various times of the day. This approach recalls de Louthembourg's stage lighting techniques described above. Cox outlines specific uses of colours to create "sparkling and catching lights," "clear reflections of the different objects in the water," "sky tints," and "shadows" and "the light side" of a dwelling structure. The image which illustrates these instructions is perfectly readable as a morning scene.

While *Effect, Morning* illustrated here is an aquatint, the light effects are particularly discernable in watercolor renditions, where the unpainted paper provides the illusion of light. This is evident in a finished watercolor detail of a Cox landscape which clearly shows the loose handling and use of colour to convincingly depict back-lit foliage on a tree (1831; Fig. 3.34).⁷⁸ Figure 3.35 is a photograph taken by the author of back-lit foliage in the Llugwy River Valley in Wales. The similarity of the painted depiction to the photograph is readily apparent. Cox perfectly captures the effect of backlit foliage, including the insertion of white details for the "lights" mentioned in the text.

If naturalistic effects demand truth to nature with regard to topography and light, the proposition is equally applicable to wind. Wind effects were prominently addressed in de Louthembourg's theatrical productions, as discussed above. Cox includes the effect of wind in Plate LXIII of his treatise (1813; Fig. 3.36). He describes the effect of wind as follows: "[t]he general tone of colour is a silvery gray, upon which the effect of the piece most materially depends."⁷⁹ The hung laundry fluttering in the wind is best observed in a detail of the image of plate LXIII (1813; Fig. 3.37). The effect of wind in this early Cox work is similarly portrayed, with fluttering laundry in Figure 3.18, *A Windy Day in Wales*.

Truth to nature for Cox requires truth to wind. Another such Cox work is *Rhyl Sands*, a highly evocative depiction of well-dressed town-folk and tourists gathered at a beach in North Wales called Rhyl Sands (c. 1840s; Fig. 3.38). The row of buildings facing the strand, the crowds of visitors with their wind-blown clothes, and the reflections on the wet sand where the waves have come ashore all speak to the realistic depiction of the natural world. The composition corresponds well to a photo of a visitor to Rhyl Sands taken by the author (Fig. 3.39). Here, as in his *Treatise*, Cox uses colour, not line, to depict the naturalistic effect on paper that he observed in nature.

The same line of buildings facing the wide expanse of yellow sand, and particularly the illustration of clothes flapping in the wind are all indicative of the painter's truthfulness to the nature he is depicting. Cox captured in *Rhyl Sands* precisely the experience of walking along Rhyl Sands at a particular time and in a windy place.⁸⁰

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to place the naturalism of Cox's landscape in the context of the theatrical innovations of the English stage in the late eighteenth and early

nineteenth centuries. Cox's experience in the theater has not been examined by modern art historians to establish whether it might have informed his approach to landscape painting. The evidence presented here demonstrates that the effects sought in theatrical scenography, namely accurate topography, simplified brushstroke, lighting, wind, and other atmospheric events, were also sought by Cox in his landscape depictions. It is no mere coincidence that a substantial number of the landscape artists discussed in this Chapter were also employed at some point in their careers as theatrical scene painters. As with the print and exhibition culture described in the previous chapter, Cox was also immersed in the world of the theater that entertained the innovations I have described.

The foregoing discussion validates the central idea that Cox's emphasis on creating "truth to nature" effects in his depictions of landscape corresponds precisely to "nature" as recreated on the English theater stage during his life. The theoretical constructs of the theater find correspondence in the didactic pronouncements of Cox the drawing master, the biographical accounts of Solly, and in the works of the master himself.

End Notes To Chapter 3

¹ N. Neal Solly, *Memoir of the Life of David Cox* (London: Rodart Reproductions, 1973), 310-311.

² Solly, 7.

³ Sybil Rosenfeld, *Georgian Scene Painters and Scene Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), VII-XII.

⁴ Scott Wilcox, ed., *Sun, Wind, and Rain: The Art of David Cox* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 144. According to Wilcox, Cox completed this watercolor during his first sketching expedition to North Wales in the summer of 1805.

⁵ Rosenfeld, VIII.

⁶ Wilcox, 21. This image is clearly an attempt to emulate Claudian style. Wilcox quotes Cox's son David Jr. as commenting that this approach was a miscalculation on Cox's part. While it certainly resembles a stage set, in the manner of Inigo Richards, we do not see Cox returning to this mode of representation often.

⁷ Rosenfeld, VIII.

⁸ Solly, 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰ Rosenfeld, 6, 81.

¹¹ Rosenfeld, 10, 81.

¹² David H. Solkin, *Art in Britain: 1660-1815* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 2015), 115.

¹³ Bernard Comment, *The Painted Panorama* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999).

¹⁴ Franny Moyle, *Turner: The Extraordinary Life and Momentous Times of J.M.W. Turner* (New York: Penguin Press, 2016), 362-363; Eric Shanes, *Young Mr. Turner: The First Forty Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 428-430.

¹⁵ Solly, 6-8; Moyle, 362-363.

¹⁶ Postle, 8.

¹⁷ The most comprehensive monograph on De Louthembourg is Olivier Lefeuvre, *Philippe-Jacques de Louthembourg: 1740-1812* (Paris: Arthema, 2012). Other references include Christopher Baugh, *Garrick and Louthembourg* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1990), as well as a number of essays in Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Georgian Theatre 1737-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁸ Iain McCalman, “Magic, Spectacle, and the Art of de Louthembourg’s Eidophusikon,” in *Sensation and Sensibility: Viewing Gainsborough’s Cottage Door*, ed. Ann Bermingham (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 181-197.

¹⁹ Dutton Cook, “The Story of a Scene Painter,” in *Nature and Art, Volume I* (London: Day & Son, Ltd., 1866), 101. The relationship between Garrick and de Louthembourg is fully explored in Baugh, *Garrick and Louthembourg*, cited above.

²⁰ Kathryn R. Barush, “Painting the Scene” in Swindells and Taylor, *Georgian Theatre*, 265-285.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 273.

²² Cook, 102.

²³ *Ibid.*, 103.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Shearer West, “Manufacturing Spectacle,” in Swindells and Taylor, 286-303. Louthembourg’s innovations with the changing effects of light and atmosphere described by West created a wholly naturalistic space and enhanced the believability of the topographical settings depicted on stage.

²⁸ Barush, 275.

²⁹ *Ibid.*: see also, West, 300.

³⁰ Ann Bermingham, “Technologies of Illusion: de Louthembourg’s Eidophusikon in Eighteenth-century London,” *Art History, Volume 39, no. 2* (April, 2016): 376-399. Bermingham characterizes the Eidophusikon as a “new species of painting” and calls it de Louthembourg’s masterpiece in landscape at page 300. This essay is perhaps the most incisive analysis in modern scholarship of de Louthembourg’s installation.

³¹ Bermingham, “Technologies of Illusion,” 385.

³² *Ibid.*, 378.

³³ *Ibid.*, 381, 383.

³⁴ Cook, 103

³⁵ Bermingham, “Technologies of Illusion,” 382.

³⁶ Jonathan Mayne, *Thomas Gainsborough’s Exhibit Box* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1965).

³⁷ Author's inspection during a visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum at which time he also photographed the *Exhibition Box* shown in Figure 3.11.

³⁸ Anthony D. Barlow, "Lighting Control and Concepts of Theatre Activity," *Educational Theatre Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1973): 142.

³⁹ H.J. Pragnell, *The London Panoramas of Robert Barker and Thomas Girtin: c. 1800* (London: London Topographical Society, 1968).

⁴⁰ Pragnell, 11.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., Plates II and III.

⁴³ Ibid., Plate XIV.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Plate VII.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Plate VIII.

⁴⁶ The modern visitor to the *Battle of Atlanta* Cyclorama, originally installed in Grant Park, Atlanta, Georgia in 1886, can recreate the same experience that a visitor to the early London Panoramas that Cox would have been familiar with. The work is now housed at the Atlanta History Center.

⁴⁷ Martin Postle, "Edwards, Edward (1738-1806)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁴⁸ Edward Edwards, *A Practical Treatise of Perspective* (London: Leigh, Sotheby and Son, 1803).

⁴⁹ Edwards, 281.

⁵⁰ Solly, 23.

⁵¹ Edwards, 282-283.

⁵² Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 117-118.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 117.

⁵⁶ For example, John Talman, writing from Rome to Henry Newton (18 November 1711) to organize a campaign to stop Marco Ricci from winning the commission to paint the dome of St

Paul's: "Yis cupola... will be ye scandal of painting and an eyesore to all iscerning men. Rizzi of Venice everyone knows to be no more yan a scene painter..." (*Bodl MS Eng. Lett. E34 f231*).

⁵⁷ Solly, 7.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ The author here understands the term "broad" to refer to the brushstroke; the term "effective" refers to the "effects" of nature – the phenomena of light and weather, a changing climate, and natural visual "effects" or ephemeral occurrences.

⁶⁰ Solly, 8.

⁶¹ On close inspection there is hardly a line in the image or evidence of graphite undergrowing. Cox here is applying pure watercolor to create shape and movement. *A Windy Day in Wales* was exhibited as *Washing Day, North Wales* at Guy Peppiatt Fine Art in 2017, and illustrated in the catalogue, Guy Peppiatt, *British Drawings and Watercolours*, (London: Guy Peppiatt Fine Art, 2017), 42 No. 36. The picture was formerly with Abbott and Holder, longtime London picture dealers, c. 1956, when it entered a private collection.

⁶² Christie's *Victorian & British Impressionist Art* (London: Christie's, 30 June 2010), Lot 137. The painting, in a period frame, bears an old label indicating that the picture was exhibited at the David Cox Exhibition of 1890 at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. The loose brushstroke of Figure 3.21 is the same as the watercolor version of *A Windy Day in Wales*. The comparison of these two works illustrates the proposition that the looseness of brushstroke evident in Cox's work was not due to the peculiar characteristics of one medium or another.

⁶³ Solly, 11.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 12.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁶ Interview of the author with Mr. Pomeroy at the Royal Academy in London.

⁶⁷ Guy Peppiatt, *British Drawings and Watercolours 2013* (London: Guy Peppiatt Fine Art, 2013), 37, Figure 34. The picture was with Thos. Agnew & Sons, c. 1955.

⁶⁸ The photographed landscape and Cox's depiction of the same in Figure 3.22, closely correspond to each other, indicating a lack of picturesque manipulation of the landscape and Cox's attempt to be true to topography while creating the atmospheric effects quite evident in the watercolor.

⁶⁹ Christie's, *Andrew Wyld: Connoisseur Dealer, Part I*, (London: Christie's, 2012), 89, Lot 101. The present location of this work, which sold on 10 July 2012, is unknown.

⁷⁰ Cox's view of Harlech Castle, which Andrew Wyld dated to the 1830s, was featured in the Christie's sale of July 10, 2012, *Andrew Wyld: Connoisseur Dealer Part I*. It was listed as lot 101.

⁷¹ As with the author's photograph of Mount Snowdon from Capel Courig, this photograph, also taken by the author of Harlech Castle, illustrates the Cox view to be topographically accurate while achieving atmospheric effects at the same time.

⁷² The Cox drawing of Pembroke Castle is in a private collection in the U.K. See www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk. The picture was last reported to be in the collection of Sir Hickman Bacon. Bauer, 34

⁷³ Hugh Belsey, *Paintings and Drawings* (Bury St. Edmunds: Xanthus Gallery, 2014), 7, Figure 22. The drawing, formerly in the collection of Philip Michael Goodman (1935-2013) came by descent to David Cox's granddaughter Hannah Cox, and was previously sold by Christie's on 15 January 1975.

⁷⁴ Agnew's, *English Watercolours and Drawings* (London: Thos. Agnew & Sons Ltd, 1997), Figure 58. The exhibition was curated by Andrew Wyld.

⁷⁵ Solly, 7.

⁷⁶ David Cox, *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Watercolours* (London: S.&J Fuller, 1813). The significance of David Cox's publications of instructional manual was featured in an exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1987. Peter Bicknell and Jane Munro, eds., *Gilpin to Ruskin: Drawing Masters and their Manuals, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Fitzwilliam Museum, 1987). Chapter 4 in the catalogue features the manual by David Cox at pages 30-40.

⁷⁷ Cox, *A Treatise*, Plates LIX – LXII.

⁷⁸ As with *A Windy Day in Wales*, there is no trace of underdrawing in this watercolor and it is all about color and not line.

⁷⁹ Cox, *A Treatise*, Plate LXIII.

⁸⁰ *Rhyl Sands* is perhaps this author's favorite Cox landscape because it exhibits true topographical accuracy and it captures a moment in time where visitors to this beachfront at Rhyl are windswept by the winds which continually blow landward from the sea. The author visited Rhyl Sands and ascertained the veracity of Cox's depiction, even 170 years later. Rhyl Sands today is instantly recognizable from the Cox image of c. 1840s. The photograph, taken by the author and illustrated here as Figure 3.39, is proof enough. Although the author rejects the simplistic characterization of David Cox as a precursor of the Impressionists, one cannot fail to note that the windswept beach scenes of Cox pre-date similar scenes by Eugene Boudin at Trouville by two to three decades. With apologies to T.S. Elliot and Ezra Pound, I would say of David Cox, *Il miglior fabbro*. Elliot's reference was to a line from Dante's *Purgatorio*, canto 26, where Dante refers to the poet Daniel as the "better craftsman." A mere coincidence it may be, that J.M.W. Turner referred to David Cox affectionately as "Daniel." Moyle, 362.



Figure 3.1 David Cox, *Llanrwst market Place, North Wales*, c. 1805. Watercolor on paper. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Wales.



Figure 3.2 John Inigo Richards, *The Maid of the Mill* set design, 1765. Engraving. British Museum, London.



Figure 3.3 David Cox, *Carthage: Aeneas and Achates*, 1825. Watercolor on paper. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, U.K.

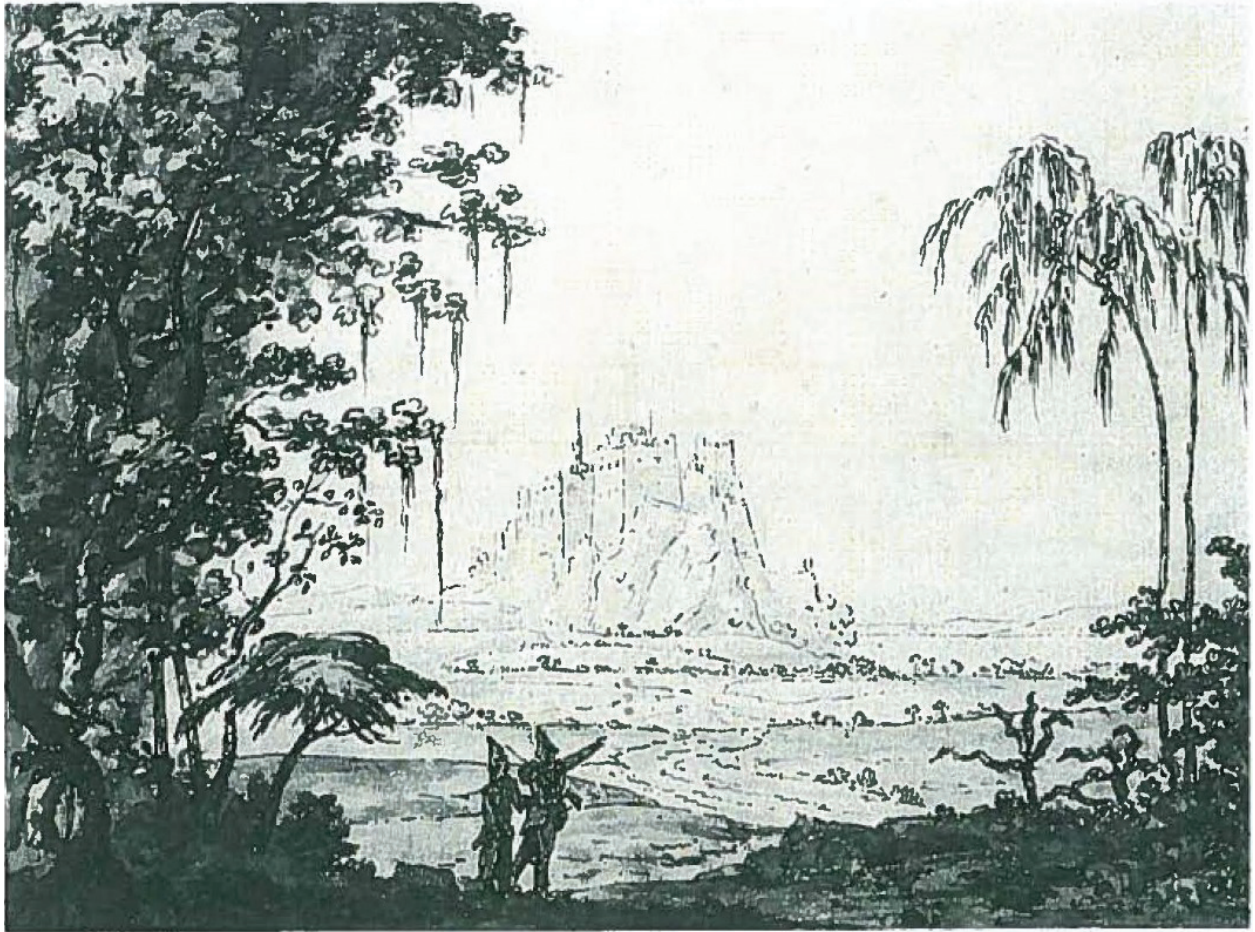


Figure 3.4 John Inigo Richards, *Ramah Droog* set design, 1798. Ink on paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 3.5 George Lambert, *A View of Box Hill*, 1733. Oil on canvas. Tate Britain, London.



Figure 3.6. George Lambert, *View of Copped Hall*, 1746. Oil on canvas. Tate Britain, London.



Figure 3.7 George Lambert, *Digital Manipulation of A View of Box Hill*, 1733, converted to stage scenic design by the author of this dissertation.



Figure 3.8 George Lambert, *Digital Manipulation of View of Copped Hall*, 1746, converted to stage scenic design by the author of this dissertation.



Figure 3.9 Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg, *maquettes for Omai Stage Set*, 1785. Watercolor on cut-out cardboard. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 3.10 Edward Francis Burney, *Eidophusikon*, 1782. Watercolor on paper. British Museum, London.



Figure 3.11 Thomas Gainsborough, *Exhibition Box*, 1781. Wood and glass construction. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 3.12 Thomas Gainsborough, *Wooded Landscape with Herdsman Driving Cattle*, c. 1781-82. Oil on glass. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 3.13 Thomas Gainsborough, *Wooded Landscape with Herdsman and Two Cows*, c. 1781-82. Oil on glass. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 3.14 Frederick Birnie, after a drawing by Robert Barker, *London from the Roof of the Albion Mills* (partial view of panorama painting), 1792. Engraving on paper. Guildhall Library, London.



Figure 3.15 Thomas Girin, *Eidometropolis: Panorama of London* (one of five drawings), c. 1800. Watercolor on paper. British Museum, London.



Figure 3.16 Robert and Henry Barker, *View of London from the Roof of the Albion Mills*, 1795. Engraving on paper. Guildhall Library, London.

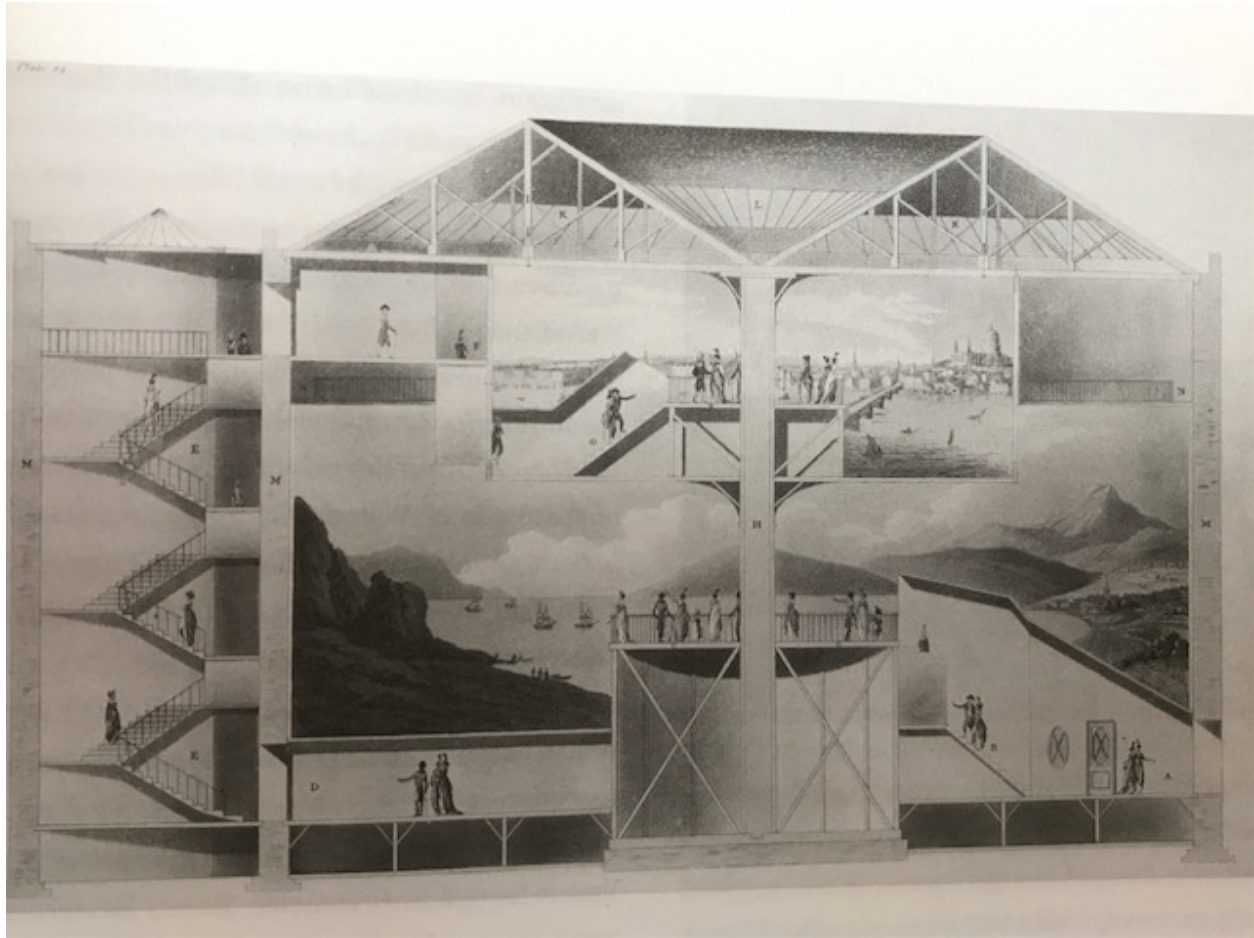


Figure 3.17 Robert Mitchell, *Section of the Rotunda, Leicester Square, in which is Exhibited the Panorama*, 1801. Colored aquatint on paper. Guildhall Library, London.



Figure 3.18 David Cox, *A Windy Day in Wales*, c. 1840s. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.



Figure 3.19 David Cox, *A Windy Day in Wales* (detail of clothesline), c. 1840s. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.



Figure 3.20 David Cox, *A Windy Day in Wales* (detail of shadow), c. 1840s. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.



Figure 3.21 David Cox, *A Windy Day in Wales* version in oil on canvas (detail), c. 1840s. Oil on canvas. Private collection.



Figure 3.22 David Cox, *Mount Snowdon from Capel Curig*, 1835. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.



Figure 3.23 Contemporary photograph of Mount Snowdon from Capel Curig.



Figure 3.24 David Cox, *Harlech Castle*, c. 1830s. Watercolor on paper. Location unknown (formerly with Christies, London).



Figure 3.25 Contemporary photograph of Harlech Castle.



Figure 3.26 David Cox, *Pembroke Castle*, c. 1810. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.



Figure 3.27 Contemporary photograph of Pembroke Castle.



Figure 3.28 David Cox, *The River Llugury at Betws-y-coed, Wales*, c. 1840. Pencil on paper. Private collection.



Figure 3.29 Contemporary photograph of the River Llugury at Betws-y-coed, Wales.



Figure 3.30 David Cox, *A View of Bolsover Castle*, c. 1840. Watercolor on paper. Private Collection.



Figure 3.31 Contemporary photograph of Bolsover Castle.

PLATE LIX
EFFECT, MORNING

Morning Effect should be produced by sparkling and catching lights. A scene on the banks of a river is here intended to produce the effect, while the clear reflection of the different objects in the water gives stillness to the scene ; and the people crossing in the ferry-boat to market is an incident which materially tends to stamp the character and elucidate the effect of the picture. The sky tints are composed of indigo, lake, and a little gamboge, gradually softened in with light ochre towards the horizon ; the upper part of the sky is finished with a little ultramarine ; the water washed in with the same tints as the lower part of the sky ; the distance, indigo and a little light red ; the trees and bank, in the second distance, indigo and Indian red, re-touched in the lights with light ochre and gamboge ; the shadows upon the house, indigo and Indian red ; the light side, light ochre ; the foreground trees, bank, and weeds are worked in with a grey composed of indigo, Indian red, and brown pink, finished with the same three colours, preserving some quite white for the sparkling lights, which are to be carefully filled up with gamboge and indigo ; the bark of the trees, indigo and Indian red ; the whole of the foreground finished with indigo and burnt sienna, heightened up with Vandyke brown.

Figure 3.32 David Cox, *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours*, Plate LIX, London: S. & J. Fuller 1813.



Figure 3.33 David Cox, *Effect Morning*, 1813. Aquatint, from *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours*, Plate LXI, London: S & J Fuller.



Figure 3.34 David Cox, *Haddon Hall from the Park* (detail), 1831. Watercolor on paper. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, U.K.



Figure 3.35 Contemporary photograph of backlit foliage in the Llugwry River Valley, Wales.



Figure 3.36 David Cox, *Wind*, 1813. Aquatint, from *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours*, Plate LXI, London: S & J Fuller.



Figure 3.37 David Cox, *Wind* (detail), 1813. Aquatint, from *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours*, Plate LXI, London: S & J Fuller.



Figure 3.38 David Cox, *Rhyl Sands*, c. 1840s. Watercolor on paper. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, U.K.



Figure 3.39 Contemporary photograph of Rhyl Sands, Wales with windblown figure.

CHAPTER 4

PAINTING GOD'S SECOND BOOK: COX'S RELIGIOUS FAITH AND THE PERCEPTION OF NATURE

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth;
...
And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth

William Wordsworth
*Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern
Abbey* (1798).

Introduction

The spiritual aspects of the contemplation of nature are well encapsulated in the lines excerpted from William Wordsworth's poem *Tintern Abbey*. Wordsworth is deservedly recognized for his appreciation of the naturalistic impulse in the depiction of landscape in art and the description of nature in poetry. Wordsworth is closely identified with the area of Northern England called the Lake District.¹ Cox traveled there on at least two occasions and produced at least four landscape paintings of scenery, including Coniston Lake and Lake Windermere.² Wordsworth's poetry and its oblique references to God in nature (the presence, dwelling in light, the motion and spirit that impels all thinking things) form part of the cultural context of English religiosity in the early nineteenth century as it may have informed the naturalism in Cox's work.

In another contrasting aspect of this context, William Blake, the mystical and visionary poet and artist, wrote the short poem *Jerusalem* in 1808, where he asked:

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green:
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen!

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here,
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

On one level, the poem is a cry against the dehumanizing advent of the industrial revolution in England where factory-mills replaced cottage and small manufacturing businesses, resulting in inferior quality products, unemployment, and environmental pollution. The “dark Satanic Mills” changed the landscape, for the worse, according to Blake.³

But, on a more fundamental level, before bemoaning the advent of industrialization, Blake's poem depicts the landscape of England, in its pure and natural state, as intrinsically linked to the presence of God in nature. Cox was likely to have been familiar with Blake himself. Blake was an artist as well as a poet, and he and Cox were exhibitors in the 1812 annual exhibition of the Associated Artists (or Painters) in Water-Colours, an exhibition society which was active from 1808 to 1812. The Associated Artists' catalogue for the 1812 exhibition shows entries by both Blake and Cox.⁴ Blake was also a close friend of John Varley, from whom Cox took drawing lessons in 1805-06.⁵

I cite the poetry of Wordsworth and Blake here not to suggest that Cox set out to paint landscapes in a naturalistic fashion following the poetical or religious notions of either poet. My purpose is, rather, to further illustrate the cultural context in which artists negotiated their approaches to landscape painting, informed by an overarching discourse of God in nature.

By the time of Cox's death in 1859, England had become extensively industrialized, and was a major economic and imperial power. But Cox never painted scenes of industrial development or environmental degradation. Instead, he generally depicted an English and Welsh countryside in a vibrant naturalism that I consider to be the outgrowth of his religious faith. Cox was equally at home in the city, and also travelled to Europe on two occasions; he allowed himself from time to time to depict serene urban settings at home and abroad. Cox's landscape then, was the landscape of mountains green, pleasant pastures, and clouded hills – a landscape before the advent of the dark Satanic Mills, when the land was intimately related to the countenance of God shining (as Light) even through clouded skies, where the Lamb of God grazed on English pastures, and God walked upon the land on metaphorical feet.⁶

When Cox painted cities, they were orderly places without a hint of urban blight or social conflict. Cox's view of nature is of a peaceable kingdom that reveals God as much as the written First Book of God, that is, the Bible. Since Cox was, as I will show, a devout Anglican and faithful reader of sacred scripture, I will cite the *King James Version* of the Bible to contextualize the faith of Cox in the familiar cadences of what he read. These words informed his determination to depict nature without manipulation, faithful to his perception of God's revelation in His creation.

The goal of this chapter is to argue that his religious faith informed Cox's predilection for landscape painting. I will contextualize his artistic emphasis on nature with religious notions of nature as the "Second Book of God," and will posit historical antecedents, dating back to the Middle Ages, according to which one could find God in nature. Under this disposition, one could gain an understanding of the beauty and power of God in the beauty of the natural world in all its manifestations. Cox did not paint "religious" landscapes, by which I mean of scriptural history,

religious practices, or religious allegory, as one finds in the works of Blake. But the accidents of nature, the “effects” Cox painted, are often understood in the tradition of symbolic representations of the Divine. I should note that not only did Cox avoid patently religious painting, but also that he scarcely left any writings about his religious faith. One can only construct the character of the artist from a few scraps of correspondence and from the anecdotes of his friends. In doing so, one can construct an assessment of how Cox’s faith informed his artistic choices.

Westminster Abbey from Battersea Marsh

An early Cox composition, *Westminster Abbey from Battersea Marsh*, a view across the River Thames, appears as Plate LXX of his 1813 *Treatise on Landscape Painting in Watercolours* (1813, Fig. 4.1).⁷ This remarkable image dates to Cox’s first residence in London, when he was beginning to make his mark in artistic circles, as both a landscape painter and a drawing master. More than a painting of the landscape on the River Thames, and more than a painting of Westminster Abbey or of a landscape with a rainbow, it is all of the above. The juxtaposition of a rainbow and a church immediately suggests religious connotations.⁸

That Westminster Abbey was an active place of worship at the time Cox created this image is, of course, a fact to be considered.⁹ Then as now, the Abbey was associated with the English monarchy as the place of coronation of kings and queens, where earthly rulers converge within sacred spiritual space. It is symbolic of the English notion. That the River Thames is an iconic symbol not only of London but also of the English nation is evident from its frequent appearance in English poetry, certainly from Elizabethan times to the present.¹⁰

The unifying feature of the Cox landscape is the rainbow, which encompasses both river and church. It is the organizing principle of the composition. The religious connotations of the rainbow were well known then as now. In Genesis, Chapter 9, it is described thus:

[8] And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,
[9] And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; [...] [11] And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. [12] And God said, This [is] the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that [is] with you, for perpetual generations: [13] I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. [14] And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: [15] And I will remember my covenant, which [is] between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. [16] And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that [is] upon the earth.¹¹

The juxtaposition of the rainbow and the waters of the Thames relates specifically to the covenant between God and Man that “neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.” Four years before Cox painted the subject picture one particularly devastating Thames flood occurred.

The Royal Meteorological Society (RMS) published a groundbreaking paper in July 2015 that covered the occurrence of widespread storms and flooding in Britain in January 1809.¹² The paper is an exercise in what is called “synoptic meteorology,” essentially a contextual methodology not unlike the art historical approach of this dissertation. It merged newspaper accounts, quantitative measurements from widespread geographical locations, and weather records from ships’ logs, to paint a picture of widespread flooding across the entire country, which must have seemed to be of “biblical proportions.” Figure 4.2, taken from the *RMS Paper*,

illustrates the breadth of flooding across England: from Carlisle in the North to Salisbury in the South, and Worcester in the West to Norwich in the East.¹³ The RMS quotes newspaper accounts from London as follows:

In Dorset-street, Portman-square, the common sewer has blown up, and left a dreadful chasm ... In the neighbourhood of Kennington and Vauxhall, a torrent of water has arisen, which in its progress has carried away furniture, trunks of trees, cattle, etc and has destroyed a great number of bridges.

Gentleman's Magazine, 1809, p. 83

Although Sloane-street stands upon high ground, the kitchens are all flooded. In many parts of this [Chelsea] and other neighbourhoods near London, persons have been obliged to get in and out of their one pair of stairs windows.

The Times, 27 January

It will be impossible to ascertain the damage done until free access can be obtained to Lewisham, which, as yet, is totally impracticable, the water in Mill Lane being still as high as the window cills of the ground floor ... all the gardens, outhouses, etc within reach of the torrent, are entirely destroyed. In Lambeth all the lower apartments of some hundreds of houses are three and four feet under water; and throughout the metropolis, and its neighbourhood, few houses have escaped a drenching from top to bottom, excepting those from the roofs of which the inhabitants took the precaution to have the snow removed previous to the commencement of the thaw. The principal part of Chelsea was under water during Wednesday night [25th-26th], and there was no passing but by boats and carts, to take persons to their own homes. In short, a more extensive inundation has not been known, in and near the metropolis, in the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

The Examiner, 29 January¹⁴

The London flooding may well have influenced the Coxes's move from London and choice of Dulwich nearby for their residence. The storm fronts, the deluge that followed, and the rising waters destroyed homes, farms, and a number of bridges across the river. Entire neighborhoods of the metropolis were inundated. Little wonder then, that Cox painted a picture of post-flood religious connotations. The pictorial content of the subject picture is only part of

the story; the historical context of the great flood of 1809, to which Cox was a first-hand witness, provides a persuasive suggestion as to Cox's artistic intent which was informed, to be sure, by his deep religious faith and knowledge of the scriptures. By comparison, Cox's contemporary Robert Havell painted a picture of the reconstruction of one of the bridges destroyed by the Thames flood of 1809 (Fig. 4.3).¹⁵ In contrast to Cox's picture, there is no trace of religiosity or religious symbolism in Havell's composition.

Beyond the reference to Genesis, chapter 9, the rainbow as a sign of the presence of God is also found in Ezekiel, Chapter 1:

[25] And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings. [...] [28] As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face and I heard a voice of one that spake.¹⁶

The most prominent features of the Cox composition, other than the rainbow, are the broad expanse of the River Thames and the large boat, or barge, that takes center stage on the foreground. The waters of the Thames certainly recall the waters of the biblical flood related in Genesis, particularly after the great flood of 1809. The boat assuredly recalls the Ark built by Noah to shelter his family and all the animals he brought on board to save them from God's wrath. And as already mentioned, the rainbow represents God's covenant never to inflict a destructive flood on humankind again.

Westminster Abbey is situated on the north bank of the river. The storm clouds in Cox's picture are receding to the north and west; the clouds are breaking from the east and a heavenly light emanating from the east – I propose, a divine light – illuminates the church before falling on the green landscape between the church and the river. As noted in Ezekiel Chapter 1, this light is indeed the presence (“the likeness of the glory”) of God, creating the sign of the

covenant. This is consistent with the perception of God as light I discussed in Chapter 3. As I discussed previously, truth to light is a persistent feature in Cox's landscapes.

Given all the elements of the composition, the historical event, and the biblical references, one can safely state that this is indeed a painting imbued with religious connotations, deeply reverent and symbolic. Cox, as I will discuss in this chapter, was a deeply reverent man of religious faith. Even so, I should emphasize that Cox is not known for overt religiosity in his paintings. He was a painter of the natural world in all of its manifestations and glory.

Westminster Abbey from Battersea Marsh may be the most "religious" painting Cox ever executed. It is the central thesis of this chapter, however, that Cox's religious faith is a contributing factor to the choice of painting landscapes and the manner in which he painted them, most likely because he found God in nature.

Modern art critic Estelle Lovatt describes a parallel concept in the landscape paintings of John Constable (1776-1837). Lovatt notes that Constable "thought of landscape painting as the way he could best reveal God's eternal plan."¹⁷ She suggests, for example, that in paintings such as *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, which Constable painted in 1831, the artist "pushed the cathedral further and further into the background" (Fig. 4.4). This gives preference to the "magnitude of nature," which includes the rainbow as symbol of the divine covenant enveloping the cathedral, and the flooded landscape in the foreground.¹⁸ The compositional similarities between the Cox and the Constable are surely not coincidences unrelated to each artist's religious faith and the recognized religious tropes in their contemporaneous culture. Like Cox, Constable also uses atmospheric conditions as indicative of spiritual phenomena.¹⁹

Turning to J.M.W. Turner, Lovatt also notes that "[t]o Turner, light was the emanation of God's spirit," and thus "provided evidence of the power [and presence] of God [in nature.]"²⁰

The idea that the natural world reflected the presence, power and glory of God was not a novel concept of English religiosity or culture in the early nineteenth century. To better understand its provenance, and how this informed the landscape paintings of a deeply religious artist, we must look to the painter's personal character in relation to the church and his faith.

Cox: a man of deep religious faith

Cox biographer Neal Solly related that the artist's mother, born Frances Walford, was "a superior woman, with highly religious feelings" and that her son "often attributed a good deal of his success in after life to the watchful care and good judgment she instilled into his mind in the early years."²¹ Frances Walford Cox died in 1810 when Cox was twenty-seven years old. She continued to be the moral and religious teacher of young David well into his adult years. Solly relates that his mother pressured Cox to leave the employ of Macready's theater "as she feared that continued companionship with actors might contaminate his morals."²²

Cox did in fact leave the world of the theater to pursue a career as a painter of landscapes. In 1808, he married Mary Ragg.²³ Mary was the eldest daughter of Cox's landlady in London; shortly after the wedding, they settled in a cottage on Dulwich Common.²⁴

Cox and his wife Mary were thus living in Dulwich, outside of London, when their son, David (junior) was born in 1809. The archives of Dulwich College contain the record of their son's baptism. The closest parish church to Dulwich was, at that time, St. Giles in Camberwell, some twelve miles distant. Choosing a venue closer to home, the senior Coxes had young David baptized in the Chapel of God's Gift at Dulwich College; the chapel records of Baptisms include the entry in 1809 "Nov. 2. David, Son of David and Mary Cox," as illustrated in Figure 4.5.

Little else is recorded of Cox's religiosity after his move to Hereford in 1814 or his return and back to London in 1827, where he resided at a house on Foxley Road in Kennington.²⁵ After

fourteen years there, Cox and his wife Mary left London in June, 1841 and moved to Harborne, a village approximately two miles from Birmingham. Solly reports that the Coxes were anxious to live “in the country” again; Harborne was at the edge of open country then, and Cox would have at his disposal a land of hills and trees where he could sketch the landscape “near at hand and without fatigue.”²⁶

The Coxes settled on a cottage called Greenfield House, on Greenfield Lane, a residential lane a few hundred feet from the local parish church, called, to the present day, St. Peter’s Church at Harborne (Fig. 4.6).²⁷ He was a regular attendee at church services and his participation in parish life extended beyond mere attendance. A review of the archives, of St. Peter’s, presently deposited with the City of Birmingham central archives further reveals Cox’s persistent religious devotion.²⁸

The administrative function of a Church of England parish at the time of Cox’s residence in Harborne was found in the church “Vestry,” more commonly referred to after 1920 as the “Parochial Church Council.” The archive entries for these relevant time periods of Cox’s residence in Harborne include three volumes of minutes of meetings of the St. Peter’s Vestry, the first being meetings held from 1829 to 1857. The minutes of the somewhat irregular meetings from 1843 to 1845 show that Cox was a member of the Vestry of St. Peter’s. The handwritten minutes include his distinctive signature.²⁹

Cox’s Vestry membership indicates that he was not just a “devout” parishioner, but also an active participant in the ecclesiastical and associated civic functions of a Church of England parish. None of the biographies or art historical literature to this day have reported the historical fact of his membership in the Vestry. Cox’s Vestry membership reinforces the anecdotal biographical assertions of his deep religious faith.

Further indications of Cox's religious faith can be found in a number of his extant letters.³⁰ In correspondence with his son, Cox made frequent reference to God. For example, in October, 1840, he wrote:

I am, thank God, very well³¹

And again in October of 1841:

And I hope it may please God to give me health³²

His faith was no doubt severely tested in 1845. In November of that year Mary Cox died and was buried in the churchyard of St. Peter's Harborne. Solly relates that "Cox deeply felt his loss, but being a truly religious man, he did not mourn as one without hope."³³ Just weeks after Mary's passing, Cox wrote to his son and his wife Hannah:

. . . and I believe I have no real cause to be otherwise [out of spirits], for all things I feel are ordained for the very best for my good. I have been at my work with more calmness, and shall, I have no doubt, do better and be better in all ways, with God's grace and assistance.³⁴

The death of his wife forced Cox, to be sure, to confront his own mortality in the context of his religious faith. He wrote on February 15, 1846 to his son:

Better if please God I am spared to finish what I have begun.

And again on September 10 of that year, he wrote to his son:

And now, with love to all, and may God bless you, is the prayer of your affectionate Father,

D. Cox

Although Solly does not analytically discuss Cox's religious faith, he does not shy away from referring to it.³⁵ Cox saw "gloom and mystery as an expression of the infinite, and with respect to his love of depicting "Nature's effects" Solly refers to it as "the divine voice of the water and the wind."³⁶ Solly summarizes Cox's observant religiosity as follows:

It has been remarked that Cox was always a very regular attendant at church, and, although no bigot, as mentioned by Mr. Popkin, he had a strong feeling that it was right “to keep holy the Sabbath-day;” he also desired to pay respect to all religious observances, as well as to the clergy themselves.³⁷

As further evidence of his piety, Solly goes on to relate a story which is indicative of Cox’s sense of devotion and respect for his faith and its institutions.

Some gay young artists, who had come down to stay at the Royal Oak in the summer of 1849, or 1850, in the exuberance of their spirits, had amused themselves with painting some caricatures on the walls under the Lych-gate porch, such as the parson thundering from his pulpit in an undignified attitude, the clerk fast asleep below &c., &c. This much offended Cox’s sense of propriety and decorum, so one evening soon afterwards, just at the close of the day, he called for a lantern, and said, “I am going off to Bettws church to-night.” A young friend, Mr. Edwin Butler, jun., who was present, said, “What for, Mr. Cox?” “Oh!” he replied, “I am going to wash off all those unseemly drawings.” The young man volunteered to accompany him, and presently they sallied forth in the dark, one carrying a lantern and the other a large basin of water. Cox worked away in his usual energetic style until he had removed the whole of the offending sketches...³⁸

Much of the correspondence reproduced in Solly is addressed by Cox to his son. On April 18, 1853, he closes a letter with “God bless you all is the prayer of your affectionate father.”³⁹ At the end of his last illness, in June, 1859, his son David Junior was at Cox’s bedside. In the posthumous memoir, Solly he reports that Cox’s last words to his son were “God Bless you.”⁴⁰

Cox’s religiosity was also known within artistic circles. Upon learning of Cox’s passing, the artist Samuel Palmer, who like Cox’s early teacher Varley was a friend of religious visionary William Blake, wrote Cox’s son a letter of condolence:

Much as we all admired his works, in common with the nation at large, we might also see in him all that was kind and good, and at once honour the artist and venerate the Christian.

Thus our profession, in losing one of its brightest ornaments, sustained a still heavier loss in his example, who showed the ardent

students that devotion to art was not incompatible with devotion to God . . .⁴¹

Cox's religious devotion was also known to his non-artist friends as well. The reference by Palmer to Cox's Christian faith is further substantiated in this account by Solly:

. . . a dream which Cox once had of being brought face to face with Christ, who did not speak, but looked on him and smiled. The great beauty of the Saviour's countenance much impressed him, and he tried, but in vain, to paint it.

It was in the Royal Academy in 1849, that, looking at a sacred subject with a lady, a remark of hers brought up the recollection of this dream to Cox, which he then related to her.⁴²

Cox biographer William Hall, for example, tells of a social gathering where both he and Cox were present and the poem "The Skylark" by Hall himself was read to the assembled guests. Cox had painted *The Skylark* picture and Hall had written the poem about it (1849; Fig. 4.7).⁴³ Hall tells of Cox exhibiting "a degree of emotion which testified to the truth" of the poem, and recalls "what was probably passing through the mind of David Cox when he produced" his painting:

To our young eyes the heaven above us wore a brightness like its
Maker's face. Green earth
To us was something more than beautiful . . .⁴⁴

And this was, as the poet continues, "Thanks to the magic of the painter's art."⁴⁵ The "brightness" of the "Maker's face" of course recalls Blake's "Jerusalem" cited above:

And did the countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills

The light and brightness from the heavens described in the poem is precisely the light that shone upon Westminster Abbey and brought forth the rainbow in Cox's painting of the *Westminster Abbey from Battersea Marsh*, and the same divine light that informed the landscapes of Turner and Constable as I discussed previously.

Hall's intimate friendship with Cox makes him uniquely qualified to distill aspects of Cox's religious faith for his narrative biography. Building upon the earlier Solly account of Cox's life, Hall confirms that Cox's last words were "God Bless you all" when he died on June 7, 1859.⁴⁶

Hall describes Cox as:

A devout Churchman and always evinced great respect for religious observances, and, if the weather were not too unfavourable, made it a point of duty to attend church on the Sabbath, at home or abroad.

On those occasions he was grave and serious, and appeared to have laid aside for the day all light thoughts and professional considerations. He never, whilst the author was acquainted with him, painted on Sundays⁴⁷

He adds that if Cox was:

confined to the house by indisposition or bad weather, devoted some portion of the day to reading the Prayer-book and the Bible. The writer used frequently to visit him on Sunday evenings, . . . he would take down the large Bible, and devote the evening to a serious, attentive perusal of its contents.⁴⁸

His attachment to his parish church, where he had served in the Vestry, was deep and continuous throughout his life after settling in Harborne. Hall reports,

Nearly every Sunday morning when at home, as regularly as the day came round, his venerable grey head might have been seen above the top of his pew in Harborne Church, devoutly bent in prayer, or gazing attentively at the preacher, whose words imparted comfort and consolation.⁴⁹

Cox chose to be buried in St. Peter's Harborne churchyard, next to his wife Mary, who preceded him in death by fourteen years. One additional insight into Cox's faith is found at St. Peter's Church, in the form of a stained-glass commission by Hall and several other friends of the artist (Fig. 4.8).⁵⁰

The Cox Memorial Window at St. Peter's Harborne

Shortly after Cox died, a group of his friends organized a memorial project to honor the deceased artist by placing a bust likeness of their friend at the Public Art Gallery in Birmingham. Subsequently, another memorial was planned, the installation of a memorial window at St. Peter's Church, where Cox worshipped and was buried.⁵¹ It was unfinished at the time Solly published Cox's biography in 1873. William Hall's biography, however, was published in 1881 after the memorial window was installed, and a full account of the memorial is given there.

Hall was an intimate friend and companion of Cox's. The memorial stained glass window sheds light (both figuratively and in a religious context) on the link between Cox's religious faith and his perception of nature.⁵² And of course, the memorial window prominently visible behind the main altar of the church preserves his presence in the sanctuary as much as his body rests in the churchyard (Fig. 4.9). The window, installed in March, 1874, was reviewed in the *Birmingham Daily Post* on April 1, 1874.⁵³ Cox's friends commissioned and funded by subscription this memorial. The content of the window design, commissioned by those who knew Cox well, reflects the artist's views and understanding of his artistic subject matter and predilection with the Book of Nature. The window is described in the newspaper review thus:

The strong love of nature, the looking through nature up to nature's God, is the simple object portrayed, and how successfully this has been done a mere glance at the window, now completed, full proves. The centre of the window contains within a circle, which is banded in its upper part by a rainbow, the scene of the Creation, in which Adam views the marvelous works of nature in the infinite varieties of life revealed to him. In the upper half of the window appear two vesica-shaped spaces, in which "Spring" and "Summer" are respectively painted, the former flinging blossoms to the earth, whilst the latter is seated amidst a luxuriant growth of flowers. Corresponding to these are "Autumn," with her wreath of ripe corn and fruits, and "Winter," whose darkly-wrapped figure stands well out against the bare branches and snow-mantled ground. Bands, which surround and interlace the whole of the

design, bear texts from the Psalms, bearing upon the subject of the glory of God, as exemplified in the works of nature.⁵⁴

The religious significance of the individual details is self-evident. The setting of the window directly behind the main altar at St. Peter's links its content and dedication to Cox with the worship of God in the liturgy. This venue, where Cox worshipped, served on the Vestry, and is buried also contextualizes the man to a permanent presence in the Church, in ways that the memorial bust commissioned by his friends for the secular Birmingham Art Gallery contextualizes his place in the art world.⁵⁵

On the window we find a rainbow, circumscribing the scene of the creation of Adam and the natural world. I have already discussed the religious symbolism of the rainbow in Scripture. The contents of the window give pictorial evidence to the creation narrative from the *Book of Genesis*. It could be said that the figures of Spring, Summer, and Fall stand for birth, reproduction and fecundity, and Winter stands for death—all stages in the life of man, visualized in the context of Creation. I propose that the very visualization of these concepts and processes are appropriate in a memorial to an artist who himself created visual representations of Creation on paper and on canvas. These visual representations were places where, as the dedication plaque beneath the window states, the images are “To the Glory of God” and “in Memory of David Cox, Artist.”

The key phrases in the newspaper article, are, of course, “looking to nature up to nature's God,” and “the glory of God as exemplified in the works of nature,” all consistent with the historical and contextual antecedent concepts of nature as the Second Book of God, which I will further explore in the balance of this chapter. Based on the circumstantial evidence presented thus far, Cox, I argue, adhered to these beliefs.

Nature as the Second Book of God: historical and contextual evidence

Cox did not set out to paint overtly religious landscapes, even though from time to time he painted ruined abbeys, such as *Tintern Abbey* (c. 1840; Fig. 4.10), or images with religious references, as we have discussed with *Westminster Abbey from Battersea Marsh*.⁵⁶ But the milieu in which Cox painted, almost exclusively, images of the natural world, was fundamentally grounded in a historical and theological perception of nature as a reflection of the Divine. It was believed in his circle that a close reading of nature led to a close understanding of God. Nature is, after the Bible, what I refer to as the “Second Book of God,” the “first” book being the Bible itself.

Psalm 121, with which a devout Cox would have been well acquainted, proclaims that, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.”⁵⁷ And Cox would, to be sure, be familiar with the description in the Book of Deuteronomy, of the Promised Land:

But the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of *hills and valleys* and drinketh water from the rain of heaven. A land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it
...⁵⁸

Cox’s predilection for the scenery of northern Wales accounts for his numerous depictions of the mountains and hills which dominate the landscape. Someone with Cox’s deep faith would visually associate this familiar landscape with the scriptural references to those landscape features mentioned in Deuteronomy, the Psalms, and elsewhere in scripture.

Theological associations of landscape with God predate eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artistic discourses. Margaret Goehring, writing in *Space, Place and Ornament: The Function of Landscape in Medieval Manuscript Illumination*, notes that in the Middle Ages,

“philosophical and religious systems . . . invested little value in the natural world for its own sake but saw it primarily as an ontological reflection of God.”⁵⁹

“Nature” as Goehring points out, was a “shadowed mirror” that reflected Man’s fall into sin as much as something “to be celebrated as a manifestation of the divine.” This dichotomy of corruption and perfection in landscape is I believe reflected in art historical theories in Cox’s time, whether the “perfection” is to be found in the ideal landscape depictions advocated by Reynolds, or “corruption” in the less than ideal “effects” which Reynolds condemned as “deformities,” as discussed in Chapter 2 above.⁶⁰

Medieval Christianity believed that the natural world, created by God, was ordered in such a way as to provide “instruction to humanity.” This concept of the “Book of Nature” found support in the Bible, such as, for example, in the book of Job wherein it was written:

but the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of mankind.⁶¹

The perception of nature as the Second Book of God persisted in Western European artistic endeavors well past the medieval period, to the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation and into the Age of the Enlightenment. Pamela Jones’ groundbreaking article, “Federico Borromeo as a Patron of Landscapes and Still Lifes: Christian Optimism in Italy ca. 1600,” advances the discourse from the medieval to the modern era.⁶² Federico Borromeo served as cardinal-archbishop of Milan in the early seventeenth century.⁶³ Federico has a passion for landscapes. Jones reports that by 1631, the year of his death, Federico owned some thirty-one landscape paintings, mostly by Dutch and Flemish artists.⁶⁴

Jones sees a religious context for the creation, collection and display of landscape paintings. She quotes Borromeo's devotional meditation on the description of the natural world as it relates to its accurate depiction: ". . . can it not be said how excellently divine wisdom has demonstrated the value of its very great works?"⁶⁵

The use of paintings of the natural world for spiritual contemplation is confirmed by Borromeo's autobiographical writings, which Jones quotes:

...I have had my room ornamented with paintings, and I have made sure that all of them are excellent; there is not one vulgar or cheap thing. And the pleasure I take in looking at these painted views has always seemed to me as beautiful as open and wide views [of nature].... Instead of them, when they are not had, paintings enclose in narrow places, the space of earth and the heavens, and we go wandering, and making long [spiritual] journeys standing still in our room....

Federico Borromeo's spiritual contemplation of nature described in this quote lends credence to the reported description of the Cox memorial stained glass window at St. Peter's – Harborne, discussed above. Indeed, Borromeo anticipates the contemplative impact of the Cox window when, as Jones reports, he "explained [in his autobiographical notes] that God endowed nature with sensory appeal in order to attract contemplative minds."⁶⁶

While the theological and spiritual implications of the natural world discussed so far come from the Roman Catholic tradition, no less can be said about their acceptance and promotion by Protestant reformers from the late sixteenth century onward. Of particular importance are religious notions of the natural world developed in the Dutch Reformation which found expression in Dutch landscape paintings. The Dutch Protestant view of God in nature found its way into Dutch landscape paintings that the English were fond of collecting. These collecting habits no doubt had a subsequent impact on English art production, patronage, and reception.

More or less contemporaneously with Catholic Tridentine reforms, Protestant Dutch reformers adopted the *Confession* of 1561.⁶⁷ Article 1 of the *Dutch* (also called “*Belgic*”) *Confession*, deals with the belief in “One Only God.”⁶⁸ Significantly, the very next entry, Article 2 is entitled *By What Means God is made known to us*. The Confession states:

We know him by two means; first, by the creation, preservation and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to contemplate the invisible things of God, namely His power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says, Rom. 1:20. All which things are sufficient to convince men, and leave them without excuse. Secondly, he makes himself more clearly fully known to us by his holy and divine Word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to his glory and our salvation.

The scriptural basis for the book of God in nature is also clearly set out in the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, which is cited in Article 2 of the Confession:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.⁶⁹

The theological implications of the observation and study of nature were also commonplace features of English religiosity in the seventeenth century and beyond. John Maynard, an Anglican minister in England active in the period following the Stuart Restoration, published *The Beauty and Order of the Creation* in London in 1668.⁷⁰ In it, Maynard writes:

to spend more hours studying this great Book of Nature, which the Lord hath spread open before us, therein describing unto us those invisible things of his Eternal Power and God-head in such plain and legible Characters, that he which runneth may read them: every main part being (as it were) a several Volume, the Heaven, the Aire the Earth and Waters, every Creature in these being a several Leaf or page: every part of each Creature; every natural property, quality or created virtue in each, being a several line, or (at least) word or syllable...⁷¹

Closer to Cox's time, David Hume published *Four Dissertations* in 1757, including the *First, on The Natural History of Religion*, (1757; Fig. 4.11).⁷² In the very opening paragraph of the Introduction, Hume acknowledges the organizing principle of God in nature:

The whole frame of nature bespeaks an intelligent author; and no rational enquirer can, after serious reflection, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion.⁷³

This influential treatise encapsulates contemporary ideas about of the notion of God in nature, a view prevalent in the England to which Cox was born later in the eighteenth century.

Pictorial evidence: deformities

If the observed beauty of nature served to instruct the viewer as evidence for the Divine and of His benevolence, whether in direct observation or in a landscape painting, it was equally true that damaged nature served to remind the viewer of the consequences of sin, of the inevitability of death, and of the need for repentance and reconciliation to obtain Divine mercy and salvation. As evidence of this potent signifier, we see in the landscapes of Cox and his contemporaries recurring tropes: the dead or blasted tree, the fallen limb, and splintered trunk, all spiritually-loaded symbols.⁷⁴

A painting by William Turner of Oxford (1789-1862) illustrates this trope, front and center. Entitled *Oak Tree in New Forest*, it depicts the massive trunk and dead branches of an oak tree, with no apparent sign of life (c. 1830; Fig. 4.12).⁷⁵ It stands in front of a copse of trees that are partially bare-limbed and otherwise with brown foliage, possibly in the process of dying, in the symbolic "death" of deciduous foliage from fall into winter. The far distance possibly contradicts the fall foliage supposition, for these trees are all uniformly green. Turner's painting could well be read as a metaphor for the process of living, dying, and death, as illustrated by the perspectival depiction of the subject trees in various temporal stages. Turner of Oxford was

Cox's contemporary and would have been well known to Cox by virtue of their membership in the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolour. Like Turner, Cox also utilized the "damaged tree" trope in a number of his compositions.

In his discussion of Ruisdael's *The Jewish Cemetery*, John Walford points out that "dead trees, waterfalls, ruins, whether of sacred or secular buildings, were commonly associated with the transience of life" (c. 1650s; Fig. 4.13).⁷⁶ The Ruisdael painting also depicts a rainbow adjacent to a church partially illuminated by light breaking through stormclouds. Walford underscores the juxtaposition of the dead tree on the right of the painting, symbolizing the transience of life, and the rainbow on the left side of the composition as both a symbol of God's covenant with man after the Great Flood of Genesis, but also a reminder of God's judgment at the end of life.⁷⁷ Cox would have been acquainted with the work of Ruisdael; at least two of his works, including one with a blasted tree, were in the Desenfans-Bourgeois collection in London, subsequently in Dulwich. The tropes discussed by Walford and illustrated by Turner and Ruisdael can also be found in landscape depictions by Cox.

For example, Cox's depiction of *Bolsover Castle* features in the foreground a massive tree limb with a ragged end as if violently torn off from a nearby tree (c. 1830s; Fig. 4.14).⁷⁸ The torn limb may signify the transience and fragility of life, or impending death. This suggestion of death is enhanced by the figure of a man depicted in the painting in dark shadows, his back to the viewer, leading a horse and a mastiff down the sloping ground into a void-dark valley. A similar effect is shown in a detail of Cox's moody exhibition work, *In Windsor Forest* where a hooded rider and a walking companion go into a dark forest by a dead or dying tree (c. 1640s; Fig. 4.15).⁷⁹ There is a feeling of foreboding in both of these images.

In both illustrations, the individuals are faceless, with their backs turned to the viewer, as if leaving the world of the living and heading into uncertain darkness, where the light of nature, the divine light of God, is diminished. But in both images, there is light at the end of the figures' journey. We see in both *Bolsover Castle* and in *Windsor Forest* the depiction of light beams illuminating the distant castle, or indeed, the landscape in the far distance beyond the path in the forest. Walford has pointed out that "light-beams, as an image of divine providence breaking into a darkened world, are commonplace" in seventeenth-century religious art.⁸⁰ He illustrates this point with Rembrandt's *Baptism of the Eunuch*, which incorporates both the illuminating heavenly light and the blasted tree (1636; Fig. 4.16).⁸¹ The darkened world and the blasted tree create a sense of foreboding that has religious significance. We find that there is theological evidence related to this sense of foreboding in a blasted tree or a darkened forest. For example, in 1581, Anglican minister Stephen Batman wrote:

Whatsoever hath bene, is, or shal be to proceede, either Celestial or Terrestriall, can not be without the fore-ordinance and providence of God, who sending these fore-warnings, as instruments to former ages, doth by the like wonderful shewe of manifest appearance foretell no lesse dangers to happen among the generations of this last posterity.⁸²

Batman suggests that the destructive forces found in nature are forewarnings of an angry God who punishes transgressors. To the viewer of a landscape painting, the blasted tree stands as a warning of the coming judgment of humankind as much as the darkness suggests death or dying. Cox was surely aware of this discourse, as suggested by the foregoing figures.

I previously noted Cox's predilection for the wild scenery of Wales. I discussed in Chapter 3 his depiction of Mount Snowdon in both topographical accuracy and naturalistic brushstroke, reflecting nature as the eye perceived it. Is there a meaning behind the depiction of a mountain? Cox's repeated depictions of the mountainous scenery of Wales recall the comment of

a Welsh observer in 1686 who noted that “Snowdon [was] a ‘Paradise’: I am sure ‘tis one of the nearest places to Heaven that is in this world.”⁸³ I agree that this comment is indicative of “the growing association of mountains and religion” leading up to Cox’s time.⁸⁴

Keith Thomas who reported the preceding comments about mountains has also postulated that “by the later eighteenth century, the appreciation of nature . . . had been converted into a sort of religious act.”⁸⁵ He quotes Coleridge in 1803 as finding a God that is everywhere, and Sir Richard Hoare in 1786 as holding that Alpine scenery could “cure even an atheist into belief.”⁸⁶ The religious predilection for “wild” landscape which was an underlying principle for Coleridge and Hoare also proved to be foundational for landscape artists, such as Gainsborough, Sandby, and Constable.⁸⁷

Cox’s landscape paintings exhibit an overarching privileging of the “wild,” uncultivated scenery of England and Wales. His entire oeuvre certainly places him in a corresponding foundational position as these other artists. But going beyond the artistic community, it is also worth considering other antecedents beyond its boundaries, namely in so-called Natural Theology.

Faith and science: God in nature?

Men of science, no less than artists, adhered to the perception of God in nature that formed the cultural context of Cox’s perception of landscape. For example, Robert Boyle (1627-1691), considered by many to be a pioneer in modern chemistry and physics, wrote extensively about the interrelationship of God and nature, and belief in God and science.⁸⁸ A compilation of Boyle’s writings was published in London in 1725 as *The Philosophical Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq.* and included two separate theses, one entitled *A Free Inquiry*

*into the Vulgar Notion of Nature, and the other The High Veneration Man's Intellect owes to God.*⁸⁹

The “Free Inquiry” is a foundational argument in the development of the arguments on natural theology of later writers of the nineteenth century. To Boyle, the revelation of God in nature is to be found not only in the perfection of the world (in artistic terms, we might think of Sir Joshua Reynolds's praise of the “ideal landscape”), but also in the irregularities of the world (artistically, we might think of the “accidents of nature” which Reynolds deemed unworthy of landscape painting). Boyle sees God in both; he writes:

When we consider the world, and the physical changes that happen in it, with regard to the divine wisdom and providence; the arguments for the affirmative ought, in their kind, to have more force than those for the negative. For it seems more allowable, to argue a providence from the exquisite structure and symmetry of the mundane bodies, and the apt subordination and train of causes, than to infer from some physical irregularities, that things are not fram'd and administered by a wise author and governour. For the characters and impressions of wisdom, conspicuous in the curious fabric, and orderly train of things, can, with no probability, be referr'd to blind chance, but to a most intelligent and designing agent. Whereas, on the other hand, the irregularities we speak of, are incomparably fewer than those things which are regular, and produc'd in an orderly way; and the divine maker of the universe being a most free agent, and having an intellect infinitely superior to ours, may in the production of seemingly irregular phenomena, have ends unknown to us, which even these irregularities may be very fit to compass.⁹⁰

Boyle fully endorses the concept of nature as the Second Book of God. In “High Veneration,” he writes:

As there are two chief ways to arrive at the knowledge of God's attributes; the contemplation of his works, and the study of his word; it may be doubted whether either, or both of these will suffice to acquaint us with all his perfections.⁹¹

Contrary responses to Sir Joshua Reynolds's advocacy for the "ideal landscape," discussed in chapter 2 above, may well have been based on the religious notion of finding God in nature regardless of any perceived "perfection." John Ruskin, for example, writing in his magnum opus *Modern Painters*, proposed that "the truth of nature is a part of the truth of God."⁹²

T.J. Gorringer has noted that Constable criticized the emphasis on "ideal art, which in landscape is sheer nonsense."⁹³ And that Ruskin, who favored the naturalism of Constable, Turner and Cox, argued that in the depiction of ideal landscape, and by inference, the manipulation of landscape to achieve picturesque effect, was problematic. Ruskin's reason was his objection to "the painter's taking upon him to modify God's works at his pleasure."⁹⁴ Gorringer has argued that the cultural context of the religious outlook in a society or an age informs the artistic output of that period. Thus, even though a painting may not display an overtly religious theme, it may exist "within a context where every detail was understood from the perspective of faith."⁹⁵

Of immediate relevance to Cox's world of the early nineteenth century is the literary codification of the antecedent notions of God in nature in English clergyman William Paley's *Natural Theology or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* of 1802 (Fig. 4.17). This book was a bestseller in its day, and saw subsequent editions spanning all the years of Cox's adult life. It was much used in sermons and theological discourse in the decades after its publication.

The number of editions of Paley's work attests to this popularity: by 1807, it had been republished eleven times, and three more by 1813.⁹⁶ Keith Francis's insightful account of British sermons on Natural Theology brackets the popular acceptance of Paley's concept of God in

nature from the date of its publication in 1802 to the date of publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859.⁹⁷

In his analysis of sermons in the first half of the nineteenth century, Francis quotes William Enfield, who wrote, in 1808,

Dull, atheist! could a giddy dance
Of atoms, lawless hurl'd,
Construct so wonderful, so wise,
So harmoniz'd a world?⁹⁸

In one such sermon, the Reverend Thomas Dale preached that:

The works of God in nature are constantly symbolical of the works of God in grace; and they who are acute to discern and diligent to explore the correspondence, may 'read sermons in stones, and find good in everything.' ... whatever is now a law was a miracle when first ordained.⁹⁹

The cultural context of Protestant attitudes toward nature, and landscape in particular, was well summarized by Peter Harrison thus:

There [are] two ways of knowing God: the contemplation of the created order, and knowledge of the sacred text.¹⁰⁰

Thus, the act of the artist contemplating nature in landscape painting was fundamentally (to the "believer") the act of contemplating God.

While Paley's *Natural Theology* may have been overthrown by Darwin, it nevertheless was the culmination of the concept of God in nature in nineteenth-century English religiosity as preached to and understood by the devout of Cox's time. Darwin's scientific challenge and upending of Paley's work postdated Cox, who died in the very year – 1859 – that *Origin of Species* was published.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has been aimed at establishing the religious, pre-Darwin cultural context of Cox's world, which, with its emphasis of God in nature, would plausibly have informed Cox's views of nature, and the naturalistic content of his landscapes. We know from the biographical accounts of Solly, and particularly Hall, that Cox was deeply religious and observant, and was a devoted reader of the Scriptures. Lacking other primary evidence in Cox's own hand, the art historian would do well to consider the religious context of his times as informing Cox in his oeuvre: that he painted landscapes, and adopted a naturalistic style, as a reflection of his faith in a God that was to be found in nature.

End Notes To Chapter 4

¹ See generally Peter Bicknell and Robert Woof, *The Lake District Discovered 1810-1850: The Artists, The Tourists, and Wordsworth* (Grasmere: The Trustees of Dove Cottage, 1983). David Cox was included in this exhibition. More recently, an exhibition at the Wordsworth Museum in Grasmere featured works by a multitude of artists, many in Wordsworth's circle, who painted in the Lake District. Cecilia Powell and Stephen Hebron, *Savage Grandeur and Noblest Thoughts: Discovering the Lake District 1750-1820* (Grasmere: Wordsworth Trust, 2010).

² Bicknell, *The Lake District Discovered*, 27.

³ For an excellent discussion of British predilection for landscape paintings, Tim Barringer and Oliver Fairclough, *Pastures Green and Dark Satanic Mills: The British Passion for Landscape* (New York: American Federation of Arts, 2014). Barringer cites to Blake's *Jerusalem* to outline what he identifies as "the tension between these two opposites – nature and culture, country and city." Barringer suggests that English landscape painters responded to this tension by generating a "heightened awareness of the natural world" and a "contrasting world of natural bliss." Ibid.

⁴ Antique Collectors Club, *The Royal Watercolour Society: The First Fifty Years 1805-1855* (London: Antique Collectors Club Ltd, 1992), 22-23. This volume includes comprehensive exhibition records until 1855.

⁵ N. Neal Solly, *Memoir of the Life of David Cox* (London: Rodart Reproductions, 1973), 17. Cox and Varley were longtime members of the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours, sometimes called the Old Watercolour Society or OWS. Cox and Varley remained long-time associates throughout their lives and exhibited together for several decades. Varley exhibited at the Royal Watercolour Society continuously until 1842, the year he died; Cox exhibited at the Society until 1855, four years before his death. Ibid. Blake died in 1827; Cox likely knew of Blake's ideologies directly and through Varley. See also Robert N. Essick, "Blake's 1812 Exhibition" in *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* Vol. 27, no. 2 (Fall 1993). Cox is mentioned by name in Essick's discussion of the exhibition.

⁶ One hundred and fifty years earlier, the poet John Milton articulated the notion of God as light in *Paradise Lost*, Book 3, lines 1-6.

HAIL, holy Light, offspring of Heaven first-born!
Or of the Eternal coeternal beam
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity-dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate!

Light was an important spiritual trope for Turner, as it was for Cox, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁷ David Cox, *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours* (London: S&J Fuller, 1813). Plate LXX is also entitled "Rainbow Effect."

⁸ William Wordsworth illustrates man's response to the sign of the rainbow in his poem *My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold*:

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man:
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

The concluding line suggests a covenant bound by natural (I suggest, religious) piety.

⁹ For a general history of Westminster Abbey see Dean Eric Abbott, et al., *Westminster Abbey* (London: Annenberg School Press, 1972).

¹⁰ An early poem c. 1501 by William Dunbar entitled *In Honour of the City of London* describes the river thus,

Above all rivers thy river hath renowne,
Whose beryl streames, pleasant and preclare,
Under thy lusty walles runneth down;
Where many a swanne doth swimme with winges fair,
Where many a barge doth sail, and row with oar,
Where many a ship doth rest with top-royal.
O town of townes, patron and not compare,
London, thou art the flower of Cities all.

Three hundred years later, William Wordsworth, in his poem *Composed Upon Westminster Bridge*, September 3, 1802, wrote:

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor valley, rock or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

Cox's image in Figure 4.1 captures the spirit of both poets in describing the river.

¹¹ Genesis 9:8-16, King James Version.

¹² David E. Pedgley, *January 1809: Synoptic Meteorology of Floods and Storms Over Britain* (Reading: Royal Meteorological Society, 2015). This publication is part of the Royal Meteorological Society's *Occasional Papers on Meteorological History*, as no. 16. It can be accessed at www.rmets.org. I will henceforth refer to it as the *RMS Paper*.

¹³ *RMS Paper*, 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁵ *RMS Paper*, 5. Robert Havell, Jr. (1793-1878) was a member of the Havell family of Reading which included engravers and painters. He is better known as the principal engraver of John James Audubon's *Birds of America*. His cousin William Havell was a watercolor painter and close friend of Cox; Solly, 25-26. For a complete accounting of the Havell family, see Lucy Peltz, "Havell Family" in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

¹⁶ Ezekiel 1:25-28, King James Version.

¹⁷ Estelle E. Lovatt, "Worshipping Nature's Glory: Constable, Gainsborough, and Turner at the Royal Academy," *Art of England*, Vol. 99 (2013): 16-23.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

¹⁹ Constable was born seven years before Cox, and died 22 years prior to Cox. Their lives overlapped, although Cox's biographies do not mention Constable. Their presence in the London art circles in the first four decades of the nineteenth century virtually assures that they were familiar with each other's work. One can find parallel developments in their approach to naturalism in landscape, particularly informed by religious convictions. Cox, however, according to his biographers, exhibits an optimism that seems to this author to be lacking in Constable. An excellent biography of Constable is Jonathan Clarkson, *Constable* (London: Phaidon Press, 2010). A memoir of the life of Constable by his friend, C.R. Leslie was published in 1843, two years after the artist's death: C.R. Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995).

²⁰ Lovatt, 21. Lovatt wrote these observations in her review of the Exhibition at the Royal Academy, London entitled "Constable, Gainsborough, Turner, and the Making of Landscape," February, 2013. Quoting Sir Joshua Reynolds's dictum that "a mere copier of nature can never produce anything great," she replied: "Maybe it's time we proved Reynolds wrong by kneeling down in front of these three landscapists with a level of solemn reverence that is normally reserved for scripture paintings."

²¹ Solly, 2.

²² Solly, 11.

²³ William Hall, *A Biography of David Cox* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1881), 17.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 44.

²⁶ Solly, 105-107.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Archives, St. Peter's, Harborne, DRO 61, 3. *Vestry*, box 3/1 Minutes (3 vols.) 1829-57.

²⁹ This author personally inspected the Vestry meeting minutes and ascertained Cox's participation.

³⁰ Every reference to "God" in these letters is reverential and indicative of deep faith. Unlike twenty-first century usage, during Cox's time any mention of God in non-reverential terms would likely be considered a profane taking of the Lord's name in vain.

³¹ Solly, 99. The letter is dated October 8, 1840.

³² Ibid., 114. The letter is dated October 24, 1841.

³³ Ibid., 137.

³⁴ Solly, 138. I find the statement to be indicative of Cox's Christian optimism, a reverential attitude which enabled him to deal emotionally with his wife's death and to carry on a vigorous artistic life.

³⁵ William Hall, in his biography of Cox, deals more directly with the significance of (sun)light, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

³⁶ Solly, 311-312.

³⁷ Ibid., 175.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 229. See also the letter from Cox to David junior on July 23, 1855. Ibid., 237, and the letters of November 8, 1855, November 14, 1855, and July 18, 1857. Ibid., 240.

⁴⁰ Solly, 300-301.

⁴¹ Solly, 305.

⁴² Solly, 305-306.

⁴³ Solly, 141-144. William Hall was a close friend of David Cox and the author of the poem *The Skylark* in place of Cox's painting by the same name. He is frequently cited by Solly. Solly, 346.

He is one of the subscribers that funded the painting of Cox's portrait. Sir John Watson Gordon accompanied Cox to Edinburgh for the painting of the portrait. Solly, 237, 241. Hall's biography of David Cox, which has been called anecdotal, is especially credible due to the author's intimate acquaintance with Cox.

⁴⁴ Solly, 142.

⁴⁵ Hall, 143-145.

⁴⁶ Hall, 182. Hall was one of the pallbearers at Cox's funeral.

⁴⁷ Hall, 186.

⁴⁸ Hall, 186-187.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 187.

⁵⁰ The Cox window is directly behind the main altar of the Church.

⁵¹ Solly, 306.

⁵² Hall, 187-189.

⁵³ Hall, 188-189.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Hall, 176.

⁵⁶ Barlow, *The Melting Touch of Nature*, 54, Plate XXXV. The picture is discussed by Stephen Wildman in his essay in the same book at page 19. *Tintern Abbey* was exhibited at the FSU Museum of Fine Arts, "18th-19th Century Study Exhibition" curated by Aaron de Groft, October 19 – November 17, 2002.

⁵⁷ Psalm 121:1-2, King James Version.

⁵⁸ Deuteronomy 11:11-12, King James Version.

⁵⁹ Margaret Goehring, *Space, Place and Ornament: The Function of Landscape in Medieval Manuscript Illumination* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2013), 11.

⁶⁰ Ibid. It is worth recalling at this point Sir Joshua Reynolds's views on the deformities or lack of perfection in nature, Robert R. Wark, ed., *Sir Joshua Reynolds Discourses on Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 44-45.

⁶¹ Job 12:7-10, King James Version.

Didactic medieval manuscripts, including "bestiaries," sought to classify the natural world in both spiritual and scientific spheres. The *Aberdeen Bestiary* is one such document. It

was first recorded in an inventory of the old royal library at Westminster Palace, in 1542. This library was assembled by Henry VIII after the dissolution of the monasteries, to house manuscripts and documents confiscated from these dissolved institutions. The manuscript found its way to Scotland by the year 1624 when James I, through his Scottish royal librarian, transferred it along with other manuscripts to Marischal College in Scotland. Marischal College became part of Aberdeen University in 1860, the Bestiary became part of the University's library.

The bestiary itself provides a clue as to the didactic purpose of the work: in Folio 25v, the author states that his purpose is "to improve the minds of ordinary people, in such a way that the soul will at least perceive physically things which it has difficulty grasping mentally: that what they have difficulty comprehending with their ears, they will perceive with their eyes."

The didactic spiritual and the didactic natural considerations of medieval literature and art were essentially inseparable. One informed the other. This merger came out of two earlier sources, the secular, classical *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder and the religious instructions of St. Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologies*. Pliny's work, of the first century C.E., was a 37 volume compilation of human knowledge, both observable fact and fanciful legend.

St. Isidore was a bishop of Seville, who died on or about 636 C.E. In his *Etymologies*, he set out to compile all that was known in his time about science, mathematics, and theology. Isidore likely relied not only on Pliny's *Natural History* but also on another earlier set of writings, the *Hexameron* of St. Ambrose of the 4th century, C.E. Ambrose's work contained a series of allegorical sermons on the story of creation of the Book of Genesis. No surprise, then, that the *Aberdeen Bestiary* includes both illustrative depictions and textual discussion of the creation cycle.

⁶² Pamela M. Jones, "Federico Borromeo as a Patron of Landscapes and Still Lifes: Christian Optimism in Italy ca. 1600," *Art Bulletin* 70, no. 2 (1988): 261-272.

⁶³ Ibid. His uncle, Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, was a leading advocate of reform in the Catholic Church's Council of Trent (1545-1563). Carlo Borromeo was intimately involved in artistic patronage and theory; significantly he was the author of Decree XXV of the Council of Trent, dealing with the role of art in the religious devotions of Catholic faithful.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 262.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 266. In particular, see footnote 28 and accompanying text.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 271.

⁶⁷ *Belgic Confession*, www.creeds.net/belgic.

⁶⁸ Ibid. The first entry, Article I of the *Belgic Confession* states: "We all believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God; and that he is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all good."

⁶⁹ Romans 1:20, King James Version.

⁷⁰ John Maynard, *The Beauty and Order of the Creation* (London, 1668).

⁷¹ Maynard, 38.

⁷² David Hume, *Four Dissertations* (London: A. Muller, 1757).

⁷³ Hume, 1.

⁷⁴ The “blasted tree” trope is certainly classified as one of the “deformities” of nature that Sir Joshua Reynolds railed against in landscape painting, as discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

⁷⁵ Timothy Wilcox and Christopher Titterington, *William Turner of Oxford (1789-1862)* (Oxford: Oxfordshire County Museum, 1984), 54, Figure 48. The picture, now in a private collection, was with Agnew’s in 1972.

⁷⁶ E. John Walford, *Jacob van Ruisdael and the Perception of Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 99.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 96-99.

⁷⁸ Agnew’s *English Watercolours and Drawings* (London: Thos. Agnew & Sons Ltd, 1997), Figure 58. The exhibition was curated by Andrew Wyld.

⁷⁹ Echoes Auction Gallery, *Fine Art Auction, October 26, 2013* (Long Island, N.Y.: Echoes Antiques and Auction Gallery, 2013), Lot 0362. The composition bears similarities to Cox’s *Windsor – The Queen* illustrated in the exhibition catalogue for the 1983 at the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery; Wildman, *David Cox*, 88, Figure 74.

⁸⁰ Walford, 39.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, & Memory in Early Modern Britain & Ireland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 339.

⁸³ Keith Thomas. *Man and the Natural World, Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 260. Thomas does not identify the Welsh observer.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 260.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 261.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 265-266.

⁸⁸ An excellent biography of Boyle dealing with his views on God and Science is by Michael Hunter, *Boyle: Between God and Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁸⁹ Peta Shaw, M.D., ed., *The Philosophical Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq.* (London: W and J. Innys, 1725).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 264.

⁹² John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Volume 3 (London: George Allen, 1906), 141.

⁹³ T.J. Gorringer, *Earthly Visions: Theology and the Challenges of Art*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 111.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 34, 105-139.

⁹⁶ Keith A. Francis and William Gibson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of The British Sermon 1689-1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 446.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 444-462.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 452.

⁹⁹ Thomas Dale, *A Memorial of Pastoral Ministrations: Sermons, Principally on Points of Christian Experience, Delivered in St. Matthew's Chapel, Demark Hill* (London: Richardson, 1837), 93-94.

¹⁰⁰ Peter Harrison, *The Bible: Protestantism and the Rise of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 45.



Figure 4.1 David Cox, *Westminster Abbey from Battersea Marsh*, 1813. Aquatint, Plate LXX of *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours*, London: S & J Fuller.



Fig.3: Places across Britain where flooding was recorded in January 1809.
For additional places in the Thames valley, see Fig.2.

In Exeter,

'the continued fall of rain and snow which we have experienced for some time past occasioned the waters of the river Exe to rise to a most tremendous height. The parish of St Thomas the Apostle ..., the Exe Island, and the lands adjoining were completely inundated. In the afternoon of Tuesday [24th] the streets in St Thomas exhibited a most melancholy appearance, the shops were shut, being full of water, and the inhabitants obliged to betake themselves to their upper rooms; at this time trees, field-gates, wrecks of various descriptions, and a number of sheep, were bore away by the rapidity of the current. At 4 o'clock this morning, the water attained its greatest height,

Figure 4.2 David E. Pedgley, *January 1809: Synoptic Meteorology of Floods and Storms Over Britain*. RMS Occasional Papers on Meteorological History No. 16, 2015.



Figure 4.3 Robert Havell, *Reconstruction of Wallingford Bridge on the Thames*, 1810. Aquatint from *January 1809: Synoptic Meteorology of Floods and Storms Over Britain*. RMS Occasional Papers on Meteorological History No. 16, 2015.



Figure 4.4 John Constable, *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, 1831. Oil on canvas. National Gallery, London.

Baptized 1809		£ s. d.
	Brought over	16 0 0
Nov. 1.	Edward, son of Thos. & Mariah Fleming	1 0 0
Nov. 2.	David, son of David & Mary Cox	2 6
Nov. 5.	James, son of Joseph & Elizabeth Swan	1 0 0
Nov. 12.	Elyz (daughter) of Thos. & Ann Boyd	2 0 0
Nov. 14.	William, son of Stephen & Elyz Hall	1 0 0
Nov. 27.	Samuel & John, twins of John & Helen Washet	2 0 0
Dec. 10.	Elyz, daughter of Thos. & Ann Birt	1 0 0
Dec. 11.	Thos. son of James & Mary Laydon	2 6
Dec. 25.	Wm. son of Wm. & Ann Johnson	1 0 0
Baptized 1810		
Jan. 14.	Wm. Robert, son of Robt. & Ann Ridley	1 0 0
Jan. 21.	Elyz, daughter of Wm. & Ann Liff	1 0 0
Jan. 28.	Elyz, daughter of Wm. & Anne Powell	1 0 0
Jan. 29.	Elyz, daughter of James & Ann, west	1 0 0
Feb. 11.	George, son of George & Sarah Bantell	1 0 0
Feb. 10.	Robt. son of Henry & Elyz Day	2 0 0
Feb. 27.	Elyz, daughter of Thos. & Elyz Helen Gray	1 0 0
March 2.	Charles, son of Wm. & Mary Gannon	1 0 0
March 11.	Ann, daughter of Stephen & Elyz Steer	1 0 0
March 18.	Sarah, daughter of Wm. & Elyz Dayton	1 0 0
March 20.	James, son of Thos. & Martha Steel	1 0 0
April 6.	Thos. son of Thos. & Sarah Robins	1 0 0
April 8.	Elyz, daughter of Wm. & Sarah Bantell	2 6
April 11.	George, son of Wm. & Elyz Dayton	1 0 0

Figure 4.5 Baptismal Entries for 1809-10, Chapel of God's Gift at Dulwich College. Dulwich College Archives, Dulwich, U.K.



Figure 4.6 Contemporary photograph of St. Peters Church at Harborne, Birmingham, U.K.



Figure 4.7 David Cox, *The Skylark*, 1849. Oil on canvas. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, U.K.



Figure 4.8 Contemporary photograph of Cox's Grave at St. Peter's, Harborne.



Figure 4.9 Contemporary photograph of Cox Memorial Window at St. Peter's, Harborne.



Figure 4.10 David Cox, *Plate XXXV, Tintern Abbey, Wales*, c. 1840. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.

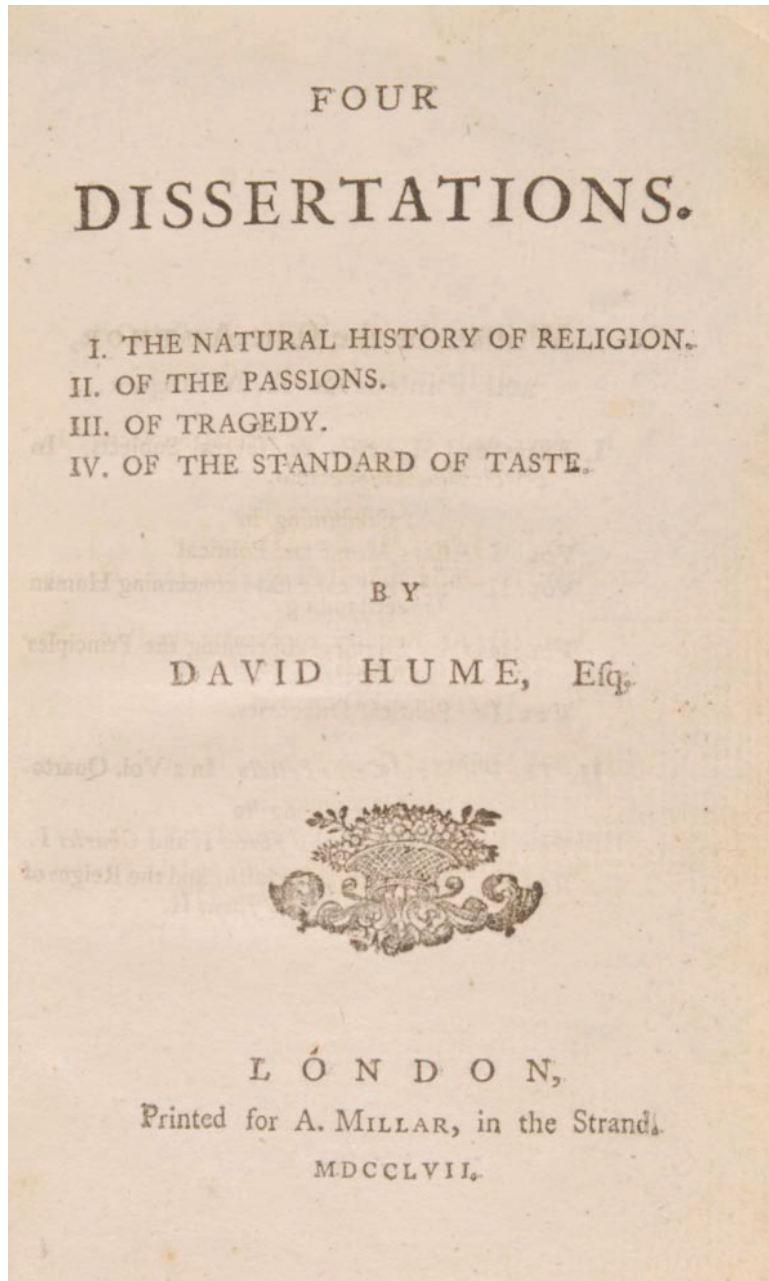


Figure 4.11 David Hume Title Page of *Four Dissertations* (London: A. Millar, 1757).



Figure 4.12 William Turner of Oxford, *New Forest*, c. 1830. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.



Figure 4.13 Jacob van Ruisdael, *The Jewish Cemetery*, c. 1650s. Oil on canvas. Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan.



Figure 4.14 David Cox, *A View of Bolsover Castle*, c. 1840. Watercolor on paper. Private Collection.

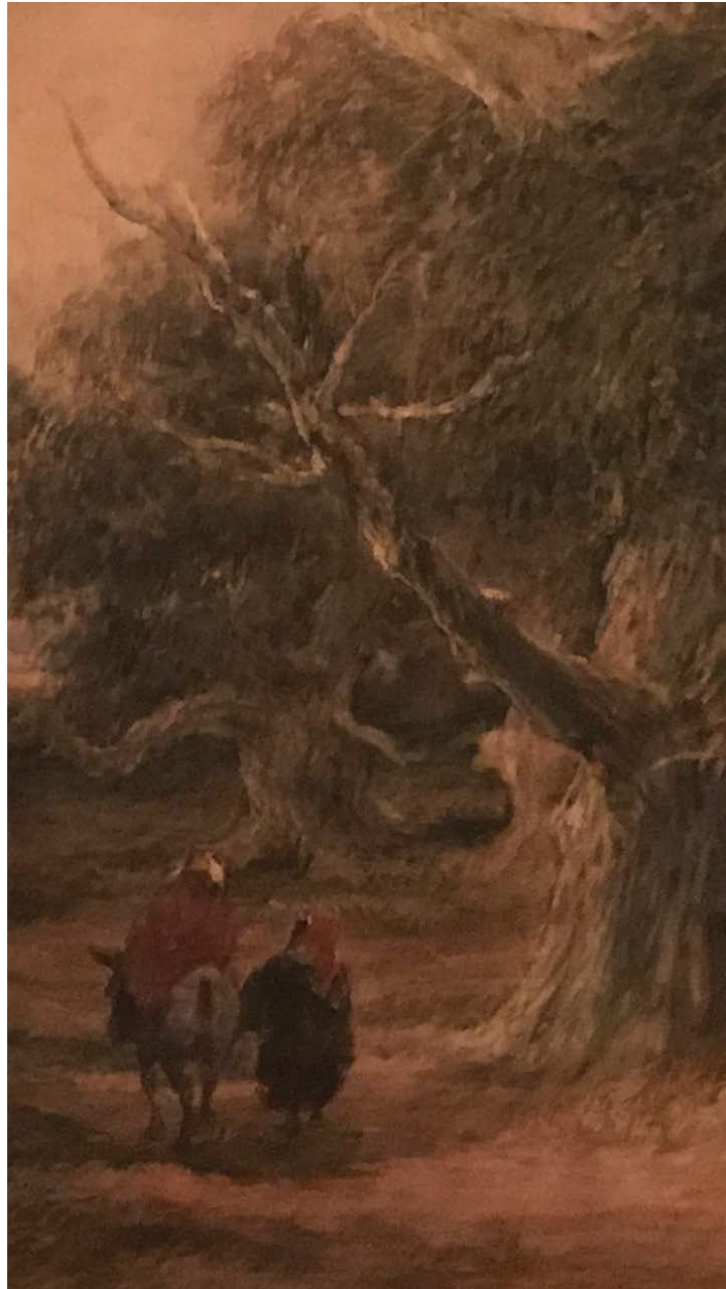


Figure 4.15 David Cox, *In Windsor Forest* (detail), c. 1830s. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.



Figure 4.16 Rembrandt van Rijn, *Baptism of the Eunuch*, 1636. Oil on canvas. Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover, Germany.

Eng. Lib.

NATURAL THEOLOGY;

OR,

EVIDENCES

OF THE

EXISTENCE AND ATTRIBUTES

OF

THE DEITY,

COLLECTED FROM THE APPEARANCES OF NATURE.

BY

WILLIAM PALEY, D.D.

LATE ARCHDEACON OF CARLISLE.

—◆—
THE FOURTEENTH EDITION.

=====
L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. FAULDER; LONGMAN AND CO.; CADELL
AND DAVIES; J. RICHARDSON; J. WALKER; WILKIE
AND ROBINSON; J. NUNN; F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON;
GRADOCK AND JOY; C. LAW; AND R. BALDWIN.

Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge.

1813.

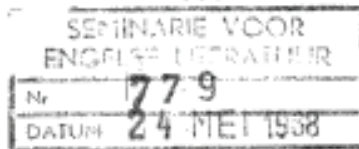


Figure 4.17 William Paley, Title Page of *Natural Theology* (London: S. Hamilton, 1813).

CONCLUSION

David Cox died on June 7, 1859. An obituary sketch of his life appeared in *The Illustrated London News* edition of July 9, 1859.¹ This dissertation has addressed what the author has identified as the salient feature of Cox's landscapes: a naturalism that is true to light, to wind, and to other atmospheric effects. This feature of his works was clearly recognized at his death.

The obituary states:

The landscape painter alone steals away from the busy crowd, and in the grand solitudes of Nature's preserves communes with his Maker through his marvelous manipulations . . . David Cox was a man of this class, pre-eminent amongst landscapists, and the founder of a school of landscape painting purely English, but new to England itself when he created it . . . "All who have ever loved nature," says a recent writer, "must love David Cox."

The writer acknowledges other artists that were fellow members of Cox's "worthy fraternity," such as Turner, Girtin, and Prout, all having predeceased the subject of the obituary. These represent an illustrious company, yet the ultimate praise is given to Cox, as the "founder of a school of landscape painting purely English."

I have used a contextualizing process to place the work of Cox in relation to contemporaneous art theory discourses, particularly the Reynolds-Gilpin advocacies of ideal versus Picturesque landscapes. In doing so, we have learned that Cox did not follow one side or the other, instead crafting his own approach which borrowed elements from both and hybridized his own style.

Cox's naturalism was not one based on subject matter alone, but rather on painting techniques that converged truth to nature and to natural phenomena. Two foundational reasons for this naturalism are evident from two biographical truths that have often been reported in the

literature but hardly ever examined to ascertain artistic consequences. I deal with these in two chapters: one on Cox and the theater, and another one on Cox and his deep religious faith.

The significance of Cox's theatrical scene painting experience becomes apparent when contextualized with Cox's naturalism in landscape. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were an age of great ferment on the English stage. Theatrical presentations were staged on sets designed to mimic nature and all of nature's effects. Cox's formative artistic values were developed and matured in theatrical presentations that were true to topography and to atmospheric effects.

In similar fashion, I have documented a deep religious faith by examining primary sources, both biographical and textual, to ascertain that the religious context of the age was reflected in the life of Cox and in his naturalistic approach to landscape painting. The theater and religious stand side by side informing Cox the artist as much as they explain Cox the man.

Along the progress of this study I also argued for a renewed appreciation of the work of George Lambert as a founder of the English school of landscape painting; a reassessment of Richard Wilson as a practitioner of picturesque landscape painting; and the germ of Cox's earliest attempt at copying an Old Master, namely Gaspard Dughet, and how that exercise evolved into an anglicizing and naturalizing exercise in landscape depictions. This last point corresponds to the obituary's characterization of Cox's works as "landscape painting purely English."

End Notes To Conclusion

¹ A copy of the obituary is included in this dissertation as Appendix 3. The writer of the obituary is not identified.

POSTSCRIPT

Further insight into the character of David Cox can be gained from a remarkable document which recently came on the art market in London.¹ It is a small watercolor, a work on paper approximately 4 1/2” by 5.” It portrays a man, asleep on three chairs, legs together and pulled against his abdomen. His head is propped up, resting on his left arm. He is wearing grey slacks, a white vest or waistcoat, and a long black frock coat. The man depicted, of course, is David Cox (c. 1835, Figs. 1 and 2).

The watercolor is by William Radclyffe, Junior, son of Cox’s dear friend and engraver of Cox’s works, from Birmingham. William Jr. was an artist in his own right, and painted a portrait of David Cox in 1830.² In a letter dated “Dec. 12” (probably written c. 1890), Charles W. Radclyffe, brother of William Jr., writes his correspondent and presents as his Christmas greeting a “little sketch by my brother of Cox asleep on three chairs” (c. 1890, Fig 3). The back of the drawing, shown in Figure 2, is inscribed with the following notation:

Sketch of David Cox taking a nap – after dinner – on three chairs – by William Radclyffe Junior – about 1835 – a most perfect likeness of the man
[signed] Charles W. Radclyffe

Stephen Wildman, in a letter of 21 September 1983, validated and complemented the provenance of the drawing, noting that it was exhibited at the great David Cox retrospective exhibition of 1890 in Birmingham (Fig. 4). Wildman’s letter to Mr. A.R. Milburn, the then owner of the drawing is reproduced here as Figure 5.

The impeccable documentation of the drawing of Cox asleep gives the author the full confidence that it is indeed an authentic primary document of the character of David Cox, who was often described as modest and unpretentious by his friends.

It provides a visual representation of these attributes in the biographies by Solly and Hall. The drawing validates the close friendship Cox enjoyed with the Radclyffe family and his familiarity (an ease) which allowed him to take a nap on a hastily arranged trio of dining table side chairs, as well as validating the authentic voices of Solly and Hall as having intimate and first-hand knowledge of David Cox the man. This is particularly important if we are to glean insights into Cox's artistic and religious aesthetics and his predilection for the naturalistic depiction of nature as the Second Book of God in Chapter 4.

End Notes to Postscript

¹ Abbott and Holder, Ltd., 30 Museum Street, London WC1A 1LH;
www.abbottandholders.co.uk.

² National Portrait Gallery, London, U.K. www.npg.org.uk, NPG 1403, *David Cox* by William Radclyffe. Oil on canvas, 1830.



Figure P.1 William Radclyffe, junior. *David Cox Asleep on Three Chairs*, 1835. Watercolor on paper. Private collection.

H. Gaskell Esq
with Charles W. Radclyffe Esq
Sketch of David Cox Esq
taking a nap - after dinner -
on these chairs - by
William Radclyffe Esq
- about 1835 -
a most perfect likeness
of the man -
Charles W. Radclyffe

Figure P.2 Inscription on the back of Figure P.1 in the hand of Charles W. Radclyffe (1817-1903), Brother of William Radclyffe, junior (1813-1846).

Ached 14/11
 with chisels 1/21
 CONSERVATIVE CLUB,
 TEMPLE ROW,
 BIRMINGHAM.
 66 Hagley Road Dec 12
 Dear Mr Gaskill I have sent off
 4 Pops 7 in this afternoon - this
 three days - you kindly selected for
 your daughter and niece -
 which you would have as a memento
 of your visit - I have enclosed
 one - which I must by your
 acceptance of - the sketch
 made some 40 years ago of
 a man Halls a very long hair -
 made before the admission
 in each of the place - just as

1

home - Mr Price - does
 not care for it - and with the
 exception of a small one
 is the only example he has
 - you have so many fine ones
 that it is right to strengthen
 your collection when you
 can - I must ask you to accept
 for my Xs - greeting the little
 sketch by my brother of Cox
 asleep on three chairs -
 I shall send it with your
 other things - but you must
 please try to hang it on your

2

I saw it - now no doubt
 it is gone - and the back
 gilt! - with regard to the
 Price Cox you have bought -
 you have not yet seen it - the
 being too high - and in too
 dark a place - it was at Halls
 room - we took it out of the
 frame - and I am sure it
 must come fully - and as both
 thought there as we do now -
 that it is a very very fine
 example of the master - and
 I am certain you will think
 so too - when you get it

3

Please Mr's dog - there is no one I know
 who more than I am friendly - and as
 one who will value it more highly -
 with our very kindest
 regards
 Yours W. Radclyffe
 H. Gaskill's

4

Figure P.3 Photograph of an undated letter some time after 1890 from Charles W. Radclyffe to a Mr. H. Gaskill presenting the sketch of David Cox Asleep as a Christmas present.

The relevant portion reads, "I must ask you to accept for my Xs greeting the little sketch by my brother of Cox asleep on three chairs – I shall send it with your other things."

City of Birmingham - Museum & Art Gallery
Catalogue of a Special Collection of Works by David Cox 1890

62

402. Blackberry Gatherers.

Rough road leading from cottages to part of stream on right, with rough boulders along side, with overhanging trees; two children gathering blackberries; white cat on road; rocky mountain tops in the background.

403. Dryslwyn Castle.

Foreground, bushes and rushes on left; part of hayfield on right, with horseman and dog, and other figures haymaking and loading wagon; beyond, the river flowing from left to right across picture; in distance, the castle on hill; with the exception of the foreground, similar to Nos. 5, 20 and 33.

404. Sketch of "David Cox taking a Nap after Dinner, on three chairs," by William Radclyffe, Junr. A most perfect likeness of the man.

About 1835.

Lent by Charles W. Radclyffe, Esq.

405. The Engraving of the Portrait of Cox, by Samuel Bellin.

Lent by Charles W. Radclyffe, Esq.

Engraved after the portrait by Sir John Watson Gordon. No. 107.

406. Photograph of Cox, by Messrs. Dickenson. This was taken before the oil picture was painted.

Lent by Dr. Bell Fletcher.

Etchings by the late Edward Radclyffe—

407. Hayfield.

Foreground, part of pool on right, and rushes; three women with hayrakes, talking; beyond them, on right, wagon being loaded.

408. Peat Gatherers.

After No. 58.

409. Windermere Lake.

The lake across centre; on left, stone causeway running into the water; two women and man seated on beach in centre; on right, cattle standing in water; background of hills; rain falling in distance.

410. Dudley Castle.

Foreground, the canal, with rushes and tree on right, and lime kilns on left; horses on bank; men in empty barge; castle on hill in centre; somewhat similar to No. 143.

411. Road through the Forest.

Large oak tree on left, with forest behind; rough road on right, with cart in distance coming forward. These etchings were begun as a "Liber Studiorum" of Cox, but the death of the engraver prevented the work being completed.

412. Skirts of the Forest.

After No. 42. See also No. 226.

413. Lancaster Castle.

After the water-colour, the property of Mr. Craven. Similar to No. 166, "Peace and War," with exception of foreground, in which a pasture with sheep takes the place of cornfield, and two figures on slightly rising ground, under two trees, on right, the place of the group of harvesters.

414. Crossing the Sands.

Party of people crossing wet sands in each direction, two dogs, heavy clouds blowing up from left horizon to top of right. After No. 231.

Figure P.4 Photograph of the catalogue entry of Figure P.1 for the retrospective exhibition of the works of David Cox at the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery in 1890.

Catalogue entry number 404 reads: Sketch of "David Cox taking a Nap after Dinner, on three chairs," by William Radclyffe, Junr. A most perfect likeness of the man. About 1835. Lent by Charles W. Radclyffe, Esq.



City of Birmingham

CITY MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERY

Birmingham, B3 3DH.

Telephone 021-235 9944

Michael Diamond MA, FMA
Director

Mr A. R. Milburn
Grove Hill
Starston
Harleston
Norfolk

your ref
our ref ART/SW/FB
date 21st September 1983
telephone calls to Mr Wildman
direct line 021-235 2839

Dear Mr Milburn,

Please forgive the delay in replying to your letter; as you may imagine, the Cox bicentenary exhibition has generated many enquiries and interesting discoveries, such as yours.

I am most interested to learn the whereabouts of William Radclyffe Junior's drawing of David Cox asleep on three chairs. As you will see from the enclosed (which may or may not be familiar to you), the drawing was shown in the great 1890 Cox exhibition here, and was previously last recorded at a Fine Art Society sale in 1957. There, by the way, it is wrongly credited to Radclyffe senior rather than to his son, also called William (1813-1846), a friend of Cox and painter of the rather stiff portrait of him now in the National Portrait Gallery.

Had I known of the drawing's existence at the time, I would certainly have included it in the exhibition, but I am afraid that I simply cannot add works, however interesting, to the showing at the V & A, because of the greatly reduced space available there. It is going to be very difficult to accommodate what we already have, and I must give precedence to the items already lent and catalogued.

We should very much welcome a black and white photograph of the drawing for our records (and will, of course, pay for a print), as would the National Portrait Gallery, which tries to keep a comprehensive file on major British artists.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Wildman
Deputy Keeper (Prints and Drawings)
Department of Fine Art

Figure P.5 Photograph of a letter by Cox scholar Stephen Wildman providing authentication and provenance for Figure P.1.

APPENDIX A

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS AND WILLIAM GILPIN, 1791

(34)

AS the subject of the foregoing essay is rather new, and I doubted, whether sufficiently founded in truth, I was desirous, before I printed it, that it should receive the *imprimatur* of Sir Joshua Reynolds. I begged him therefore to look it over, and received the following answer

London,
April 19th, 1791

DEAR SIR,

Tho I read now but little, yet I have read with great attention the essay, which you was so good to put into my hands, on the difference between the *beautiful*, and the *picturesque*, and I may truly say, I have received from it much pleasure, and improvement.

Without opposing any of your sentiments, it has suggested an idea, that may be worth consideration—whether the epithet *picturesque* is not applicable to the excellences of the inferior schools, rather than to the higher

The

The works of Michael Angelo, Raphael, &c. appear to me to have nothing of it, whereas Reubens, and the Venetian painters may almost be said to have nothing else.

Perhaps *picturesque* is somewhat synonymous to the word *taste*, which we should think improperly applied to Homer, or Milton, but very well to Pope, or Prior. I suspect that the application of these words are to excellences of an inferior order; and which are incompatible with the grand style.

You are certainly right in saying, that variety of tints and forms is picturesque, but it must be remembered, on the other hand, that the reverse of this—(uniformity of colour, and a long continuation of lines,) produces grandeur

I had an intention of pointing out the passages, that particularly struck me, but I was afraid to use my eyes so much.

The essay has lain upon my table, and I think no day has passed without my looking at it, reading a little at a time. Whatever objections presented themselves at first view,*
were

* Sir Joshua Reynolds had seen this essay, several years ago, through Mr Maſon, who ſhewed it to him. He then made
D 2 some

(36)

were done away on a clofer inspection . and I am not quite fure, but that is the cafe in regard to the obfervation, which I have ventured to make on the word *picturesque*.

I am, &c.

JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

To the rev^d. Mr Gilpin,
Vicar's-hill.

THE ANSWER.

May 2d, 1791

DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged to you for looking over my effay at a time, when the complaint in your eyes muft have made an intrusion of this kind troublefome. But as the fubject was rather novel, I wifhed much for your fatisfaction ; and you have given it me in as flattering a manner, as I could wifh.

With regard to the term *picturesque*, I have always myfelf ufed it merely to denote *fuch objects, as are proper fubjects for painting*.

Some objections to it particularly he thought, that the term *picturesque*, fhould be applied only to the *works of nature* His confeffion here is an inftance of that candour, which is a very remarkable part of his character, and which is generally one of the diftinguifhing marks of true genius

fo

(37)

so that, according to *my definition*, one of the cartoons, and a flower piece are equally picturesque.

I think however I understand your idea of extending the term to what may be called *taste in painting*—or the art of fascinating the eye by splendid colouring, and artificial combinations, which the inferior schools valued; and the dignity of the higher perhaps despised. But I have seen so little of the higher schools, that I should be very ill able to carry the subject farther by illustrating a disquisition of this kind. Except the cartoons, I never saw a picture of Raphael's, that answered my idea, and of the original works of Michael Angelo I have little conception.

But tho I am unable, through ignorance, to appreciate fully the grandeur of the Roman school, I have at least the pleasure to find I have always held as a principle your idea of the production of greatness by *uniformity of colour, and a long continuation of line*. and when I speak of *variety*, I certainly do not mean to confound it's effects with those of *grandeur*.

I am, &c.

WILLIAM GILPIN.

To Sir Joshua Reynolds,
Leicester Square.

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APPENDIX B

EXCERPT OF HANDWRITTEN CATALOGUE TO THE BOURGEOIS/DESENFANS COLLECTION AT THE MANSION ON CHARLOTTE STREET, LONDON

R

A Brief
Catalogue of Pictures,
Late the Property of
Sir Francis Bourgeois, R.A.
with the sizes and proportions of the Pictures.

J. Britton submits this as a very concise and imperfect Catalogue of the Collection of Pictures; and has adopted the Names of many of the Artists, and the Subjects of their Works, generally from the late Sir Francis Bourgeois' communications to Ja^s. Gill, his Servant.

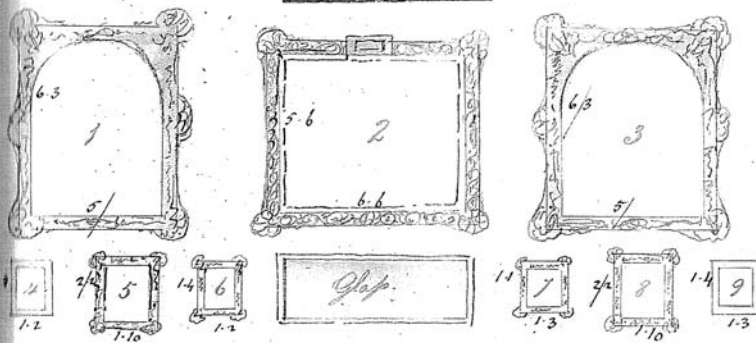
J. B. however thinks it will be expedient to have a more correct and particular Catalogue made hereafter; to define the Subjects, and identify the Names of the respective Painters.

This splendid collection contains many Pictures of extraordinary merit, and of great value: respecting these, it will be desirable to explain the Subjects, and animadvert on their peculiarities of composition, execution, colouring and other characteristics. Several are in bad condition; with the paint cracked, chipped, -chilled and otherwise injured. It will be essentially necessary to restore and secure them from further injury. - Some of them must be new lined.

May 24. 1813

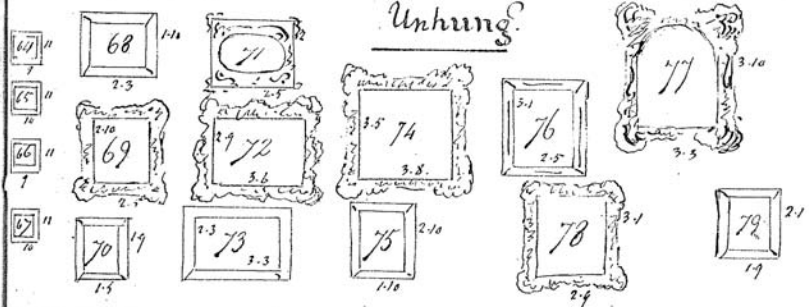
J. Britton

Drawing Room



- 213 1. Virgin & child - half length of the former in drapery c. Vandyck^x
- 214 2. Landscape, with cows in water ----- c. P. Potter^x
- 215 3. Charity - a female with 3 children ----- c. Vandyck^x
Mr Methuen has a duplicate of this.
- 216 4. Girl with an organ ----- P. Chardin^x
- 217 5. Venus & Cupid - the latter making a fire ----- P. Rembrandt^x
- 218 6. Virgin, St John & Child in landscape - P. L. Caracci^x
- 219 7. Two Saints, full length, in a landscape - Cop. Ung. Caracci^x
- 220 8. Female Saint - with another figure: a Town P. Rembrandt
- 221 9. St Jerome at his Devotions ----- c. Guercino^x

Umrung.



333	64	Cow in a landscape	P. P. Potten	x	
4	65	Full length figure of a man in lande	P. Tassius	x	
5	66	do - - - - - Women do	do	x	
6	67	Man smacking - - - - - compare to 62	P. Ostade	x	
7	68	Two cows in a landscape	C. Bougeois		
8	69	Virgin & child - large	P. Le. de Vinci	x	
9	70	Head of a boy	Velasquez	x	
340	71	Nymphs & Pan play on Tambourin	P. Poelenberg	x	
1	72	S. John in hands & with lamb	C. Murillo	x	
2	73	Slight sketch of figures in land	C. Bougeois		
3	74	Portrait of a lady sleeping in bed	C. Vandyeck	x	
4	75	Lande - stump of tree &	Reynolds	x	
5	76	Head of a lady	C. Vandyeck		
*	6	77	Portrait of N. Dessefers - (at Mr. Westmancott's)	Northcote	x
7	78	Market, several figures	C. Lingelbach	x	
348	79	Full length of N. Dessefers	-	-	

DAVID COX OBITUARY
JULY 9, 1859. LONDON ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

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THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

JULY 9, 1859

LITERATURE.

WOMEN, PAST AND PRESENT. BY JOHN WADE.
This work professes to supply an omission in the history of the most remarkable improvements in social life. It is stated that, although the social state and vicissitudes of females have formed influential elements in national affairs, they have obtained little distinctive notice from historians, a circumstance which can hardly have arisen from want of interest or the repellent nature of the inquiry.

position to met with here and there in the volume; and we might hint at one or two matters of personal description which, being mended in a second edition, would add a grace to the obvious merits of a very carefully-digested book.

The National Review.—With the exception of an article on "Italy and its Prospects," the subjects of the current number of the National are somewhat abstract. The first article, on "Glaciers and Glacier Theories," is curious, inasmuch as it develops to the less thinking public the fact of the existence of considerable scientific research into one of the apparent anomalies of nature which has of late years become familiar to a certain travelling class.

and "Poms by James Orton." "The Season Ticket, No. 4," is anecdotally good.

The Universal Magazine.—If we remember rightly a good deal was said about Sir Bulwer Lytton as a novelist in the first number of this serial. The subject is renewed in the present issue with unabated power of pen; and we would here also note a difference of opinion between the writer of this article and the one in Elizabethan, to which we have already alluded, the former holding Bulwer's latest novels to be his best, and the latter declaring them to be proofs of an entire degeneration of idea, style, and power.

WILLIAM BURKE, THE AUTHOR OF "JUSTICE," BY JEREMY BENTHAM.
This essay is written with much elegance of style and force of argument to prove that William Burke was really the author of "Justice." The first question that arises in the reader's mind is, "Who is William Burke?" He was, it appears, a friend and contemporary of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke. He was, it is also stated, a cousin of the great Edmund Burke, but most probably through the statesman's maternal kindred, the Napiers. His indeed, rather singular that no Burke of Edmund Burke's immediate family (his widow excepted) existed after himself, his nearest representative at the present day is in the female line, and bears the additional surname of Burke by license from the Crown.



THE LATE DAVID COX.—FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.—SEE SUPPLEMENT, PAGE 11.

and What it Is," will each address itself to the same kind of readers. The short article on "Utopian Bangquets" will, we think, be interesting and creative, as regards the classical allusion. The number is, perhaps, more solid than many a review reader would desire, but it maintains the acknowledged ability of the publication.
Frost's Magazine.—The subject of the etiological notices which have been carried on for some time in this magazine under the title of "In Memoriam" is this month Alexander von Humboldt, and his memory is treated, as far as the disquisition goes, as it should be. "Wars in General, and French Wars in Particular," is appropriate to the present moment, and in a brief space gives a history of that pursuit after military glory to which France is now adding a new chapter. "Thoughts on Modern Literature" is curious for the theory which it starts, that "Charles Reade" is the greatest tale in any language, and for an attempt to prove everybody wrong who believes in Miss Austen, with immense illustration of Miss Austen's, in this affording a singular contrast to an article in Blackwood for this month, in which Miss Austen's merits are elaborately set forth as unapproachable, and an opinion hazarded that ere long "Jane Eyre" will have no readers. The two social stories are advanced a few chapters, as are "The Notes on the National Drama of Spain." The other subjects comprised in the issue are a dissertation on "The Irrationality of Speech," that is, on stammering and its cure; "Egyptian and Sacred Chronology;" and "The New Administration," while the comic element is represented by a "Song from Garibaldi," that is "The Groves of Blarney" turned into chivalric Italian, as alleged by the famous partisan chieftain, but which does not need the illustrated signature to tell us that it is from the well-known hand that has so often played these famous tricks of the muse.
Dialects University Magazine.—"Dunbar's Egypt" is here, as well as in Fraser, made the basis of an article. The contributions of interests of the moment are to be found in "Italy and the Eastern" and "Volcanic New and Old." A short but graphic sketch is given of the career in South America of the God of Donalson, better known as Lord Cochrane, under the title of "The Old Sea-Lion," which has been culled from a narrative of his life recently published by the noble Earl himself. The article on "George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham," is from its subject, at least entitled to be placed in the romantic department of the magazine which we more than call "Arctic and Crutonian," begun, which promises well. Variety is duly ministered by the production of articles serially entitled "University Essays," "The Alabama Slave," "The Society of British Artists," "Fashionable Follies,"

and "Poms by James Orton." "The Season Ticket, No. 4," is anecdotally good.
The Universal Magazine.—If we remember rightly a good deal was said about Sir Bulwer Lytton as a novelist in the first number of this serial. The subject is renewed in the present issue with unabated power of pen; and we would here also note a difference of opinion between the writer of this article and the one in Elizabethan, to which we have already alluded, the former holding Bulwer's latest novels to be his best, and the latter declaring them to be proofs of an entire degeneration of idea, style, and power.

As regards the other numerous monthly publications, we have only space to mention that Zion, the National Magazine, and the Universal Magazine, in the current month are of the average character, and address themselves to their specialties, particularly in the case of the two latter, with accented care and completeness.

THE FINE ARTS EXHIBITION AT THE PALACE OF INDUSTRY, PARIS.

In giving a View of the Paris Exhibition of 1859, which has been somewhat delayed, owing to the pressure of war subjects, we have chosen the Sculpture Department on account of the picturesque nature of its arrangement. The interior of the building is as all times very beautiful, but the presence of so many fine works of art is an additional charm to its beauties. Our Engraving represents very faithfully the general aspect of the ground floor, or rez-de-chaussée, as the French call it. The trees, the gardens, the bridge over the little ascending stream which flows gracefully through the building, the statues, and the artistic ornaments for this particular occasion, are all presented to the reader, already acquainted with the usual aspect of the Palais d'Industrie.

Although there is no lack of space and light and air in this vast edifice, it is to be regretted that for this fit of the fine arts in Paris there exists no particular building especially adapted for its celebration. There will, perhaps, next year be a change in this respect, as it is proposed to devote to this purpose some portion of the new Louvre, an edifice in every way suited to the importance of the subject and the honour due to art.

The jury appointed for the selection of subjects for admission are said to have been very severe this year; but, in spite of all their care, many pictures of a mediocre talent have obtained an entry. However, the task for the jury was very arduous, and some oversight may well be excused when it is known that the number of paintings admitted was upwards of three thousand; to which must be added, sculpture, nearly three hundred pieces; and drawings, lithographs, architectural designs, &c., about four hundred.

Taken as a whole, the exhibition of this year may be looked upon as a great improvement on that of 1855, both as regards the nature of the subjects treated and the talent displayed in their execution. Amongst the French artists whose progress is most marked we may cite Madame Henriette Browne, whose "Sisters of Charity" is a most touching and admirably-executed production, full of truth to nature; and M. Auguste Bouché, who has contributed five landscapes of great merit. We have to regret the absence of Mlle. Rose Bonheur's name from the present catalogue; two paintings from the brush of our favourite artist, a "Flock of Sheep," and a "View in Holland," were not finished in time, and are still in the atelier of the painter.

We cannot, in a short sketch like the present, allude to all the paintings which merit attention, or mention the most remarkable pieces of sculpture; but we may notice among the finest two by Yvon, representing scenes in the attack on the Blackfort of the 26th of September, 1855; two religious subjects, one by the best artist; and a most marvellous effort of skill and soul in a "Simon" by Bouché. The well-known artists Flaxmin, Lehmann, Van Muyden, Landelles, Troyon, Van Goyen, and others, have shown their usual ability and success. M. Troyon's "View of the Environs of Soreuse," with coming-storm effects admirably depicted, is a most delightful landscape, is, perhaps, the masterpiece of the exhibition.

The English painters have not this year sent their quota to the exhibition; but their contributions were expected with impatience. One objection to the exhibition is the committee of the artists intending to exhibit at Paris decided not to forward the collection destined to them. This circumstance has given rise to the expression of much regret on the part of the visitors, amongst whom the English painters have a number of sincere admirers. Let us hope that these intended loans may not interfere with their appearance at the next French Exposition Universelle. The exhibition closes on the 10th instant.

We shall shortly give a selection from the finest paintings exhibited at the Paris Exhibition, or, as it is there called, the Salon of 1859.

APPENDIX D

A CHRONOLOGY OF DAVID COX

Excerpted from Scott Wilcox, ed.,
Sun, Wind, and Rain: The Art of David Cox
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008)

A Chronology of David Cox

Throughout his career David Cox filled his summers with sketching expeditions; during the years when he resided outside London, he generally traveled to the metropolis in the spring to see the exhibitions; and in the periods when he resided outside Birmingham, he made frequent visits to his native city to see family and friends. The following chronology cannot be a complete record of all these trips; however, every trip for which there is some evidence has been included.

- 1783 Born on 29 April at Deritend, a suburb on the southeast side of Birmingham, to Joseph Cox, a smith, and Frances Walford Cox.
- ca. After taking drawing lessons with Joseph Barber, Cox is apprenticed to Albert Feidler, a painter of lockets and miniatures.
- 1798 Gains employment with William Macready's company at the Theatre, Birmingham, first as assistant to James De Maria, scene painter, later as a scene painter himself.
- 1800 Travels to London on the promise of work at Astley's Amphitheatre; work does not materialize. Takes lodgings at 16 Bridge Row, Lambeth. Possibly visits Wales.
- 1804 Exhibits two works at the Royal Academy of Arts in London (RA). Visits Wales (Merionethshire and Caernarvonshire) in the company of Charles Barber.
- 1805 Exhibits a single work at the RA. Possibly visits Wales.
- 1806 Exhibits a single work at the RA.
- 1807 Marries Mary Agg, daughter of his landlady. Rents a cottage on Dulwich Common. Exhibits two works at the RA.
- 1808 Exhibits ten watercolors at the Associated Artists in Water Colours (AA). 9 July: David Cox Jr. is born.
- 1810 Becomes member and president of the AA; exhibits thirty-seven watercolors there. Visits Wales.
- 1811 Exhibits thirty-six watercolors at the AA. Late spring and summer: Visits Hastings with wife and son; sketches in the vicinity with William Havell.
- 1812 Exhibits twenty-one watercolors at the AA. 8 June: Becomes an associate member of the Society of Painters in Water Colours (SPWC). December: Becomes a member of the reconstituted SPWC.
- 1813 March: First installment of *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours* is published. Exhibits seventeen watercolors at the SPWC. Summer: Accepts appointment as drawing instructor at the Royal Military College at Farnham.
- 1814 February: Last installment of *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours*. Exhibits a single work at the British Institution and fourteen watercolors at the SPWC. Autumn: Moves with his family to Hereford. 26 October: Begins teaching at Miss Croucher's school for young ladies; continues to teach there until 1819.
- 1815 2 February: Begins teaching at the Hereford Grammar School. Exhibits nothing at the SPWC. Makes a trip down the Wye in this year or the next.
- 1816 Exhibits seven watercolors at the SPWC. *Progressive Lessons on Landscape for Young Beginners* is published.
- 1817 Suffers illness; exhibits nothing at the SPWC. Visits Bath to execute a commission for views of the city.
- 1818 Exhibits thirteen watercolors at the SPWC.

- 1819 Exhibits ten watercolors at the SPWC. Spring: Takes son to London for the first time to see the exhibitions. Journeys into North Devon and visits Bath. Summer: Tours North Wales with three Hereford friends. October: First installment of *The Young Artist's Companion* is published.
- 1820 Exhibits eighteen watercolors at the SPWC. *Six Views in the City of Bath* is published.
- 1821 Exhibits four watercolors at the SPWC.
- 1822 Exhibits twelve watercolors at the SPWC and a single work at the Liverpool Academy (LA).
- 1823 Exhibits twenty-one watercolors at the SPWC.
- 1824 Exhibits twenty-five watercolors at the SPWC. Commissioned by Jean-Frédéric d'Ostervald, a publisher in Paris, to do seven drawings of English subjects; Ostervald later commissions him to paint French and Mediterranean subjects from outlines forwarded from Paris. Builds a new home, Ash Tree House, to his own designs on Ailstone Hill outside Hereford.
- 1825 Exhibits thirty-four watercolors at the SPWC. Makes a trip down the Wye and into Wales with Edward Everitt.
- 1826 Exhibits twenty-three watercolors at the SPWC. Together with his son, Cox accompanies his brother-in-law, Mr. Gardener, to Bruges and Brussels; at Brussels Cox meets the Hoptons, whose daughters he had taught, leaves his son to return with Gardener, and travels on with the Hoptons to Ghent, Antwerp, Dort (Dordrecht), Rotterdam, Delft, The Hague, Leiden, Amsterdam, and Haarlem.
- 1827 Provides illustrations for *The Hereford Guide*, published by W. J. Rees in this year. Moves from Hereford to London; takes up residence at 9 Foxley Road, Kennington Common. Exhibits seventeen watercolors at the SPWC and a single work at the RA.
- September: Sends four works to the first exhibition of the Birmingham Society of Arts; he will contribute to almost every subsequent Society exhibition of modern paintings.
- 1828 Exhibits twenty-seven watercolors at the SPWC and single works at the British Institution and the RA. Sends nine works to the 1828 exhibition of the Birmingham Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts.
- 1829 Exhibits thirty-five watercolors at the SPWC. Exhibits single works at the RA and the Birmingham Society of Arts. *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire* is published. Summer: Travels in France, with a week in Calais, two days in Amiens, three days in Beauvais, and six weeks in Paris; a projected tour along the Loire is abandoned.
- 1830 Exhibits thirty-one watercolors at the SPWC. Travels in Yorkshire.
- 1831 Exhibits thirty-seven watercolors at the SPWC and six works at the LA. Summer: Travels with his son and William Roberts in Derbyshire; visits Rowsley and Haddon Hall. With his son visits Chatsworth, Ashbourne, Dovedale, and Birmingham. Travels in the Lake District. Publication by Radclyffes & Co. of *Eight Views of Dudley Castle, and the Limestone Caverns*, including plates after Cox.
- 1832 Exhibits thirty-five watercolors at the SPWC and ten works at the LA. Visits Boulogne, Saint-Omer, and Dieppe in the company of Frederick Bruce, a former pupil. Visits North Wales.
- 1833 Exhibits thirty-six watercolors at the SPWC.
- 1834 Exhibits twenty-four watercolors at the SPWC, seven watercolors at the Birmingham Society of Arts, and eight works at the LA. From late July: Travels through Lancashire, Derbyshire, and Yorkshire with William Stone Ellis, visiting Lancaster, Morecambe Bay, Bolton Abbey, and

- Bolsover Castle. In a letter Cox mentions his intention of visiting Hornby Castle, Kir[k]by Lonsdale, Hawes, Richmond, and Barnard Castle, and perhaps traveling as far north as Carlisle.
- 1835 Exhibits twenty watercolors at the SPWC, six watercolors at the Birmingham Society of Arts, and ten works at the LA. From late July: Visits Lancaster, Morecambe Bay, Liverpool, and Manchester, and travels in Derbyshire. September: Visits Lancaster, Morecambe Bay, Manchester, Bolsover, and Hardwick, possibly visits either Nottingham or Rowsley and Haddon Hall.
- 1836 Exhibits thirty-four watercolors at the SPWC and ten works at the LA. Thomas Roscoe's *Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales* and William Hawkes Smith's *Dudley Castle*, both with illustrations by Cox, are published. Summer: Spends two or three weeks at Rowsley, painting at Haddon Hall. Early autumn: Travels in Wales. October: Stays with William Radclyffe in Birmingham.
- 1837 Exhibits thirty watercolors at the SPWC, five watercolors at the Birmingham Society of Arts, and a single work at the LA. Thomas Roscoe's *Wanderings and Excursions in South Wales; Including the Scenery of the River Wye* is probably published in this year. Visits Powis Castle, Bolton Abbey, Castleton, Hardwick Hall, and possibly Haddon Hall. August: Possibly travels through Westmorland, Yorkshire, and Durham, visiting Brough, Kirkby Stephen, Wharton Hall, Sedbergh, Barnard Castle, Egglestone Abbey, and Greta Bridge.
- 1838 Exhibits thirty-two watercolors at the SPWC and a single work at the LA. March–May: Spends six weeks with his wife at Seabrook, near Hythe; sketches at Dover and along the Kentish coast. August: Visits Rowsley, Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, Mansfield, Bolsover, and Hardwick; returns to Manchester by the 29th. September: Revisits Hardwick and Birmingham.
- 1839 Exhibits twenty-six watercolors at the SPWC, two watercolors at the Birmingham Society of Arts, and nine works at the LA. Takes lessons in oil painting from William James Müller.
- 1840 Exhibits eighteen watercolors at the SPWC. *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours* is reissued. July: Makes a short visit to Birmingham and Manchester. August: Visits Blackpool, Dentdale, Kirkby Lonsdale, Morecambe Bay, Lancaster, Manchester, and Birmingham. September–October: Visits Birmingham.
- 1841 Exhibits ten watercolors at the SPWC and two oils at the Society of British Artists (SBA). Exhibits two oils and two watercolors at the Birmingham Society of Arts. March: Visits Birmingham; takes a lease on Greenfield House in Harborne. June: Moves to Harborne. September: Travels in Yorkshire, sketching at Otley, Bolton Abbey, and Ilkley; returns to Birmingham by way of Manchester.
- 1842 Exhibits eighteen watercolors at the SPWC and one oil at the SBA. Is made an Honorary Member of the Birmingham Society of Artists (BSA); exhibits one oil and three watercolors there. April–early July: In London. July: Travels in Yorkshire, sketching in oils. August: Travels in North Wales with his son, visiting Conwy, Rhyl, and Betws-y-Coed. September: Spends a fortnight at Kenilworth. November: Visits his sister at Sale, near Manchester.
- 1843 Exhibits a single oil at the British Institution, fifteen watercolors at the SPWC, an oil at the RA, and another oil at the BSA. Summer: Suffers illness. Autumn: Visits his sister at Sale, near Manchester.
- 1844 Exhibits twelve watercolors at the SPWC, two oils at the RA, a single oil at the BSA,

- and two works at the LA. April: In London. July: Travels in Wales, visiting Ruthin, Denbigh, Abergelge, Conwy, Llanbeder, and Betws-y-Coed. September: Travels in Yorkshire, visiting Bolton Abbey, Bolton Bridge, and Knaresborough.
- 1845 Exhibits sixteen watercolors at the SPWC and three works at the LA. April–May: In London. Mid- to late May: Visit to Rowsley with sketching at Haddon Hall, Hardwick Hall, and Sherwood Forest. Mid-August–September: Visits North Wales, stays in Betws-y-Coed. October: Visits Dudley. 23 November: Mrs. Cox dies.
- 1846 Exhibits fifteen watercolors at the SPWC, two watercolors and two oils at the BSA, and a single work at the LA. Spring: Spends six weeks in London. May: Visits Bolton Bridge, Barden, and Malham. July–August: In Betws-y-Coed. August: Visits his sister near Manchester.
- 1847 Exhibits fourteen watercolors at the SPWC, a single oil at the BSA, and a single work at the LA. April: In London. July–August: In Betws-y-Coed; either remains in Betws-y-Coed or returns there in the autumn.
- 1848 Exhibits fourteen watercolors at the SPWC, a single oil at the BSA, and two works at the LA. August: In Betws-y-Coed.
- 1849 Exhibits sixteen watercolors at the SPWC, two oils at the BSA, and a single work at the LA. April–May: In London. July: In Betws-y-Coed. Late summer: Visits his sister near Manchester.
- 1850 Exhibits fifteen watercolors at the SPWC and a single oil at the BSA. Spring: Serves on the hanging committee for the SPWC. Summer: Visits Rowsley. September: Visits Rhyl and Betws-y-Coed.
- 1851 Exhibits eleven watercolors at the SPWC, a single oil at the BSA, and three works at the LA. Spring: Visits London. Visits Sale (perhaps more than once) and spends a month at Betws-y-Coed.
- 1852 Exhibits thirteen watercolors at the SPWC and a single oil at the BSA. Spring: Visits London. June: Visits Ludlow, Stokesay, Powis Castle, Leintwardine, and Downton Castle. Visits Betws-y-Coed.
- 1853 Exhibits thirteen watercolors at the SPWC and a single oil at the BSA. March: Suffers a severe case of bronchitis. May: Visits London. 12 June: Suffers a stroke. August: Visits Betws-y-Coed.
- 1854 Exhibits seven watercolors at the SPWC and a single oil at the BSA. Spring: Visits London. Summer: Visits Rhyl and Betws-y-Coed with his son.
- 1855 Exhibits fourteen watercolors at the SPWC and a single oil at the BSA. Represented by four watercolors at the Paris *Exposition Universelle*. Spring: Visits London. August: Travels to Edinburgh to sit for a portrait by Sir John Watson Gordon. Autumn: Possibly visits Betws-y-Coed.
- 1856 Exhibits eleven watercolors at the SPWC and a single oil at the BSA. 24 May–mid-June: In London, sits for portrait by William Boxall. Late August: Visits Betws-y-Coed.
- 1857 Exhibits thirteen watercolors at the SPWC and four oils at the BSA. 25 May–13 June: In London. Represented by eighteen watercolors at the Manchester *Art Treasures Exhibition*.
- 1858 Exhibits thirteen watercolors at the SPWC, five oils and four watercolors at the BSA, and one work at the LA. Remains at Greenfield House all year. August: Makes will. Exhibition of his drawings by Hampstead Conversazione Society. *
- 1859 Exhibits eight watercolors at the SPWC. Spring: Retrospective exhibition at the German Gallery, 168 (New) Bond Street, London; in April the exhibition appears at the French Gallery, 121 Pall Mall. 7 June: Dies at Greenfield House. Three watercolors exhibited posthumously at the BSA and three works exhibited posthumously at the LA.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

RESUME OF SEGUNDO J. FERNANDEZ

Education

- University of Miami, B.S. in Biology, 1973
- Cumberland Law School of Samford University, J.D. *cum laude*, 1976
- University of Miami, LL.M. in Ocean and Coastal Law, 1977
- Florida State University, M.A. in History and Criticism of Art, 2009
- Florida State University, Ph.D. in History and Criticism of Art, 2018

Law Practice Areas

- Representation of cities, counties, and water supply entities in water resource development, permitting, and regulation before FDEP and the various Water Management Districts, development of water supply plans, the permitting of consumptive use permits for water production facilities, and the relationship between water use permitting and land development regulation by state, regional and local governments.
- Land use practice includes representation of private industry, land developers, chemical manufacturers and mining concerns in areas of air and water pollution, water resources, infrastructure permitting, and solid and hazardous waste matters. Representing client projects in hearings and other local matters before local, state and federal administrative bodies; outside counsel to a number of local governments on similar issues.
- Environmental practice representing clients at the federal, state and local levels in virtually all areas of environmental law. Represents clients from both the public and private sectors including environmental counseling, permitting and litigation under the CWA, CAA, RCRA, CERCLA, as well as under state and local environmental programs.
- Administrative law practice at state, local and federal levels. Representation in regulatory matters including rulemaking, permitting, negotiations, administrative litigation, compliance proceedings and enforcement proceedings.
- Representation of clients in matters related to art book publishing, representation of galleries and artists, and artwork copyrights.

Court Admissions

- State of Florida; U.S. District Court, Northern District of Florida; U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida; U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
- United States Supreme Court

Agency Experience

- Deputy General Counsel with the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation from 1980 to 1983.
- Assistant General Counsel with the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation from 1977 to 1980

Private Practice Experience

- Managing Partner, Oertel, Fernandez, Bryant & Atkinson, PA from 1983 to 2018 (present)

Professional and Community Service (present and former)

- **The Florida Bar - Environmental and Land Use, and Administrative Law Sections**
- **Florida State University College of Fine Arts, Executive Committee Member, Dean's Advisory Board and Board Chair**
- **Holocaust Education Research Council, Board of Directors member and Officer**
- Trinity Catholic School, School Board Chair
- Historic Tallahassee Preservation Board, member and Chair
- Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation, Inc., Board member and President
- Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, Board of Directors member and President
- Goodwood Museum and Gardens, Board of Directors member and President

Art History Academic Accomplishments and Publications

- Co-editor, *The Melting Touch of Nature: 250 Years of British Landscape Drawings and Watercolours* (Gainesville, Georgia: Brenau University Galleries, 2001)
- Recipient, Günther Stamm Prize for Excellence, 2009 Art History Graduate Student Symposium, Florida State University
- Author: "Kaufman and Reynolds: Infant Academy Unmasked" in *Athanos XXVIII* (2010)
- Curator, *Cuban Art in the 20th Century: Cultural Identity and the International and the Avant Garde*, Exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida (February – March 2016) and the Coral Gables Museum, Coral Gables, Florida (January – April 2017)
- Author: "Cuban Modernism and the International Avant Garde" in *Cuban Art in the 20th Century Cultural Identity and the International and the Avant Garde* (Catalogue, Museum of Fine Arts, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, 2016)

Legal Publications

- *Municipality's Growth Restriction Plan Found to be an Unconstitutional Burden Upon the Right to Travel*, 5 CUMBERLAND LAW REVIEW 543 (1975).
- *Choice of Law Considerations in Alabama*, 7 CUMBERLAND LAW REVIEW 89 (1976).
- *Stormwater Revisited: Department of Environmental Regulation New Rule for Regulation of Stormwater Discharges*, 56 FLORIDA BAR JOURNAL 479 (1982).
- Co-Author, *Key Haven and Its Progeny: Uncertain Choices for Constitutional Challenges to Administrative Action*, 58 FLORIDA BAR JOURNAL 381 (June 1984).
- Co-Author, Chapter 4, *Environmental Regulation and Litigation in Florida*, "State and Federal Regulation of Construction Activities in the Waters and Wetlands of Florida", The Florida Bar Continuing Legal Education Publications (1988, 1991).
- Author and Lecturer, *Environmental Permitting Courses*, Florida Chamber of Commerce (1995-2018), including Session Chair on "Who Controls Water Use," and "Linking Growth with Water Availability."
- Florida Municipal Attorney's Association Annual Seminar (2009-2011).