READING THE PICTURESQUE EYE: EIGHTEENTH - CENTURY SCENIC
TOURISM AND TRAVEL LITERATURE

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SCENIC TOURISM AND TRAVEL LITERATURE

by

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to resituate the study of the picturesque, shifting it away from the analysis of the picturesque as an aesthetic category or as a politically inscribed mode of representation toward the critical assessment of the picturesque as a social practice. As such, I locate the picturesque in the context of late eighteenth-century domestic British tourism. This thesis gives an analysis of late eighteenth-century guidebooks and travel journals which foregrounds their instructional role in the tourist's production of picturesque landscapes. The picturesque, I argue, should not be seen simply as a set of conventional motifs and compositional structures, but as a tourist practice, in which the leisure traveller participates by following the directions set forth in the guidebooks and travel journals of the time.

The examination of the picturesque as practice allows this thesis to link the picturesque to other socio-cultural activities, namely those involved in the late eighteenth-century production and viewing of graphic art. I offer an investigation of the late eighteenth-century tourist's textually-mediated composition of the landscape which connects it to the growing availability of pictorial art in British society, an event which I contend is inseparable from the new techniques of mechanical reproduction and the proliferation of art exhibitions. It is here, at the level of social practice, and not at the level of representation, that I attempt to link the picturesque to contemporary economics and politics.

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Introduction:

The Picturesque as a Visual and Textual Practice

In the summer of 1799, James Plumptre, a recently ordained Anglican curate and
Cambridge fellow, travelled to the Lake District, as was the custom of many of his
generation and social position. On the third of August, having walked from Cambridge
with a friend, Plumptre reached Keswick, the focal point of the emergent tourist trade in
the north-west of England. (Like Wordsworth and Coleridge, his juniors by a few years,
Plumptre preferred, for moral as well as financial reasons, to travel by foot). After visiting
Crosthwaite's Museum, where the tourist could buy guidebooks as well as view
Crosthwaite's display of Roman coins, numerous specimens of oddly shaped driftwood,
maps of the Lakes, and a list of the 16 different ways of spelling the name of Braithwaite,
Plumptre and his travelling companion continued on to Derwentwater. In his travel
journal, which he would later attempt, unsuccessfully, to have published, Plumptre
recorded the view:

> Just below the village is a pretty view of the small Lake or Tarn. It is bound by
>
> rude crags and a promontory on the right breaks the sheet of water. The river and
>
> bridge occupy the middle of the foreground, a large pollard oak and rock are on
>
> the right, and a barn backed by trees, oak and pine are on the left. We crossed the

bridge and then descended and viewed the waterfall from below it on the West side

(144).

Plumptre's description is, to say the least, typical. Similar descriptions of the

landscape are liberally scattered throughout contemporary travel journals, such as Joseph

Budworth's A Fortnight's Ramble to the Lakes (1792) or Stebbing Shaw's A Tour to the

West of England (1789). Thomas West's A Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland,

Westmorland and Lancashire (1780) and James Housman's A Descriptive Tour and Guide

to the Lakes, Mountains and Caves of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire

(1800), two guides to the Lake District, popular at the turn of the century, similarly

reiterate the same vocabulary of "rude crags", "cataracts", and "foregrounds". As is

common with late eighteenth-century landscape description, Plumptre's representation of

Derwentwater is distinctly pictorial; that is, it organises and frames the landscape as if it

were an element in a graphic image. Like West, whose guide he used on his tour of the

Lakes, Plumptre employs "sidescreens" to limit the boundaries of his representation: The

oak and the rock on the right and the trees and barn on the left serve to delineate the

borders of Plumptre's textual picture. This pictorial structure, definable by its application

of sidescreens and receding foregrounds, like the constant mention of rugged cliffs and

rude crags, runs throughout the travel literature of the last three decades of the eighteenth

century. Plumptre is, as it were, participating in shared language of description, a

discourse invented by no one in particular, but appropriated by many.

This mode of description, which Plumptre and his contemporary scenic tourists employed to "capture" the landscape, can be conveniently termed "picturesque discourse." Its representation of rough landscapes, terrains which obstruct agricultural cultivation is, in effect, a promotion and celebration of what was becoming widely known as "picturesque beauty," or simply as "the picturesque." From the mid-eighteenth century, the term "picturesque" was in general cultural circulation, adjectivally denoting that which would look good in a picture. Tobias Smollett could thus describe as picturesque--albeit parodically--a scene in his novel The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (1771) in which Jerry Melford rushes out of a burning building in his night-clothes, barely escaping incineration (163). By the last decade of the century, the meaning of the word had been more firmly delineated to describe the features of a rugged landscape. Wind-broken trees, rushing cataracts, craggy hilltops, were universally seen to be picturesque. The taste for rugged landscapes had been prevalent since the 1760s, when Thomas Gray and Dr. John Brown made their trips to the Lake Districts, inaugurating the Lake District as a site of scenic tourism. However, it was a vicar from the North of England, William Gilpin who, in his popular travel books, most indelibly linked the term "picturesque" to rough landscapes, by schematising a variety of scenic tourism (already being practised in late 1760s), in which the leisure traveller mentally or on paper organises crags, mountains, trees, and other features of an uncultivated landscape so that they comprised a pictorial composition. Plumptre's description of Derwentwater can, then, be placed within socio-cultural context,

in which wild landscapes were appreciated by thinking of them, and consequently, by organising them, as that which would look good in a picture.

Despite the substantial number of eighteenth-century travel journals and guides, examinations of the texts which employ and foster picturesque discourse are rather scarce. To my knowledge, there has been only one book-length treatment of the role of picturesque beauty in the literature of the British tours, Malcolm Andrews' The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800 (1989). While Andrews does an admirable job in offering the reader a general outline of late eighteenth-century travel, his work gives little more than an overview of the literature associated with the tours. The Search for the Picturesque, though it gives the reader a distinct vision of late eighteenth-century tourism, does not adequately delineate the procedures involved in picturesque observation nor does it connect those procedures to politics, economics, or contemporaneous cultural practices, such as the proliferation of visual art and exhibitions in the late eighteenth century. These omissions can perhaps be accounted for if we realise that Andrews' examination of the picturesque and tourism is not explicitly meant for the academic reader, but the interested modern traveller. Despite this, Andrews' book is a good preliminary source of information on late eighteenth-century tourism and travel literature.

Unlike Andrews' work, Stanley K. Robinson's An Inquiry into the Picturesque (1991) offers a substantial analysis of the relation of British politics to the widespread interest in the picturesque in late eighteenth-century Britain. The scope of Robinson's

book is limited to the writing of Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price,
landscape-garden designers and theorist of aesthetics, whose main works appeared
immediately before and after the turn of the eighteenth century. As Robinson comments on
tourism only in passing, his work gives scant insight into the link between tourism and
picturesque observation and composition. Moreover, the direct, causal links which
Robinson makes between Knight's and Price's theories and the Whig leader Charles Fox's
denouncement of the French Revolution and French views on civil law and social order
cannot be grafted onto my investigation of scenic tourism, since the texts which offer the
most comprehensive perspective of the picturesque's place in scenic tourism pre-date the
French Revolution and the domestic British reaction to it.

Despite the limited scope of Robinson's investigation, his work portrays critical
elements which we can find in other, less thorough investigations of the picturesque,
which are more germane to my project. Robinson focuses on the motifs and pictorial
structures advanced by Price and Knight, contending that the conceptualisations of order
intrinsic to Price's and Knight's aesthetic theory and garden design can be connected to
Fox's position toward Jacobin ideology. Central to Robinson's argument is the movement
in which the visual image or aesthetic concept becomes transparent to political positions
and representations of social order. This hermeneutic reduction of aesthetics to politics is
equally present in Anne Bermingham's "System, Order, Abstraction: the Politics of English
Landscape Drawing around 1795", in which she argues that later (post-Gilpin) sketches of
picturesque landscapes are ideologically inscribed by a British political "naturalism", which

rejects the "abstractions" of French Revolutionary socio-political views. In a similar

fashion, Alan Liu in his "Politics of the Picturesque", a chapter in his Wordsworth: A

Sense of History,   contends that the picturesque tourist's composition of the landscape

mirrors the emergent bureaucratic apparatus in the Lake District, which was inaugurated

to rationally organise the land and its inhabitants. Though Liu does not go as far as

Robinson and Bermingham to reduce the use of picturesque motifs of rugged landscapes

and broken trees to the promotion of specific political positions, he nonetheless, like

Robinson and Bermingham, employs what we can term (after the cultural theorist W.J.T.

Mitchell) an iconology. That is, Liu interprets picturesque representations as being

inscribed by political views. For Liu, as for Robinson and Bermingham, the picturesque

representation (i.e. the sketch, the painting, the landscape design) is inspired by and, by

extension, supports distinct political positions.[1]

While I do not deny the validity of examining the political iconography of

picturesque landscape representations, such an approach, if it does not recognise the

socio-cultural practices with which the picturesque representations are inseparably

implicated, tends to oversimplify the picturesque, ignoring the discontinuities and

connections evident at the level of practice and production. For example, there has been a

tendency to study the picturesque without distinguishing between landscape-garden design

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[1]   As the connection which Liu forges between landscape aesthetics and politics is

more penetrating and intricate than I have indicated, I will return to Liu's understanding of

the picturesque in the third chapter.

and scenic tourism, since both promote similar motifs and utilise a common compositional structure in their respective "organisations" of the landscape. As far as I know Kim Ian Michasiw, in his "Nine Revisionist Theses on the Picturesque", is the only critic to fully recognise and appreciate this difference. Picturesque landscape gardening and scenic tourism, as Michasiw notes, are distinct practices, whose corresponding sets of participants are not coextensive: landscape gardening could be practised solely by wealthy landowners, such as Knight and Price; on the other hand, even distinctly middle-class clergymen, like Plumptre, Gilpin and West practised scenic tourism, and indeed were influential in its development. This conflation of picturesque landscape gardening with scenic tourism, which Michasiw discerns (but does not follow up) can, I think, be explained as deriving from a lack of emphasis placed on establishing the differing procedures and participants involved in landscape gardening and scenic tourism. The motifs employed in the sketches of the tourist in search of the picturesque landscape and those of the landscape gardener are deceptively similar, obscuring the differing cultural economies in which they operate. The picturesque tourist, unlike the landscape-garden designer, is a nomadic figure, encountering landscapes with which he or she has had little previous contact, a figure whose graphic and textual representations of the landscape, in contrast to the landscape garden, are implicated in the textual and visual procedures of late eighteenth-century tourism. Despite the shared motifs and compositional structures of picturesque landscape gardening and scenic tourism, similar representations of landscape do not necessarily imply similar political views on the part of their producers; the social,

political or cultural use to which motifs and formal structures can be put is not dependent on the motifs and structures themselves, but their users and the social context of the cultural practices in which they participate. In an attempt to move away from the reducibility of representation and practice, this thesis, then, focuses, not on picturesque representation, but on picturesque practice and production, and specifically, on the productive procedures involved in scenic tourism.

By applying a literary-critical analysis to the texts which promote picturesque composition, we can gain access to how the tourist is instructed to practice picturesque composition, thus enabling an analysis of the strategy and procedures necessary for picturesque production. Works such as Gilpin's Observations, relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the year 1776, on Several Parts of England; particularly the Mountains, and Lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland (1786) and West's A Guide to the Lakes (1778) explicitly instruct the tourist in how to compose the landscape and where he or she can most effectively do so. Such works of "picturesque travel literature", which are specifically directed at the organisation of the terrain as landscape art, will be investigated in this thesis as instruments of production, functional elements in a "literary technology" (to loosely apply a term devised by Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer), which involves distinct and analysable procedures, and whose end product is the pictorially composed landscape. Published travel journals and journals which circulated in manuscript form, while not usually devoted solely to picturesque description, nonetheless disseminate, and therefore encourage, the picturesque method

of composition, and must likewise be included in an analysis of the practices of picturesque production. In this thesis, the travel journal is viewed as a relay circuit in a literary technology of production, circulating a form of description widely imitated by leisure travellers taking the tour. I will show how guides and journals, which contain picturesque discourse, and less generic works, such as Gilpin's Observations (which are a mix of art instruction manual, travel guide and journal), all foster and propagate a particular practice of representation, training the tourist to view, organise and represent the landscape in a specific way. Therefore, through textual analysis, we can examine, not only picturesque representations of the landscape, but the practices which are involved in their production.

The purpose of this thesis, as I stated above, is not to examine picturesque representations themselves, but the training implicit in picturesque production and the rationalised visual, textual and artistic procedures which the tourist performs to produce a picturesque composition. The procedures of picturesque production are diverse, freely crossing the boundaries of discourse and visual art. While picturesque production has an undeniably discursive element--language is used not only to describe the landscape, but to instruct on how to describe it--it is clearly also a visual practice. The instructive comments made in travel guides, such as West's, are directed primarily, but not solely, to the sketcher, to the amateur visual artist in the landscape. The discursive-instructive element of the picturesque tradition, which is perhaps most evident in Gilpin's numerous travel books, teaches the tourist how to see the landscape; it rationalises the tourist gaze, in that

it trains the tourist to organise and appreciate the landscape as pictorial art. Consequently, this thesis does not limit itself to literary analysis. It rather approaches the picturesque from the perspective of the critical analysis of the discontinuous totality of socio-cultural practices, pioneered by Raymond Williams, and later placed under the ambiguous rubric of Cultural Studies.

Distinct pathways of investigation open when we investigate the picturesque from the perspective of a critical analysis of socio-cultural practices. At the level of practice, picturesque representation cannot be separated from the specific social actions on which it is dependent. The picturesque construction of landscape (in the context in which I am dealing with it) cannot be separated from tourism and the diverse procedures which leisure travel entails. Nor can it be separated from the reconstitution of the arts in late eighteenth-century Britain, a prolonged set of events which reformulated how the graphic image was thought about, how art was practised, and to what ends it was put. Moreover, by foregrounding the socio-cultural practices of the picturesque, we can better view how scenic tourism connects to the constitution of the art viewer and the art object in the last decades of the eighteenth century. A study of landscape representation which does not investigate the constellation of practices which forms the immediate context of the cultural production of the picturesque landscape all to easily makes facile connections between landscape constructions and politics. Before making connections between politics and representation--a movement which I feel is necessary--, this thesis attempts to analyse the practices of cultural production which are inseparable from the picturesque landscape. To

look at the practices of cultural production involved in the construction of the picturesque

landscape reveals that the picturesque participates in what we might call the "cultural

field", a constellation of practices which, though inescapably linked to government and the

political economy, nonetheless maintains it own intermural relations.

The first chapter of this thesis, then, attempts to separate the procedures of

picturesque production from the other strategic (that is, end-oriented) practices of the

tourist, at once revealing the links between the picturesque landscape and other landscape

constructions and establishing that picturesque tourism constitutes an autonomous and

analysable strategy of production. The next chapter deals more specifically with the

picturesque, placing its linguistic and visual elements in relation to mechanical

reproduction and the reconstitution of the pictorial image with which mechanical

reproduction is interdependent. The third chapter, following from the arguments made in

the second chapter, contends that the picturesque should be understood to participate in

what Tony Bennett terms the "exhibitionary complex". Scenic tourism, I argue in this

chapter, cannot be separated from how the exhibition-goer and the display of objects were

constituted in late eighteenth-century Britain. The final chapter, departing somewhat from

the preceding chapters, looks at the conceptualisation of pleasure in picturesque

observation and representation. Nevertheless, as with each portion of this thesis, it

analyses the picturesque from the perspective of social practice.

I should also note in closing that the four chapters which make up this thesis for

the most part inhabit the same landscape. While I have not limited myself to those texts

which deal with the tour of the Lake District, the majority of the texts which I cite derive

from the interaction of the late eighteenth-century tourist with the terrain of

Westmoreland, Cumberland, and to a lesser degree, Lancashire..

Chapter 1:

Landscape and Strategies of Production

In 1782, when William Gilpin published <u>Observations on the River Wye</u>, the first

of what would be a series of works by Gilpin on picturesque travel, he was well aware that

the practice of observation and representation he advocated would have to compete with

other "rational amusements" for the attention of the traveller. The increasing number of

tourists visiting such "beauty spots" as the Wye River, the Lake District, and the

Highlands of Scotland participated in various leisure activities, behind which lay disparate

aims and procedures. Picturesque travel began and remained one among many tourist

practices. "We travel for various purposes", Gilpin notes in the first lines of his work on

the Wye, "to explore the culture of soils; to view the curiosities of art; to survey the

beauty of nature; and to learn the nature of men; their different polities, and modes of life"

(1). Into this constellation of practices, Gilpin hoped to add one more amusement to

occupy the tourist's leisure-time. Gilpin's book on the Wye offered the tourist "a new

object of pursuit; that of not barely examining the face of a country; but of examining it by

the rules of picturesque beauty; that of not merely describing; but of adapting the

description of natural scenery to the principles of artificial landscape..." (2). How new

Gilpin's technique was is questionable; the methods of observing the landscape practised

by Thomas Gray and other early travellers are certainly not unlike Gilpin's, even if Gilpin's

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technique of landscape perception is more systematic and, due to its wide and favourable

public reception, was more imitated. Nonetheless, Gilpin is correct to claim that

picturesque observation is a relatively distinct practice, having its own object of

pursuit--the production of a properly picturesque pictorial composition--and its own

procedures for realising this goal. Despite its singularity, however, picturesque

observation rarely functions by itself. Even Gilpin, who was by far the most avid promoter

of picturesque observation, punctuates his travel works with descriptions of his attempts

at archaeology, antiquarian historiography, geology, botany and other amusement proper

to those with time, taste and education. This combination of picturesque observation with

other leisure practices is even more evident in other written accounts of the British Tours,

such as Joseph Budworth's A Fortnight's Ramble in the Lakes (1792) or James Plumptre's

A Pedestrian Journey (1799, unpublished), texts whose authors advocate that picturesque

observation be used in combination with other leisure practices.

Broadly, this chapter is concerned with situating picturesque observation alongside

the other practices followed on the tours. To do so, I will examine a selection of late

eighteenth-century guidebooks and other textual accounts of the British tours, focusing

particularly, as I will in the following chapters, on those texts which deal with the tour of

the Lake District. But more specifically, I am interested in how the landscape is organised

by disparate practices, and in particular, with how the landscape is variously produced

within the leisure activities of the tourist. The tourist, I contend, is involved in the

production of a multiplicity of landscapes. When we speak of the "construction" of the

landscape in the discourses and social activities of the late eighteenth century (or any period) we cannot speak of a single organisation of the landscape. While engaged in a relatively synchronic analysis of the cultural practices of a particular time, or when examining a single text, we must take into account that the landscape will be formulated in a number of ways. I would like to suggest that this multiplicity of "landscapes" which operate within a particular culture can be illuminated by an analysis of the complex of relatively autonomous strategies which function in a given historical context. By this, I do not mean that in an analysis of the various modes in which landscape is constituted in the eighteenth-century, we can ignore how class, gender, political and ethnic distinctions condition various representations and uses of landscape. Rather, I think that by focusing on socio-cultural strategies, one can help explain the variety of landscapes we find in the travel literature of the 1780s and 1790s, texts which by and large were produced by a uniform group of individuals, with similar class and ethnic backgrounds.

The strategies which are the most prevalent in late eighteenth-century travel guides, I would suggest, are directed toward differing kinds of production. By strategy, I mean nothing more than a set of rational procedures which are explicitly directed to the successful accomplishment of a pre-defined end. We can thus claim that the picturesque observation is a strategic practice, since its aim is pre-determined. The tourist is asked to pictorially compose the landscape and given instructions on how to accomplish this end. The instructions which the tourist is offered, either directly in works such as Gilpin's or West's or indirectly in published travel journals, are clearly productive; in that, the

picturesque composition, whether it is created on paper or merely in the mind of the

observer, functions as the pre-determined end of picturesque observation. However, even

when the landscape operates within a set of methods involved in making and validating

knowledge claims, we can speak of strategies of production (that is, if one does not

naively posit that production is identical with the imaginative inventions of an individual or

collective subject). Historical narratives or scientific knowledge claims ultimately demand

a material production, which can usually be equated with a group of written statements.

Both historical and scientific knowledge claims are dependent upon a set of procedures

directed at the production of sentences and propositions. They require that one go through

distinct practices--hermeneutic in the case of historical analysis, experimental in the case of

scientific analysis. In the production of picturesque pictorial composition or of historical

narratives and empirico-scientific knowledge, the landscape occupies differing roles. It is

the disparate function of the terrain in each of these strategies which, I would suggest,

accounts for the differing constructions of the landscape which coincide with each strategy

and its corresponding product.

Though the following analysis of three distinct strategies evident in late

eighteenth-century travel literature cannot be said to be a genealogy of landscape

constructions (it does not analyse the continuities and discontinuities of a progression of

shifts in how the landscape was seen in the early modern era) it does share in what

Foucault terms "the history of the present", in that it maps out specific paradigmatic

strategies which remain operative in our present ways of seeing and using the landscape.

The ability of modern culture to maintain seemingly incompatible positions toward the landscape can, I think, be loosely connected to the autonomous nature of the strategies we find in late eighteenth-century travel literature. The socio-cultural ability to construct the landscape as a location of freedom and beauty, while simultaneously applying purposive-rational action to transform the landscape to devastating effects reveals the functional disjunctions which are possible between contemporaneous approaches toward the landscape. The present functional separation of the strategies involved in the construction and use of the land can be traced back to the early modern era. (This is not to say that late eighteenth-century socio-cultural strategies are merely early "versions" of our own). As this chapter will show, the divisions which separate strategies of production have historical conditions of possibility, disarticulations which are still operational in the arrangement of present views and uses of the land . While the principal aim of this chapter is not to connect post-Enlightenment and late eighteenth-century landscape strategies, it does not negate or discount the connections which exist between the present strategies and their socio-cultural organisation and those we find in early modern travel literature.

Late eighteenth-century travel literature evidences the landscape's role in the visual and textual procedures implicit in the production of historical narratives. In the historical mode of observation, interpretation, and instruction, the landscape enters into historical narratives, at once constituting the material on which the traces of past events remain visible and affording a present reminder (sign) of past events. In contrast to picturesque observation, historical observation constructs the landscape as a site of past events, a site

which still offers the observer evidence of those events. Even when the landscape does not

bear the remnants of past events--as is often the case with the literary history of the Lake

District--the historical mode of vision and signification is able to narrativise the landscape,

by assigning a particular landscape a significance within a specific historical narrative, in

other words, by making it a monument which commemorates the past.

Guidebooks to the Lake District testify to the prevalence and consistency of the

discrete visual and textual procedures for the production of history involved in late

eighteeth-century tourism. Although written primarily as a guide and manual for the

tourist who intends to view the Lake District as an exhibitionary site of pictorial scenes

simulating the works of Claude, Gaspar Poussin or Savator Rosa, Thomas West's A Guide

to the Lakes does not limit itself to the picturesque strategy of vision in which the

landscape is constituted as a detemporalised, and hence de-historicized, pictorial

composition. Though the majority of West's guide focuses the production of the landscape

as a cultural item, the guide also contains sections, specifically those dealing with the

material traces of the Roman occupation of Lancaster and the ruined abbey at Furness,

which function within the discourse of antiquarianism. West's sporadic remarks on local

history of the Lake District and the surrounding area focus primarily on architecture. West

narrativises the architecture at Lancaster: Reading the traces of conflict in what remained

of a Roman garrison, he begins a story that starts with the arrival of the general Agricola

and ends with the reign of Elizabeth. Similarly, the ruins of Furness Abbey catalyse a

historical narrative, affording West an opportunity to recount the founding of the

monastery by the Earl of Montaigne and Boulogne in 1127 and of the various

contemplative orders at Furness prior to the dissolution of the monasteries.[1] For West,

architectural formations are ineluctably linked to historical time; viewing ruins and other

architectural sites leads immediately to a discourse about the past. In <u>A Guide to the</u>

<u>Lakes</u>, architecture is, thus, indissociable from the past and a specific discourse of the

past. It would not be unfair, then, to say that the <u>Guide</u> is involved in the production of

history as surely as it is in the production of the landscape as a pictorial composition, even

if the guide is less devoted to historical production.

The landscape, though it may be marginal to the <u>Guide</u>'s production of the

historical past, does not escape from historical time in the portions of the text operating

with an antiquarian vocabulary. In the historical strategy of vision of the antiquarian, in

which to see is to see the past, the landscape becomes a space open to historical decoding.

The landscape is formulated both as a site in which the signs of the past reveal themselves

and as an historically analysable item in itself. At Lancaster, West remarks that "the green

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[1]   West's account of the era before the dissolution of the monasteries is explicitly
nostalgic. This nostalgia for a contemplative past is, no doubt, in part due to West's
catholicism. However, even taking into account the prevalent view among Anglican travel
writers, such as Gilpin, that ruined abbeys are visible signs of the end of papist social and
intellectual domination, there is considerable evidence of a nostalgic attitude in late
eighteenth-century travel writing, if not toward the abbeys themselves, then at least
towards the concept of contemplation. It is also worth noting the sporadic descriptions of
ruined abbeys in works which promote the landscape as a site of contemplation. I think it
would be well worth investigating the links between the construction of the landscape as a
contemplative local and the tensions within eighteenth-century views on contemplation. If
in the eighteenth-century, the landscape became associated with contemplation, since
contemplation no longer could be favourably associated with monasteries, it would be
interesting to investigate how this shift occurred and how it might have functioned to
isolate and domesticate forms of asceticism.

mount on which the castle stands appears to be an artefactum of the Romans. In digging

into it seven years ago, a Roman silver denarius was found at a great depth" (14). Of

course, this is a special case; not every hillside contains the remains of Roman

fortifications. Nevertheless, West's account of the hill which Lancaster castle occupies is

indicative of how the landscape functions within the strategy for the production of

historical knowledge. Similar to the ruin, the landscape is marked with the traces of the

human past, and can thus become an object of historical knowledge. Marks on the

landscape, in the same way as the Roman denarius, function, not within an economy of

property or aesthetic judgement, but within an economy of exposition, in which to view

objects (artefacts) is to read the past, to place a silent object into a narrative structure.

The strategy of observation involved in the production of historical knowledge also

constructs the subject of observation: the observing subject reads the traces on the

landscape, attempting to make the past give up its story. As in the case of the hillside at

Lancaster, the subject of historical knowledge must observe the past in the present face of

nature, a procedure which may involve digging into the landscape, literally and figurally

defacing the landscape so precious to picturesque observation.

This visual procedure in and by which the landscape becomes an artefact, an item

which can be placed within a historical narrative, was used not only to uncover a narrative

of human history, but a "natural history", a narrative of geological formations. Caves and

crags were, for the natural antiquarian, traces of the Flood, remnants of an antediluvian

landscape. Rugged landscapes were the visible effects of the Deluge, and to observe them

was to see into the past. For example, writing of Gingling-cave at Derbyshire, a common

tourist stop before or after the Tour of the Lakes, an anonymous "Gentleman at

Cambridge", "sees" the cave as baring the signs of the "first cause":

> ......O may I oft
>
> In this Egerian cave, great power, attend
>
> Thy sacred presence; here with nature's self
>
> Hold converse; 'till by just degrees of mind
>
> Through science' footsteps pierce the harmonious maze
>
> Of sacred order, and to brighter views
>
> From day to day aspiring, trace at length,
>
> Through all the wonders of the nether world,
>
> The Eternal cause...(quoted in West, 305).

The tourist-poet, through a conversation in which the landscape serves as a semiotic

medium, attempts to decipher the sacred order. If the landscape is a semiotic medium, it is

science which serves to decode the message imbedded in the "wild fantastic form" of

Gingling-cave; scientific methods of observation and analysis bring the order of disorder

into the light, subsequently illuminating the "Eternal Cause". Similar sentiments underlie

"Some Philosophical Conjectures on the Deluge, and the Alterations on the Surface and

Interior Parts of the Earth Occasioned by This Great Revolution of Nature", a monograph

written by West in the late 1770's. As for the anonymous Gentleman from Cambridge, for

West, the "rough" landscapes, both above and below the Earth's surface, are hieroglyphic, in that they are the material signs of a vague, yet interpretable narrative.

The antiquarian in the landscape thus observes two categories of ruin: the ruins of past human events and the ruins of nature. Not surprisingly, since both the ruin of nature and the ruin of human history operate in a relatively unified strategy of vision and narrative, they occupy the same rhetorical structures, the same discourse of time and decay (Ousby, 142). For William Hutchinson, the author of The History of Antiquities of Cumberland (1794) and An Excursion to the Lakes, in Westmorland and Cumberland, in August 1773 (1774), the rugged landscape at Dovesdale resembles "a ruined castle" (1774: 104). The condition of possibility for Hutchinson's enunciation of such a resemblance is, I would suggest, not an essential similarity between rugged landscapes and ruined architecture, but the common visual and narrative strategy in which both ruins and landscape can be encompassed. The sight of the ruined landscape and broken architecture are able to correspond because a space has been cleared in which material decay can be narrativised, in which what is present can speak of the past. Such a clearing in which the silent materiality of things opens up to history (that is, to a specific narrative discourse) clearly depends on a construction of visuality which is fundamentally linked to the formation of narratives, in so far as what is seen is seen to speak of past events.

This is not to say that rugged landscape and ruined architecture are always conflated in the mind of the traveller or that broken landscapes or buildings necessary lead the tourist to a historical narrative. The strategy of picturesque observation and

representation, as I will investigate below, separates the picturesque scene from

temporality, and consequently from historicity. The compositional frame of the

picturesque, not only separates the objects of the composition from those outside the

viewer's gaze, but from any temporality outside of that of the immediate composition.

Picturesque observation, far from activating a historical narrative, halts the metonymy of

historical regression that characterises the antiquarian or historical strategy of

observation.[2] (In this respect, the picturesque can be seen, as Alan Liu contends, as a

variety of formalism). When Gilpin viewed Tintern Abbey, a paradigm of the ruin even

before Wordsworth's notable poem, he did not see the historical past, though he saw the

effects of time. In a notorious passage, Gilpin suggests some improvements be made to the

Abbey:

> Though the parts are beautiful, the whole is ill-shaped. No ruins of the tower are
>
> left, which might give form, and contrast to the walls, and buttresses, and other
>
> inferior parts. Instead of this, a number of gabel-ends hurt the eye with their
>
> regularity; and disgust it by the vulgarity of their shape. A mallet judiciously used
>
> (but who durst use it?) might be of service in fracturing some of them; particularly
>
> those of the cross isles, which are not only disagreeable in themselves, but which
>
> confound the perspective (1782: 33).

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[2]   I am here indebted to Will McConnell, who, in an unpublished paper, comments on

the connection between ruins and metonymy.

Gilpin's vision is in no way historical: rather, it is judgmental; it does not lead to a

narrative, but to a normative criticism based on the "rules of art". Approached using the

visual strategy of the picturesque, the buttresses are not signs of the dissolution, but

awkward objects which unbalance a pictorial composition. There is an undeniable tension

between the ruin as collection of interpretable signs, and as a functional item in a pictorial

production. Gilpin's hesitation over his suggestion that someone take a mallet to the

Abbey can be understood as the strained conjunction of two incommensurable strategies:

As a historical artefact, the ruin must be preserved, so that it can correctly offer evidence

of the past; as an object in a pictorial composition, the ruin must be made more ruinous.

For Gilpin, as for other tourists, the abbey functions in (at least) two separate economies

of cultural production: the production of historical narrative and the production of

aesthetic items.

While the production of historical narratives and the production of aesthetised

landscapes result from distinct strategies of vision and analysis, this does not hinder the

writing of a literary history of the Lakes, which is, in part, a history of the production of

aesthetised landscapes. West's guide continually refers to the travels of Thomas Gray,

who, in the summer of 1767, travelled in the Lake District, capturing landscapes in his

convex mirror. When West directs his reader to compose the landscape from a site which

Gray had visited, he does not omit to tell the reader that he or she is standing were the

famous poet had earlier in the century composed the landscape in his Claude Glass. To

make it easier for the tourist to place the landscapes he or she is presently viewing into the

narrative of Gray's tour, the 1782 edition of West's guide conveniently includes Gray's journal entries from the summer of 1767, republished from William Mason's The Life of Gray, as an appendix. West's comments on Gray and the inclusion of Gray's journals as an addenda to West's guide are most certainly the first steps in the process by which the landscape of the Lake District entered the narrative of British literary history. Following West's guide, the tourist was able to map out which landscapes the famous poet had observed, to see the landscapes which now stood as monuments to British cultural history. Decades before tourists viewed the landscape as a monument to Wordsworth or the "Romantics" , West's guide inspired the traveller to visit certain landscapes, such as the vale of Keswick, because Gray had done so earlier. Since its history was largely that of agricultural workers, a class who were not seen by the traveller to have taken part in History, the Lake District was a blank slate onto which British literary history could be written. Ignoring the history of local workers, West could constitute Gray and other less well-known writers as Dr. John Brown, as the dominant figures in the narrative of the local landscape. Apart from the several Roman and monastic architectural remains, the literary sites of the Lake District were (and remain) the dominant "historic sites" in the Lake District. For the late eighteenth-century traveller, then, the sights of the picturesque, along with generating pictorial compositions, were frequently sites of the dissemination of literary history. During the Tour, the tourist could interpret the landscape, not as literature, but as the site of past cultural productions, reading onto the landscape a

significance which the terrain derived from its participation in earlier textual or visual
productions.

With the literary-historical sites of the Lake District, as with its other historic sites,
to see the landscape is to place the landscape within a specific narrative, whether that
narrative is that of British letters or of geological formations . Through this intersection of
vision and narrative, landscape acquires a particular meaning, a significance generated
through its connection to past events, which may or may not have left interpretable traces
on the landscape. The landscape is consequently caught up in the legitimating of specific
narratives. By giving the particular landscapes a historical significance, the landscape
operates in the maintenance and reproduction of narratives and the system of values
inherent to those narratives. For instance, since it is linked to a particular narrative--the
story of Gray's "discovery" of the Lake District--the vale of Keswick not only valorises
Gray's role within British letters, but also legitimates a particular conception of cultural
history, one which not only canonises works and authors, but also formulates the position
of literature within society. Like the vale of Keswick, the crags and caverns near the Lake
District maintain and reproduce a specific narrative and the values inherent to that
narrative. As a tourist attraction, Gingling-cave promotes a specific understanding of
natural history, one in which geological and Biblical time correspond and interanimate
each other. Gingling-cave, in effect, becomes a space in which to see is to participate in
late eighteenth-century geological knowledge and its core narratives. The strategy by
which a landscape is placed within a historical narrative allows the particular sights to

operate as sites of dispersion for various cultural narratives and narrative-dependent knowledges, such as geology and history.

Apart from its role in the dispersion of narrative-dependent disciplines, the British tours served to disperse the strategies of observation and description employed by the eighteenth-century natural sciences, modes of vision and textuality that, for the most part, employ narratives only sparingly. Among the public which took the tours (or which read accounts of those who had), late eighteenth-century travel literature popularised scientific observation and textuality. On the tour of the Lakes, for instance, the tourist frequently rehearsed a empirico-scientific strategy which, though it shares some aspects with antiquarianism and picturesque observation, is relatively autonomous, constituting distinct objects of knowledge--categorisable and quantifiable specimens--and a distinct subject of observation, the rational individual who could objectively view, measure and describe nature. Published accounts of the British tours which include sections on the analysis of local soils or minerals or, as is more frequently the case, merely describe and categorise the birds and plants which could be observed on a specific tour, undeniably played a role in the public's increased understanding and application of scientific methods of observation and categorisation, such as those involved in ornithology or botany. The tours were, then, socio-cultural activities in which leisure intersected with empirico-scientific modes of vision and enunciation.

The mode of vision which operates within late-eighteenth natural science, I would suggest, was instrumental in shaping a distinctively realistic and unornamented prose style

frequently used in late eighteenth century and early nineteenth-century guide books, such

as West's <u>A Guide to the Lakes</u> (1778) and John Housman's <u>A Descriptive Tour and</u>

<u>Guide to the Lakes, Caves, and Mountains of Lancashire, Westmorland and Cumberland</u>

(1800) No doubt aware of the criticism levelled at Gilpin's series of <u>Picturesque</u>

<u>Observations</u>, which were widely held to have given embellished accounts of the

landscapes of the Lakes, Housman was careful to accurately describe the landscape. In

the "advertisement" to his guide Housman claims that he had to the best of his ability

faithfully reproduced the Lake District. He reports of his guidebook:

> Unexaggerated descriptions, in plain and simple language, are here principally
>
> aimed at; and if the Author, in any instance has failed in the truth and justness of
>
> his representations, he entreats the candid reader to attribute such inaccuracies
>
> either to some unperceived mistake of his own, or to the misinformation of
>
> others--and not to any desire of passing a deception upon the public (ii).

Housman's concern with the "truth" and "justness" of his representations is explicitly

connected to a discursive style: truthful representations are possible only when the author

uses plain and simple language. Quotidian and unadorned discourse is understood to be

transparent to the world of empirical objects; only through unornamented language can

what is immediately present to the author's vision be related to the reader. Clearly,

Housman, unlike Gilpin, is interested in presenting the landscape as it would appear to the

tourist, not as it should appear according to the rules of art. For Housman, artful language is exaggerated language, since it embellishes upon the "truth" of the scene. This is not to say that Housman is immune to picturesque description, but rather that Housman sees accurate description of the Lakes and the plants and animals of the area as an underlying principle of his guide. However, what interests me here is the concept of accurate and plain description, not the differences between Gilpin's and Housman's works.

Housman's plain and simple language functions within a particular a discourse, that is, it relies upon a regulated and conventional mode of enunciation. That Housman's unadorned discourse is frequently quantitative reveals how Housman associates a transparent language with a discourse that constitutes the landscape as a measurable specimen. Like West's Guide to the Lake, Housman's guidebook offers the traveller the heights of mountain, and precipices and the length of the lakes. While Housman's work does not go as far as West's to compare the height of mount Skiddaw to the valley of Chamouni, in Savoy, or Pike Rucio, in the island of Madeira, A Descriptive Guide to the Lakes generally includes measurements in his depiction of the Lake District. Describing a gorge in the Lake District, Housman applies a textual mode which exemplifies the "plain and simple" language which he advocates in the guide's "advertisement":

> The form of this chasm is somewhat elliptical; quite open at the north end, but the south end, through which the water pours, although partly open, is sufficiently barred up by immense fragments of rock, so as to prevent all further progress. It

consists of two apartments or areas; the first is about 100 yards by 40; the other is inaccessible, and appears to be about 20 yards by 10 (24).

Quantitative facts are here regarded as truthful description. To see the landscape and to relate that vision, is to delimit the landscape, to situate the landscape against a standard scale of measurement. The chasm, for Housman, is subject to a quantifying vision. "Progress" is halted only when the observing subject is no longer able to see. (Nevertheless, what remains unseen, does not lead to the unknowable. What is unseen, the blocked "apartment," like what is seen can be reduced, by rational speculation, to a quantifying vision). Housman's "plain" discourse, complete with measurements of the landscape in feet and yards, can thus itself be understood as a visual medium, a textual channel through and by which the reader is able to accurately see the chasm.

Housman's proclivity to equate truthful description with measurement is connected to the strategies involved in the late eighteenth-century natural sciences, or more precisely, with its aim of accumulating data (standardised depiction and measurements) about objects. Data, much like "commodity", is an all inclusive category, a field which can accommodate any object. The tours, no doubt, offered the traveller the opportunity to collect data, to repeat the procedures by which Housman acquired his information. With a clear and penetrating gaze, the tourist could do his or her part in making the world more knowable. Even when the observed landscape had been previously investigated, as was the case with the majority of the Lake District, the tourist could none

the less rehearse the quantifying vision of the naturalist, collecting his own facts about the landscape. It is precisely this exercise of vision, in which the landscape is quantified, which Housman's guide promotes. It should also be noted, however, that the visual strategy which Housman forwards is equally a textual performance to be repeated by the tourist. The tourist was free to apply the mode of description which Housman employs in his guide. As most tourists, it seems, kept a travel journal, the discourses and vocabularies of the guidebooks were reiterated in the tourist's notebooks. The modes of description which Housman applies, and the strategy of vision intrinsic to it were, then, dispersed throughout a large number of journals--some of which, such as Budworth's <u>A Fortnight's Ramble</u> were later published as guidebooks themselves. Guides and travel notebooks can therefore be understood as instruments of dispersion, in which the fascination with quantification and measurement, procedures by this time well-developed in the eighteenth-century natural sciences, could reach the ever-growing numbers of those who travelled for leisure.

Housman's <u>Descriptive Tour and Guide</u> includes, along with excerpts from West, Gilpin and Anne Radcliffe, observations of natural phenomenon appropriated from the notebooks of naturalists who were examining the Lake District at the time. Housman inserts sections of text which focus on the particular phenomenon, listing minute details gathered through empirical observation. From the fieldbooks of John Swainton, a naturalist who, in the 1790's, studied the water and minerals of the Lake District, Housman takes an observation of what he describes as a "singular" phenomenon:

Gigglewides well, 7th April 12 P.M. Settled 11 inches in about 4 minutes; it

flowed the same height in 2 minutes. Next time did not go so low by 2 inches.

When at low ebb it begins to rise immediately. There seemed no interval between

its low ebb and rising, nor between its being full and beginning to ebb again (35).

That Swainton's detailed account of Gigglewide well is included in Housman's work, a

guidebook expressly published for the leisure traveller, reveals how the language of the

natural sciences were not, at least at the turn of the nineteenth century, strictly isolated to

a specialist scientific community. The discourse which coincides with late

eighteenth-century empirical observation, of which Swainton's description is a good

example, frequently found its way into the travel literature of the period. Even Gilpin, who

argues against the inclusion of minute details in picturesque composition, carefully

describes waterfowl of the Lake District, noting the coloration of their plumage and their

manner of flight. (1786: 167). Although Swainton's observations, in their degree of detail,

go beyond most of the detailed descriptions found in late eighteenth-century travel

literature--only Arthur Young's observations in A Tour of the Northern Counties (1787)

are comparable--they nonetheless share with many of the guides and travel writing of the

time a fascination with minute particulars.

The strategy for the production of empirical knowledge, which lies behind sections

like those taken from Swainton's notebooks, can be distinguished from the visual

procedures of picturesque observation and composition if we take into account their

differing approaches toward detail. Picturesque composition, in accord with Reynolds's

Third Discourse, attempts to present a generalised, abstract landscape, to look beyond the

material particularity of a local terrain to present a landscape regulated by the rules of art.

The depiction of minute details and idiosyncratic natural phenomenon necessary to the

naturalist's scientific descriptions are, for Gilpin, not the "province" of the painter, and by

extension, not the concern of the picturesque observer. The picturesque observer is to

"consider little more than their [natural objects'] general forms, actions and combinations"

(Gilpin, 1793: 45). By contending that the curious or uncommon object, the object which

does not correspond to a general type, falls within the "naturalist's province", he aligns

himself with Reynolds (1793: 45). Gilpin would have no doubt agreed with Reynolds's

dictum that "the whole beauty and grandeur of the art [painting] consists... in being able to

get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities and details in every kind" (44).

Using the picturesque strategy of vision and presentation, the tourist reveals that he or she

is able to abstract, to use his or her rational faculties to encompass the general and

formulate the ideal. According to the rules of picturesque composition, variety must be

distinguished from detail: variety is a compositional feature, it denotes the contrasts within

a pictorial image; on the other hand, detail corresponds to the idiosyncratic materiality of

specific terrains, a quality which the painter (or observer-as-painter) must overcome if he

or she is going to present a properly picturesque landscape. Because it is unconcerned

with particularities, that is, with increasing society's stock of descriptive propositions

(information), picturesque observation rejects precisely that which scientific observation values.

Housman's association of "truth and justness" with a mode of observation which necessitates measurement and with a discourse which records particularity is indicative of a historical condition in which knowledge is increasingly equated with information. Within this socio-cultural context, which is by no means without its tensions and incongruities, scientific observation can be differentiated from picturesque observation in its relation to the historical conditions for the validation of knowledge claims. Where the observation of the naturalist, which tourists rehearsed on their travels, could be seen to lead to knowledge, picturesque observation could only be seen to offer the tourist a technique, a know-how. In this context, which affords the separation of aesthetics from knowledge, the technique of picturesque observation and composition becomes self-contained within the field of artistic or cultural production. By learning how to compose the landscape according to the generalities of the picturesque, the tourist does not acquire information about the world: rather, he or she learns the rules for composition and shading. Admittedly, the abstractions which the tourist must perform are equated with rationality, in so far as they constitute a "rational amusement". But it is a rationality detached from the rationality of late eighteenth-century natural sciences, which increasingly formulated abstraction (or generalisation) as deduction. Since knowledge was equated with deducing general trends from minute particulars (a procedure which, despite its element of abstraction, is necessarily tied to the observation and recording of measurable

particularities), the picturesque's depreciation of detail, separates it both from the strategies of scientific observation, and by extension, from the production of valid knowledge claims.

Nonetheless, despite the picturesque's degradation of particularity, the strategies by which the tourist produced well-composed, general landscapes are, at points, congruent with the strategy for the production of empirical knowledge. Both the picturesque observation and the scientific forms of observation which were directly and indirectly promoted and recorded in the tour guides and journals demand that the particularity of the observing subject be minimalised. While the tourist organises the landscape variously depending on whether he or she is participating in the strategies of the natural sciences or of the picturesque--formulating the landscape as a storehouse of particular phenomenon in the one case, and in the other, rejecting the particularities of the local terrain--in both cases the subject in the landscape is asked to forget his or her particularity as a subject,or at least not imprint those particularities on the object of observation. In a word, the observing subject must be "disinterested". To fail as a disinterested observer is to fail at both picturesque and scientific observation and production. If the picturesque eye is jaundiced with personal idiosyncrasies, it cannot correctly compose the landscape, since it will be unable to reach a sufficient abstraction to reconstruct the local terrain. Similarly, if the tourist in his or her application of scientific observation does not bracket his or her personal feelings, he or she will not be able to produce the clear and plain statements about natural phenomena which scientific knowledge requires.

The position of the tourist fits in neatly with this demand for a disinterested

subjectivity. The tourist is necessarily unconnected to the landscape he or she views,

having no--or at least little--prior personal connections to the object of observation

(Bohls, 32). As a casual on-looker, the leisure traveller can claim a certain degree of

distance from the landscape, an otherness which allows the tourist to remain disengaged

from the local and materially specific terrain. The dislocation of the subject from the object

is central to the construction of the subjectivity of the tourist. Far from being a marginal

modern identity, the figure of the tourist is in complete accord with certain ascendant

modern strategies of production. The production of aesthetised landscapes necessitates the

observer's disconnection from the aesthetic object, for if the artist (or "composer") of the

landscape is concretely connected, through memory, to the landscape, there is the constant

chance that he or she will not be able to reach the necessary level of abstraction. The

subjectivity of the tourist likewise corresponds to the construction of the subject of

scientific knowledge; the tourist necessarily reaches the desired position of the subject of

scientific observation: to be an individual who sees objects as if for the first time, or better,

for the first time. The tourist, like the subject of scientific knowledge, is constituted as an

eye devoid of memory. The tourist's situation, which is both physical and psychological,

removed from the material condition and social situation of his or her everyday-life allows

the leisure traveller to view him or herself as a tabula rasa. The tourist, of course, carries

the baggage of his or her social position, but removed from the immediate locations of his

or her social conditioning, the tourist asked to ignore that conditioning, to be an individual

seemingly without memory. The strategies of picturesque and scientific observation and production, both of which demand the sublimation of the subject's particular social position, are, then, congruent with the construction of the disconnected, and hence disinterested subjectivity of the tourist.

There is an obvious tension between, on the one hand, how the subject is structured in the production of empirical knowledge and picturesque compositions and, on the other hand, how it is structured in the production of historical narratives. The picturesque and scientific subjects, despite their obvious differences, are both divorced from memory (that is, from personal or historical narrative), in contrast to the subject of historical knowledge who must reconstruct the memory of the mute materiality of the landscape, reconnecting the landscape to the narratives in which it participates. Nonetheless, without denying the differences between the distinct subject positions involved in the disparate economies of production that have been the focus of this chapter, the subject position which the tourist-as-antiquarian appropriates is not as disjunct from the picturesque and scientific subject as it might first appear. The subject position intrinsic to the production of historical knowledge, like the subject positions inherent to the picturesque and to the production of scientific knowledge, are understood as distinct--or at least separable- from the personal narrative of the individual viewer. The historical narratives inscribed on the landscapes of the Lake District, for instance, can be read with apparent disengagement by the tourist, since the tourist is not socio-economically involved with the terrain of the Lake District. The stories which surround the Westmorland and

Cumbrian landscapes are suitably distant from the tourist. The tourist is constituted, so to speak, as a casual reader, not an active participant. The distance which the picturesque eye must achieve from the agriculturally-based, socio-economic conditions of the Lake District, is thus not unlike the distance the tourist-historian must attain so as not to directly enter the narrative of the landscape. (We should also note that it is precisely this historical distance which hinders the ability of the traveller to view "tourism" as an active social force in the socio-economic history of the landscape)

Regardless of their various aims, which in themselves are frequently incongruent, the strategies involved in late eighteenth-century tourism present, at least at certain points, analogous procedures. The constitution of the tourist, in so far as it is dependent on the distancing of the subject from the object of investigation, is not unrelated to the formation of the subject of scientific knowledge. Similarly, the ways in which the landscape is itemised, divorced from its immediate socio-economic role in the local culture and economy of the Lake District are, it would appear, indicative of certain general historical trends in how objects are constituted. While no social activity, or its procedures, is reducible to any other (e.g. cultural production is not reducible to economics), distinct strategies reinforce each other, even if they are simultaneously, at various levels, in direct conflict. Thus, cultural productions, such as those involved in the visual or literary arts, may reinforce the modes of subjectification and objectification intrinsic to the production of empirical knowledge, even when the aims and social function of cultural production are at odds with those of the production of empirical knowledge.

The various constructions of landscape found in late eighteenth-century travel literature are, then, conditioned by strategies of production which, while being fully distinct from each other, maintain a certain degree of interaction, due to their mutual participation in a historically-specific constellation of social practices. Guidebooks and travel journals, nevertheless, serve as means of disseminating disparate representations of landscape, whose social function and conditions of production vary. It is thus possible to map out, through an examination of the texts and procedures which the late eighteenth-century tourist employed, how the landscape is constructed within a single leisure activity, without obfuscating the tourist's participation in other social practices. It is precisely such an examination which the following three chapters will pursue.

Chapter 2:

The Picturesque and the Mobility of the Picture

From hence I got to the parsonage... and saw in my glass a picture, that if I could

transmit to you and fix it in all the softness of its living colours, would fairly sell

for a thousand pounds.

-Thomas Gray[1]

To regard Gray's speculation on the monetary value of a landscape reflected on the surface

of a convex mirror as an anomalous moment in the late eighteenth-century discussion of

landscape would greatly underestimate the intersection between late eighteenth-century

commercial economics and constructions of landscape, and in particular the integral role

the economy of the art market played in structuring the relation between the observer and

the natural terrain. Gray's remark is indicative of how the organisation of the production,

circulation, and consumption of pictorial images in late eighteenth-century Britain, by

initiating the understanding of the landscape as a mobile and exchangeable item, informs

contemporaneous discussions of landscape . Picturesque travel is arguably the most

striking example of the intersection of late eighteenth-century constructions of landscape

and the order of pictorial production and consumption. While in the late 1760s and early

1770s only a limited number of artists, writers and cognoscenti, such as Gray, John

Brown, and William Gilpin visited the Lake district and other out-of-the-way picturesque

sites, by the 1790s, the Lake District in Cumberland and Westmorland, and to a lesser

degree the Wye Valley in Wales, and the Highlands of Scotland, were widely seen as the

destinations of choice for the traveller of taste and means. The methods of observation

which the tourist applied provided an indefinitely repeatable, versatile, and easily followed

procedure for composing pictorial images, regardless of whether the picture was

composed on paper, on the surface of a convex mirror or solely in the mind of the

traveller. In this chapter I will argue that picturesque travel can be effectively understood

as an integrated nexus of discourse and practice which is inseparably linked to the

consumption and production of pictorial images in late eighteenth-century Britain, making

specific reference to the role of discourse in the proliferation of pictorial images.

Although this chapter concerns the participation of picturesque travel in the

organisation of pictorial production and the circulation and consumption of pictorial

products in late eighteenth-century Britain, I do not maintain that picturesque travel can be

fully understood in terms of commercial economics. Picturesque discourse and practice

are conditioned by disparate fields of knowledge and discrete institutional systems and

cultural practices. The picturesque is, as it were, a locus for the imbrication of

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[1]   An excerpt from a letter sent to Gray's friend Dr. Wharton in October of 1769.
Gray's letters to Wharton were posthumously published in Gray's memoirs. The letter was,
however, published in the addenda to the third edition (1784) of Thomas West's A Guide
to the Lakes (1779).

heterogeneous and discontinuous knowledges and social fields, all of which function on a

single social surface. Picturesque travel texts and picturesque observation cannot be

viewed apart from the eighteenth-century rationalisation of language, surveying

technologies, agricultural enclosure, and competing constructions of public and private

space, to name merely a few of the picturesque's conditioning factors.[2] The intricate

connection between the picturesque and contemporary politics also cannot be ignored. In

the past few years Anne Bermingham and Stanley Robinson have convincingly articulated

picturesque theory's connection to the fractious schism within Whig politics and the

ossification of party politics in England during the French Revolution. Although I accept

the link which Bermingham and Robinson secure between the picturesque

landscape-gardening and eighteenth-century foreign and domestic politics, their approach

to the picturesque obscures how the significant changes in mechanical reproduction,

patronage, the hierarchy of pictorial genres, the reorganisation of the art market and the

redefinition of art objects in late eighteenth-century Britain informs scenic tourism. This

chapter will work toward an examination of the function of picturesque instructional

discourse and observation in the reorganisation of pictorial production and consumption

which occurred in late eighteenth-century Britain. However, before I can investigate

picturesque discourse and practice it will be necessary to analyse several elements of

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[2]   For discussions on the relation between picturesque travel and agriculture
enclosure, see John Barrell's The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place, 1760-1840:
An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare (Cambridge 1972) and Alan Liu's Wordsworth:
A Sense of History (Stanford, 1989)

eighteenth-century visual culture and the system of production and consumption in which pictorial objects operated during that period.

Late eighteenth-century Britain witnessed a realignment of the relation between art and its audience which was codeterminous with a restructuring of the circulation, and hence availability, of pictorial products. In the late eighteenth century, the visual arts can truly be said to have become public. In the later decades of the century, the visual arts, no longer confined to the manor house or private auction room, circulated more freely across the social stratifications of late eighteenth-century British society. The claim that pictorial products were available, whether by consumption or exhibition, to a far larger segment of society than they had been in the first half of the century is based not only on the appearance in the 1760s of regular art exhibitions which displayed and sold contemporary British paintings, but also on a more general shift in the distribution of patronage in British society. In the last decades of the late eighteenth century, as Morris Eaves comments, the public became the most significant patron of the visual arts; it was no longer a select group of aristocratic families, but the middle classes which primarily funded the production of visual images (179). That a far broader segment of society could purchase pictorial productions is in part due to the growing wealth of the middle class during the time period immediately preceding the Industrial Revolution and to the increased availability of contemporary British paintings, which were displayed in annual art exhibitions operated by a collection of separate artist societies, the most prestigious of which was the Royal Academy.[3] Although we should not deny the significance of the new moneyed classes or

the increased availability of British art, we cannot overlook the importance of the mechanical reproduction of pictures as a highly effective means by which a broader segment of society could view and buy visual art. Mechanical reproduction was a key element in the reorganisation of the relation between art and its audience in the late eighteenth century, as it permitted an artist to sell an individual composition a multiple number of times, thus increasing the number of persons who could view or purchase an individual composition. Pictorial prints had, of course, been a factor in visual culture since the fifteenth century; however, it was only in the late eighteenth century that the display of reproductions became widespread fashion in Britain. Working with a set of engravers, artists such as Joshua Reynolds and Benjamin West produced a limited number of reproductions of their work, which were successfully sold by subscription. Artists, thus, were no longer dependent on individual patrons or buyers, since they could finance their art through the pre-sale of reproductions. John Boydell, a leading print-seller during the last decades of the eighteenth century, could proudly exclaim that the development of a native engraving industry was "the first great improvement" in English art, for Boydell believed that engraving would introduce a larger number of people to "great art" and provide a stable patronage base for British artists. Whether of not the taste of the British

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3   Although there had been sporadic exhibitions of the works of British painters before the 1760s, the first regular exhibition of contemporary British art was held by the Society of Artists of Great Britain at Spring Gardens in 1761. One can argue that picturesque sites, such as the Lake District, functioned analogously to the art exhibition, since both the picturesque site and the art exhibition were spaces which simultaneously blurred the lines between viewing, desire and consumption. This link between scenic tourism and the late eighteenth-century art exhibition will be dealt with more thoroughly in the next chapter.

public was "improved" through the production of prints is arguable; however, pictorial

reproduction did clearly allow for the increased circulation of visual art, therefore sizeably

increasing the number of art buyers in Britain. Pictorial reproduction, as it were, opened

up valuable channels of commerce to the British art market, providing as it did a means by

which visual art could circulate more freely in British society. By making what was

singular--the painting--into an exchangeable multiplicity, pictorial reproduction was

interdependent with the modernising process of capitalism, a process which through

simulation--and other means--eliminates obstacles to the circulation of objects in an

economy (see Deleuze 1145).

While only a few enthusiasts collected prints in the early eighteenth century, by the

late 1760s print collecting was all the rage. Writing Horace Mann in 1770, Horace

Walpole complains that while he "originally gave for a mezzotinto [print] above one or

two shillings[,] the lowest are now a crown, most from half a guinea to a guinea" (465).

When he blamed the growing number of collectors for the increased cost of prints,

undoubtedly Walpole accurately surmised the reason for the price difference. Collecting

pictorial reproductions of noted works substituted for the buying of originals, an

endeavour which, due to the price and scarcity of many originals, excluded not only much

of the new moneyed classes, but also many of the aristocracy (Pears, 170). Moreover, by

owning prints of the works of recognised painters, one could demonstrate one's taste

without great expenditure. Owning pictorial reproductions was, then, not so much a

display of one's economic wealth, as it was of one's cultivation. In the late-eighteenth

century, the consumption and display of prints thus had a decided sign-value; to display a print was to display one's taste. Since, by collecting pictorial reproductions, the new moneyed classes could appropriate the cultural position of the landed aristocracy, the collection of pictorial prints can be seen to be indexical of a reorganisation of the cultural economy of signs. The reproduction of pictorial images coincided with the middle classes' reproduction of aristocratic tastes, enabling the middle class to perform what Jean Baudrillard has termed "social mimesis", the process whereby one class or group, by imitating the cultural markers of another social set, can destabilise that set's unique cultural position. However, we need to recognise that the growing popularity of pictorial prints which could display the appropriate sign-value was interdependent upon recent techniques of mechanical reproduction.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century the simulation of paintings increasingly became the focus of techniques for the mechanical reproduction of pictorial images. In the period from 1760 to 1790 four significant printing methods were developed in or introduced to Britain: the crayon manner, stipple etching, aquatint and soft ground etching, all of which attempted to simulate the look of either paintings or drawings (Godfrey, 43). Added to these processes, James MacArdell and John Raphael Smith made significant advancements in the mezzotint printing process. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to outline the specific procedures involved in each of these printing methods, some of their effects should be noted. The newly developed stipple process not only allowed for the simulation of a softer and more varied tone than had previously been

possible, but also made the printing process more efficient and economic, as assistants

with little training could execute a great deal of the labour and since stippled plates could

provide far more impressions than the mezzotint process. Nonetheless, the mezzotint

process continued to be effectively applied. The technical development made in the

mezzotint process between 1760 and 1780 were essential to the production of the multiple

plates William Woollett engraved after Reynolds, the highly sophisticated productions of

James Raphael Smith, and--perhaps most significantly for this paper--James Earlom's

widely reproduced engravings after Claude Lorrain. Since most amateur picturesque art

was produced in water-colour, it is also noteworthy that in the early 1770s the aquatint

process allowed for the mass reproduction of pictorial reproductions which simulated

water-colour.[4] As these reproductions were first used in instructional texts for the amateur

picturesque watercolorist and in early picturesque travel literature, the aquatint process is

intimately linked to the development of picturesque discourse and practice. In the last four

decades of the eighteenth-century mechanical reproduction should therefore be seen as

having a considerable role in the reorganisation of the production, circulation and

consumption of pictorial images.

The examination of the advancements made in the late-eighteenth-century

mechanical reproduction is crucial to the understanding of scenic tourism because, as I will

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[4]   While a proto-aquatint process had been developed in France in the first half of the
eighteenth century, in Britain a full-fledged aquatint procedure had been developed by the
painter-engraver Paul Sandby and was, until the mid-1770s, jealously guarded by Sandby.
The first use of the aquatint process in book publishing was in William Gilpin's
Observations on the River Wye (1781), the first of several picturesque travel books by
Gilpin.

argue in the remainder of this paper, picturesque discourse and practice generates an easily

followed and efficient technology for the production of pictorial images which is

structurally homologous to mechanical reproduction. Like mechanical reproduction,

picturesque observation made what was singular--the landscape--into a multiplicity of

mobile items. Since picturesque tourism involves the transformation of the natural terrain

into composed pictorial landscapes, the procedures applied by the picturesque traveller

increased the number of consumable visual compositions in late eighteenth-century

Britain. It is significant, no doubt, that in the 1760s William Gilpin, the most influential

exponent of picturesque travel and the person largely responsibly for the schematisation of

picturesque observation, wrote the first manual on the collection of prints, as both the

pictorial print and picturesque productions (i.e. paintings, sketches, reflected images) are

codeterminous with a increased proliferation of images and an increased number of

collectors. Moreover, the picturesque production of pictorial images, like mechanical

reproduction, is informed by a rationalisation of action which is grounded upon and

engenders efficiency and repeatability. The orchestrated actions of the picturesque tourist

in the landscape participates within the same rationalisation of human and mechanic action

which regulated other technologies of production, such as those involved in the

production of prints. The rationalised actions of the picturesque observer, like the actions

of the engraver and printing machine, were directed towards the same end: the increased

production of visual images.

So as to better articulate my formulation of picturesque discourse and practice as a

technology of pictorial reproduction, I will now briefly discuss the plano-convex mirror

used by picturesque tourists, since the Claude Glass is at once emblematic of picturesque

discourse and practice, and participates within picturesque discourse and practice as what

Gilles Deleuze calls an assemblage, an object "which is simultaneously a machinic

assemblage and an assemblage of enunciation" (504). In other words, the Claude Glass

was used by the picturesque traveller both as a means of producing compositions and as a

conceptual model by which he or she could figure the strategy by which the landscape is

transformed into a visual production. Since it instantly captures a scene on its tinted

surface, the Claude Glass was the model productive technology for the picturesque

traveller, and was spoken of as such. The convex mirror, as A. Walker contentedly

observes in his Remarks made on a Tour from London to the Lakes of Westmorland and

Cumberland in the Summer of 1791 (1793), "brought every scene within the compass of a

picture" (63). This aim of transforming the landscape into a picture, which the Claude

Glass performed so efficiently, must be seen as the primary purpose of picturesque travel.

However, the Claude Glass must not be seen as simply an apparatus of production. The

Claude Glass reflected and modified the scenery, simultaneously providing a composed

pictorial image and the hallucination of realism. The convex mirror was for the picturesque

tourist, then, an apparatus for both the construction and naturalisation of a specific vision

of the natural terrain. This construction of the picturesque landscape was dependent,

however, on distancing the natural terrain. Because of its degree of refraction, the Claude

Glass effectively separated the subject from the represented object. By using a Claude

Glass, the reflected landscape was conveniently placed before the viewing subject,

ensuring the technical mastery of the viewer over the landscape. Thomas West in his

Guide to the Lakes (1779) comments on this strategy of distancing which is central to

picturesque practice: "Where the objects are great and near", West remarks, " it [the

convex-mirror] removes them to a due distance, and shews [sic] them in the soft colours

of nature, and in the most regular perspective the eye can perceive, or science

demonstrate" (12). The Claude Glass' efficacy as an apparatus of production and

naturalisation was thus dependent on the stable distance it produces between the landscape

and its observer

The procedure by which the Claude Glass distances the landscape, fixing the

technical mastery of the observer over the landscape, is prevalent throughout picturesque

discourse and practice, and the strategy on which the efficacy of picturesque travel rests.

Procedures for distancing the observing subject from an object are not only indicative of a

historically specific mode of constructing objects but also of constituting the subjectivity

of the observer. The Claude Glass' degree of refraction distances the immediate

foreground, consequently separating the picturesque observer from the ground on which

he or she is standing. A pure distance is therefore created between the picturesque

traveller and the landscape under observation, even those parts of the landscape with

which the observer is in direct physical contact. During picturesque contemplation, then,

the subjectivity of the picturesque observer is fully disarticulated from the horizon of

objects[5]. The constitution of a pure distance between the observing subject and the observed object is an essential element in the construction of the picturesque observer as a consumer of pictorial productions, since the pure distance between the object and the observing subject affords the picturesque traveller the ability to conceive of him or herself as a disinterested observer, regardless of his or her involvement in the composition of the picturesque product. In the case of the picturesque traveller who composes the landscape not on the surface of a mirror or paper, but in his mind, the dual subject position which picturesque practice demands is particularly significant, as the observer's mind is at once the location of the composed image and the means by which he or she contemplates that image. So that the picturesque traveller's mind can serve as that which is observed and that which observes, the picturesque observer must create an abstract distance between a mental surface and a subjectivity which can disinterestedly observe that mental surface. Recognising the disarticulated subjectivity of the picturesque observer, it is not inconsistent to state that the picturesque traveller is both a passive consumer and an element in the apparatus which produces the pictorial product.

Although the Claude Glass is a convenient model by which the strategies and aims of picturesque travel can be articulated, it is possible to overstress the significance of machinic assemblages to picturesque observation, while ignoring the ineluctable discursive nature of picturesque travel and observation. Picturesque practice cannot be fully understood without analysing the role of guidebooks in the production of visual images.

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[5]   In Cartesian terms this separation of the subject from the horizon of the object can be understood as a dislocation of the mind from the res extensa

The proliferation of guidebooks during the last two decades of the eighteenth century was integral to the production and consumption of pictorial products by the increased number of tourists who visited sites such as the Lake District. Guidebooks facilitated the production of pictorial images in two interrelated ways: they performed on the body of the picturesque traveller, disciplining his or her movements; and secondly, they provided repeatable and easily followed procedures for composing the landscape as a visual production. These two processes are, understandably, interrelated. As Alan Liu comments, "the command over the [picturesque] viewer was... interchangeable with the viewer's own command over the landscape" (96). For the picturesque traveller to compose an image, he or she had to obtain the optimum position from which the view could be perceived. Picturesque practice, like photography, is an action performed by and on the body. The lens of the eye, like the lens of a camera must be fixed in the correct position, so that the proper composition can be achieved. Guidebooks, by directing the traveller to specific sites, participated in the technology of pictorial production by working upon the body of the tourist. Furthermore, guidebooks not only worked upon the body of the traveller, but provided the rules of picturesque composition which would allow the observer or artist to compose the natural terrain, integrating it into a system of pictorial production. Criticism of prefabricated rules of composition were not uncommon. In 1801, James Stoddard disparagingly likened the rules of picturesque composition, such as those found in William Gilpin's numerous travel books, to "apothecaries prescriptions or receipts [sic] in cookery" (quoted in Andrews, 232). Whatever the artistic value of the

picturesque formula, the picturesque guidebooks' directive language, like the directive language of recipes, creates an efficient and endlessly repeatable mode of production. Therefore, picturesque discourse, as it functioned within a technology of production, should be viewed as an integral aspect of the proliferation of visual images in late eighteenth-century Britain.

An essential element of the technology of production in which picturesque guidebooks functioned was the enclosure and organisation of a landscape. Like the convex-mirror, picturesque discourse can be understood as an integrated aspect of a productive apparatus directed towards containment and composition. James Clarke's directions to the observer at various sites in the Lake District provides highly suitable examples of how the discursive technology of the picturesque functions. Along with West's Guide to the Lakes (1778) and Gilpin's Observations... on the Various Parts of England, in Particular the Lakes of Cumberland and Westmorland (1784), Clarke's Survey of the Lakes (1789) was widely used by tourists in the last decades of the eighteenth century. At Ullswater, Clarke advises:

> Proceed to a little bay in Hallin-Hag, where the painter will meet with the
>
> employment for his pencil in two most beautiful landscapes. The best of these, in
>
> my opinion, faces Glencoyn, and contains many good objects not crouded too
>
> close together. The sidescreens will be Ewe-Cragg, the rising ground in
>
> Gowbarrow Park, and some other less striking objects on the right hand: On the

left a small coppice, Sandwich-Dod, Sandwich Cascade, and Birk-Fell: the front

screen will take in Glencoyn-House, Lyulph's Tower, and the picturesque ground

on which they stand; whilst Glencoyn Pike, Common-Fell, Catesby Pike, and

Helveylin, succeeding each other in just degrees of distinctness, close these

distances (146).

Like West and Gilpin, Clarke uses the typical picturesque jargon of sidescreens,

frontscreens and distances. Clarke's formulaic mode of viewing the landscape is largely

derivative of Gilpin's work. By simplifying and modifying the structural principles of

Claude Lorrain (and to a lesser degree, Gaspar Poussin), Gilpin devised a repeatable--and

widely imitated--formula for the composition and containment of picturesque landscapes.

As in the Claudean landscape composition, Gilpin's side-screens, which are primarily

composed of trees, ruins and mountain or hill sides, deter the viewer's vision from straying

outside of the pictorial composition. In addition to the side-screens, as Malcolm Andrews

notes, the picturesque breaks down the landscape into three distinct distances: "a

background, a strongly lit middle or second distance, and a darkened foreground" (76). By

dividing the landscape into three distances, Gilpin greatly simplified the Claudean

compositional structure, which demands a multiplicity of discrete distances. Gilpin's

system of three distances was, due to its simplicity, an easily followed and effective way to

compose--and hence constrain--the depth-field of the natural terrain. While Gilpin's

procedure for organising the lateral and depth fields of the landscape were widely used by

the amateur landscape artist, they were also intended for the observer who had little interest in sitting down and drawing or painting the landscape. Unarguably, Gilpin's directions to the picturesque artist, like Clarke's directions at Ullswater, were frequently used to compose pictorial productions which were never put to paper or canvas, but which were solely composed in the observer's mind

However, not every terrain was as easily composed as the landscape at Ullswater. A terrain which resisted its inclusion into picturesque production and consumption was often subject to "visual improvement", a procedure by which the traveller would recompose the landscape on paper or in the imagination, adding what was desirable and eliminating what was, in Gilpin's words, "offensive". As Gilpin remarks in his book on the Lakes, "He who works from imagination, that is he who culls from nature the most beautiful parts of her production,--a distance here; and there a foreground--combines them artificially; and removing everything offensive, admitting only such parts, as are congruous and beautiful; will in all probability, make a better landscape than he who takes it all as it comes" (1786: xxiii). On paper or in the imagination, the tourist should not hesitate to break up small hills, plant or cut down trees, move a foreground from one site to another, or place a few withered stumps here and there. One was also permitted to relocate a few humble peasants or a small selection of gypsies. In his Observations, Gilpin frequently suggests improvements which the traveller could enact, even directing the tourist at Grasmere to add some robbers to the scene. As Gilpin claims "nothing could suit it [the landscape] better than a group of banditti" (1786: 189). Increasingly, however, the

observer was not required to rearrange the landscape in his or her imagination. In the Lake

district and other sites, physical improvements were enacted upon the landscape by

planting trees that would serve as sidescreens and physically eliminating those aspects of a

particular view which did not conform to picturesque principles. Like physical

improvement, picturesque discourse, with its impetus to rearrange and recompose the

landscape, was a procedure which organised the landscape for more efficient consumption.

Picturesque discourse, as it were, prefabricated views, transforming the natural terrain into

easily consumed commodities. As the landscape is always already socially constructed, the

process in which visual improvement partakes is not significant in so far as it transforms

what was authentic and unmediated into a crass representation of "nature", but because it

is a rationalised productive procedure which allows the landscape to be more effectively

integrated into a system of pictorial consumption, and hence into the general economy of

goods and images.

In its capacity as an apparatus of production, picturesque discourse commanded

the body of the tourist, disciplining his or her movements in the landscape. West's <u>Guide

to the Lakes</u> directs the picturesque tourist through the Lake district, advising him or her

to stand at specific sites which allow for the composition--whether on paper or in the

mind--of a picturesque product. At Windermere, West commands the tourist:

> Return to the road, and at the gate, leading to the ferry-house, follow the path
>
> to the left, having a stone wall to the right, until you approach the farm house

called Harrow. Here a charming picture will present itself in an elegant stile. The

sland from this stand appears with much variety on shore; indented and embayed;

almost surrounded by islets; adorned with ancient oaks and scattered trees. Here

the lake is caught a second time over the island; and the village and church of

Bowness hang on its banks. A sweeter picture than this the lake does not

furnish.--The artist will find a proper stand on the inside of the stone-wall (58-59).

West's guide directs the picturesque tourist to specific sites, even being so specific as to

command the viewer to stand beside a particular wall, tree or rock . By reading West's

guide, the traveller did not have to personally discover the locations from which he or she

could appropriate properly picturesque views. When possible, guides such as West's

directed the tourist to view the scene from gently rising ground. That the tourist was

directed to stand on slightly elevated ground can be in part explained by the fact that

Claude favoured a moderately elevated prospect. However, to view the landscape from a

"elevated eye", as Gilpin advises, also has the effect of removing the immediate

foreground from view. Disciplining the body in the landscape, then, becomes a means by

which the pure distance can be opened between the observer and the natural terrain. Since

they guided the body of the picturesque tourist, both Gilpin's and West's handbooks were

essential aspects of an integrated mechanism for the production of pictorial images. As the

discursivity of the guidebook enacts a rationalisation of bodily action, the technology of

pictorial production in which West'sand Gilpin's texts function must be seen to be both

bodily and discursive.[6]

The body regimented by the travel book was not only disciplined in the attempt to

fix the landscape spatially, but also temporally. The picturesque tourist was often advised

at what time of day or during which season he or she should paint or draw or view the

landscape. Gilpin's aesthetic procedure, as Gerard Findley notes, is dependent on the both

the spatial and temporal isolation of the landscape (197). Commenting on the "uncommon

effect of light" at the lower Rydal Falls, Gilpin remarks:

> It is this effect indeed, from which the chief beauty of this little exhibition arises. In
>
> every representation truly picturesque, the shade should greatly overbalance the
>
> light.The face of nature under the glow of noon has rarely this appearance. The
>
> artist therefore generally counts her charms in the morning or evening hour, when
>
> the shadows are deep and extended; and when the suns beams afford rather a
>
> catching than a glaring light   (1786: 169).

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[6]   Conscientiously using West's methodical instructions, the observer would nearly be practising what Foucault terms askesis, the physical and mental training in which the self works upon the self. Such a claim does not sound as outlandish when we realise that West was a member of the Society of Jesus, an organisation whose religious practice involved carrying out detailed discursive instructions, such as those outlined in Ignatius de Loyola's Spiritual Exercises (1548). Of course, for the picturesque tourist the disciplining of action was not directed towards spiritual apotheosis, but towards the production of pictorial images and the pleasures which result from that production

The observer's appropriation of the scene at the lower Rydal Falls is clearly dependent on refraining from viewing the landscape in the glaring light of noon. By directing one's actions, one could, as it were, catch the landscape in a particular light. To catch a landscape in a particular light is to divorce it from the temporal flux, if only for the moment of aesthetic contemplation. The removal of the landscape from time, and hence also from the temporality of the observer, provides a pure distance over which the observer can disinterestedly view the natural terrain, since it disarticulates the shared time-frame of the observer and the landscape The regimentation of the viewer in time as well as space, therefore, becomes a procedure, not merely for the spatial composition of the landscape, but also for its detemporalization.

The occurrence of a situation in which Gilpin is not able to command his body in either space or time effects an odd and revealing moment in picturesque travel literature. Riding in a stage-coach on the road from London, Gilpin happens to take out his Claude Glass, and aims it out of the window. Having done so, Gilpin comments on what he sees and on what one should do in a similar situation:

> A succession of high-coloured pictures is continually gliding before the eye. They are like visions of the imagination; or the brilliant landscapes of a dream. Form and colours, in brightest array; and if the transient glance of a good composition happens to unite with them, we should give any price to fix, and appropriate the scene. (1808: 124)

The phantasmagoric proliferation of images on the screen of a mirror excites Gilpin; however, the uncontrollable movement of the images also causes Gilpin some anxiety. Unable to undertake the regulated aesthetic gaze on which picturesque observation relies, Gilpin must make do with a "transient glance". An unrestrained momentary glance may be enough for the observer to register a view, but not to appropriate it. Since they cannot be kept in memory, the moving landscapes slip out of the economy of pictorial images; too rapid to be fixed, the shifting images will not solidify and provide the solid boundaries needed to construct an aesthetic object, scientific specimen or commodity. Any price is offered, but none is taken. Unable to discipline his body or the landscape, Gilpin is left with a phantasmagoric spectacle which resists both incorporation and surveillance.

It is here that we can distinguish the picturesque from the sublime. In his mention of the phantasmagoria of "visions" and dream-landscapes, Gilpin accesses the vocabulary of the fantastic which runs through the discourse of the sublime. Because it overwhelms the observer's subjectivity and defies his or her attempts to place boundaries on and between himself and the horizon of objects, the sublime cannot be incorporated into a mental or commercial economy. The sublime is not that which is embodied, but that which fragments the human body and the body of objects. Since both the consumer and the consumed are not sufficiently differentiated, the sublime defies economization. It is on this level--and not the level of differing descriptive aspects--that the sublime is fully distinguished from the picturesque. With its sidescreens, foregrounds and distances, the picturesque frames a pictorial composition and orders its contents, mobilising the

landscape by allowing the observer to capture it on paper, the surface of a mirror or of the

mind. On the other hand, the sublime is that which works upon the observer, enacting an

ekstasis, which disallows the subject or the object a locatable position. To speak concisely,

the sublime, by definition, is fundamentally unrepresentable, while the picturesque is a

strategy of representation.

As strategy of representation, the picturesque multiplies the landscape by framing

it an indefinite number of times. Sites like the Lake District were scattered with points at

which the tourist could frame the landscape, composing--and sometimes rearranging or

changing--its contents. West's Guide, for example, directed the tourist to specific sites,

which he termed "stations", at which the landscape could be multiplied and mobilised by

the growing numbers of picturesque tourists. Since each of West's stations could--and still

can--generate an indefinite number of composed pictures, each station can be understood

as the location of a particular landscapes mass (re)production. As such, West's guidebook

functions in tandem with the body of the tourist as an apparatus for the proliferation of

pictorial images. Understandably, the views which the tourist took away from locations

such as Windermere resemble each other. Like mass produced post-cards, the

prefabricated views seen from West's station were pictorial commodities which could be

taken from the site and kept as appropriated parcels of scenery. West's guide is then a

significant element in a reproductive technology homologous to late eighteenth-century

mechanical reproduction, since like the printing press, West's guide provided for the

large-scale production and consumption of pictorial products. Indeed, West's guide can be

understood to be a more effective reproductive technology than mechanical reproduction. Printing plates wear out; to this day, West's guide can produce an endless number of composed visual productions. Furthermore, the views composed at West stations are not involved in a futile competition with pictorial originals. After they were published by John Boydell, James Earlom's prints after Claude were accused of infidelity. The natural terrain at Windermere, unlike Claude's originals, could not compete with picturesque productions, since nature, as Gilpin recognised, always fails at art. Nature must be composed and manipulated if it is to make a satisfying picture. When Ann Radcliffe visited Derwent-water, she was upset with the scenery; the pictures she had seen were far more picturesque than the site itself. For Radcliffe, the souvenir preceded the site; the memory came before an experience which could not separate itself from the memento. Moreover, the original Derwent-water or Windermere cannot be found, the picturesque production of Windermere created Windermere; Windermere is itself just one more simulacra, one more picture-postcard, a site unable to separate itself from its representation, as it is itself a representation.

Fifty years after the decline of picturesque travel, Oliver Wendel Holmes, commenting on the rise of photography, disparagingly noted that "matter in large masses must always be fixed and dear; form is cheap and transportable. We have got hold of the fruit of creation now, and need not trouble ourselves with the core" (748). Regardless of the philosophic validity of his opposition between surface and substance, Holmes' insistence that photography discards the ineluctable situatedness of matter, instead

concentrating on the transportable and reproducible form could be easily applied to picturesque travel. Several decades before the development of photography, picturesque practice and discourse cleared away the obstacles which impeded the mobility of the landscape and participated, along with the mechanical reproduction of visual images, within a new system of visual culture. By the late eighteenth century, visual culture was entering into the age of a fully transportable art, an age which, despite the complaints of the Romantics, was decreasingly involved with the singular visual production, but rather with a multiplicity of pictorial images. The discourse in which picturesque tourists mediated their relation to the landscape clearly must be understood as integral in the reproduction and mobility of visual images. Picturesque practice/discourse, as surely as the Claude Glass or the printing press, is an technological apparatus which is inseparable from the proliferation of visual productions in late eighteenth-century Britain.

Chapter 3:

The Picturesque and the Exhibition

This is a shewy, shewy age, sister...-Anne Hanaway

In the previous chapter I argued that picturesque practice constitutes a productive mechanism which, through a process of aesthetic composition orchestrated by guidebooks and travel journals, constructs the landscape as a mobile and reproducible cultural product. However, if the sociocultural role of picturesque guidebooks and manuals, such as Gilpin's Picturesque Observations or West's A Guide to the Lakes, is to be comprehensively assessed, we must take into account not only picturesque discourse's part in transforming local landscapes into mobile cultural products, but also its constitutive role in constructing a definable form of social space. As well as being the raw material for picturesque compositions, locations such as the Lake District and the Wye River were constructed as sites in which various discrete pictorial landscapes were on display. In this chapter I suggest that that picturesque sites are exhibitionary spaces. As such, they share an "architectural" design and function with other late eighteenth-century exhibitionary sites, particularly the annual art exhibition. Picturesque discourse/practice, then, is a productive technology not just since it composes the landscape as a cultural product, but

because it formulates the landscape as a space in which items are publicly displayed for contemplation and consumption.

Picturesque descriptions such as those found in Gilpin's Observations, West's guide or in travel journals such as those of James Plumptre, are inextricably caught up in historically situated techniques of display. Although picturesque observation and representation, along with the texts which promote and guide these visual procedures, comprise a relatively autonomous pursuit, they nonetheless participate in far more general constitutions of presentation and display. Since it constructs the landscape as a pictorial image, we can place scenic travel within a general history of the public spectacle, including it with other procedures designed to enable large numbers of people to view visual images. Through an analysis of the specific works which employ picturesque discourse, we can, however, locate picturesque tourism more precisely, situating it among those social events which, during the last decades of the eighteenth century, were beginning be called "exhibitions."

Undeniably, the exhibition was an integral part in the growing prominence and popularity of the visual cultural productions in eighteenth-century Britain (Pear 223). Subsequent to the iconoclastic reforms of the seventeenth century, which stripped British churches of most of their pictorial images, pictorial art was located mainly outside of the public sphere, in the houses and manors of the nobility and the aristocracy. The public art exhibition made pictorial art more visible than it had been before: with the increased frequency of art exhibitions in the last decades of the century, we can say that paintings

truly (re)entered the public sphere. The "exhibition" is a particular kind of public space: it reconstitutes not only artworks and other items on display, but also the relations between objects and the relation between objects and viewing subjects. With the onset of the exhibition in the mid to late eighteenth century, cultural items were reordered, so that they would interrelate more "rationally". Artefacts were codified and organised into distinct categories, whose structural divisions were largely informed by the ascendent human and natural sciences. (Of course, it was the museum, not the art exhibition, which would fully embody the trend toward the rational organisation of objects). Moreover, the social space of the exhibition is not only inseparable from how objects were understood to interrelate, but how the subject was organised as an observer, namely an exhibition-goer. (Bennett 174). The exhibition-goer was an outcome of the exhibitionary space as much as the new modes of display and organisation. At the art exhibition, the observing subject was organised not merely as a rational viewer, but as a consumer, since the art that was on display was also for sale.

This chapter situates picturesque observation and representation alongside late eighteenth-century exhibitionary spaces principlely through an examination of texts which employ what I have been calling picturesque discourse. However, I will not limit my examination to a textual analysis. Where it is possible I will also examine non-discursive mechanisms, such as "viewing-houses," which evidence how deeply picturesque travel is involved in late eighteenth-century techniques of display. Both the discursive and non-discursive procedures of picturesque tourism should be located in relation to the art

exhibition, and to a far lesser degree, to the museum. Picturesque tourism organises the

landscape as if it were an artefact at an exhibition. Not only does the language of the

picturesque description and instruction construct the terrain as an artefact of display, but

the very structure of the British tours evince an intimate connection to the techinques of

display and organisation inherent to exhibitionary spaces. Similarily, as is the case with the

exhibition-goer, the picturesque tourist is, as we shall see, organised as both a viewer and

a consumer.

Rather than arguing, as Alan Liu does, that the picturesque site is a rural outpost

of Michel Foucault's "carceral archipelago," I contend that picturesque sites can be best

understood to operate in what Tony Bennett terms the "exhibitionary complex" (a

category which includes not only the art exhibition and museum, but also the panorama,

the industrial trade fair, the international exhibition and the arcade). My discussion thus

takes issue with Alan Liu's discussion of the picturesque in Wordsworth: A Sense of

History. In his analysis of the picturesque, Lui claims that a chapter on the picturesque

"would not be out of place in Foucault's Discipline and Punish", subsequently asking the

reader to imagine the picturesque as Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon (87). In this chapter, in

contrast to Liu, I contend that the picturesque site is not a carceral space, so much as it is

a spectacular space, a space of exhibition. However, it would be incorrect to think that the

panoptic space, as it is formulated by Foucault and appropriated by Liu, and the

spectacular space are mutually exclusive mechanisms. Liu's argument is not so much

invalid as it is limited, for it fails to encompass the complexity of picturesque discourse

and practice. Before I investigate the constitutive role picturesque discourse plays in the formulation of local landscapes as exhibition spaces, it will be helpful, I think, to discuss the limits of Liu's equation of the Panopticon with the picturesque.

By arguing for a congruence between the picturesque and the disciplinary mechanism of the Panopticon, Liu's assessment of the social space of the picturesque obfuscates the picturesque's connection to the public display of cultural products (even though elsewhere in his discussion Liu seemingly recognises the ability of the picturesque gaze to formulate the landscape as a cultural product). For Foucault, the Panopticon is a mechanism which, while being productive in a restricted sense (it is instrumental in constructing the subjectivity of the inmate) is not productive in the sense that I have been using the term, that is, productive of cultural products and cultural sites. Liu's appropriation of the Foucaultian critique of power necessarily has the effect of minimising the productive role of picturesque discourse and practice.[1] This is not to say that I am entirely unsympathetic to Liu's arguments. Liu's contention that "the architecture of confinement...was like the [picturesque's] landscape of freedom" is correct to the degree that picturesque instructional texts discipline the observer and the viewed landscape, while claiming that it works in the service of greater (natural) freedom. The picturesque disciplines the landscape, in so far as it organises the landscape for a particular use.

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[1]   Foucault distinquishes technologies of production from technologies of power. For Foucault, power relationships operate specifically within the domain of the human: power is defined as the action which works on the actions of other subjects. Technologies of production, on the other hand, are the modes by which humans act upon and manipulate the material world. See Foucault's <u>Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault</u>, pp.22-24

However, even though Foucault's concepts of "panopticonism" and "discipline" are rather diffuse, to view the "disciplining" of the landscape and its viewer in terms of the carceral mechanism of the Panopticon overinterprets both Foucault and the picturesque tradition. This is particularly true if one takes the Panopticon as a general paradigm for the picturesque--as Liu overtly does--and not merely for a technology of vision which is on occasion appropriated by the picturesque tourist. For a variety of reasons, which I will briefly touch on below, the picturesque is not directly equatable to a prison whose inmates are constantly under surveillance.

Liu's predication that picturesque "frames of vision" are disciplinary mechanisms which operate analogously to bureaucratic institutions of control is premised on a comparative analysis of the picturesque gaze and the gaze of the rural bureaucracy. For Liu, the picturesque tourist rehearses the gaze of the professional surveyor or overseer, rural professionals who, in the last decades of the eighteenth century, supervised both the landscape and its population during and after parliamentary enclosures. The strategies of vision practised by the surveyor and the overseer, according to Liu, are analogous to those practised by the picturesque tourist, in so far as the picturesque tourist, like the professional surveyor and the overseer, supervises a landscape, taking stock of its contents (both human and agricultural) and organising them for greater productivity. The picturesque tourist works in the spirit of the professional surveyor or overseer; however, the tourist does not directly participate in the power relations inherent in both the position of the surveyor and the overseer. The tourist looks over and symbolically regulates the

landscape and organises its population and resources, mimicking the strategies of the

burgeoning rural bureaucracy; but, unlike the surveyor or overseer, the picturesque

observer does not actually managing the rural landscape or its population. The picturesque

becomes, as it were, an empty form, related to institutions of control only in its structure.

Liu offers two examples of this empty disciplinary structure implicit in picturesque

descriptions, one by Wordsworth, the other by James Clarke (see Liu, 76-79). Both

quotations relate the author's view from a high prospect from whence, like an omniscient

eye, the author surveys the landscape and its population. I do not disagree that in these

quotations the respective author takes on the position of a surveyor. Nevertheless, both

quotations are somewhat atypical of picturesque discourse; the picturesque observer rarely

views the landscape from a high prospect, but rather from a prospect of a considerably

lesser altitude--as Clarke himself contends in the continuation of the quotation which Liu

cites (see West, 67). In his description of the picturesque gaze, Liu ignores that

picturesque commentators universally recommend a prospect which is only slightly raised,

and not one which affords a view of the whole surrounding terrain. The prospect most

advantageous to the picturesque observer is the prospect which affords an off-skip (a far

distance which closes off the depth field), a middle ground, and a foreground, but which

does not remove the middle ground so much as to diminish the size of its contents. In

other words, it is a prospect most suited to the production of a well composed picture.

Thus, the picturesque tourist may take on strategies of the surveyor or overseer, but, for

the most part, he or she is involved in other strategies of vision only indirectly related to

those of the surveyor or overseer, and which cannot be categorised as "panoptic".

Furthermore, the picturesque gaze cannot be understood to be disciplinary (or at

least not in the Foucaultian sense of the term), for the subject and the object of the

picturesque gaze are involved in a visual dynamic which is unambiguously disparate from

the disciplinary relation of the panoptic observer to the observed subject. It is crucial, I

think, to realise that the picturesque gaze is for the most part not directed toward subjects

in the landscape. The Panopticon is a technology of power: its disciplinary action operates

upon the actions of human subjects, not objects. The disciplinary mechanism of the

Panopticon functions by having the prisoner internalise the gaze of the unseen observer. It

is a process based on internalisation, subjectification and self-regulation. Since he cannot

perceive the observer located at the centre of the prison, the panoptic mechanism forces

the prisoner (or other observed subject) to think that he or she is constantly under

surveillance. In the instructional discourse of the picturesque, the landscape, unlike the

prisoner, is not constructed as an object capable of internalisation. Like the calm

reflecting lake so admired in picturesque description, the landscape is constructed as a

surface of contemplation, a picture on display. In a similar was, picturesque representation

obfuscates the interiority (or depth) of human subjects (or "staffage", as Gilpin calls

them). In picturesque description, the interiority of the observed subject is not understood

to be available to the gaze. Rather, the interiority of the rural labourer is disregarded all

together. When they are represented--an occurrence which is surprisingly rare in

picturesque discourse and visual art--the rural inhabitants of the Lake district, the

Highlands or the Wye River are presented only at a distance, a condition which obscures

their individuality and the particularity of their role in local society. Thus, while the

picturesque tourist certainly participates in an instrumental rationality which organises the

landscape, and although picturesque discourse occasionally recommends a birds-eye view

which permits the tourist to scan the landscape and its population, for the most part the

strategies of vision outlined in picturesque manuals, such as Gilpin's or West's, do not

construct the observed object and observing subject in terms of an architecture of

disciplinary control, so much as a space of exhibition.

A cultural occurrence which Gilpin notes in his work on the Lake District serves as

a paradigmatic example of the disparity between the visual mechanisms of the Panopticon

and the picturesque. After discussing the value of St. Herbert's island as a location from

which the complete circumference of Windermere can be observed and drawn, Gilpin

remarks on an exhibit of drawings which he had recently viewed:

> I have seen a set of drawings taken from this island; which were hung around a
>
> circular room, and intended to give a general idea of the boundaries of the lake.
>
> But as no representation could be given of the lake, the idea was lost, and the
>
> drawings made, but an awkward appearance (1786: 188)

Gilpin does not state that he finds the artist's ambition to create a simulated viewing station unusual or intellectually misgiven. Instead, Gilpin criticises the artist's failure to represent the "idea" of Windermere, since the artist's painting does not represent the lake itself. It is precisely because the drawings fail to create the proper aesthetic effect that they are inadequate. It is crucial, I think, that we note that achieving the "idea" of the landscape, that is, of presenting it in a pictorially pleasing manner, is distinct from the panoptic project of making all which was hidden fully visible. Gilpin suggests that the tourist visit St. Herbert because from the island the landscapes of Windermere are visible. However, the visibility which the picturesque eye desires is not the visibility which denies opacity, but a visibility which coincides with the constant "displayability" of discrete landscapes. (In the terms of the picturesque, opacity is fully able to be displayed) As Gilpin remarks, St. Herbert's is highly suitable "if a painter were desirous of studying the whole lake from one station" (1786: 188). The study for which St. Herbert's is appropriate is decidedly artistic, for it consists of constructing and judging the landscape as a pictorial image. Furthermore, even though Gilpin advises that the traveller visit St. Herbert's, a point of view which is reminiscent of the observing station of the Panopticon, the circular prospect is not necessary for picturesque cultural production. (In fact, I don't believe Gilpin mentions any other circular viewing stations in his writings) What is essential to the picturesque gaze is not the full visibility which a circular prospect affords, since the picturesque is not a mechanism of visibility (and hence, discipline), but a mechanism by which the landscape can be exhibited as a pictorial composition.

Since it constitutes the landscape as a space of display (in that, it is both what is on display and the location from which the tourist perceives), picturesque discourse can be seen to participate in a general exhibitionary complex with other eighteenth-century discourses and practices. While the exhibitionary spaces of the late eighteenth century are related to private collections and public art museums, they should be distinguished from these spaces for two significant reasons: First, unlike the kunstkammer or the cabinets des curieux of the preceding century, the exhibitionary site of the late eighteenth century was open to the public (Bennett 137) and secondly, unlike the public art museums of the nineteenth century, eighteenth-century art exhibitions conflate the distinction between aesthetic perception and commodity consumption. We can thus say that in contrast to the public art museums of the nineteenth century, eighteenth-century art exhibitions had not yet perfected the Kantian separation of (interested) commerce and (disinterested) aesthetic perception. This argument--that the late eighteenth-century exhibitionary spaces conflate consumption and vision--is somewhat of an indirect challenge to the conception of commodity culture which is formulated on the division between a constitutive economic base and a dependent and secondary superstructure, since it postulates that the strategies of vision which operated in the arcades and consumer exhibitions of the nineteenth century developed, not subsequent to the rise of a commodity based economy, but rather parallel to its rise, if not before its rise. We might even say that the strategies of vision, appropriated by nineteenth-century arcades and consumer exhibitions were extant and functioning well before the solidification of a commodity based economy. So as to

articulate properly what I mean by exhibitionary "strategies of vision" and the social

dynamics involved in these strategies, I will, subsequent to my discussion of how

picturesque discourse constructs the landscape as a exhibitionary space, investigate the

social space of the late eighteenth century art exhibition. Since the art exhibition's

"architectural mechanisms" function analogously to those of the picturesque site, and to

some degree serve as its model, a discussion of space of the art exhibition is necessary to

my larger project. I would even suggest that we cannot properly understand the

construction of the Lake District or the Wye River that we find in picturesque literature

without first analysing the perceptual and social conditions of the late-eighteenth century

art exhibition. Although from this it does not follow that the picturesque sites are indistinct

from the public art exhibitions, or that they do not share certain characteristics with other

exhibitionary spaces, such as the public museum or curiosity show.

In 1761, at the Spring Gardens in London, under the aegis of the Society for the

Encouragement of the Arts, Commerce and Manufacture, a collection of British artists

(who in two years would become the Society of British Artists) held the first of what

would become an annual event: the public display of contemporary British art. Without a

doubt, this exhibition and those which followed were exercises in public relations. During

the second half of the eighteenth century, British painters were intensely involved in the

redefinition of their social position. The public display of contemporary British art was a

visible marker of the new status of the British artist; no longer were British artists to be

seen as a collection of independent craftspersons or "mechanics", but as a recognised

liberal and intellectual profession, capable of presenting British culture both at home and abroad. But the Spring Garden exhibition is not only indicative of a reorganisation of the place and role of artists in British society, but of a general reorganisation of objects and bodies, one which, as Tony Bennett remarks, involved "a transfer of objects and bodies from the enclosed and private domains in which they had previously been displayed (but restricted to the public) into progressively more open and public arenas..." (134). In the absence of a national museum of art, the annual exhibitions organised under the aegis of the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Commerce and Manufacture--and later by a selection of independent organisations such as the Royal Academy, the British Society of Artists, British Institution of the Arts, and the British Society of Watercolourists--were the sole occasion for the regular public display of paintings in the late eighteenth century. The annual art exhibitions were, then, an event which reformulated not merely the place of the artist in British society, but also the place and role of the visual arts. Previous to the annual exhibitions, paintings were primarily located in a private context, that is, in the private residences of the aristocracy or gentry. Moreover, the sale of art was nearly as private as its display, as it occurred either in a private transaction between the painter and his patron, between the artist and his dealer, or at the infrequent art auctions held in London during the summer social season. Although admission into the art auctions was not officially restricted, the art auction was not a site for the public display of art, since the limited number of people who could be seated prevented it from becoming a public event and because it did not allow for the regular or effective display of paintings. In contrast to

the art auction, the art exhibition was designed specifically for the public display of

paintings. The Spring Garden exhibition, which as Iain Pear notes "resulted in the sale of

over six thousand catalogues and was seen by more than twenty thousand people" (127),

must be understood to be indexical inter alia of a reconfiguration of the display of art in

Britain and its social function in British society. By the first years of the nineteenth

century, over fifty thousand people were visiting the Royal Academy's summer exhibition

at Somerset House on the Strand. Painting, an art form which only fifty years earlier had

largely been restricted to the houses of the aristocracy, was by the late eighteenth century,

a public spectacle, functioning as vehicle for a constellation of discursive formations,

including those of aesthetics, civic humanism, nationalism and imperialism.

Unlike in the carceral architecture of Bentham's Panopticon, the visitor to the art

exhibition was not constructed as an object of knowledge, transparent to the gaze of an

omnipresent eye, but rather as a subject of knowledge. As Bennett notes, the exhibition

complex can, to a limited degree, be thought of as a reversal of the Panopticon, in so far

as the space of the panoptic observer was filled by an observing public (136). At the

annual art exhibitions, the public was interpellated as a collection of spectators, implicated

in the contemplation, judgement, and criticism of pictorial representations. Inside the halls

at the Spring Garden exhibition, the exhibition-goer appropriated the position of the

discerning observer who was free to judge the paintings on display as to their commercial

and aesthetic value. The exhibitionary complex, then, constructed the public not as a

population, but as a citizenry, an assembly of free-willed individuals implicated in the

observation of objects. (Bennett 145). The visual mechanism implicit in the art exhibition, unlike the disciplinary mechanism of the Panopticon, was not a mechanism of coercion, but of complicity. At the art exhibitions, like at other exhibitionary sites, the public was offered the position of the discerning observer, a location which in the disciplinary mechanism of the Panopticon was limited to the state or its representatives (Bennett 140). The strategies of vision which in part constitute the art exhibition, then, prefigure those of Guy Debord's "society of the spectacle", a social formation in which being a subject of vision is far more socially complicated and politically nefarious than being its object; since, in the society of the spectacle the division between complicity and coercion is blurred, ineluctably confusing one's position in the equation of power relations.

Yet it would be incorrect to think that the annual art exhibitions appropriated a fully formed public sphere, annexing a previously solidified conception of the public and its domain. The architecture and function of the annual art exhibitions, as well as those of other social spaces in the late eighteenth century, contest to competing notions of the public's social and political role. Similar to other officially sanctioned social spaces in the eighteenth century, the art exhibition inculcated a particular idea of its public. While the art exhibition was understood to be a public space--and to judge from the numbers who visited the annual art exhibition it would be incorrect to say that it was not a public site--admission into the art exhibitions was not fully unrestricted. In 1762, at the next exhibition organised under the aegis of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Commerce and Manufacture, employees were located at the entrance of the exhibition to

screen those entering the building, denying entrance to certain "improper" elements of

London Society which had been present at the 1761 show: most notably, "livery servants,

foot-soldiers, porters, and women with children etc...". These social groups were excluded

expressly to "prevent all disorder in the room" (quoted in Pear 127). The public which was

envisioned at and by the exhibition space was an ordered public, one which was capable of

self-regulation and appreciative contemplation. Thus unlike the Panopticon, the art

exhibition presupposes that the viewer already conforms to certain normative views of

public and personal order. Furthermore, unlike the 1761 show, admission to the 1762

exhibition was not free. By denying entrance to the poor (a social element which, like

foot-soldiers and mothers with children, was associated with disorder), an admission fee

was felt to be an efficacious method to ameliorate the social disposition of the exhibition,

Thus, while we can claim that the art exhibition was a public event (as opposed to a

private event), we must at the same time realise that the public which gathered in its halls

was an idealised vision of British society, constructed for and by the moneyed classes.

The art exhibition, then, became not merely a location to display British paintings, but also

to exhibit a specific concept of British citizenry, a category which was increasingly

inclusive, but not too inclusive (see Bennett 134).

By the late eighteenth century, the traditional definition of the "public" individual

as one who, due to a privileged, non-commercial and non-professional status, could

disinterestedly study public virtue and contribute to the governing of the state was

untenable, both to the wealthy middle class and to the increased numbers of the

aristocracy involved in trade and commerce. Even if the middle classes were largely

excluded from public office, they could not accept that they were incapable of public

virtue, and thus incapable of being citizens. The transfer of objects from enclosed spaces

to those which were increasingly open to the public's gaze participated in the middle

classes' appropriation of the discourse of civic humanism current with such artists and art

critics as Joshua Reynolds. In his Discourses, Reynolds states that the social role of

painting, especially history-painting, is the promotion of public virtue in the nation's

citizenry. At the exhibitions, middle class exhibition-goers saw themselves as the social

group to which this promotion of public virtue was directed. No longer could the

instructional mode of painting which was deemed proper to a mature nation-state be

limited to the private residences of the aristocracy. The exhibition of paintings at the

annual exhibitions interpellated the viewer as a citizen, that is, as an individual worthy of

instruction in civic virtue. But, of course, lines had to be drawn somewhere. The division

which had previously distinguished the aristocracy from the mercantile and professional

classes was efficaciously reappropriated to disallow the "disorderly rabble" from upsetting

the civic order of the new exhibitionary spaces. Remarking on the social order of the

second Spring Garden exhibition, John Edwards comments that "the visitors, who were

highly respectable, were also perfectly gratified with the display of art, which, for the first

time, they beheld with ease and pleasure to themselves..." (quoted in Pears, 128). With the

successful conclusion of the 1762 exhibition, the line which divided the "respectable" art

viewing public from the disorganised, and hence irrational, masses had been redrawn,

including the professional and commercial classes among the aesthetic citizenry While the debate on who should be allowed into the newly formed exhibitionary spaces would continue well into the nineteenth century, the line of social division over which the debate was fought was not the division between the aristocracy and the moneyed middle classes, but the line between the commercial and professional classes and the urban poor. While we can claim, as Bennett does, that the late eighteenth century exhibitionary sites were public spaces, we should recognise that the social space of the exhibitionary complex is thoroughly inscribed, inculcating a specific construction of the public domain, a construction which is repeated on the picturesque tours.

However, there was another, more practical reason for denying entrance to certain social "undesirables" into the late eighteenth century-art exhibitions. It is not hard to locate financial factors which conditioned the development of the art exhibitions of the 1760s and 1770s. The late-eighteenth art exhibition was designed, as Pear notes, "to overcome the inadequacies of the British art-market", a market which had previously excluded the commercial and professional classes (Pear 127). At the annual art exhibition, more people were exposed to saleable British paintings than had ever been before. The space of the art exhibition was the site of the transformation of the British art market from a patronage system to a commercial system, which, in a somewhat residual cultural terminology, nominated the public as the new patron of the arts (see Eaves 234). The art exhibition was, then, a space of consumption as well as of contemplation, as it displayed paintings which were for sale, or the works of artists who were actively looking for

commissions, and whose paintings advertised their creator's style and ability. It would not be inaccurate to suggest that at the late eighteenth-century art exhibition commodity culture saw its future. Like the arcades of the nineteenth century, late eighteenth-century art exhibitions combined consumption with the contemplation of aesthetically fetishised items. The art exhibition embryonically embodied a regime of consumer vision which came to exemplify nineteenth-century commodity culture, a regime of vision which by the late eighteenth century had not (yet) banished the voice of the hawker, the smell of the open market, or the immediate sights of trade and production. As with the arcades, with the art exhibition, public consumption was conflated with individual contemplation, making personal contemplation publicly visible. Similarly, consumption, an event which in the open market was communal, in that it was infused with dialogic interactions (bartering), was transformed into a private act, one which allowed the commodity item to speak for itself, in a voice which denied its social and dependent existence. The strategies of vision involved in art exhibition thus conflated the public with the private, complicating their once mutually exclusive identities. Furthermore, the exhibitionary space of the art show ineluctably blurred the division between visual contemplation and consumption.

Before we can examine how consumption and visual contemplation function in the space of the picturesque, we must first examine how picturesque discourse constructs the landscape as a exhibitionary site, thus involving the landscape in the late eighteenth century exhibitionary complex. To assess how picturesque description and observation constitutes the terrain as an exhibitionary space, I will examine a specific picturesque site:

Lower Rydal Falls, a site which is nominated, both by West and Gilpin (and by critics and historians such as Liu and Malcolm Andrews) as paradigmatic of the picturesque. While Liu, by relating the picturesque observation of Lower Rydal Falls to the politics of Sir Michael le Fleming (the baronet on whose land the Falls is located), uncovers how Lower Rydal Falls operates in the late eighteenth century debate over property ownership, his assessment of Lower Rydal Falls underestimates the "spectacular" nature of the Falls and therefore does not accurately assess how the discourse and practice which surrounds and constitutes the Falls partakes in the exhibitionary complex of the late eighteenth-century. I will, therefore, in the tradition of the picturesque, stop briefly at Lower Rydal Falls, appropriating it for my particular purpose, before tripping off to other picturesque sites and sights.

The descriptions of Lower Rydal Falls, given by such writers as Richard Mason, West and Gilpin expose how the markers of the picturesque--the craggy rocks, the flowing water, the serpentine lines--are interdependent with specific strategies of vision, strategies associated with the art exhibition and other exhibitionary sites and practices. Most frequently, writers comment on the picturesque features of Lower Rydal Falls, on how "its little central current dashes down a cleft of the darkest coloured stone..." (West, 78) or on how "the dark colour of the stone, taking still a deeper tinge from the wood, which hangs over it, sets off to wonderful advantage the sparkling lustre of the stream" (Gilpin 1786: 154). Lower Rydal Falls is given "special notice" since it embodies the leitmotifs of the picturesque, displaying a rough landscape in a variegated lighting. In his

description of the Falls, Gilpin, in the (reconstituted) spirit of Claude Lorrain, fixates on

the contrast achieved by the light and shade at Lower Rydal Falls, since like the Claudian

Landscape, the Falls is striated with distinct bands of light and shade. Lower Rydal Falls,

or more exactly the Falls in the morning or evening hours, is suitably shady for the

connoisseur of the picturesque. Since, as Gilpin reminds us, "in every representation that is

truly picturesque, the shade should greatly overbalance the light", the sparkling light of the

water of the Falls which contrasts with the dark surrounding woods and rocks creates a

scene which is properly picturesque (Gilpin 1786: 78). West, in a characteristic way,

chooses to refrain from commenting on the Falls himself, opting instead to republish an

account of the Falls given by Richard Mason, a friend to Thomas Gray and the first editor

of his collected works and letters. In West's guide, Mason's account serves not only to

reiterate the highly typical refrains about the dark woods and the picturesque effect of

light and shade found at the Falls, but also situates the Falls in a sublimated history of the

picturesque, a history which West constructs as a heiligegeschichte with Gray at its

hagiographic centre. In West Guide, Lower Rydal Falls stands not only as a paradigm of

the picturesque, but also as one of its ur-sites, since it is connected--albeit indirectly--to

Gray. However, both Gilpin's and West's validations of the site are dependent on a

sublanguage of exhibition and specific non-discursive exhibitionary mechanisms.

When Gilpin, in his description of Lower Rydal Falls, calls it a "little exhibition",

we should not discount his terminology simply as a descriptive figure, a rhetorical flourish

which participates only tangentially in the construction of the site of the Falls. Gilpin's

figuration of the Falls as a exhibitionary site is, I would argue, at the centre of the

construction of the sight of the Falls. The Falls is ineluctably connected, not only to a

descriptive rhetoric which figures it as an exhibition, but also to the exhibitionary

terminology of the art exhibition; Gilpin's, West's and Mason's descriptions of lower Rydal

Falls hinge on the connection between observing the Falls and its contemplation as a visual

production. Gilpin presents the Falls, for obvious reasons which I will discuss below, as a

"picture in a frame", a pictorial cultural product which is viewed "a few yards from the

eye" (1786: 126). Lower Rydal Falls is constructed as a picture, not merely because it

exemplifies a normative picturesque composition, but because of its diminutive size. Both

Mason and Gilpin associate the Falls with a "miniature", a small, and thus, mobile pictorial

representation. Mason is quite explicit with this association: "Here [at Lower Rydal Falls]

nature has performed every thing in little that she usually executes in her larger scale; and

on that account, like a miniature painter, seems to have finished every part of it in a

studied manner" (West, 78). Apparently, at Lower Rydal Falls, Nature has taken on the

work of the picturesque artist, recomposing the landscape in a small pictorial format. (A

Claude Glass, being a instrument of miniaturisation, as well as composition, is thus

unnecessary at the Falls). Lower Rydal Falls, in Mason's and Gilpin's texts, is understood

to be already composed as a picture. The conflation of physical landscape and landscape

art is made fully apparent in Mason's description of the Falls. The Falls is, as it were,

simultaneously both the landscape reflected in a Claude Glass and the Claude Glass itself,

both what is reflected and the reflecting surface. But it is not only that the Falls is

constructed as a painting, but that the site of the Falls is constructed as a space in which to view graphic art. In a revealing fashion, Mason equates the space at Lower Rydal Falls with an opera house. Continuing on with his figuration of the Falls as a painting, Mason suggests that "this little theatrical scene might be painted as large as the original, on a canvas not bigger that those usually dropped in the opera-house" (West, 79). Mason's figuration of the Falls as theatrical scenery is significant not only since it conflates Lower Rydal Falls with a pictorial representation, but because it constructs the space of the Falls as a spectacular space, a space in which a silent and composed audience, in the dark of the theatre, watches a show which is set before them.

Mason's equation of a picturesque site to an opera house, though somewhat usual in late eighteenth-century travel literature, is not anomalous to picturesque description. Gilpin, commenting on the visual character of a Claude Glass, states that the Claude Glass forms images of the landscape which resemble "something like the scenes of a play house resting behind each other" (1834: 277). Furthermore, the figurative connection which Mason forms between Lower Rydal Falls and the cultural space of the opera-house is not dissimilar to the use of the term "amphitheatre" in picturesque discourse to designate a valley surrounded by mountains or hills. The ubiquitous reference to amphitheatres in West's Guide and other picturesque manuals is duly satirised by Plumptre in his comic opera The Lakers (1798). Pontificating over the view from West's second station on Derwent-water, Sir Charles, an aristocrat masquerading as a botanist and guide, explains the composition of the scene to Miss Veronica Beccabunga, a wealthy and title-hungry

amateur botanist: "This spacious amphitheatre of picturesque mountains, with the pellucid

waters lying at their base variegated with islands, adorned with wood, or clothed with the

sweetest verdure, presents a picture as fine as the imagination can form" (17). In a less

whimsical tone, Gilpin gives his description of a comparable "amphitheatre" near

Derwent-water. In a similar fashion to Mason's analogy of Lower Rydal Falls with an

opera-house, Gilpin's discussion of an enclosed valley near Derwent-water makes explicit

the links between the picturesque and the spectacle. Comparing "Nature's art" to the

"works of civilisation", Gilpin argues:

> We admire the scenes of a Roman amphitheatre: but what are the most magnificent
>
> works of art, compared to such an amphitheatre as this? Were the Coliseum itself
>
> brought hither, and placed with in this area, the grandeur of the idea would be lost
>
> and the ruin magnificent as it is would dwindle into the ornament of the scene
>
> (1786: 219).

The Coliseum, the paradigm of the Classical spectacle, is here subsumed into a far more

encompassing spectacle: the spectacle of Nature. Against his intention, no doubt, Gilpin's

comparison of an enclosed valley to the Coliseum does less to distance the spectacle of

Nature from "works of art" than it does to incorporate the local terrain near Keswick into

the logic of the public spectacle. Like the Roman spectacle, the landscape is here set up to

amuse and instruct a public, which is constructed as a collection of on-lookers. However,

at the Lakes, the spectacle of Nature is not on display for the "proletarians"; it is an exhibition available only for those of proper taste, that is, the aristocracy and the newly enfranchised members of the community of taste: the moneyed middle classes.

Nevertheless, even while the analogy of the picturesque site to a theatrical space is not unmatched, Mason's analogy of opera scenery is perhaps more understandable when we assess the non-discursive aspects of Lower Rydal Falls, specifically the summer house situated at the its base. Lower Rydal Falls is furnished with a viewing station, a small summer house from whose darkened interior the picturesque tourist can, through a window set in the side of the building, view the Falls. The framing effect which the summer house's window enables is enhanced by a shutter, whose rapid removal reveals the Falls, affording the viewer a sudden glance of the Falls. Mason's analogy of the landscape with a painted set is, therefore, not as forced as it might at first seem, for it is not merely the scene of the Falls which is comparable to the painted scenery of an opera house, but also the architectural space of the summer house. The summer house, like the opera house, or the art hall, is a public space in which visual art is on display, set out before an appreciative and limited public. At the Falls, by entering the summer house, by coming indoors, the tourist separates himself or herself from the natural landscape, creating a distance between him or herself and the displayed object--the Falls. Robert Southey's comments on a similar--albeit more decorated--viewing house at West's second station at Windermere, revealing the close link between viewing houses, such as the one at Rydal Falls and the display of visual art:

The room was hung with prints, representing the finest similar landscapes in Great

Britain and other countries, none of the representations exceeding in beauty the

real prospect before us. The windows were bordered with coloured glass, by which

you might either throw a yellow sunshine over the scene, or frost it, or

fantastically, tinge it with purple (56).

Although Southey attempts to distinguish the representations on the summer house's walls

from the landscapes framed in its windows, the landscapes and the landscape prints are

similarly on display. The architectural space of the viewing stations on the tour of the

Lakes, is, then, as Southey description of the "fantastically" tinged windows at

Windermere would suggest, a technology of the spectacle, an architecture which frames

the landscape, constituting the landscape as cultural product placed before the public eye.

However, the absence of an analysis of the picturesque's place within the late

eighteenth-century exhibitionary complex has, I would argue, created a situation where the

architectural purpose of the summer house--as well as the tensions inherent in its

function--have not been comprehensively assessed. It is obvious, I think, that the summer

house at Lower Rydal Falls, like the viewing station at Windermere, participates quite

explicitly in the late eighteenth-century exhibitionary complex. As an exhibitionary space,

the summer house reveals certain tensions which threaten to disrupt the exhibition of local

landscapes. Picturesque discourse and observation, as I argued in the previous chapter, are

ineluctably involved in the production of pictorial representations which, even while they

can be composed without ink or paint, use compositional techniques and terminology

appropriated from the discourse of visual production, in particular from the discourse

surrounding eighteenth-century painting. Concomitantly, as I will elaborate on below,

picturesque sites are analogous to the space of the public art exhibition. Nevertheless,

even though they are in a constant process of redefinition, both visual art and its exhibition

provide relatively stable cultural structures for the exhibition-goer, compared to the

picturesque site, at which the tourist must continually deal with changes in light, in the

seasons, and with the appearance and disappearance of physical features. Moreover, unlike

the art exhibition, the picturesque and other exhibitionary forms, like the panorama (and

much later the motion picture) had to deal with movement, and how one exhibits motion.

The summer house at Lower Rydal Falls presents one exhibitionary strategy to the

problem of movement and the necessity of a composition which is stable enough to

exhibit. As was typical for the picturesque, the summer house structured the landscape as,

in Gilpin's words, "a picture in a frame" (1786:169) In response to the problematic of

movement, the picturesque eye attempts to neutralise movement by exhibiting the

landscape using the techniques and terminology of painting. In an attempt to exhibit the

landscape, picturesque practices denied temporal progression or narrative. Expressing his

views on the representation of movement in picturesque drawings and paintings, Gilpin

claims that "quick motion, of any kind, represented, is an absurdity: and the longer you

look, the more absurd it becomes" (1786: 145). Similarly, Mason, it should be

remembered, compares the Falls, not to the operatic performance itself, but to its set design, distancing the picturesque from the movement (and sound) of the opera. The exhibitionary strategies of the picturesque, I will now argue, attempt to approach the visual situation of the art exhibition, which demands that the cultural product's composition remain fixed, allowing the observer to contemplate the pictorial surface, until he or she decides to move on to the next item of interest. Thus, although the observer may move and be moved, the observed object should remain composed, continually available for observation and appropriation.

Located after Windermere Lake (or at least for those tourists which had approached the Lakes from the south, as directed), the Falls is placed in between two imprecisely demarcated zones in the Lake District, between the "noble" landscapes of Windermere and the sublimity of Derwent-water. The Falls is thus only one exhibit, in a organised series of descrete landscapes. West's guide, which was the predominant reference text for the tourist at the Lake District, envisions the tour of the Lakes as a gradual movement through various collections of "scenes". West associates these scenes with the styles of particular artists, whose compositions and moods would have been recognisable to the tourist who was even remotely in touch with contemporary artistic trends. By taking the southern course, West remarks, "the lakes lie in an order more agreeable to the eye, and grateful to the imagination. The change of scenes is from what is pleasing, to what is surprising; from the delicate touches of Claude, verified on Coniston Lake, to the noble scenes of Poussin, exhibited on Windermere-water, and from these, to

the stupendous romantic ideas of Salvator Rosa, realised on the lake of Derwent" (10). West places Lower Rydal Falls, as well as the other sites of the Lake District, within a grand exhibitionary schema, transforming the Lake District into an exhibition of specific artistic styles. Claude Lorrain, Dughet Poussin, and Salvator Rosa (all of whom were associated with the Rome school of painting of the mid-seventeenth century) had been appropriated by artistic discourse of the late eighteenth century, and were subsequently appropriated by West and others in their descriptions of the tour. In the late eighteenth century, the paintings of Lorrain, Poussin and Rosa were understood to embody specific and distinctive aesthetic effects, each artist's style being associated with particular "ideas", which were provoked in the observer as he or she was contemplating one of their paintings or, as was more likely, a painting in which their styles were emulated. The tour of the Lakes was constructed, then, to have the same effect as an exhibition of exemplary paintings. Just as he or she would be at an exhibition, on the Tour, the traveller received particular aesthetic effects, such as those one might experience while contemplating the works of Claude, Poussin or Rosa.

Even though exhibitions of contemporary British art were common-place by the 1780s, public exhibitions of the paintings of recognised "Masters", such as Claude, Poussin and Rosa, were largely unheard of. By the early nineteenth century over eighty Claudes were in English collections; however, these were private collections, on display only for those who could gain entrance into private residences (Andrews, 28). Collectors like the Duke of Devonshire had brought back various examples of Claude's work while in

Italy on the Grand Tour, and had acquired additional pieces by hiring art agents on the

Continent to search out saleable Claudes. The Duke of Devonshire was not alone in his

interest in Claude, and other seventeenth-century artists like Poussin and Rosa. From the

1730s onward, Claude, Poussin and, to a lesser degree, Rosa were the favoured artists of

the British aristocracy. During the tour of the Lakes, the "curious of all ranks", as West

describes the ever increasing numbers of middle class tourists visiting the Lake District,

partook in the aristocratic admiration for the landscapes of Claude, Poussin and Rosa.

The middle classes' appropriation of aristocratic taste is expressed in West's introduction

to his guide, in which he claim that it is "the taste for one branch of a noble art [landscape

painting] (cherished under the protection of the greatest of kings and the best of men) in

which the genius of Britain rivals that of ancient Greece and modern Rome, induces many

to visit the lakes of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire" (1). West, therefore,

expressly relates the interest in the Lake District with a growing interest in the landscape

art, a pictorial form which, as West notes, was associated with the English ruling classes.

By percieving the landscape as landscape art, the tourist associates himself (or, more

confusedly, herself), at least in West's eyes, with "the best of men", that is, with those

capable of both private and public virtue.

The Lake District tour, then, can be seen in terms of the movement of objects

from a private context to a sphere which is accessible to a broader, though still limited,

segment of society. Even though the paintings of artists, such as Claude, were generally

out of public view, the tours--and the cultural products which derived from the

tours--were a way of bringing the works of Claude and other artists into a public context.

The picturesque tours were, of course, not the only method by which the styles of Claude,

Poussin and Rosa were made available to the public. In 1777, John Boydell published

James Earlom's engravings of the Liber Veritas, a collection of Claude's works which was

then in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire. The picturesque tour thus participated,

along with other cultural practices, in the increased visibility of the visual arts in British

society. At the picturesque sites, what had been the possession of a single individual

arrived, somewhat indirectly, in a domain which was understood to be public, in so far as

it was only restricted to those who could not afford to travel to the Lake District. The

stations along the tour at which the tourist encapsulated the landscape as a picture--most

usually with a Claudean compositional structure--were, then, sites of social redefinition, in

so far as they constructed the public, or more exactly the commercial and professional

classes, as a citizenry which was capable and worthy of vision.

However, as John Cannon states in his Aristocratic Century: The Peerage of

Eighteenth-Century England, the aristocracy and the gentry still retained control not only

of the House of Lords, but also of the House of Commons. Furthermore, during the

French Revolution, the tenuous civil rights of the British populace were often disregarded

by an anxious Parliament and a Monarchy which was attempting to reassert some of its

lost political weight. Thus, the increased visibility of visual productions which had

previously been inaccessible to the public can perhaps best be seen as the desire for a

public and civic vision, as a wish for a more inclusive access to a public vision, and as the

longings of the commercial and professional classes to enlarge their prospect, so that it

encompassed not only their underlings and patients, but British society as a whole. The

picturesque tour, like other examples of the late eighteenth-century exhibitionary complex,

were constructed as a spectacle of visibility. The stations on the picturesque tour were

sites at which the commercial and professional classes dreamt of a society which was fully

visible to its members, or more exactly, they dreamt of a society which would be visible to

the new moneyed classes, who would gaze into society for those who were incapable of

sight: the rural and urban poor.

Like the art exhibitions, the picturesque stations were sites in which the transfer of

objects into a public domain signalled a new form of social vision, one in which a larger

segment of the population would have access to the grand spectacle of British society. At

the picturesque stations, as at the art exhibitions, the public which was offered this new

social sight was not fully inclusive. Scenic tourism, much more effectively than the annual

art exhibitions, effectively denied social vision to those who were deemed unable to master

its perspective . While West boasts that visiting the Lakes "has diffused itself among the

curious of all ranks", allowing them to follow in the footsteps of "persons of genius, taste

and observation", such a claim must be understood to be incorrect (West, 3). All the ranks

were not present at the Lakes, at least not in the capacity of the leisured on-lookers. It is

an undeniable fact, although one which is not mentioned in the guides, that it took money

and time to visit the Lakes, two commodities which were, of course, not universally

possessed by all segments of British society. Many of those who could afford a ticket into

the annual exhibitions held in London and in other urban centres in Britain could not afford a trip to the Lakes. The spectacle of the British landscape which was offered at the Lakes was thus more restricted than many of the other spectacles of the late eighteenth-century exhibitionary complex. Nevertheless, the picturesque sights of the Lake District were open to those who could afford to travel to Westmorland and Cumberland, a selection of society which included not only the aristocrats and the gentry, but also the professional and commercial classes. This (limited) social diversity of the picturesque tourist is well presented in contemporary satire. A common figure in the satirical representations of the picturesque which began to flourish at the turn of the century was the school-master, or other such middle class professional, who with his horse burdened with easels, guidebooks and other picturesque paraphernalia, was shown in search of the picturesque. Similarly, James Plumptre's satiric opera, The Lakers (1798) fills the hills and inns of the Lake District with an assortment of social classes, from the professional middle class to the wealthy (but untitled) classes to the titled (but not so wealthy) aristocracy. Even though the sights of the Lake District were restricted to those who could not afford the time or money to visit Westmorland and Cumberland, the Lake district was presented as a public domain, both satirically in Plumptre's opera and in earnest in West's Guide, as it was only restricted to those who could not afford the trip to the Lake District.

At the Lakes, it was not merely the landscape which was on view, but a specific construction of British society. And the central demarcation on which this societal perception was focused was the division of those who could construct the Lakes as a

cultural product and those who were merely a part of that product, that is, the rural

labourer. The satisfaction of being one of those who was capable of composing and

observing the landscape was manifested at Crosthwaite's museum at Keswick, a common

stop on the tour of the Lakes. Along with a sundry of other objects, including fossils,

maps of the Lake District, a Chinese gong, and a bar of metal floating on a bath of

mercury, Crosthwaite exhibited an up-to-date list of "persons of rank and fashion" who

were visiting or had visited the Lakes. Crosthwaite's list was both exclusionary and

inclusionary, in that it marked a distinction which was immediately put under erasure. The

untitled or undistinguished visitor to Keswick was by definition excluded from the list.

However, with West's guide to tell them what to see and Gilpin's Observations to tell them

how to see, the unlisted tourist could observe everything which the persons of "rank and

fashion" could see. The aesthetically fetishised landscape of the Lake District was equally

open to the listed and unlisted. Instead of marking a invariable distinction between the

aristocracy and the middle classes, Crosthwaite's list was an index of a reorganisation of

social divisions, a social reconfiguration which, while still preserving certain residual

aspects of the division between the middle classes and the aristocracy and gentry,

deconstructed this division by exposing the shared vision of those excluded and those

included on the list. Thus, what was on display in Crosthwaite's list was a new form of

display: it exhibited a strategy of vision which shifted the context of objects from a private

to a public sphere. This promulgation of an more inclusive social vision was equally on

display at West's stations, where middle classes could view the same sights as those of

rank, and perhaps more significantly, view those of rank observing the scenes which they themselves could observe.

Furthermore, on the Lakes tour and other British landscape tours, a more varied public could participate in the tour culture, a culture of travel and display which had previously only been available to those wealthy enough to take the European Grand Tour. This social and cultural connection and conflation between the Tour and the tour of the Lakes is made apparent in West's guide. In A Guide to the Lakes, West explicitly constructs the Lake District as a miniature Europe, a collection of landscapes which includes examples of the general European landscape. West advises that those who intend to make the Continental Tour should begin at the Lakes, "as it will give in miniature an idea of what they are to meet with there" (3). Similarly, in Westmorland and Cumberland, those who did not intend or could not afford a trip to Europe could also view Europe in miniature. West further comments that at the Lakes, the tourist can view "the Alpine scenery, finished in nature's highest tints, the pastoral and rural landscape, exhibited in all their stiles [sic], the soft, the rude, the rude and the sublime; and of which perhaps like instances can no where be found assembled in so small a tract of country" (2). The Lake District becomes, as it were, a miniature Europe, an exhibition of various distinctive and pictorially composed landscapes, which have been placed under to eye of those who visit the Lakes.

While West equates the Lakes to other European scenery, in particular the Alps, and even compares the waterfalls of the Lake district to Niagara Falls (see West, 91), one

gets the impression that it is a specifically British landscape which makes up the spectacle

of the Lakes. Comparing the Lake District to the sights of Europe, Richard Cumberland in

the dedication to his Ode to the Sun (1776) states:

> We penetrate the Glacieres, traverse the Rhone and the Rhine, whilst our own
>
> domestic lakes of Ulswater, Keswick and Wydermere exhibit scenes in so sublime
>
> a stile, with such beautiful colourings of rock, wood and water, backed with so
>
> tremendous a disposition of mountains, that if they do not fairly take the lead of all
>
> the views of Europe, yet they are indisputably such as no English traveller should
>
> leave behind.   (Cumberland, quoted in Andrews 153)

In a undeniably nationalistic tone, Cumberland sets the scenes viewed at the Lake District

apart from the Alps and the Rhine, two of the prime picturesque sites on the European

Grand Tour. The Lake Distict offers distinctly English landscapes which, as Cumberland

reminds us, should be seen by all--presumably patriotic--English travellers. Gilpin presents

a similar argument in his guide to the Lakes. For Gilpin, England excels in the variety of

its landscapes. Straining to distance his argument from a biased patriotism, Gilpin argues:

> From whatever cause it proceeds, certain, I believe that, it is, that this country
>
> exceeds most in the variety of its picturesque beauty. I should not wish to speak
>
> merely as an Englishman: the suffrages of many travellers, and foreigners of taste, I

doubt not, might be adduced. In some or other of the particular species of
landscape, it may probably be excelled...I should suppose, that on the whole, it
transcends them all (1786: 6).

Whether or not Gilpin is able to avoid an ungrounded and biased argument is doubtful. In
this passage the English landscape is clearly compared to other national landscapes, with
which it participates in an aesthetic competition. From Gilpin's and Cumberland's remarks,
one senses that at the Lake District, the English landscape and, by extension, England
itself, are on display. In this regard, the tour of the Lakes is not unlike the exhibition of
British history-paintings at the annual art exhibitions, in so far as exhibition of
history-paintings and the tour of the Lakes afford a reconfigured British public to view
what is most distinctive and exemplary about Britain.

Though Gilpin's and Cumberland's remarks on the value of domestic travel and the
aesthetic qualities of the national landscape should be seen to participate within the
discourse of English nationalism, they also partake in a method of classification which
underlies the late eighteenth century exhibitionary complex. In late eighteenth-century,
questions of exhibition necessarily lead to questions of the organisation of objects: to
speak of exhibition was to speak of the arrangement of objects. Cumberland's statements
on the difference (and superiority) of the English landscape and West's comments on the
similarities between the Lakes and the Rhine and the Alps rely on a taxonomic
classificatory system which is ubiquitous throughout the discourses and practices of the

late eighteenth-century exhibitionary complex. Similarly Gilpin's reference to "species" of landscape--a contemporaneous biological term which is evident throughout his works--connects the observation of the landscape to a specific system of organising objects. The organisational system which informs works such as those of Gilpin or West is predicated on the display of external similarities and differences on a mental table, which allows the observer to obfuscate distinctions in chronology and geographic location. The presence of this classificatory system is evident in West's outline of the various reasons for picturesque travel. One of the prime amusements for the picturesque tourist, remarks West, was the recognition of similarity and difference: "To trace the analogy and differences of mountainous countries, furnishes the observant traveller with amusement; and the travelled visitor of the Cumbrian lakes and mountains will not be disappointed of pleasure in this particular" (6). This system of similarity and difference, through which the picturesque traveller seeks amusement, is also evident in the late eighteenth-century public museum. Late eighteenth-century museums, such as the National Museum in London, did not organise objects according to a historical narrative, as became typical in the nineteenth century; rather, objects were ordered according to the "culturally codified" similarities and dissimilarities in their external appearance (Bennett 141). The picturesque tourist applied a similar taxonomic method to organise the diverse landscapes which he or she visited on the domestic or Continental tours. Like a museum curator, the tourist ordered the artefacts which he had appropriated on his various travels into distinct classes and species.

Unlike the National museum which employed various axes by which to judge

similarity and difference (the anatomical, the geological, the zoological etc.), the traveller

on the tour of the Lakes used a relatively simple system of codification. Influenced by

popular works on taste, the tourist applied a classificatory system which took the sublime,

the beautiful or that distinct mixture of the two proposed by Gilpin, picturesque beauty, as

its basic categories. This somewhat limited, but all-encompassing and easily mastered

system of codification afforded the traveller the ability to distinguish the landscape at

Derwent-water from that at Windermere, subsequently allowing him or her to confidently

place Derwent-water in a grouping with other sublime landscapes, such as the Alps. As

the category of the sublime, like that of beauty and picturesque beauty, was both universal

and normative, the tourist was additionally capable of judging which landscape was the

more sublime. Since Rosa's, Claude's, and Poussin's paintings were understood to

exemplify each of these respective categories, the tourist could, for instance, place a

painting by Claude in the a grouping which included the landscape at Windermere (as

viewed from West's second station), subsequently judging which contained more

picturesque beauty. (Of course, this translation from the field of art to that of nature was

made all the easier since the landscapes of the Lake District were already modelled on

pictorial paradigms, usually a Claudian compositional scheme) As any suitable landscape

could be sublime, beautiful, or picturesque, and could also stand for each of these

categories, the sublime, the picturesquely beautiful, and the beautiful were exhibited

metonymically. Domestic tours, therefore, were exhibitionary sites which were informed

by a specific classificatory system, one which displayed the British landscape on a table of similarities and differences, a set grid which could obfuscate time, distance, or material medium, and which could be encompassed by the discerning vision of the traveller's (inner) eye.

The picturesque site, then, articulates two collections: the private collection of the traveller and the collection of things in the world, the spectacle of Nature. As Gilpin remarks in his "Essay on Picturesque Travel", "the variety of nature is such, that new objects, and new combinations, are continually adding to our fund [of ideas], and inlarging [sic] our collection" (1793: 73) In works such as Observations, Pertaining chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, on Various Parts of England, Particularly the Lakes of Westmorland and Cumberland, Gilpin, influenced by Lockean psychology, structures the memory as capital, an investment of ideas, which the individual can draw upon. The vision of the traveller becomes, as it were, an interface between, on the one hand, a continually expanding collection of things and the relations in the world and, on the other, the collection of ideas which is the memory. In Gilpin's understanding, the picturesque tour is an opportunity for enlarging one's collection of ideas. The location from which the picturesque observer views the landscape--a location such as one of West's stations--is therefore structured as a site of consumption, in so far as it is the site where the observer enlarges "his general stock of ideas", his or her mental capital of images. The ideas which the tourist gains from the landscape are, for Gilpin, atomistic, that is, they are composed as individual parcels. At a particular picturesque site, a tourist may view a particular tree

or cottage, subsequently judging a particular idea of a tree or cottage against those images of tress or cottages which he or she has already obtained. Thus, the traveller eventually gains a general idea of the picturesque tree or cottage. Although Gilpin does comment that the improvement of one's fund of ideas does lead to "a correct knowledge" of the landscape, the stockpiling of ideas, like the stockpiling of monetary capital, is directed less at the production of knowledge than at the production of products. Indeed, the stockpiling of ideas, according to Gilpin's theory, does lead to a general idea of particular form, however this general idea is not an end in itself, in that, it is a means to obtain what Gilpin understands as the main objective of picturesque travel: the appropriation of landscapes.

The picturesque site or station is not simply a space where the picturesque eye subsumes various, particular ideas, but whole scenes. In his book on the Lakes, Gilpin distinguishes two kinds of landscapes: Those from which one can cull only bits and pieces, a tree here or a hill there, select ideas which one can use later in a sketch or drawing; and those landscapes which one can appropriate as a composition, with only minor alterations (see Gilpin 70-86). Thus, in contrast to those sites at which the picturesque tourist only takes select images, at a site which affords a view of a landscape which is properly picturesque, the tourist appropriates not merely select atomic ideas, but a set of relations which function together as a pictorial whole, a complete composition. It is at these sites where the picturesque tourist is obliged to draw or paint the landscape or to give a

detailed description based on the painterly discourse of the picturesque. It is also at these

sites where the landscape as a publicly available spectacle becomes private property.

Like the annual art exhibitions, the picturesque tour serves a transfer point, a point

of translation, between the public (as what is publicly visible) and the private (as that

which is owned by a single individual). While the landscapes on the tour are not restricted

to the public, they are not strictly communal. Unlike the term "public", the term

"communal" necessarily has the meaning of that which is owned in common. Like the

arcade of the nineteenth century, the Lake District is a public space. However, both sites

contain items which can move freely (or at least, if the observer has sufficient funds) from

the public to the private. In contrast to common land, the public nature of the Lake Tour,

is public only in so far as it contains items which are available for private consumption.

When one discovers (or rather is offered) a properly picturesque scene one should not, as

Gilpin says, "fail to appropriate the scene" (1834: 34). Like the commodity, the

picturesque scene is a liminal or amphibious item, traversing both the public and private

spheres. The landscape is only public in so far as it is open to be composed, pictorially

choreographed. It is the act of composition, the act of painting or sketching, linquistically

describing or placing a mirror in front of the landscape which draws the landscape into the

domain of private property. Drawing the landscape, then, has a double meaning in an

analysis of picturesque discourse and practice: To draw the landscape is both to sketch the

landscape and to draw it into a private context.

The social space of the picturesque inculcates a consumerist public architecture, a mechanism by which publically visible objects are transformed into private property. In the liminal zone of picturesque space, objects and bodies come into view, only to pass into a private context. However, as we have seen, the act of bringing what was private into public visibility should not be discounted. Bringing objects into display also brings the observer, as an aggregrate of the public, into view, implicating him or her in a specific construction of the public sphere, and inculcating his or her role in the public domain. Nevertheless, at the picturesque site the individual on-looker is always secondary to the landscape. Picturesque discourse is not a mechanism by which subjects can be put on display, so much as it is a mechanism which operates to exhibit the landscape. In the last instance, the picturesque space is directed toward construction of a mediating space through which the tourist can disinterestedly gaze at aesthetically fetishised landscapes.

Chapter 4:

The Picturesque and the Problematic of Pleasure

But these parts are too often the resort of gay company, who under no impression

of this kind--who have no ideas but of extending the sphere of their

amusement--or of varying a life of dissipation. The grandeur of the country is not

taken into question: or, at least, it is not otherwise considered, than as affording

some new mode of pleasurable enjoyment. Thus even the diversions of New

Market are introduced--diversions one would think most foreign to this country

than any other.

-- William Gilpin (1786: 68-68, vol. 2)

This passage, like picturesque observation and representaion itself, is constituted

within a set of differences: New Market, the single legal site to hold horse races in the

North of England, is constrasted with the Lake District, and in particular with Lake

Ulswater; the frivolous tourist is set up against the ideal tourist implicit in Gilpin's

comments; dissipation and diversion are placed in opposition to those practices which

keep the "grandeur" of the country in mind. Animating and informing these differences,

crossing their boundaries, is a notion of conduct, a concept of what constitutes proper

pleasure. It is, then, to pleasure, to the specific visual gratifications of the picturesque that I now turn.

This chapter concerns what I will term, after Foucault, a "problematic" of pleasure (1985: 10). That is, it deals with how late eighteenth-century picturesque travel writing problematizes pleasure, how it orients the observing subject toward his or her pleasure. A cursory glance at a work such as Gilpin's "Essay on Picturesque Travel", the text which serves as the focus for much of my analysis, would seemingly suggest that the picturesque's problematic of pleasure is predicated on the distinction between the mental pleasures of viewing and representing landscapes and certain more sensual gratifications, such as eating or drinking, or the more physically stimulating amusements of hunting or field sports. However, though the texts which outline the sites and procedures proper to picturesque travel align themselves with decidely intellectual amusements, firmly recommending "rational recreations" to their readers, it would be misleading to view the fundamental bifurcation of pleasure which informs picturesque travel literature as being that between mental and sensual pleasure. In this chapter I would like to suggest instead that the problematic of pleasure evident in picturesque travel writing is structured, not on a mind/body dualism, but rather on the distinction between instrumentalist and non-instrumentalist positions towards pleasure. Picturesque travel writing accepts pleasure, even the gratification of the senses, in so far as it can be used within an edifying process of improvement. Allowable and prohibited gratifications are thus differentiated as to their function (or lack thereof) within the process of self-improvement. The picturesque

traveller has an unacceptable relation to pleasure if he or she intends to extend the "sphere of their amusement", seeing pleasure as an end in itself. Correspondingly, the tourist is directed not to waste his or her pleasures, but to use them towards a rational end, namely the development of the intellect and the visual faculty. In a system which views the self as a site of improvement (the term used in the late-eighteenth century to denote not only the improvement of the self, but also improvements in the productivity of agricultural land and the increased wealth of the nation's industry and economy) the attitude toward pleasure which is least acceptable is not the positiion which recognises sensual gratification, but the position which dissipates amusement by understanding it as a goal in itself, and thus which does not integrate pleasure into an economy of improvement. In the final instance, the relation to the self and its pleasures which informs picturesque discourse is one which views the self as a site of investment and development, one which sees pleasure as an functional element in this project. It is the aim of this chapter to show how picturesque travel writing effects this integration of pleasure within a process of improvement.

While the starting point of this chapter and the area which it wishes to elucidate is the attitude which picturesque travel writing takes toward the observing subject and pleasure, I do not intend to present a phenomenological or psychological analysis of how picturesque discourse constructs the relation of the observer to those pleasures derived from picturesque observation. Like the preceding chapters, my approach to the picturesque will remain one which is based on an analysis of social practices. In particular, I am interested in how picturesque observation deals with the problematic of pleasure

which informs the general complex of late-eighteenth century leisure activities. In this chapter, I argue that the textual schematics of picturesque travel writing (its discursive instructions on how to view and construct the landscape) operate within a field of visual culture which separates edifying entertaiments from those which promote sensationalistic gawking and produce idle spectators. In other words, this chapter locates picturesque travel writing and its views on pleasure within a cultural field whose central axis of codification is the distinction between those amusements which are edifying and those which are strictly pleasurable. In an entertainment complex which separates amusements on the basis of whether pleasure is sought as a end in itself, picturesque travel writing unambiguously connects itself to those amusements which, while pleasurable, are also instructional or educational. The promotion of a specific relation of the subject to his or her pleasure is, then, essential not only to the moral and education character of picturesque practice, but to the location of picturesque observation within the general complex of late-eighteenth century leisure. However, before it is possible to situate picturesque practice within the general complex of eighteenth century amusements and to show how it locates itself in relation to the varied procedures by which pleasure is subsumed under the sign of improvement, it will be necessary to investigate a decidely "picturesque" response to the problematic of pleasure.

To investigate the process by which picturesque observation integrates pleasure and improvement, engendering a pleasurable rationality and rationalised pleasure, a close analysis of the visual and textual aspects of picturesque observation will be necessary. To

do so, I will examine Gilpin's "Essay on Picturesque Travel". Written in the late 1780s, the "Essay on Picturesque Travel" derives out of Gilpin's wish to clarify the arguments he makes in his Observations. As such, it gives the most manifest description of picturesque tourism; consequently, among Gilpin's works, and indeed among other texts which promote picturesque observation, the "Essay on Picturesque Travel" offers the clearest explication of the intersection between picturesque observation and pleasure. While the explicit connection between pleasure and the rationalisation of the gaze which Gilpin formulates is not duplicated, so far as I know, in any other late eighteenth-century travel work, a close analysis of Gilpin's "Essay on Picturesque Travel" nonetheless affords the opportunity to map out a specific response to the problematic of pleasure which occupies the late eighteenth-century complex of leisure practices.

In the "Essay on Picturesque Travel", Gilpin circumscribes the problematic of pleasure by interanimating pleasure, rationality, and pictorial composition. The composition of the landscape opens the picturesque gaze, so to speak, as a space of pleasure and as an instrument of purposive-rational action, since the visual organisation of the landscape is at once productive and intellectually stimulating. In the equation of rationality and pleasure, composition becomes the necessary third term: rationality and pleasure are, as it were, triangulated with the pictorial organisation of the landscape. According to Gilpin, picturesque composition is both pleasurable and rational, since by viewing the landscape as a picture--a procedure which frequently demands reorganising the landscape so that it conforms to the "rules of art"--, the tourist becomes more

accustomed to basic artistic principles, while simultaneously being aesthetically stimulated by the pictorialised landscape. In the "Essay on Picturesque Travel", Gilpin outlines this conjunction of rationality and stimulation:

> Our amusement.... arises from the employment of the mind in examining the beautiful scenes we have found. Sometimes we examine them under the idea of the whole: we admire the composition, and the light, in one comprehensive view. When we are fortunate enough to fall in with scenes of this kind, we are highly delighted. But as we have less frequent opportunities of being thus gratified, we are more commonly employed in analysing the parts of scenes; which may be exquisitely beautiful, tho unable to produce a whole. We examine what would amend the composition; how little is wanting to reduce it to the rules of our art (1793: 49)

The composition of the landscape serves both as a source of pleasure and as the goal to which the rationalisation of the subject's vision is directed. For the picturesque observer, to gaze at the landscape is to place the landscape under the regulations of proper pictorial composition. The picturesque gaze, then, is an "employment of the mind", in so far as it judges the landscape in relation to proper compositional forms and reconstructs the landscape accordingly. Through this artistic judgement, the picturesque gaze then proceeds to implement a purposive-rational action. (The procedure by which the

picturesque eye manipulates the landscapes, transforming it so that it corresponds to a specific visual norm, can be defined as a process of instrumental rationality, since it employs the landscape as the raw material for a pre-defined end, namely, the production of a pictorial image). The practice of composition thus enables the gaze to become a mechanism of instrumental rationality. However, if composition enables the picturesque eye's implementation of a distinctly instrumental rationality, it equally affords a visually-derived pleasure; a pleasure which, while it can be distinguished from instrumental rationality, cannot be separated from it, since it is causally linked to purposive-rational action. To employ the mind, to use the gaze in a process of judgement, manipulation and visual control, is, according to Gilpin, an unmediated source of pleasure. The subject's pleasure, then, derives directly from an aesthetic judgement and a purposive-rational action directed to the production of a pictorial artefact.

To view pleasure, not as an enticement to rationality, but as a direct effect of rationality necessarily affects a rationalisation of pleasure. Because picturesque observation is made up of discrete procedures which follow one upon the other, the pleasures of picturesque observation are correspondingly localised and distinguished, each observational procedure effecting its own form of pleasure . In other words, the visual pleasure of picturesque observation is rarefied, fragmented into distinct "amusements". Picturesque travel and observation is, therefore, not merely a "rational amusement", but a rationalisation of amusement, a refinement of the subject's experience of pleasure. The structure of Gilpin's essay is generated out of this rarefaction and fragmentation of

pleasure which results from equating pleasure with rationality. Gilpin's work is itself

fragmented, broken down into discrete sections which deal with individual procedures and

their corresponding pleasures. Gilpin, in his essay, defines several distinguishable

intersections of pleasure and rationality where the rarefaction of the gaze generates

specific pleasures in the observing subject. It is to these intersections that I will now turn.

The first intersection of pleasure and rationality on which Gilpin comments

corresponds to the inaugural procedure of picturesque observation, the moment in which

the observer searches for a suitable landscape. At this stage, the traveller is constructed as

a voyeur whose pleasures are undeniably scopophilic:

> And shall we suppose it a greater pleasure to the sportsman to pursue a trivial
>
> animal, than it is to the man of taste to pursue the beauties of nature? to follow
>
> her through all her recesses? to obtain a sudden glance, as she flits by him in some
>
> airy shape? to trace her through the mazes of the cover? to wind after her along
>
> the vale? or along the reaches of the river? (Gilpin 1793: 48).

The gendered language here undeniably interpellates the observer as a male, a man of

taste, whose pleasures exceed those of the common (sports)man. The picturesque traveller

becomes a titillated viewer, a male spectator involved in an out-of-doors peep-show, in

which the landscape coyly conceals and reveals "her beauties". The construction of the

viewer of the landscape as a scopophilic male is, of course, conventional. Thomson's

<u>Seasons</u>, for instance, offers a sustained analogy between the landscape and a bathing nymph, with the contemplator being represented as a well-mannered voyeur. This convention which constructs the landscape as a passive, if allusive, object of masculine desire operates in Gilpin's description of the initial stage of picturesque observation. However, the conventionality of the quotation's scopophilic rhetoric does not diminish the passage's gendering of the picturesque eye. In the quotation, it is obviously a male gaze which stocks beauty, penetrating the maze of nature in the hope of finding a suitably picturesque landscape. The above passage would thus suggest that the female picturesque traveller, of whom there were many, would need to appropriate a masculine gaze to sustain the analogy between the landscape and a desired female.

While it would no doubt be futile to study what constitutes "masculine pleasure", I think some provisional remarks can be made on the gendering of pleasure in picturesque discourse. Without making any essentialist claims on whether voyeurism is a specifically male preoccupation, it can be argued that in picturesque discourse the pleasures of the gaze are those of a masculine subject, namely the man of taste. The man of taste, of whom Gilpin speaks in the above passage, continued to be identified with the aristocratic male, even after the middle classes were fully involved in "high" cultural pursuits. It was the aristocratic male, who due to his social status could achieve the proper "prospect" from which to disinterestedly contemplate nature, and who due to his gender had a privileged access to rationality. Though picturesque travel, of course, did not exclude females or the middle classes, the figure of the man of taste, with some middle class adaptations, persists

in picturesque travel writing as the ideal observing subject. Even if we are unable to claim

that the pleasures derived from picturesque observation are specifically masculine, I think

we can safely say that the subject toward whom picturesque discourse directs its

promotion of rational pleasure is unambivalently male. Without defining what would

constitute masculine pleasure, we can argue that picturesque discourse, since it

participates in the gendering of the landscape, directs the observer to a distinctly masculine

experience of pleasure. However, we cannot see the masculine construction of the initial

pleasures of picturesque observation as its only characteristic feature.

For the picturesque observer, the pleasure of the scopophilic gaze, whether it is

gendered or not, is generated by expectation: the observer already knows the landscape

will be "caught" and placed under an organised and organising gaze. The voyeuristic

pleasure of the picturesque eye is not predicated on desiring what it cannot acquire, but

rather on the anticipation of more substantial pleasures to come. At this stage, the

observer, while he has not found a suitably picturesque landscape, knows that the

pleasures of composition will follow. Picturesque practice, then, grounds its voyeuristic

titillation on the sequential and serial quality of the picturesque observation. The

voyeuristic pleasures of the picturesque are produced in part by the knowledge that an

integrated process of composition will follow; he is assured that a sequence of textually

guided rational procedures to frame the landscape is always at hand. One might even

argue that the scopophilic pleasure of the initial stages of picturesque observation are

generated, not so much by the sight of the landscape, as on the expectation of further

purposive-rational actions which occur after the "hunt" is over.

The second intersection of rationality and pleasure occurs, according to Gilpin, at

the moment when the desired landscape is "caught" and initially constructed as an art

object in the mind of the observer. "After the pursuit" writes Gilpin, "we are gratified with

the attainment of the object" (1793: 48). The attainment of the object involves the

production of the landscape as a discrete visual item and its immediate integration into an

economy of images. For Gilpin, the framing of a landscape enables a local terrain to enter

into a series of associations: "we compare the objects before us with other objects of the

same kind:--or perhaps we compare them with the imitations of art. From all these

operations of the mind results great amusement" (1793: 49). The pleasure of picturesque

observation is here the delight of association. Association frees objects from their local

relations. As a free-floating simulacra, the pictorialised landscape can be compared to a

piece of art as easily as it can to a physical landscape. The view at Windermere can be

associated with a landscape in Italy or a painting by Claude representing a Classical scene.

For instance, on his tour of the Lakes, the Duke of Devonshire travelled with his favourite

Claude, against which he could compare and judge the local landscapes he encountered

(Andrews 223). The Duke's organised and organising gaze, as it were, freed the landscape

of Derwent or Ulswater to participate within a common field with his Claude. What is not

perhaps so apparent in this brief anecdote about the Duke and his travelling Claude is how

the Duke's visual amusement, which is seemingly quite arbitrary, is in fact dependent on a

set of well formulated rules. The association and comparison of pictorial images which

both the Duke and Gilpin practised is predicated on the existence of rules which regulate

proper compositional forms. The association and comparison of a foreground at

Windermere and a foreground in a painting by Claude, Poussin or Gainsborough is only

possible because there are accepted rules which dictate the proper construction of

foregrounds and distances, rules which serve as the basis for individual comparisons and

judgements. It is precisely these rules of composition which allow landscapes and

paintings to move within a single economy of images and pleasure.

Because they permit the production of a common space in which landscapes and

pictures can be associated, compositional rules operate analogously to the rules of

capitalism, similarly engendering the distinctly modern pleasures involved in the free flow

of commodified and aesthetised items. Capitalism (in so far as we can relate it to the

standardisation of currency and integration of local, national and international markets)

creates a field in which diverse objects can be compared and interchanged; it permits all

objects to be subsumed into a common field, that of the commodity. Like

commodification, the compositional framing of the landscape produces items which can

enter into and participate within a relatively unrestricted economy. Arguably, the pleasures

which result in associational flow of pictures and landscapes are related to the pleasures of

the flow of commodities. There is a case, I think, for claiming that the pleasure which the

observing subject gains through a comparison of landscapes and pictures is linked to the

positive value afforded to the unhindered movement of items in a liberalised consumer

economy and the enjoyments structured by that economy. If we can say that the "great

amusement" which results from the comparison of art and nature can be understood as a

delight in the movement of objects into and within a common field of relations, we can

subsequently argue that picturesque pleasure is structurally related to the pleasures

associated with the unhindered movement of items within a consumerist economy. By

extension, we can contend that specifically capitalistic pleasures (that is, those pleasures

which capitalist ideology inculcates in the maintenance and reproduction of a consumerist

economy) are inherent to picturesque observation and the conditions of possibility which

generate its ability to amuse the observer taking the Tour.

Further evidence of the operation of visual pleasure in the maintenance of a

consumerist economy is given in Gilpin's discussion of the observing subject's amusement

as he or she encounters new objects and configurations of objects in the landscape. Most

landscapes are, according to Gilpin, usable, in that, even if they do not offer a view which

can be represented, they nonetheless offer "ideas" which the artist or observer can

appropriate and insert into other scenes. The pleasure afforded by the collection of such

ideas is undeniably related to the pleasures of capitalisation, and Gilpin describes it as

such: "Our next amusement arises from enlarging, and correcting our general stock of

ideas. The variety of nature is such, that new objects, and new combinations of them, are

continually adding something to our fund and enlarging our collection" (1793: 50). In the

picturesque's economy of amusement, pleasure does not simply coincide with the

accumulation of ideas; it is rather the immediate effect of amassing ideas. Consequently,

the boundaries between capitalisation, improvement and pleasure are irrevocably blurred, for the amassing of ideas leads equally and necessarily, not only to the enlarging of a mental capital and its improvement, but also to sensual and mental gratification. The visually induced pleasures of the picturesque here operate as a essential element in the maintenance and reproduction of capitalist ideology. Picturesque travel, even while it functions within the general complex of late eighteenth-century leisure pursuits, nevertheless maintains the dominant economic structure through the conflation of pleasure and capitalisation. For not only does picturesque observation equate the amassing of capital with improvement (in so far as enlarging one's stock of ideas corrects those ideas), but also disciplines the observer to associate pleasure with capitalisation.

Through the picturesque gaze, late eighteenth century capitalism is, so to speak, inscribed on the body of the observer. While the amusements of the picturesque are reproducible in any number of observers, the pleasures of picturesque observation are personal, in that the viewer experiences pleasure as an individual. Just as the accumulation of ideas is constructed as the amassing of a mental capital in an individual mind, so is the pleasure which results from this cerebral capitalisation. During the practices of the picturesque, consumption, capitalisation and improvement, operations which usually operate on a non-personal level in the fields of industry, agriculture or finance, come to reside within the individual. This translation of levels, from the impersonal to the individual, from the nation-state and its lands to the body of the subject, is dependent on the organisation of the observer's gaze. The disciplining of the gaze, which picturesque

observation demands, enables the observer to judge which items in the landscape are suitable for the production of a picturesque landscape, which kind of tree or hill will best serve as a sidescreen, or which types of stones and shrubbery, while providing a good foreground, do not distract from the view as a whole. The enlarging and correction of the subject's stock of ideas is, then, inseparable from the disciplining of the gaze, for the accumulation of ideas and the improvement of the viewer's mental "stock" is dependent on the observer's ability to perceive the landscape as a source of "ideas" and to "see" which of those ideas is properly picturesque. The organisation of the gaze, because it constitutes the ground for both improvement and capitalisation, is, therefore, a central mechanism in a micro-physics of power which disciplines the individual to understand pleasure as a direct result of consumption and capital development.

Gilpin adds a twist to his equation of pleasure and the capital development of the mind. The observation of various trees, hills, streams and other picturesque objects, leads to more than amusement and a mental capital of ideas:

The same kind of object, occurring frequently, is seen under various shapes; and makes us, if I may so speak, more learned in nature. We get it more by heart. He who has seen only one oak-tree, has no compleat idea of an oak in general: but he who has examined thousands of oak trees, must have seen that beautiful plant in all it's varieties; and obtains a full, and compleat idea of it (Gilpin 1793: 51)

The picturesque observation of the object leads, undeniably, to knowledge. The "correct knowledge" of objects derived through picturesque observation is, however, distinct from empirico-scientific knowledge. Unlike empirico-scientific knowledge, "picturesque knowledge" only deals with the visual appearance of objects. When Gilpin says that the well-travelled observer has a complete idea of an oak, the "complete idea of an oak", of which Gilpin speaks, does not encompass the non-visible or non-formal properties of the object. The "compleat idea" of the object does not include a knowledge of the oak's reproductive system, or a knowledge of the species of arboreal disease which inflict the oak, but an visual image, the general shape and colour of the oak.

Despite Gilpin's Platonic pretensions, his "correct knowledge" of objects is irrevocably connected to production. The correct knowledge of the visual appearance of an oak, is not an end in itself. To have a "compleat idea" of an object is to be able to use that idea in the production of well-composed scenes. This instrumental quality of the "picturesque knowledge" is revealed in a passage from the "Essay on Picturesque Travel": "From [the] correct knowledge of objects arises another amusement; that of representing, by a few strokes in a sketch, those ideas, which have made the most impression on us" (1793: 51). Here knowledge leads directly to the amusements of production. We need to examine the connection which Gilpin makes between the "correct knowledge" of natural objects and cultural production (i.e. sketching or painting the landscape) before we examine the picturesque amusement of representation. Apparently, for Gilpin, the knowledge of natural objects is separable from production, in so far as "correct

knowledge", while it can be accessed (as a sort of capital) by the artist/observer, is nevertheless independent of the actual act of cultural production. However, it seems clear that, even within Gilpin's own schema, knowledge is diacritical with production. The knowledge of the visual appearance of nature obviously encourages and informs picturesque cultural productions; but cultural production generates the field in which the knowledge of objects can operate as knowledge--there being no knowledge outside of its context of use. The rules which govern what can be seen as a complete idea of an object arise only in response to the needs of cultural production, namely those of pictorial composition. Outside of the practice of pictorial production and its mechanism of composition, the "compleat idea" has no grounds of existence. (If the reader gets the idea that I am integrating knowledge into social practice, the reader has understood my point)

This means-end relationship in which knowledge of appearances and cultural production interanimate each other is, as Gilpin, notes, a source of pleasure. The "representation" of the landscape is pleasurable, not because it is a faithful translation of the local terrain onto paper, but because it re-constitutes the landscape; that is, it "re-presents" the landscape, transfiguring the terrain to conform to the normative conditions of the properly picturesque landscape. What is pleasurable is precisely the purposive-rational action which underlies the practice of picturesque re-presentation. Clearly, in this equation of pleasure, knowledge and production, pleasure does not function as a dangerous, but necessary excess--an erratic supplement to rationality--, but as a stable figure in the algebra of knowledge and production. The pleasure of picturesque

representation derives from the programmatic visual constraint of the landscape, a control

which is not so much repressive, as productive, in that it at once gives birth not only to a

pictorially composed image and organised gaze, but to a sensually-derived mental

pleasure. As a positive result of visual control, pleasure is thus inseparable from an

instrumental rationality (zweckrationaltat) which "improves" the landscape and the

subject's sight.

This sight which is improved by the incorporation of knowledge, production and

pleasure is at once an internal sight, a sight which is directed toward the mind, as well as

an external sight which glances at the natural terrain. This bi-directional sight can be

explained if we enumerate the multiple visual surfaces on which the picturesque eye gazes.

A short passage from Gilpin's "Essay on Picturesque Travel" reveals that there are three

separate, but inter-related, visual surfaces which operate within picturesque

representation:

> A few scratches, like a short-hand scrawl of our own, legible at least to ourselves,
>
> will serve to raise in our minds the remembrance of the beauties they represent;
>
> and recall to our memory even the splendid colouring, and force of light,
>
> which existed in the real scene (Gilpin: 1793: 51).

The picturesque eye gazes on three distinct, though interdependent, surfaces of display:

the "real scene", the sketch, and the presently remembered view. The sketch taken at the

site later functions as a catalyst in a mnemonic process in which the final landscape scene

is realised in the mind of the subject. The memory, however, could not become a site of

display without the "external" landscape, whose beauties are supposedly being represented

on its mental surface. For the observing subject, these three landscapes operate within a

personal economy of images. The sketch is written in a hand which is only readable to the

drawer; sketches are, as it were, both representations and personal discourses. In so far as

they operate as personal discourses, sketches indicate the individualistic quality of

picturesque observation. The landscape may seen in public, but it is remembered

individually.

Despite their mutual dependency, the "real scene", the sketch and the remembered

landscape generate unequal degrees of pleasure in the observing subject. The subject is

most gratified when he looks into the landscape which has arisen out of his or her

memory. In his essay, Gilpin explicates this phenomenon, albeit somewhat inconclusively

> Some naturalists suppose, the act of rumination, in animals, to be attended with
>
> more pleasure, than the act of grosser rumination. It may be so in travelling also.
>
> There may be more pleasure in recollecting, and recording, from a few transient
>
> lines, the scenes we have admired, than in the present enjoyment of them
>
> (1793: 50).

In this context, memory is not a process of narrativisation (as it is in the historical strategy

of production), but a method by which an item is recalled to operate within process of

rarefaction. In the observer's memory the "enthusiastic sensation" of first viewing an

overwhelming landscape are tamed. As Gilpin explains, compared to the pleasures of first

viewing a landscape, the pleasures of the remembered landscape are "more uniform, and

uninterrupted" (1793: 52). To remember the landscape in the comfort of one's home, is a

purer mental and visual practice, since in the drawing room, the act of remembering the

landscape is "unallayed with that fatigue, which is often a considerable abatement to the

pleasures of traversing the wild, and savage parts of nature" (1793: 52). The landscape

exhibited on the mental surface of the memory is unconfused with other, less pleasing,

sensations of the body or the mind.

The remembered landscape is more pleasurable because the recalled landscape,

unlike the "real scene" is more malleable to certain purposive-rational actions, procedures

which, as I have argued, are regarded as the immediate and direct causes of pleasure.

Unlike the "real scene", the recalled landscape, like the purely fanciful landscape is a "sort

of creation of our own" (1793: 520). That is, it is influenced and transfigured by the

imagination, a mental function, which, while it may engender fanciful scenes, is rational,

since it can be directed by the rules of art. Speaking of the relation of the imagination to

picturesque representation, Gilpin states:

The imagination becomes a camera obscura, only with this difference, that the camera represents objects as they really are; while the imagination, impressed by the most beautiful scenes, and chastened by rules or art, forms its pictures, not only from the most admirable parts of nature; but in the best taste (1793: 42).

For Gilpin, the mind, as a camera obscura, is a mechanism of improvement. The remembered landscape is more pleasurable, precisely because what generates pleasure is not the spectacle, but the process of rationalising the landscape according to the rules of art. It is therefore not specifically the view, but the purposive-rational action of the gaze and the mind which engenders pleasure in the picturesque observer.

I would now like to move back from Gilpin's "Essay on Picturesque Travel" to examine how its response to the late eighteenth-century problematic of pleasure relates to the situation of other leisure practices. In late eighteenth-century Britain, leisure practices were continually being connected to public education. To justify the pleasures which they afforded, visual entertainments were formulated as instructional spectacles by their inventors and operators. It was, however, difficult to legitimate the pleasures of the picturesque as the neccessary compliment to an instructional spectacle. Picturesque pictorial images, such as that which the picturesque tourist would compose with the aid of works such as Gilpin's, characteristically present unimproved landscapes. Similarly, they are not generally encoded with a moral significance. The question as to what the picturesque image presents remained largely unanswered throughout the late

eighteeth-century, at least for tourists who, unlike weathly landowners and gardeners such

as Price and Knight, were seemingly uninterested in superimposing a political iconology

on top of the motifs and methods promoted by the early practitioners of the picturesque

observervation, such as Gilpin, Gray and West. (It was no doubt because of this

ambiguity that Price and Knight could so easily co-opt picturesque motifs, giving them a

distinctly Whiggish significance). In terms of scenic travel, picturesque observation could

only be linked haltingly with a visual pedagogy which inculcates the value of agricultural

and ecomomic improvement or scientific progress. Under these conditions, picturesque

pleasure became legitimised not so much as an instructional spectacle akin to the popular

scientific demonstrations of the times, but as a technique which is edifying in so far as it

rationalises the perception of the viewer.

Despite its singularity, picturesque observation has obvious similarities to other

visual entertainments, and in particular with public scientific demonstrations.

Eighteenth-century scientific demonstrations, according to Barbara Stafford, trace a

delicate line between education and entertainment, between the dissemination of scientific

knowledge and sensationalistic showmanship (1994:123). Like picturesque observation,

public scientific demonstrations had to contend not only with a concern for edifying

spectacles, but also with an anti-visual current within Enlightenment culture. While the

ascendancy of empiricism in the eighteenth-century created a situation where visual

observation was necessary and widely supported, eighteenth-century culture also contests

to a well-developed suspicion of the visual. If eighteenth-century empiricism relied on the

ocular, it was equally obsessed with the illusionary qualities of the visual, with the eye's tendency to be deceived. The anti-visual sentiment within eighteenth century culture, with which visual entertaiments such as public scientific demonstrations had to deal, were fuelled by a distinctly Protestant anti-Catholicism which equated visual education with the spectacles of the Roman Catholic Church. Well after the Reformation, visual culture was thought culpable of producing passive spectators, on-lookers who gullibly accepted the semiotic messages encoded into visual icons. In short, visual amusements, since they were seen to appeal to sensual pleasure and its tendency to "by-pass" the rational intellect, was suspect, and thus had to regularly justify its pleasures. Against this lingering iconoclasm, scientific exhibitions and other visual pedagogies were careful to present themselves as pedagogical spectacles which demanded an active and rational observer. The spectacles of science may have been amusing, but more importantly, they also had to be rationally edifying, leading the spectator to greater knowledge and appreciation of the physical world and its laws. The pleasures elicited by the scientific exhibition were thus balanced (and justified) by the improving effects of the knowledge dispensed to the public.

In contrast to the scientific exhibitions which Stafford examines, picturesque observation could not be claimed to improve the observing subject's knowledge of physical objects or the laws which govern them. By extension, the promoters of the picturesque could not justify its pleasures by claiming that it was an amusement directed toward the public's increased understanding of the properties of the empirical world. Since it did not directly investigate the physical state of objects, picturesque observation, unlike

scientific exhibitions and other scientifically directed leisure activities, could not be seen as using visual pleasure as an enticement to scientific learning[1]. Fearing that he might be seen as encouraging "the lax notions of the age", Gilpin nevertheless aligns picturesque observation with the rational amusement of the scientific study of nature, simultaneously noting significant difference between picturesque and scientific observation. In the preface to his work on the Lakes, Gilpin argues for the value the picturesque approach to travel and pleasure:

> Yet surely the study of nature, in every shape, is allowable; and affords
> amusement, which the severest cannot reprehend--the study of heaven--of the
> earth--of the field--of the garden--its productions, fruits, and flowers--of the
> bowels of the earth, containing such stores of curiosity--and of animal life,
> through all its astonishing varieties, even to the shell and the insect. Among these
> objects of rational amusement, may we not enumerate also the appearance of the
> face of nature (1786: xxii).

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[1] This is not to say that picturesque travel literature does not include sections which deal with such popular late eighteenth-century scientific amusements as the investigation of rocks and soils, birdwatching and the like. It is to say that picturesque observation is a leisure activity whose visual stategies are disparate from the various scientific amusements and hobbies. The prevalence of scientific leisure activities no doubt contests to the popularity of such pursuits. Similarily, the visual stategies of the picturesque were regularly appropriated by travel writers whose main concern was not picturesque observation, but other investigations such as the manners of human culture or antiquarianism.

Though he is keen to link picturesque observation to scientific observation, Gilpin is aware

that even though picturesque observation, like scientific observation, takes nature as it

"object of rational amusement", it nonetheless takes a disparate approach to the objects of

nature. In contrast to the scientific observations of the amateur physicist, birdwatcher,

speleologist or botanist, the practices of the picturesque observer were not seen to reach

beyond the "face of nature". While picturesque observation may recognise the

contingency of phenomena in all its shapes and colours, it is unconcerned with the

investigating the empirical object in itself, with disclosing the object's hidden nature, or

with uncovering the laws which govern the relation of objects. As Gilpin states in the

"Essay on Picturesque Travel", "the inanimate face of nature, its living forms fall under the

picturesque eye, in the course of travel; and are often objects of great attention. The

anatomical study of figures is not attended to; we regard them merely as ornaments of

scenes" (1793: 48). Picturesque observation, then, is uninterested in using vision to

disclose the non-visual properties of objects. It rather understands vision as a necessary

feature of a pictorial study of nature. Consequently, since picturesque observation denies

its role in the production of empirical knowledge, it forfeits any claims of advancing an

empirical knowledge which might be used in the improvement of agriculture, that is, with

the purposive-rational manipulation of crops or livestock. By extension, promoters of the

picturesque could not legitimate its pleasures by claiming that it improves the individual

and the public's understanding of the world, a knowledge which, though valued in itself,

also leads to an improvement of the subject's ability to effectively and efficiently

manipulate objects.

The problematic of subsuming pleasure into a project in which the subject

improves his or her self, then, reveals a significant distinction between two modes of

vision, or, rather, two modes of appropriating the visual. In his effort to subsume the

picturesque observer's ocular amusement within a rationalist and educational project,

Gilpin is unable to connect the search for the beautiful appearances of nature to the

disclosure of knowledge. The picturesque features of nature are, as it were, disembodied,

disconnected from the empirically investigatable world. While an object may be beautiful,

its beauty indicates nothing of the intrinsic properties of the object. In contrast to the

"scientific gaze" which seek to see through the appearance of an object to gain access to

the object's empirical state and its relation to other objects, the picturesque eye, according

to Gilpin, remains on the level of appearances. In the disparity of the scientific gaze and

picturesque observation, we can observe the distinction made within late

eighteenth-century epistemology between the apprehension of appearances and the

knowledge gained through visual sensations. Unlike, the empirical knowledge gained by

observing birds, trees, stars or minerals, the apprehension of appearances--that is, a gaze

which does not delve behind the visual to glimpse the nature of things--stops at the level

of appearance itself, and thus cannot be seen to be properly scientific, since it does not

base its project in the search for "objective" facts. Under this episteme, the recognition of

beauty is not a sufficient condition for knowledge claims about objects in the world. The

apprehension that an object is beautiful, while it may lead to a knowledge of the human

subjectivity, does not lead to a knowledge of the properties of the object which is deemed

beautiful. (This is precisely the argument Burke makes in his "physio-psychological"

investigation of the sublime and the beautiful). Significantly, however, even though he

comprehends that the picturesque eye is distinct from the probing scientific gaze, by not

claiming that the apprehension of the beautiful and its emotive effects give access to a

knowledge of the human mind, Gilpin does not ground his argument in the

eighteenth-century discourse of physio-psychology. Instead, Gilpin allows the face of

nature to occupy a liminal zone, a realm which cannot be said to be subjective, because it

is not causally related to the subjective state of the observer, or objective, as it does not

give evidence of the inner state of the object in itself.

Obviously, this situation places picturesque observation in a difficult position in

relation to a problematic of pleasure which validates only those pleasures which can be

subsumed within a project of self-improvement. To justify the amusements of picturesque

observation, one must, as it were, argue for the edifying nature of simulacra, for the

instructional value of free floating visual appearances. This problem is, however, not

insurmountable. While the study of appearance does not necessarily lead to the

accumulation of empirical facts about "real objects", it does not follow from this that the

study of the picturesque qualities of the "face" or visual surface of nature cannot be

edifying or instructive. Although, Gilpin does not legitimize picturesque observation by

postulating that it leads to an understanding of the subjectivity of the viewer, he

nonetheless argues that scenes of nature can have an effect on the observer, an effect which, according to Gilpin, is morally edifying.

The picturesque observation of the "scenes" of nature, while not leading to the subject's improved knowledge of physical objects or empirically verifiable laws, does nevertheless instil both private and public virtues in the observing subject. Though they refer to nothing beyond themselves, visual surfaces are ethically efficacious, in that, they inculcate certain normative positions. For Gilpin, the rough scenes of nature have an undeniable effect on the subject's relation to his or her self and society. Uncharacteristically appropriating French philosophy, Gilpin argues for the private and public value of rugged scenes:

> Many sage writers, and Montesquieu in particular, have supposed these rough scenes of nature to have a great effect on the human mind: and have found virtues in mountainous countries, which were not the growth of tamer regions. Many opinions perhaps have passed current among mankind with less foundation in truth. Montesquieu is in quest chiefly of political virtue--liberty, bravery--and the arts of bold defence: but I believe private virtue is equally befriended by these rough scenes (1786: 66 vol. 2).

Despite his tacit agreement with Montesquieu, Gilpin is not making the same argument as the French thinker. Montesquieu, initiating a geographical determinism, argues for the

influences of a landscape on its inhabitants by contending that the terrain affects the

make-up of the subjects who live on it. In contrast, Gilpin is unconcerned with

psychological disposition of local inhabitants. Rather, he is arguing for the effect of

natural scenes on the picturesque tourist, who, unlike the local inhabitant, is a mere visitor

to an area, a casual on-looker. To confront a landscape is for Gilpin and other picturesque

writers a profoundly visual event. For the picturesque observer, the landscape is, as I note

elsewhere, a pictorial image, a composed visual surface. When Gilpin contends that

rugged "scenes" have an effect on the observer, he is making an argument not so much for

the overall sensual or emotive effect of the terrain on the traveller, but for improving effect

of an artistic perception of the landscape. It is precisely this visual effect of the landscape

that improves the public and private virtues of the observer. Gilpin's remarks, then, can be

connected to such contemporaneous tracts as those by Joshua Reynolds on the positive

effect of paintings on the public (see Barrell, 1986: 1-17). According to Reynolds, through

an educated contemplation of visual cultural products, in particular history or epic

paintings, the individual could increase his or her feelings for the "commonweal". Gilpin's

statement that public and private virtues are equally befriended by the rough scenes of

nature is distinct from Reynold's views on the virtues of contemplating pictorial images, in

that, Reynolds excludes landscape paintings from those paintings which improve public

virtue-- namely history-paintings and less frequently, portraits--while Gilpin views the

artistic perception of landscapes--whether they be painted or, as in the case of the

picturesque traveller, perceived as pictorial images--as promoting a concern for the well

being of the nation and its society. This correspondence between viewing landscapes and the improvement of public virtue among the citizenry was more fully developed by Richard Payne Knight who somewhat speciously equates the picturesque's advancement of pictorial variety with the separation of powers which structures Britain's bi-cameral parliament and constitutional monarchy (see Robinson, 187). In contrast to Knight, Gilpin does not elucidate how he means rough scenes to "befriend" public virtue; nor does he in the above quotation or elsewhere illustrate how the practice of viewing landscapes, or its ocular pleasures, is integrated into a process of personal moral improvement.

Though Gilpin does not explicitly relate how he means picturesque travel to encourage private virtue, his regular reference to the religiosity of natural scenes clarifies his equation of the perception of uncultivated scenery and the development of personal virtue. Since in the discourse of civic humanism--the eighteenth-century discourse in and by which private and public virtues were distinguished--religious sentiment is placed firmly on the side of the private virtues and personal moral improvement, it is not insupportable to claim that when Gilpin writes of the effect of landscape on the subject's private virtues, he is in part writing of the moral and religious effect of viewing the landscape. Unarguably, for writers such as Gilpin and West, the landscape is iconic, a pictorial surface through which one glimpses "the First Cause". Gilpin contends that "if the admirer of nature can turn his amusements to a higher purpose; if it's great scenes can inspire him with religious awe; or it's tranquil scenes with that complacency of mind, which is so nearly allied to benevolence, it is certainly the better" (1793: 47). Enumerating the values

of travelling in the Lake District in the introduction to his guide, West makes similar claims, contending that "such exhibitions of sublime and beautiful objects, cannot but excite both rapture and reverence" and that "such as spend their lives in cities, and their time in crouds [sic] will here meet with objects that will enlarge the mind, by contemplation, and raise it from nature to nature's first cause" (4). At the time at which Gilpin and West formulated these remarks, the debate as to whether the Church of England should allow religious art to hang in their churches was still ongoing. A majority of Anglican bishops (and no doubt the majority of Anglicans) equated religious art, in particular that displayed in churches, with a distinctly "Romish" form of social and intellectual domination. The awe-inspiring spectacle of nature, since it was incapable of being confused with papist social and intellectual control, could in a restricted sense appropriate the position of religious art, supplying a visual surface which could "exite both rapture and reverence" and inculcate private moral virtue within the viewing subject. However, Gilpin and West do not place the moral improvement gained through a "religious" contemplation of the landscape at the centre of the picturesque project of self-improvement. The private and public virtues inculcated by the contemplation of the landscape as an iconic surface remained on the margins of the project set out for the picturesque tourist. Indeed, for the most part, the pleasures of picturesque observation are not justified through an argument for the moral or religious character of the picturesque scene.

Gilpin was uneasy with the causal link between viewing picturesque scenes and religious inspiration. Even in the above quotation by Gilpin, which makes a clear equation of picturesque observation and a distinctly religious excitement, we observe a hesitancy, a recognition of a incongruence between the contemplation of picturesque scenes and religious contemplation Note that the complacency of mind which the tranquil scenes inspire are nearly, but not fully, correspondent to benevolence. A slight incongruence opens between the experience of tranquility and the engendering of benevolence. Gilpin also evinces a reluctance to promise that picturesque observation will inspire moral or religious sentiments in the tourist. "We dare not promise him", Gilpin writes of the tourist, "more from picturesque travel, than a rational, and agreeable amusement" (1793: 47). For Gilpin, to ask that the modern tourist aspire to religious contemplation is to ask too much. Though his reluctance is in part due to his misapprehensions about the moral character of his time, there is an other reason for Gilpin's refusal to bestow upon picturesque travel anything more than "a moral tendency" (1793: 47).

Unlike the baroque and early eighteenth-century jardin moralise, the picturesque landscape was not universally understood to be encoded with a moral message. The picturesque scene resists readability; if we can say that picturesque scenes incorporated a certain semiocity, it was not that of a direct correlation of signifiers and signifieds . For Gilpin, unlike Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight, the picturesque scene did not unambiguously offer its viewer's a moral message:

Moral and picturesque ideas do not always coincide. In a moral light, cultivation is all its parts is pleasing; the hedge and the furrow; the waving corn fields and rows of ripened sheaves. But all of these, the picturesque eye, in quest of scenes of beauty and grandeur looks at with disgust (1786: 44, vol. 2)

Significantly, Gilpin posits a incongruence between morality and beauty; what is beautiful is not necessarily moral[2]. The picturesque tourist, then, cannot read the landscape in a moral light. The judgement of beauty becomes, as it were, an enclosed set of rules, disallowing a correspondence with the judgement of morality. Thus, if we conceive of readability as the ability for a set symbolic units to be translated into an other symbolic field, we can see how the picturesque scene resists being defined as an instructional spectacle in which the observer deciphers a morally or intellectually edifying message. Because of the picturesque's status as an enclosed set of rules for the judgement of beauty, the observer cannot read the picturesque landscape as one would read a religious painting or a history-painting, genres whose moral meaning is inseparable from their formal composition. Moreover, the human figures of the religious or historical painting always

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[2]   The lack of a correspondence between beauty and morality is not the only aspect of this quotation which demands comment. It is significant, I think, that Gilpin does not hesitate to associate agricultural cultivation directly with morality. What is moral is that which is productive. The picturesque view, since it does not display productivity, is amoral, or at least morally ambivalent. The equation of argicultural cultivation with morality was, for Gilpin and other eighteenth century writers, an efficacious one. Agricultural improvement, unlike urban and industrial "progress" was not seen to corrupt the populace, disrupting tradition and traditional ethics. Therefore, the spectacle of agricultural improvement, because it occludes certain negative visions of improvement, can at once valorise improvement and tradition.

speak a moral message, communicating how one should relate to oneself, one's family, one's associates or to the public sphere. In contrast, properly picturesque figures play no part in an ethical pedagogy: "In a moral view, the industrious mechanic is a more pleasing object than the loitering peasant. But in a picturesque light, it is otherwise" (Gilpin 1786: 44, vol. 2). Instead of representing the rural labourer, the picturesque observer populates the landscape with gypsies and banditti, groups which were not seen to be the embodiments of the work ethic. Following the rules of picturesque beauty, the observer is, then, unable to view the picturesque landscape as a spectacle of improvement, since both the picturesque landscape and its staffage are distinctly unimproved.

This inability to incorporate the picturesque scene into the pedagogy of improvement complicates any claim that the picturesque landscape is an instructional spectacle which inculcates an ethics of improvement, or that it is the instructional value of the picturesque spectacle that justifies the pleasures of picturesque observation. Gilpin makes it quite clear that the picturesque observation and cultural production does not concern itself with the representation of improvement or utility: "It is not [the picturesque's] business, to consider matters of utility. It has nothing to do with the affairs of the plough, and the spade, but merely examines the face of nature as a beautiful object" (1813: 166, vol. 2). Unlike so many other amusements of the age, the picturesque is not a display of instrumental rationality. As such, the spectacle of the picturesque landscape cannot be compared to such "spectacles of rationality" as the paintings of Joseph Wright of Derby, a contemporary of Gilpin, whose paintings regularly celebrate

eighteenth-century improvements. For instance, Wright's paintings of scientific

experiments, such as his "An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump" and "A Philosopher

giving that lecture on the Orrery, in which a lamp is put in place of the sun", since they

propound the virtues of rational amusement, incorporate the excess of pleasure into an

instructional project which is guided by the spectacular surface itself. On the other hand,

the picturesque scene, whether it was drawn, painted, reflected in a convex mirror or

simply constructed in the mind of the observer, divorces any signs of agricultural,

industrial or moral improvement. Unlike Wright's displays of eighteenth-century utility and

improvement, picturesque scenes do not promote improvement in themselves. For the

most part, then, it is not by a spectacular display of improvement that picturesque

amusement subsumes its pleasures under the sign of rational amusement.

Instead, as I argued above, picturesque travel literature integrates pleasure into an

economy of self-improvement primarily through a rationalisation of the gaze. In

picturesque travel writing, the moment of improvement is displaced from the subject's

confrontation with a spectacular surface to a process by which the observing subject is

trained to see the landscape as a pictorially composed artefact. In contrast to the scientific

display or the history-painting, picturesque travel literature does not structure the gaze as

a conduit for an improving knowledge or sentiment, so much as it constructs the subject's

perception as the location and object of improvement. That is, the gaze is at once that

which is improved and that which, through its rationalisation, improves the observing self.

Consequently, it is not in the space of the spectacle, but in the space of the gaze, that

pleasure and rationality coincide. Picturesque pleasure, then, is best not seen as an enticing supplement to the contemplation of a visual surface, but as a visually-derived pleasure generated through a discursively directed visual rationality. Because, for Gilpin, pleasure is a direct result of the rationalising of the gaze, the gaze can be both the location of pleasure and a rationalised and rationalising function. It is precisely because the gaze can simultaneously serve as a space of pleasure and rationality that Gilpin is able to successfully subsume picturesque observation into an economy of improvement.

Conclusion

There is something awkward about summing up, about going over what one has done, and in so doing, bringing a work to a certain degree of closure. But, in the case of this thesis, such a taking into account is necessary, even if it is somewhat forced. This being said, let me briefly go over what I hoped to achieve in writing this thesis--apart from the immediate business of finishing a degree.

If this thesis bears reading, it does so in so far as it reveals something of how the landscape enters into and operates within specific socio-cultural economies, economies which all to often are accepted without critical reflection. Specifically, I was concerned with how the picturesque landscape operates as an art object. As such, this thesis investigates the procedures on which picturesque representations are dependent, not the political or social inscriptions evident in picturesque representations. Looking past the art object--which, like the text, is all to often the unacknowledged fetish of scholarship--, I examined the strategic procedures, both visual and discursive, which were performed upon the terrain, those visual and textual practices which allowed the landscape to function as a mobile art item. But to properly investigate how the landscape operates as a pictorial image, one must analyse the historically-specific practices of display and viewing procedures which situate the art object, not to mention the art viewer. This is the principal concern of the third chapter. Lastly, I was interested in how the terrain

functioned within a more local economy, with how the construction of the landscape was interanimated with the regulation of pleasure. My last chapter, I hope, demonstrates that the organisation of the landscape, in its participation within the system of cultural production, is not necessarily separate from issues of conduct.

This study of the picturesque as a mode by which the terrain enters into and is maintained within an economy of cultural production, however, lacks an important dimension: it fails to examine the ethics of seeing and showing. Despite this admission, I feel I am in part justified in not examining the ethics of social practice; to study the ethics of practice properly would take more time than I had to complete this project. Nevertheless, this thesis, I think, lays some kind of preliminary ground-work for looking at the ethical dimension of constructing the landscape as an aesthetic item. If nothing else this thesis, by showing that the cultural field is more than a mystification, but a distinct and analysable social sphere, reveals that if we are going to connect the construction of landscapes to political and ethical practices, we must take into account not merely landscape representation, but the level of social action upon which the construction of landscape is dependent.

In the last instance, despite its omissions, I am hopeful that this thesis, by illuminating the contingency of the constitution of the landscape as an aesthetic item, helps open a space in which its author (and perhaps even its few readers) can come to think about the landscape differently.

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