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COMMON GROUND, DIVERGING PATHS:
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH AND FRENCH LANDSCAPE PAINTING

By

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts
in Art (C) and Art History

Hite Art Department
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

December 2018

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my darling, indulgent husband,
Dr. John W. Gamel, Professor Emeritus,
University of Louisville School of Medicine,
for his support and patience during my momentary lapse of sanity.

ABSTRACT
COMMON GROUND, DIVERGENT PATHS:
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH AND FRENCH LANDSCAPE
PAINTING

Jessica Robins Schumacher

November 27, 2018

In the early eighteenth century, both English and French artists traveled to Rome to study the great seventeenth-century landscape artists --Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin in particular—at the source. The English were motivated by a combination of reverence for the ancient, classical world, an associative imagination and a burgeoning competitive art market. The French, by an equal regard for antiquity and the pragmatic desire to complete the requirements of the monopolistic French Academy. While English landscape painting evolved away from the idealism of Claude to a modern naturalism imbued with the artist's subjective response to a visual experience, French landscape painting for the most part continued with the intellectual, idealistic compositions of the century before. This thesis suggests some of the reasons why landscape painting thrived in England during the eighteenth century while it stagnated in France, when both concurrently shared the same origins.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
LIST OF IMAGES.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER I: SHARED ANTECEDENTS, DIVERGING DESCENDENTS.....	4
The Shared Legacy: Claude Lorrain.....	4
The English School.....	9
The French School.....	28
CHAPTER II: THE ORIGINS OF BRITISH GENIUS.....	36
The Grand Tour.....	36
Eighteenth Century English Aesthetics.....	50
Eighteenth Century French Aesthetics.....	56
The Authority of the French Academy.....	59
British Independent-Mindedness and Free Market Competition.....	70
REFERENCES.....	113
CURRICULUM VITA.....	118

LIST OF IMAGES

IMAGE	PAGE
1. Claude Lorrain, <i>A Landscape with Hagar and the Angel</i> , oil on canvas mounted on wood, 1646, The National Gallery, London, England.....	82
2. Richard Wilson, <i>Tivoli: The Cascatelli Grandi and the Villa of Maecenas</i> , oil on canvas, 1752, The National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland.....	83
3. Richard Wilson, <i>Tivoli: the Temple of the Sibyl and the Campagna</i> , oil on canvas, 1752, The National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland.....	84
4. Richard Wilson, <i>Rome: St. Peter's and the Vatican from the Janiculum</i> , oil on canvas, 1753-4, Tate Gallery, London, England.....	85
5. Richard Wilson, <i>The Thames at Twickenham</i> , oil on canvas, 1762, Marble Hill House, Twickenham, England.....	86
6. Thomas Jones, <i>Pencerrig</i> , oil on laid wrapping paper, 1772, Tate Gallery, London, England.....	87
7. Thomas Jones, <i>Carneddau, from Pencerrig</i> , oil on laid paper on panel, c. 1775, National Museum Wales, Cardiff, Wales.....	88
8. Thomas Jones, <i>Lake Albano – Sunset</i> , oil on canvas, 1777, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, New Haven, Connecticut.....	89
9. Thomas Jones, <i>An Excavation of an Antique Building Discovered in a Cava in the Villa Negroni at Rome</i> , oil, pencil on paper, c. 1780s, Tate Gallery, London, England.....	90
10. Thomas Jones, <i>The Bay of Naples and the Mole Lighthouse</i> , oil on Italian writing paper, 1782, Tate Gallery, London, England.....	91
11. Thomas Jones, <i>A Wall in Naples</i> , oil on paper laid down on board, c. 1782, National Gallery, London, England.....	92
12. Thomas Jones, <i>Buildings on a Cliff-Top, Naples</i> , oil on paper, 1782, Tate Gallery, London, England.....	93

13. George Stubbs, <i>Newmarket Heath, with a Rubbing-down House</i> , oil on canvas, c. 1765, Tate Gallery, London, England.....	94
14. John Robert Cozens, <i>View from Mirabella, the Villa of Count Algarotti on the Euganean Hills</i> , Watercolor, 1782, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England.....	95
15. Thomas Girtin, <i>The White House at Chelsea</i> , pencil and watercolor, 1800, Tate Gallery, London, England.....	96
16. Joseph Mallord William Turner, <i>Caernarvon Castle</i> , watercolor, 1799, private collection.....	97
17. Joseph Mallord William Turner, <i>Crossing the Brook</i> , oil on canvas, 1815, Tate Gallery, London, England.....	98
18. Joseph Mallord William Turner, <i>Harvest Dinner, Kingston Bank</i> , oil on canvas, 1809, Tate Gallery, London, England.....	99
19. Joseph Mallord William Turner, <i>Norham Castle, Sunrise</i> , oil on canvas, c. 1845, Tate Gallery, London, England.....	100
20. John Constable, <i>The Harvest Field</i> , oil on canvas, c. 1797, private collection.....	101
21. John Constable, <i>Dedham Vale</i> , oil on canvas, 1802, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England.....	102
22. John Constable, <i>The Hay Wain</i> , oil on canvas, 1821, The National Gallery, London, England.....	103
23. Jean-Antoine Watteau, <i>Pilgrimage to the Isle of Cythera</i> , oil on canvas, 1717, Le Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.....	104
24. Jean-Honoré Fragonard, <i>Blind Man's Bluff</i> , oil on Canvas, c. 1775/80, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.....	105
25. John Robert Cozens, <i>The Colosseum from the North</i> , pencil and watercolor, 1780, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland.....	106
26. Alexandre-Françoise Desportes, <i>Ciel nuageux au soleil couchant</i> , oil on beige paper, undated, Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres, France.....	107

27. George Michel, <i>Landscape with a Windmill</i> , oil on panel, c. 1790-1800, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England.....	108
28. Claude-Joseph Vernet, <i>An Italianate river landscape</i> , oil on canvas, 1753, The Matthiesen Gallery, London, England.....	109
29. Claude-Joseph Vernet, <i>View at Tivoli</i> , oil on canvas, c. 1745, private collection.....	110
30. Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, <i>A Capriccio of Rome</i> <i>with the Finish of a Marathon</i> , oil on canvas, 1788, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, California.....	111
31. Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, <i>Fabrique a la Villa Farnese:</i> <i>Les deux peupliers</i> , oil on paper on cardboard, 1780, Le Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.....	112

INTRODUCTION

The familiar adage that “all roads lead to Rome” implies its converse, that all roads also lead from Rome. Referring to the spoke-like roadways of the Roman Empire radiating out from the hub that was Rome, the proverb has come to mean that various methods of doing something will lead to a given result in the end. In the case of the evolution of English and French landscape painting in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, both the adage and its converse were true. The paths taken by landscape painting in each country differed significantly in their courses, but both ultimately arrived at the same resolution after originating from the same source. That point of origin was a group of seventeenth century painters living and working in and around Rome: Nicolas Poussin, Claude Lorrain, Gerard Dughet, and Salvador Rosa. All four painters were immensely popular among British collectors, who would return with their work as souvenirs of Grand Tours to Italy, and highly revered by the French, who would emulate their styles for an uninterrupted period of one hundred and seventy-five years.

Fledgling artists from both England and France flocked to Rome during the eighteenth century to study the Old Masters and capture the glories and nuances of the ancient Italian campagna. Rome in the eighteenth century was still the art capital of Europe. The English painter was inspired to visit Rome in equal parts by a sense of association with the classical past, a desire to capture the pervasive light suffusing a Claude canvas and a native sensibility toward the land and nature. The French painter

traveled there to complete an Academic curriculum requiring a period of study in Rome, to “tread the ground that Poussin had trod,”¹ copy the grand manner of Raphael and learn classical anatomy from antiquities. Although the landscape painters of the two nations benefitted equally from the prevailing artistic influences available in Rome, and often were even collaborators in experiences and ideas, the immediate effect of such influences on the course of their respective nation’s landscape painting differed significantly.

The English landscape artists of the eighteenth century found in Britain an environment not just conducive but nurturing for the pursuit of their art. Yet, as the landscape genre flourished artistically in Britain over this century, it virtually languished in France. It would not be until the mid-nineteenth century that French landscape would catch up with the progress made by its English counterparts, despite shared artistic origins and antecedents. If a French landscape painter desired to survive in the eighteenth century, let alone prosper, he was compelled to comply with rigid Academic rules of style, content and composition established a century earlier. Eighteenth century Britain, however, offered the native landscape painter a fertile combination of imaginative sensibility, artistic freedom, economic prosperity and market competition that stimulated an individual creativity enjoined in contemporary France.

For the eighteenth century British landscape painter, Rome and its painters provided a source of inspiration, a springboard toward a new form of expression revealing a painter’s personal observation of and dialogue with nature. English landscape painters developed a national naturalistic style that departed from Classical idealism to

¹ Philip Conisbee, *Painting in Eighteenth Century France* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), 19.

adopt an autonomous expression based on personal experience and interpretation. For the French, however, the stylistic innovations of the seventeenth century would in the eighteenth century become a quagmire of formulaic constraints that would stymie individual creativity and the development of landscape painting for the duration of that century and into the next. Although there appears to be logical explanations for why the French landscape artist did not arrive at the stylistic juncture of naturalism until arguably eighty years after the English, and even then, only after exposure to British paintings, the question remains as to the sources of this British originality that were so completely absent or unproductive in France. Why did landscape painting thrive in Britain during the eighteenth century while it foundered, even stagnated, in France?

CHAPTER I

SHARED ANTECEDENTS, DIVERGING DESCENDANTS

THE SHARED LEGACY: CLAUDE LORRAIN

In the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century, the genre of landscape painting universally held a lowly position in the hierarchy of European painting subject matters. The Renaissance had placed man, whose form was made in the image and likeness of God, above nature on the hierarchical scale; the human figure contained in a context of higher meaning occupied the highest rung of the scale. For a landscape painting to be acceptable, it had to contain some content of historical significance or moral application expressed through human figures occupied within it. The construct of the ideal landscape by Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) and Claude Lorrain (1600-82) elevated landscape painting by just such a combination. Claude Lorrain was the common source from which English and French landscape painting and painting directly from nature, *en plein air*, evolved. Although it was Poussin's more intellectual approach to nature and philosophical subject matters that carried greater and enduring appeal for the French, it was Claude's luminous skies and poetic compositions that endeared him to both the French and the English and from which their respective naturalistic landscape painting traditions would develop, albeit it at significantly different rates and times.

Poussin and Claude, both French artists living and working in Rome, devised the form of the seventeenth-century ideal landscape by blending geometric and atmospheric perspective with the tradition of pastoral Arcadia. Perspective provided a rational framework by which to depict the essence of Arcadia: the harmony between man and nature. The Frenchman Roger de Piles was one of the first to give serious theoretical consideration to the aspects of landscape painting in his 1708 treatise *Cours de peinture part principes*. He divided landscape painting into the two conceptual paths portrayed by the work of Poussin and Claude: the heroic and the pastoral, respectively. Poussin's heroic style, concerned with orderly, logical composition and "noble objects capable of elevating the imagination,"² emphasized line over color. Claude's pastoral style was framed by a truth to nature and poetry in its depiction. Poussin's carefully ordered canvases were characterized by their geometric arrangement of pictorial space as a background to an elevated scene of order and logical clarity, while Claude's depiction of space was atmospheric, suffused with light, and as much a subject of the painting as the human activity occurring within it. Despite its attempt to confer worthiness on the genre of landscape painting, De Piles' "idea of a meaningful landscape...remained a barren one in...France through the end of the eighteenth century.... In the case of the ideal landscape it was Britain, a distant relation, who fell heir to the inheritance of Poussin and especially of Claude.... The principal figure in the development of the English taste for landscape was Claude."³

² David C. Ditner, "Claude and the Ideal Landscape Tradition in Great Britain," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 70 (1983): 154.

³ Ditner, "Claude and the Ideal Landscape," 154.

Claude's idealized landscape style grew out of the dual influences of mannerism from the north, absorbed while painting in the workshops of Agostino Tassi (1578-1644), and contemporary Italian landscape artists in Rome, such as Domenichino (1581-1641), a pupil of Annibale Carracci (1560-1609), who is credited with the taking some of the first steps towards painting nature based on observation. Claude's early work demonstrates a shift from the Flemish traditions carried on by Tassi to the more naturalistic style of Domenichino with its depiction of observed nature and gently receding space. Drawing upon direct observation of nature through *plein air* sketches and studies, Claude legitimized landscape by structuring his observations into ideal and idyllic arrangements and imbuing them with classical, mythical and religious themes. The depiction of nature, even in an idealized form, was Claude's *raison d'être*: "Whereas the landscape was a secondary interest for Poussin, Claude devoted his entire career to it."⁴

Although Claude's pastoral idealization in the name of classicism sacrificed identity of place, his landscape style raised "a lowly genre from mere portraiture of place to ideal models of human happiness or heroic dignity."⁵ Claude sketched nature *en plein air* for studies to be later incorporated into formal compositions from his imagination. His formulaic composition consists of a darkened foreground and detailed middle ground framed by a *coulisse* and/or *repoussoir* of trees, with a deep atmospheric background receding into the distance to meet the sky, the whole united by a soft, poetic light. Allegorical, biblical or historical figures populate the realistically rendered imaginary spaces to lend moral seriousness to a subject matter thought frivolous without them. As

⁴ Ditner, "Claude and the Ideal Landscape," 149.

⁵ Malcolm Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1999), 103.

Sir Joshua Reynolds explained, “Claude Lorrain...was convinced that taking nature as he found it seldom produced beauty. His pictures are a composition of the various draughts which he had previously made from various beautiful scenes and prospects.”⁶ And to the English, Claude’s paintings were the virtual embodiment of beauty:

Claude’s interpretation of the Roman Campagna became the model for beautiful scenery everywhere, not only determining reactions to all types of scenery but also influencing a whole sensibility – particularly a poetic sensibility; for English admirers saw Claude’s paintings through a ‘poetic’ glass....the paintings were chiefly prized for a quality of serenity...; they crystallized the most idyllic aspects of the classical past, epitomizing a specific Golden Age, an accessible arcadia.⁷

Claude’s hold on the hearts and minds of the English would be constant throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, and his landscapes would resonate with generations of landscape painters. Claude’s 1646 painting *A Landscape with Hagar and the Angel* (Image 1) is illustrative of the ideal, classical landscape style for which he was to be revered and of the two characteristics for which he would be known: “the rational structure of his compositions and...fidelity to natural effects of light.”⁸ Purchased and imported into England by Sir George Beaumont (1753-1827) after his Grand Tour to Italy in 1782, this painting would become an object of study and source of inspiration for two of Britain’s most illustrious landscape painters, John Constable (1776-1837) and Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851). *Landscape with Hagar and the Angel* shows the figures of the narrative sitting in the left foreground, which is framed by a large tree bending from the right to form a *repoussoir* that draws the

⁶ Duncan Bull, “Introduction: British Art and the Landscape of Italy,” in *Classic Ground*, ed. Duncan Bull (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 1981), 3.

⁷ Claire Pace, “Claude the enchanted: Interpretations of Claude in England in the Earlier Nineteenth-Century,” *The Burlington Magazine* 111 (1969): 733.

⁸ Ditner, “Claude and the Ideal Landscape,” 152.

eye into the painting. The landscape under and behind the tree diminishes into distant misty peaks through a series of horizontal planes delineated by architectural elements, such as a tower on the hill surrounded by buildings and an arched bridge, and natural features, such as clumps of trees and a small lake fed by a waterfall flowing under the bridge. A boat on the lake counterbalances the foreground figures and is itself offset by the arch of the bridge, drawing the eye into the serene calm composed by Claude's imagination. As the English painter Richard Wilson would remark, "you may walk in Claude's pictures and count the miles."⁹ The whole is united by a diffuse, luminous glow that highlights the figures in the foreground and rationally softens in the distance.

⁹ John Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place 1730-1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 8.

THE ENGLISH SCHOOL

Few on either side of the channel would dispute the originality of the British School and the marked divergence of its aims from those of the more codified French approach to landscape.

Patrick Noon, *Crossing the Channel: British and French Painting in the Age of Romanticism* (2003)

The work of Claude and his contemporary in Rome, Gaspard Dughet (1615-75) was to prove particularly influential on the burgeoning landscape genre in Britain:

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of Claude's and Gaspard's influence on British sensibilities throughout the eighteenth century. More than any other artists, save Titian and Guido Reni, they were admired with an adulation bordering on worship. They were at the center of the British appreciation of landscape, Italian or otherwise.¹⁰

Although Claude's landscapes were not initially associated with the physical countryside of Italy, by the middle of the eighteenth century, their idealistic representation of classical scenes resonated with a British nostalgia for the ancient world and stimulated interest in the site of Claude's inspiration: Rome. This interest would spur both collectors and artists to journey to Rome from Britain for the purpose of experiencing and capturing the beauty of Claude's world first hand. Initially, English landscapists adopted Claude's lyrical and poetic approach to the representation of nature by applying it to the depiction of actual places and by investing it with a sense of reality. The earliest English paintings were devoted to portraiture, which eventually included the portrayal of places as well as of

¹⁰ Bull, "British Art and the Landscape of Italy," 2.

persons, and this sense and connection with place would start to permeate the idealistic landscape in the mid-eighteenth century. The seventeenth century paintings of Claude and Dughet, with their idealistic connections to the conceptual and imaginary, gave way to the representation of the real and present. Still poetic and lyrical, the paintings of Claude's earliest English acolytes, such as Alexander Cozens (1717-86), and to an even greater extent, Richard Wilson (1714-82), engaged with the natural world in a way that was expressive of the artist's observation of and response to what he saw. By the 1770s, this fidelity to place would further transition English landscape painting from idealistic renditions of representational composites to an empirical representation of the artist's perception of the landscape, in which Claude's carefully imagined composition would be abandoned to the depiction of what is actually within the artist's selected view. Thomas Jones (1742-1803) and George Stubbs (1724-1806) would pioneer this personal and naturalistic statement of the artist's experience, to be followed at the end of the century by John Constable (1776-1837). J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851) would be the culmination of the Claudian tradition, but on terms uniquely his own.

The term "landscape" derives from the Dutch word *landschap*, meaning "region, tract of land." The term also came to be applied to artistic representations of scenery and the land. The landscape painting first became popular in the Netherlands in the mid-1500s, when a rising Protestant middle class sought secular art for their homes. The golden age of English landscape painting, from 1750 to 1850, had its beginnings in the country house portraits or "prospects" of the mid-seventeenth century, which were primarily executed by Dutch landscape painters who had emigrated to England in search of commissions. English puritanism had brought painting as an artistic medium to

something of a halt after the Civil Wars of the mid-1600s, affecting even the most prevalent form of painting of the times: portraiture of worthy men and/or their dogs.¹¹

The position of English painters under the rule of taste and reason was not always enviable...the victory of Protestantism in England, and the Puritan hostility to images and to luxury, had dealt the tradition of art a severe blow. Almost the only purpose for which painting was still in demand was that of supplying likenesses.¹²

Starting in the 1660's, however, a newly formed ruling class of landowners patronized a different kind of portrait, that of their country houses and the land within which those houses were situated. The "prospect" portrait was commissioned by wealthy landowners to record the new, settled social order of a country healing from civil war:

Having survived the Interregnum and the political storms of the mid-sixties relatively unscathed, the British landed aristocracy and gentry were now working hard to consolidate their position as major regional potentates. With this political aim in mind, the great landowners sponsored a range of cultural initiatives, including the production in unprecedented numbers of engraved and painted portraits of their country estates.¹³

The goal of the prospect painting was to present an aesthetically pleasing arrangement of ordered nature. The two ideas of landscape captured in the definition of a "prospect": as a parcel of land, and as a representation of that piece of land, were "united by the idea of seeing it from a single point of view."¹⁴ The prospect's documentation of man's investment and interest in the land and in nature was perfectly timed for an audience to

¹¹ Charles Hemming, *British Landscape Painters: A History and Gazetteer* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1989), 9.

¹² Ernst H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 16th ed. (London and New York: Phaidon Press, 1995), 461.

¹³ David H. Solkin, *Art in Britain: 1660-1815* (New Haven: Yale University Press/Pelican History of Art, 2015), 27.

¹⁴ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 620.

whom its message of order, economic stability and idealistic connection to Nature resonated.

As artists started to turn to landscape painting from portraiture, tastes tended in two directions: one based on the naturalist Dutch and Flemish traditions on which the “prospect” portrait had evolved, and the other on the classical idealistic styles of Claude, Dughet and Poussin. The former would evolve into the topographical view painting of Canaletto, in which recognizability of place was the salient feature. The latter found its expression in idealistic renderings of Arcadian settings in continental Europe, particularly Italy.

By the mid-eighteenth century, Claude, the city of Rome and painting *en plein air* were exerting considerable influence on both English and French landscape artists.

Painting *en plein air* was considered an extension of the age’s scientific investigation of the natural world and had become a regular practice in Rome:

Behind the practice of working directly from nature in oils lay the notion that direct recording of experience was in itself an authentic form of artistic creation. And this was only the case because it was assumed that the artist was exploring not just the features of a terrain, but also the very essence of natural processes.”¹⁵

British artists traveled to Rome to paint in oil *en plein air* in emulation of Claude and his French followers. Alexander Cozens was one of the first British landscape artists to travel to Rome. Lodging with Claude Joseph Vernet (1714-89), a French artist who left Paris for Rome to paint landscapes and seaports and often referred to as ‘the French Claude’, Cozens also worked in Vernet’s studio and learned from him to draw directly from

¹⁵ William Vaughan, *British Painting: The Golden Age from Hogarth to Turner* (New York: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1999), 190.

nature. When the portrait painter Richard Wilson journeyed from England to Rome in 1750, he also resided with Vernet at the Palazzo Zuccari. Cozen's individual style was more affected by his absorption of and obedience to Claude's rules of composition than his exposure to the ancient glories of Rome, while Wilson's work was definitively influenced by both the Italian countryside and his experiences there.

Wilson's first year in Italy was spent in Venice, where the Italian landscape painter Francesco Zuccarelli is thought to have been the first to attempt to convert him to painting landscapes.¹⁶ Wilson was ultimately persuaded to abandon portraiture in favor of landscape painting by Vernet in Rome.¹⁷ Wilson, in the best tradition of the times, painted landscapes in the styles of both Zuccarelli (*River and Farmhouse*, c. 1751) and Vernet (*Italian Coast Scene with a Wreck*, 1752).¹⁸ Wilson's painting *Italian Coast* was so like Vernet's work that it was actually thought to be by Vernet himself for a period of time.¹⁹ Also influenced by the work of Claude, Dughet and Rosa, Wilson

soon developed a manner of his own, in which he painted the scenery of Italy more seriously and realistically than either Zuccarelli or Vernet, or indeed than any artist working in Italy at this time. Wilson's personal style was rooted in his assiduous study of the outskirts of Rome and of the Campagna, where he made numerous drawings on the spot.²⁰

Although derivative of Claude's compositional style, Wilson's paintings generally do not contain the elevated narrative associated with the ideal landscape. It was instead

¹⁶ Luke Herrmann, *British Landscape Painting of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 52.

¹⁷ Michael Rosenthal, "The Nature of British Landscape Painting, c. 1770-1830," in *Turner and Constable: Sketching from Nature*, ed. Steven Parissien (London: Tate Publishing, 2013), 13.

¹⁸ Herrmann, *British Landscape Painting*, 52-3.

¹⁹ Herrmann, *British Landscape Painting*, 53.

²⁰ Herrmann, *British Landscape Painting*, 53.

Claude's pervading light and subordination of figures to the composition of the landscape that Wilson adopted, creating tranquil pictures of nature. Wilson's 1752 companion paintings *Tivoli: The Cascatelli Grandi and the Villa of Maecenas* (Image 2) and *Tivoli: the Temple of the Sibyl and the Campagna* (Image 3) exemplify his privileging of the landscape over figurative narrative while also evidencing the practice of painting *en plein air*. The *Tivoli* paintings show artists painting and folding an easel in front of the waterfall and ruins of Tivoli. Realistic and contemporary, the figures provide a scale by which to assess the grandeur of the landscape. Carefully composed and realistically rendered, the paintings are a testament to Wilson's newly acquired genre and *plein air* painting practices.

John Ruskin declares, in his *Art in England*, that "with Wilson, the history of sincere landscape art, founded on a meditative love of nature, begins in England."²¹ Seventeenth century painters had used landscape as a means of conveying or reinforcing a higher meaning; British artists of the mid-eighteenth century started to allow landscape to speak for itself in conveying meaning. Wilson's importance to the evolution of English landscape painting was twofold: he employed the classical idealistic style to convey a recognizable sense of place and he firmly established the influence of the classical landscape artists on English painters, through his own work and his training of others. Wilson's portrayals of the Italian landscape adopt an element of topographical awareness to construct a hybrid combining the reality of place with the ideal representation of nature. Wilson's *Rome: St. Peter's and the Vatican from the Janiculum* (1753-54) (Image

²¹ John Ruskin, *Art in England: lectures given in Oxford* (New York: J. Wiley & Sons, 1884), quoted in William Gaunt, *The Great Century of British Painting: Hogarth to Turner* (New York: Phaidon Publishers, Inc., 1971), 26.

4) shows his adaptation of Claude's composition through the incorporation of the identifiable. Painted for a Grand Tourist, the view shows the Vatican in the context of classical Rome in an image framed by trees and lit by a glowing sky. The figures in the foreground are merely devices of perspective, with no tale to tell; the story here is Rome and the Campagna behind it.

Before Wilson, the ideal Italian landscapes of Claude, Gaspard and Rosa were not, in the eyes of the viewers, connected to actual terrain and sites in Italy: [Wilson] was one of the earliest [British artists] who recognized the potential visual and imaginative potency of combining the depiction of any actual place in Italy with the Grand Style of the earlier tradition. As a result, his paintings have the quality of reminiscences of given localities invested with the dignity of classical allusion.²²

Wilson recognized the English preference for the real and recognizable, as exhibited by their patronage of portraits of themselves and their houses, and understood the British esteem for the nobility of ancient Rome, a sensibility bordering on a nostalgia. Wilson's

Italian paintings set out to evoke that heightened sense of emotion which the Grand Tourist experienced on the spot. And it is more than possible that the type of landscape he produced, whether in Rome or after his return to England in 1758, was largely instrumental in shaping that experience. For by his implicit correlation of Italy with an ideal landscape imbued with the virtues of classical culture, Wilson touched a nerve that was to vibrate for the rest of the century.

After his return to England, Wilson continued to apply the particular style he had developed in Italy to depictions of the English countryside in a wholly original approach, one which is considered seminal in its transformation of the English landscape genre. *The Thames at Twickenham* (1762) (Image 5) imbues an English subject matter with the classical Italian ideal. Employing elements of Claudian composition, the painting draws the eye into the recesses of its space, attracted by the Thames River as it curves into the

²² Bull, "British Art and the Landscape of Italy," 3.

distance. The sequence of trees no longer frames the image, but acts as a series of markers for an eye drawn inward. The scene is lit with a consistent, luminous light that is reflected in the calm water of the river on which a sailboat serenely floats. The scene is one of English pastoral order and tranquility, conveyed by stylistic means acquired in Italy.

Wilson's influence reached beyond the impact of his own work; after returning to Britain, he tutored both amateurs and professional students in his studios. Only one of Wilson's pupils to become a professional painter, Thomas Jones, actually visited Italy himself. Jones, a propertied Welshman, studied with Wilson in England from 1763-65. Wilson had returned to England before the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, which pitted Great Britain against an alliance of European countries that included France. Jones, who had been painting *plein air* scenes of the English and Welsh countryside, left for Rome after the end of that conflict, arriving there in 1776 and remaining until 1783.²³

Jones, along with fellow English painter John Robert Cozens (1752-97) and the French painter Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (1750-1819), "helped to change the conventional subordination of open-air painting to studio painting."²⁴ Jones brought to Rome a practice steeped in *plein air* oil painting and a sensibility to the Italian countryside heightened by studies and memories of Wilson's earlier works. In his memoirs of his Grand Tour, Jones acknowledged the impact of Wilson's work and the sway of the Italian countryside on his experiences in Rome:

I had copied so many Studies of that great Man & my Old Master, Richard Wilson, which he had made here as in Other parts of Italy, that I insensibly

²³ Lawrence Gowing, *The Originality of Thomas Jones* (New York: Thames and Hudson, Inc., 1985), 33.

²⁴ Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 190.

became familiarized with Italian Scenes, and enamoured of Italian forms, and I suppose, enjoyed pleasures unfelt by my Companions.²⁵

Before leaving England for Italy, Jones created *plein air* oil sketches of the Wales countryside that were predictive of developments in landscape painting yet to come. First, his *plein air* oil paintings were based not on line “but on solid color matched in value and hue to visual tones, which was from the traditional standpoint a difficult and unconventional thing to do....Matching oil-colour to observation outdoors was only normal for fifty years between 1870 and 1920.”²⁶ Second, although his compositions were horizontal “with level parallels of land and cloud,”²⁷ they contained none of the framing devices or theatricality of the typical idealistic landscape. Finally, his paintings are completely devoid of human presence; the only subject is the painter himself. Jones’ paintings *Pencerrig* (1772) (Image 6) and *Carneddau, from Pencerrig* (c.1775) (Image 7) are examples of these *plein air* exercises that are strikingly modern in their lack of formal composition, rejection of the ‘picturesque’, and truth to perception.

The first canvas completed by Jones in Rome, *Lake Albano—Sunset* (1777) (Image 8) pays homage to his painting master, Richard Wilson, and to the legacy of Claude. It was not long, however, before the unique perspective and style of his Wales landscapes prevailed over Claudian composition and idealism with works such as *An Excavation of an Antique Building Discovered in a Cava in the Villa Negroni at Rome* (c. 1780’s) (Image 9). The culmination of Jones’ personal style and unconventional viewpoint materializes in a series of extraordinary scenes painted in Naples in the 1780s,

²⁵ Francis W. Hawcroft, *Travels in Italy 1776-1783: Based on the Memoirs of Thomas Jones* (Manchester, U.K.: University of Manchester, 1988), 60.

²⁶ Gowing, *Thomas Jones*, 10.

²⁷ Gowing, *Thomas Jones*, 22.

just before his return to England. From *The Bay of Naples and the Mole Lighthouse* (1782) (Image 10), with its impressionistic rendering of sailboats tossing about on the Bay, to *A Wall in Naples* (c. 1782) (Image 11), with its cropped view of the mundane, to the Cezanne-like geometries of rock and buildings in *Building on a Cliff-Top, Naples* (1782) (Image 12), Jones established himself as a pioneer and a diviner of things to come. Jones' oil sketches from the late 1770s and 80s show a marked originality in the representation of place that in hindsight reveal modernist characteristics far ahead of his time, anticipating similar developments in France 80 years later. Jones' oil paintings of Naples

resonate for us in their precocious modernity, their spare and surprisingly cropped viewpoints, their celebration of the ordinary, the way they find convincing correspondences in oil paint for crumbling plaster, peeling paintwork, and decaying brick, warmed in the Italian sun. We cannot escape Jones's strong engagement with the mundane thing seen.²⁸

Jones' modernistic trailblazing was not just an isolated incident, an outlier in the great course of English landscape evolution. His contemporary, George Stubbs (1724-1806), a portraitist turned horse painter, painted two small *plein air* landscapes of rubbing-down houses on Newmarket Heath; *Newmarket Heath, with a Rubbing-Down House* (c.1765) (Image 13) is one of the pair. Used as studies for settings in more formal portraits of horses, the paintings employ the same cropped viewpoint and sense of frozen time evident in Jones' Naples oil sketches. Depth of field is accomplished through the three houses on the heath, which diminish in size as they recede into the distance, as well as by color and atmospheric light. The scene is of an ordinary place, caught in a moment

²⁸ Philip Conisbee, "Reflections on open-air painting," in *Plain-air painting in Europe 1780-1850* (Shizuoka City, Japan/Sydney/Melbourne: Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art/Art Gallery of New South Wales/National Gallery of Victoria, 2004), 16

of abiding stillness. Stubbs had visited Italy in 1754 to study nature, which he considered to be superior to all else, including art. Ultimately settling in London, he devoted his artistic efforts to capturing the essence of nature through portraits of horses and other animals. Like Jones, he painted what he saw in a nonjudgmental, unedited, naturalistic manner that captured the essence of place.

John Robert Cozens, the son of Alexander Cozens, was one of the English artists already in Rome when Jones arrived in 1776. An English draftsman and watercolorist trained by his father, J.R. Cozens created atmospheric images of Italy that added a sense of poetry to his scenes of nature. J.R. Cozens abandoned established landscape painting conventions in two ways: he emphasized the actual land and scenery of the countryside, and he used an almost monochromatic color scheme. Cozens' individualistic style was developed partly as a means to distinguish himself in the highly competitive landscape market he found in Rome, where it was desirable to stand out from the crowd:

At the English Coffee House in the Piazza di Spagna, Cozens immediately found himself in the company of a group of figurative artists from Britain and elsewhere...who were passionately committed to promotion the notion of original genius; alongside them were a group of landscape painters, including...Thomas Jones...all these artists—as well as Cozens—were interested in selling views of famous sites in and around Rome as souvenirs to visiting Grand Tourists. This was a highly competitive business...since most buyers wanted pictures of the standard array of ruins, lakes, villas, gardens and so forth, each would-be supplier found himself under great pressure to distinguish his works from those of his rivals by adopting a signature persona and/or style, or run the risk of being ignored altogether.²⁹

Cozens favored the unframed, horizontally-configured landscape composition of Jones, but employed it in an equally individualistic manner. His *View from Mirabella, the Villa of Count Algarotti on the Euganean Hills* (1782) (Image 14) is illustrative of his

²⁹ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 230.

monochromatic palette and loose, open style. The contrasting rows of trees and shrubs alternate from the foreground into the background, with the natural swirl of clouds leading the eye into the depths of the terrain. Cozens' style "is striking enough to be considered as essentially personal, and it is one of the most original achievements in the story of British landscape painting. In addition, it was an achievement which...was to have a very great influence on the next generation of landscape artists."³⁰ His romantic watercolor landscapes "challenged oil painting, so that oil painting in open air 'loosened' its associations with the 'formal finish' of the studio."³¹ *View from Mirabella* intimates the later vision of J.M.W. Turner, who along with Thomas Girtin (1775-1802) and John Constable, was significantly influenced by Cozens.

After his return to England, Cozens suffered both the rejection of his watercolors by the Royal Academy for not being "proper art" and a nervous breakdown. He was committed to an asylum in London presided over by a Dr. Thomas Monro, an astute and discriminating art collector. Dr. Monro purchased Cozens' collection of paintings following his untimely death in 1797. J.M.W. Turner and his contemporary, the watercolorist Thomas Girtin, attended informal art classes at Monro's home during which they would copy drawings by Cozens to make them into finished watercolors. The painting styles of both Turner and Girtin would be directly influenced by the work of Cozens and Wilson. Turner's style transitioned from an early topographical accuracy of picturesque views to a more imaginative and subjective representation of place. Girtin's style quickly shifted from the detailed representation of a place to the evocation of feeling

³⁰ Herrmann, *British Landscape Painting*, 88.

³¹ Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 191.

and mood associated with its “character”.³² The paintings of both Girtin and Turner display

one important constituent of ‘genius’, as this was coming to be understood by British writers on landscape aesthetics in the 1790s: a capacity to combine the skillful imitation of nature, based on long and close attention to its ever-changing forms, with the poetic invocation of associated ideas consistent with the ‘character’ of an individual place.³³

As discussed in detail in Chapter II below, the inclination of the English to associate scenes of nature with “trains of associated ideas stimulated by them”³⁴ would precipitate their Grand Tours to Rome and form the basis for a course-altering movement in the aesthetics of British landscape painting. The writer Archibald Alison, who first applied the doctrine of associationism to landscape art in his *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790), considered landscape artists “ideally qualified to take the greatest aesthetic delight from a natural scene.”³⁵ Alison believed that the quality of a landscape painting derived from the artist’s interpretation of what he observed, rather than an accurate depiction of it:

It is not for imitation we look, but for character. It is not the art, but the genius of the Painter, which now gives value to his compositions: and the language he employs is found not only to speak to the eye, but to affect the imagination and the heart. It is not now a simple copy which we see, nor is our Emotion limited to the cold pleasure which arises from the perception of accurate Imitation. It is a creation of Fancy with which the artist presents us, in which only the greater expressions of Nature are retained, and where more interesting emotions are awakened than those which we experience from the useful tameness of common scenery.³⁶

³² Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 263.

³³ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 263.

³⁴ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 265.

³⁵ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 265.

³⁶ Archibald Alison, *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (Edinburgh, 1790), 79-80, quoted in Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 265.

Although Girtin would never visit Italy and Turner would not journey there until the early 1800s, both artists inherited the legacies of those who had--Wilson and Cozens—and applied them to give effect to their personal interpretations of the spirit of a place.

Girtin's *The White House at Chelsea* (1800) (Image 15) and Turner's *Caernarvon Castle* (1799) (Image 16), both watercolors, illustrate the attributes associationism considers essential to a successful landscape painting. In *White House*, Girtin selects to capture a fleeting moment of time at a nondescript location along the Thames river. The horizontal panoramic composition, reminiscent of Cozens, is broken by only a few vertical lines and highlighted by the suggestion of a glowing white cottage at the river's edge, its reflection projecting on to the smooth water. Clouds form on one side of the canvas, suggesting the approaching dusk. Girtin has captured the 'character' of not just the place, but also the moment. Turner also evokes the momentary while remaining true to his classical training in *Caernarvon Castle*. In a nod to Wilson, he composes an English scene in a Claudian classical manner, suffusing it with a glowing light that bestows an air of both majesty and poetry over the whole. The scene is as Turner perceived it and understood it. Although Girtin's life was short, his romantic open spaces would significantly shape later English landscape painting. Turner, who would with John Constable become one of the recognized 'geniuses' of English landscape painting, openly acknowledged Girtin's substantial talent, reportedly remarking upon his death, "Had Girtin lived I should have starved."

Turner studied and copied Claude, capturing his sense of light and depth and applying these characteristics to represent the truth of naturalistic detail gained from observation. Turner would paint classical landscapes in the style of Wilson and Claude

for twenty years before he would actually travel to Italy, and would continue to carry on the Claudian tradition throughout his career. *Crossing the Brook*, 1815 (Image 17) is just such an English homage to Claudian ideals. As his painting style evolved however, his incorporation of Claudian technique became less about the principles of the ideal and more about the implementation of light to convey a depth of field and a sense of the experience of nature. Moving away from merely capturing the appearance of a place, however, Turner caught the essence of a place at a particular moment. His encounter with nature became phenomenological, mediated by his personal, subjective experience with nature. He did not merely depict a scene, but rather a scene as he was aware of it. His paintings developed into nothing more or less than a re-creation of his visual experience, without regard to decipherability by the viewer. Turner's painting becomes about the experience of the moment and place portrayed, and so "ceases to be a 'landscape', but transforms into a complex of sensations, of light, colour, smell, sounds, tactile experience."³⁷ In the hands of Turner, landscape ceases to be a place; "it becomes an environment."³⁸ In his portrayal of the momentary and use of light, he anticipates both the Realism of Gustave Courbet (see *Harvest Dinner, Kingston Bank* (1809) (Image 18)) and the Impressionism of Claude Monet (see *Norham Castle, Sunrise* (c. 1845) (Image 19)) of almost a half a century later.

Wilson's influence would also extend to the more naturalistic branch of English landscape in the late eighteenth century. Wilson tutored amateur painters in addition to those who made it their livelihood, including Sir George Beaumont (1753-1827), a Grand

³⁷ Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 191.

³⁸ Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 191.

Tourist who was to become the best known amateur painter and connoisseur of his time. In addition to being a patron of Thomas Girtin, Beaumont would become a mentor to the young John Constable, who would first experience Claude by studying the Old Masters in Beaumont's collection, including the aforementioned *A Landscape with Hagar and the Angel*.³⁹

Turner and Constable represented two sides of the modern landscape genre: Turner was true to nature by reflecting the emotions it elicited; Constable was true to nature by being faithful to what he saw.

The break with tradition had left artists with the two possibilities which were embodied in Turner and Constable. They could become poets in painting, and seek moving and dramatic effect, or they could decide to keep the motif in front of them, and explore it with all the insistence and honesty at their command.⁴⁰

Constable's paintings "had less to do with a phenomenalist concern for optical truth and much more to do with his own, highly personal subjectivity."⁴¹ Constable, above all else, was concerned with the truthful rendering of nature and painted directly from nature to accomplish it. Although descended from the Netherlandish topographical tradition that emphasized specific detail, Constable's paintings also contained techniques of Claudian composition and unified treatment of light. Constable, like Turner, was interested in the ephemeral character of light and atmosphere, but in terms of capturing how nature revealed these conditions to the eye rather than portraying the sensation they created. Constable, primarily concerned with "creating an accurate observational record,"⁴² also

³⁹ Rosenthal, "The Nature of British Landscape Painting," 13.

⁴⁰ Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 496.

⁴¹ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 277.

⁴² Rosenthal, "The Nature of British Landscape Painting," 26.

rejected the formulaic approach of the picturesque, in which the landscape was admired for its resemblance to a painting. He stated to his friend and biographer, “When I sit down to make a sketch from nature, the first thing I try to do is to forget that I have ever seen a picture”⁴³

Constable’s naturalism is considered to be the culmination of “a trend which had been gathering strength for a quarter of a century and had its origins”⁴⁴ as far back as William Hogarth, who claimed in the 1720s “that nature was always intrinsically superior to art.”⁴⁵ The naturalistic landscape painting of the eighteenth century had its roots in Dutch seventeenth century realism, as represented by Hogarth, Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88) and Constable, but was intrinsically English in its adaptation. First, “it was English, or any rate... not Mediterranean, in orientation. It was also anti-classical,”⁴⁶ second, it was Tory in its expression of the fundamental belief “in the ‘rightness’ of the English countryside and its practices,”⁴⁷ and thirdly, it was essentially self-taught. Neither Gainsborough nor Constable left England during their lifetimes.

Constable greatly admired Gainsborough’s poetic landscapes, and emulated his style early in his career. This is evidenced in Constable’s early *The Harvest Field* (c. 1797) (Image 20), which echoes motifs of both Gainsborough and the Dutch painter, Jacob van Ruisdael (1629-82). His first important painting, *Dedham Vale* (1802) (Image

⁴³ John E. Thornes, *John Constable’s Skies* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 1999), 51.

⁴⁴ Michael Kitson, “A context for Constable’s naturalism,” in *From Gainsborough to Constable: The emergence of naturalism in British landscape painting 1750-1810* (Sudbury, England: Gainsborough’s House Society, 1991), 9.

⁴⁵ Kitson, “Constable’s naturalism,” 9.

⁴⁶ Kitson, “Constable’s naturalism,” 12.

⁴⁷ Kitson, “Constable’s naturalism,” 12.

21) continues to contain some of the characteristics of a Dutch landscape, but now clothed with an English sensibility. Claude's *repoussoir* of trees frame the receding River Stour, now lit by a single light source from the right, with leaves that seem to shimmer with movement. Constable uses a variety of brushstrokes to convey the differing physical attributes of the elements comprising the picture: from short dabs of paint for the grasses and shrubbery in the foreground to the curved depths of the clouds, to the long strokes of paint on the horizon. The eye is drawn to the church tower in the distance, triangulating from the trees in the foreground.

It was Constable's painting *The Hay Wain* (1821) (Image 22) that was to mark the maturation of his style and spark a revolution in landscape painting in France. Exhibited at the London Royal Academy in 1821, it failed to attract a buyer. Constable then sent it to the Paris Salon in 1824, where it was awarded a gold medal, thereby according official recognition in France to the naturalistic landscape genre. Constable and his fellow countryman Richard Bonington (1802-1828), who was also awarded a gold medal in the same Salon exhibition, would inspire a diverse group of painters to exit Paris for a rural village in the Forest of Fontainebleau to seek nature and paint what they saw and experienced. The so-called Barbizon painters, named for the village to which they retreated, would replace the polished, intellectual form of the Academic studio landscape with the expressive *plein air* quick brushstroke capturing nature's fleeting light and shadow-filled spaces. The Barbizon painters would adopt not only Constable's fidelity to observable phenomena, but also two of his (and Turner's) painting techniques to construct this new visual aesthetic: painting with palette knives to create "specific visual

equivalents in paint to evoke natural surfaces and textures”⁴⁸ and using small dabs or spots of varying colors of paint for maximum color brilliance and clarity.

The Barbizon painters would prove to be the bridge between what was by then the English creed of naturalism and French Neoclassical idealism. Jean-Baptiste Corot, inspired to paint by a Bonington painting in a shop window,⁴⁹ would play a vital role in reawakening French landscape painting from its long decline. Descended directly from the classical school of landscape painter Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, who is discussed in more detail below, Corot was also influenced by the truthful depiction of nature he found in English landscape painting. Corot ultimately became the bridge between French Neoclassical idealism and English *plein air* naturalism, but not until the second quarter of the nineteenth century. After spending a century in England, landscape painting would resume and continue its journey in France.

⁴⁸ Anthea Callen, *The Work of Art: Plein-Air Painting and Artistic Identity in Nineteenth-century France* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2015), 177.

⁴⁹ Steven Adams, *The Barbizon School and the Origins of Impressionism* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1994), 52.

THE FRENCH SCHOOL

“It is not without a feeling of mortification, that I thus proclaim the superiority of the English landscape painters over ours. ...”

Amadée Pichot, *Historical and Literary Tour of a Foreigner in England and Scotland*, 1825

“The old [French] landscape school is battered and ruined beyond recovery...Landscape now aspires to a high, vague, but real and natural poetry...”

Art Critic Gustave Place, *Salon 1831*

French artists also imitated the classical, idealistic structure of Claude’s landscapes, as well as those of the more severely intellectual Poussin. What for the English became an inspirational point of departure, however, became for the French a yoke of enforced observance. The only counterpoint acceptable to the French Academy that emerged in competition with the classical presentation of nature in the eighteenth century was ironically situated at the opposite end of the spectrum. Rococo, the counterpart to the classical ideal landscape, was an offshoot of the heavy grandeur of the Baroque style and featured scenes of courtly play set in pastoral surroundings in a light and ornamental style. The acceptance of Jean-Antoine Watteau’s (1684-1721) painting *Pilgrimage to the Isle of Cythera* (Image 23) in 1717 by the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture marked the Academy’s official recognition of the new Rococo style and of the *fête galant* theme of aristocrats at play in an idealized landscape. In *Pilgrimage*, the mythological theme celebrates love rather than heroics or moral virtues: the scene depicts the departure of a group of lovers from Cythera, the birthplace of Venus. The landscape in the background also departs from the classical ideal. Although framed by Claude’s

repoussoir of trees and bathed in his glowing light, the features of the landscape are executed in loose brushstrokes of almost pastel colors. With the Rococo, although frivolous in content and often decorative, French landscape appeared to be taking a more poetic, naturalistic turn by invoking Netherlandish and Flemish traditions, rather than the classical ideal:

For all the artifice and sophistication of Watteau's paintings, for all his passionate concern with human character, he also made some of the most unaffected, direct, and carefully observed drawings from nature of the century.⁵⁰

For the first two thirds of the eighteenth century, the Rococo landscape would be the predominate style of landscape painting. The work of François Boucher (1703-1770) would epitomize the Rococo style, and his landscapes contained happy and idyllic dream-scenes in artificial pastel colors. Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806) followed in the footsteps of Boucher, adding a touch of imagination to “picturesque” and elegant views of nature. Although Fragonard spent five years in Rome studying at the French Academy, his preferred concept of nature was as a well-tended park, ordered and civilized, mirroring the formal and ordered society of contemporary France.⁵¹ Fragonard's *Blind Man's Bluff* (1773-76) (Image 24) illustrates Fragonard's blending of topographical, naturalistic detail with an element of the imaginary picturesque to create just such a poetic garden. Like Richard Wilson, Fragonard fused the compositional elements of Claude with a contemporary and native theme; Fragonard's is decorative and artificial in feeling, however, rather than poetic and natural (See Wilson's *The Thames at*

⁵⁰ Conisbee, *Painting in Eighteenth Century France*, 176.

⁵¹ Enzo Carli, *The Landscape in Art* (New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1980), 155.

Twickenham, Image 5). When compared to an almost contemporary painting by J.R. Cozens, *The Colosseum from the North* (1780) (Image 25), these differences become even more apparent for reasons other than just subject matter; yet, both Fragonard and Cozens trained in Rome in the mid-eighteenth century.

Another branch of naturalism, albeit one without academic validation, grew in France out the Dutch tradition. The open-air sketches and finished hunt and animal scenes of the court painter Alexandre-François Desportes (1661-1743) are an early example. Based on a close observation of nature, his landscape studies capture realism in a startlingly modern way. Desportes' *Ciel nuageux au soleil couchant* (Image 26) demonstrates his fidelity to observed nature and sensitivity to the transient. Claude-Joseph Vernet, considered Claude's heir and successor in Classical landscape, also followed this naturalistic tract. Naturalism in eighteenth century French landscape painting, however, was more the exception than the norm:

For every Desportes there were whole...dynasties of artists who continued well into the eighteenth century to make rather debased and often purely decorative forms of the seventeenth-century ideal landscape, now and then enlivened with a dash of Rubensian color and movement.⁵²

Naturalism would continue to limp along in the work of a few landscape artists, outliers who gained inspiration from the Dutch Old Masters and viewed the classical academic tradition with contempt. One such artist was George Michel (1763-1843), who is now regarded as an important French forerunner of the Barbizon School of naturalist painters. His painting *Landscape with a Windmill* (Image 27) from the 1790s demonstrates

⁵² Philip Conisbee, "The Eighteenth Century: Watteau to Valenciennes," in *Claude to Corot: The Development of Landscape Painting in France*, ed. Alan Wintermute (New York: Colnaghi USA, Ltd., 1990), 85.

parallels with English landscapes of the same period and suggests the thwarted potential of French landscape painting in the eighteenth century.

Vernet traveled to Rome to study landscape painting in 1734, abandoning a life as a painter of decorative scenes on sedan chairs to devote his energies first to seascapes, then to landscapes. Vernet lived and painted in Rome for twenty years and actively advocated the practice of *plein air* oil painting: “the “shortest and surest method is to paint and draw from nature. Above all, you must paint, because you have drawing and color at the same time.”⁵³ His *plein air* observations were assembled and arranged in his paintings “to have a strong sense of place, to evoke the experience of Italy, but without being actual views.”⁵⁴ Although less idealistic and elevated in tone than the paintings by Claude, Vernet’s pictures remain more constructed than real.

The British Grand Tourists became Vernet’s main patrons, attracted by his convincing portrayals of nature composed in the best Claudian idealist tradition. *An Italianate river landscape* (Image 28), painted by Vernet in 1753, is typical of the type of painting that would find its way to England in the luggage of a Grand Tourist. Carefully composed, with a receding atmospheric space, architectural elements and framing trees, the pastoral scene appeals to the imagination as well as the eye. Wilson knew Vernet in Rome and the similarities between the styles of the two artists are many (see Image 2 and Image 5); what is interesting are the differences. Vernet’s scene has a sharp clarity of line, a meticulousness in composition and formality of finish that is softened with Wilson. Both have learned from Claude how to light a scene, but Vernet’s crystalline air

⁵³ Rosenthal, “The Nature of British Landscape Painting,” 12.

⁵⁴ Conisbee, “Watteau to Valenciennes,” 93.

contrasts sharply with the mellow, humid atmosphere of Wilson. And, of course, Wilson caught not only the essence, but the reality of a place, while Vernet infused an imaginary scene with the ambience of place. An earlier *plein air* painting by Vernet devoid of the academic formal finish and composition reinforces the similarities between Wilson and Vernet, as well as between Jones and Vernet. Vernet's *View at Tivoli* (c.1745) (Image 29) is a study that would have provided background material for a formal composition constructed in his studio. Its cropped perspective, fresh approach and quickly but carefully rendered naturalism would have been sacrificed in the creation of a finished product like *An Italianate river landscape*.

Identified with the excesses of the Royal Court, the artificial and decorative landscapes of the Rococo were doomed with the occurrence of the French Revolution. But even before the Revolution, the academic classical and idealistic style of history painting was regaining favor, including for landscapes. Partly in reaction to the frivolity of the Rococo and partly due to the interest in the antique generated by the archeological discoveries at Herculaneum and Pompeii, the Neoclassical movement emerged with a renewed emphasis on history painting. The Neoclassical movement not only rejected the decorative Rococo style; it also contested the nascent naturalistic trend in French landscape painting pioneered by Desportes and furthered by Vernet. The official French taste in landscape shifted away from the poetic views of Claude to the cerebral and heroic scenes of Poussin.

It was during this era, in 1771, that Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (1750-1819), the French painter who was to become one of the most famous of the *plein air* oil sketchers, arrived in Rome. Valenciennes is considered to be “the artist who effectively

founded the French school of Neoclassical landscape painting.”⁵⁵ Valenciennes, who was painting in Rome at the same time as Jones (although it has not been established that they knew each other), had also been encouraged to paint *en plein air* by Vernet and took his advice to heart. After returning to France, Valenciennes wrote the essay *Elémens de perspective pratique à l’usage des artistes* (1800), offering a treatise on painting and urging the practice of painting *en plein air* to create a detailed “landscape portrait” of place. As a teacher, Valenciennes “admonished his students that, if they wanted to surpass the history painters,” who, as studio-painters he considered incapable of painting nature, “they should go out and study natural illumination.”⁵⁶ Despite his conviction that landscape art was not subordinate on the hierarchical ranking of painting, Valenciennes firmly adhered to the belief in the superiority of idealism over naturalism. Valenciennes

felt that the rural was the representation of nature as it is, and the heroic style, which he called *paysage historique*, was the representation of nature as it ought to be. The rural depended upon the artist’s emotional response; the historic depended upon the artist’s intellectual appraisal.⁵⁷

The latter he considered more challenging than the former. Valenciennes’ 1788 painting, *A Capriccio of Rome with the Finish of a Marathon* (Image 30) demonstrates the return of French landscape painting to the academic grand manner of the seventeenth century: “Valenciennes’ noble and elevated landscapes evoke the world of ancient pastoral, mythology or history and transport us back to a place of timeless grandeur.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Conisbee, “Watteau to Valenciennes,” 96.

⁵⁶ Albert Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1971), 136.

⁵⁷ Boime, *The Academy and French Painting*, 136.

⁵⁸ Conisbee, “Watteau to Valenciennes,” 96.

Painting *en plein air* by artists in Rome became a practice that spawned its own particular techniques and conventions -- those used by Jones and Valenciennes show similarities -- as well as differing stylistic applications.⁵⁹ The difference lies in the artist's use of sketches produced in the open air. Valenciennes followed Vernet's (and Claude's) practice of using the sketches from nature as models, reworking them in the studio to produce finished, idealistic landscapes "that communicated elevated ideals of both nature and humanity -- albeit one which grounded those fictions in observed realities."⁶⁰ Stressing the intellectualization of landscape, however, Valenciennes avoided the depiction of any of the natural elements contained in his studies in the execution of his polished, finished work. Jones, on the other hand, concerned as he was with evoking a sense of place and the emotional reactions it generated, came to create finished paintings directly from nature. An oil sketch by Valenciennes provides a tantalizing hint of the unfulfilled potential of French landscape painting as a consequence of such an approach. Remarkable in its similarities to the Naples paintings of Jones, Valenciennes' *Fabrique a la Villa Farnese: Les deux peupliers* (1780) (Image 31) is a study of light, shadow and geometric form that anticipates both the Realism and Impressionism of the next century.

It is at this point that the courses of English and French landscape diverge. French statesman and historian Aldophe Thiers claimed in 1824 that the French were inadequate at landscape painting because it required "an honest and spontaneous copying from nature without attempts to embellish it."⁶¹ Not satisfied with painting the landscape of

⁵⁹ Rosenthal, "The Nature of British Landscape Painting," 12.

⁶⁰ Rosenthal, "The Nature of British Landscape Painting," 12.

⁶¹ Patrick Noon, *Crossing the Channel: British and French painting in the Age of Romanticism* (London: Tate Publishing, 2003), 196.

France, they borrowed instead that of Italy: “We go there, spend months, and return to produce false and insignificant souvenirs...the British don’t dream of a better world, they copy what they see and paint the truth.”⁶² While the British preference for realistic representation of place fostered individual creativity, the French portrayal of nature was mediated, and fettered, by the Academic hierarchy of genres and rules of composition.

French landscape, despite the same Roman origins and influences as its English counterpart, had entered into a period of stasis; the French landscape continued its idealistic representation of nature in rigid conformity with the dictates of the Academic hierarchy. The “originality of the British School and the marked divergence of its aims from those of the more codified French approach to landscape” is not disputed.⁶³ It would not be until 1824 and the award of gold medals at the Paris Salon to the English landscape painters Constable and Richard Parkes Bonington (1802-28), that the naturalistic landscape, in which the landscape itself is the subject, would be accorded official recognition and regain momentum in France.

⁶² Noon, *Crossing the Channel*, 196.

⁶³ Noon, *Crossing the Channel*, 192.

CHAPTER II

THE GRAND TOUR

“hiraeth (n): Welsh word for deep longing for home, a homesickness for a home to which you cannot return, a home which maybe never was; the nostalgia, the yearning, the grief for lost places of your past...to some it implies the meaning of missing a time or an era...”

“A man who has not been in Italy is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see. The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean.”

Samuel Johnson (who did not visit Italy), in
James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson*,
1791

“Go abroad – take your palette and pencils to Rome,
And when you return from your tour
If a few foreign graces and airs you assume
You will charm a complete connoisseur.”

Anonymous, 1764 [(Hornsby, Impact, 64

Although broader cultural shifts in attitudes toward the English landscape, such as changing perspectives regarding land and advancements in the empirical study of nature, have been credited with increasing interest in its pictorial representation, the English Grand Tour is considered the single most important factor in the development and

ascension of English landscape painting in the eighteenth century.⁶⁴ The Grand Tour was driven by a nostalgic attachment to place, Rome in particular, and precipitated by associative memories of its canonical images, real or imagined, the culmination of a life time's engagement with a Classical education. Association acted to heighten and idealize, if not literally supplant, what the Grand Tourist actually saw with what he expected and desired to see. Stated in another way, "we cannot detach our looking from the culturally constructed lenses and frames that make what we see look like what we expect to perceive."⁶⁵

A framework of references and expectations was brought to bear by the Grand Tourist on places before seen only in the imagination, imprinting the landscape with the associative memories of the subject, the observer. The ability to read and appreciate a landscape as an abstraction of a greater whole was admired as a trait of the "liberal mind" of a "man of taste".⁶⁶ The English interest in landscape came at a time when a new "scientific" view of man was creating a distance between man and the natural world, heightening man's idealization of and desire for connection with the land. The new natural philosophers classified and ordered nature, depriving it of its preceding "symbolic and emblematic meaning."⁶⁷ Nature became something to be observed, a visual subject.

⁶⁴ Michael Liversidge, "'...a few foreign graces and airs...': William Marlow's Grand Tour Landscapes" in *The Impact of Italy: The Grand Tour and Beyond*, ed. Clare Hornsby (London: the British School at Rome, 2000), 83.

⁶⁵ Rachel Ziady DeLue, "Elusive Landscapes and Shifting Grounds," *Landscape Theory*, Rachel Ziady DeLue and James Elkins, eds., Burren College of Art, Ballyvaughan, Ireland, June 17, 2006 (New York: Routledge, 2008), 10.

⁶⁶ John Barrell, "The Public Prospect and the Private View: the Politics of Taste in Eighteenth-century Britain," *Reading Landscape: Country--City--Capital* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1990), 29, quoted in Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 157.

⁶⁷ Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, 622.

The effects of urbanization in the late seventeenth, early eighteenth centuries also served to heighten man's respect and nostalgia for Nature. By the mid-eighteenth century, more people worked off the land than worked on it. People became removed from direct contact with nature and this "process of detachment"⁶⁸ affected people's ideas about nature and the countryside, sparking a romanticization and celebration of Nature that created a demand for its representation. The Enlightened intellectual's perspective transcended the concept of land as merely property owned and worked, divided by metes and bounds:

Enlightened belief in the essential benevolence and supreme efficiency of Nature led to its being appreciated as 'a God-govern'd machine'. Intellectual curiosity about the natural world fostered a revised and enlarged sense of what constituted aesthetic pleasure in natural scenery.⁶⁹

Such a personal response to nature required a universally understood language for formal expression, and the ideal compositions of Claude and his followers provided "the specialized vocabulary, and a grammar...of landscape patterns and structures"⁷⁰:

The contemplation of landscape was not, then a passive activity: it involved reconstructing the landscape in the imagination, according to principles of composition that had to be learned so thoroughly that in the later eighteenth century it became impossible for anyone with an aesthetic interest in landscape to look at the countryside without applying them, whether he knew he was doing so or not. These principles were derived from the Roman landscape-painters of the seventeenth-century, Nicolas and Gaspard Poussin, Salvator Rosa and Claude Lorrain...particularly the influence of Claude.⁷¹

The contemplation of landscape in Britain became an enthusiasm of the educated and cultured, and Italy became its primary object. The Grand Tour would provide the

⁶⁸ Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, 621.

⁶⁹ Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 67.

⁷⁰ Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape*, 6-7.

⁷¹ Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape*, 6-7.

method of satiating the British appetite for the cultivation of taste and the completion of a classical education. Classical, ideal form transcended nature, conveying the essential in its expression of universal truths and giving shape to nostalgic yearnings. The Roman landscape acted for the Grand Tourist as a catalyst for the imagination, “the repository of associated ideas.”⁷²

Travel to the continent had become more popular with the return of Charles II to the English throne in 1660. Charles had gained an enthusiasm for art and collecting during his nine-year exile in France that spread to his countrymen on his return to England. Yet, a Grand Tour was not an insignificant undertaking. It could require up to three years to complete, and so by default was a venture for the very rich and their retinues, including the occasional artist. By mid-eighteenth century, though, the British Grand Tourists numbered in the tens of thousands,⁷³ each determined to actually see the landscape they had before only imagined and to describe what they saw.

The first Grand Tourists were aristocratic young men, usually accompanied by a...tutor, who ventured to the continent as part of their education....But over the century the tourist population diversified....Prosperous burghers and minor gentry, members of the professions—including most notably painters and architects—joined refined patricians at the European inn...catering to the tourist trade.⁷⁴

The Italian tradition in landscape painting and dual impact of Italian scenery and art on Grand Tour Englishmen coalesced the stylistic preferences from which the English landscape painting tradition would evolve: “the influence of the tour...was probably a good deal less immediate than it is often presented as having been, ... nevertheless...the

⁷² Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 229.

⁷³ Paul Franklin Kirby, *The Grand Tour in Italy (1700-1800)* (New York: S.F. Vanni (RAGUSA), 1952), 8.

⁷⁴ Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, 206-7.

predominant influence on English taste in landscape was Italian.”⁷⁵ Motivated by a potent combination of reverence for the Classical world that had formed the basis of their education and *hiraeth* yearnings for the past, the English travelled south with an almost religious fervor and a “faculty, possessed by many of them, of seeing not only what is to be seen, but also what is not to be seen.”⁷⁶ As an English painter in Rome wrote in the mid 1800s:

Some I have known stand upon the same spot of ground for a good while, as it were in deep contemplation, where there was no appearance of anything very remarkable or uncommon. Tho’ such a one might be thought *non-compos*, he might probably, from his knowledge in history, be then calling to mind some brave action, performed upon that very spot; and enjoying a pleasure not to be felt by anyone confined with in the walls of a study or a chamber.”⁷⁷

It was just this peculiarly English blend of reverence, reference and association that fostered the transformation of the landscape over the eighteenth century from merely an object depicted in a painting to the subject of a painting gained from lived experience.

Historical events and cultural proclivities facilitated the great English migration south. Between the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which ended The War of the Spanish Succession, and the French Revolution in 1789, there was a period of relative peace, economic prosperity and political calm that would encourage the intrepid English gentleman to cross the channel to anchor his associative memories of a Classical education in tangible reality. The increasing popularity of the Grand Tour signaled a significant change in the attitude and confidence from the 1600s, when the English had suffered from a general sense of inferiority:

⁷⁵ Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape*, 4.

⁷⁶ Kirby, *The Grand Tour in Italy*, 93.

⁷⁷ Kirby, *The Grand Tour in Italy*, 93.

Tourists from the social elite of a burgeoning economy and an apparently successful political system, from a great and powerful world empire, were less inclined to feel a sense of inferiority than in the seventeenth century; at that time, to its own people, Britain had seemed superior in little besides its own Protestantism.⁷⁸

British self-confidence rose in the 1700s with the stabilization of its government and the expansion of its empire: the British Protestant constitutional monarchy had arisen from the ashes of the Glorious Revolution of 1688; England and Scotland had been united at the start of the century to form the Kingdom of Great Britain; and the British military had proven its prowess with victories at Culloden in 1745 and during the Seven Years' War in 1758-62.

The Seven Years' War "marks a key turning point in British political, economic and cultural history."⁷⁹ Early losses in that War had created a national angst about Britain's military strength and national standing which was ultimately relieved with a British victory and a greatly expanded British empire. While such expansion created great wealth for some, it also generated administrative and political issues that raised "major questions both about the ethics of imperial rule and about national identity more broadly."⁸⁰ British art production from the 1760s to the early 1790s reflected these issues of empire, fostering an increased interest in history painting in the Grand Manner to celebrate the victories in the War in great detail.

The British nostalgia for Classical Italy was aroused by both this background of nascent Imperialism and by an aesthetic sensibility tied to an education in Classical

⁷⁸ Jeremy Black, "Italy and the Grand Tour: The British Experience in the Eighteenth Century," *Annali d'Italianistica* 14 (1996): 533.

⁷⁹ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 148.

⁸⁰ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 148.

literature. A London gutted by fire was in the process of being rebuilt on Palladian lines, and the recent discovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum fired the classicist imagination. The eighteenth century in England has alternatively been labeled “The Augustan Age”, the “Neoclassical Age”, and the “Age of Reason” to reference its veneration for ancient Rome: “the models of English art and literature were classical; the language of Johnson and Gibbon was Italianate; in architecture the Gothic was despised and the Greco-Roman adored.”⁸¹ Britain, a former settlement of the Roman Empire, had always felt a spiritual connection with ancient Rome, which influenced both the education and imaginations of young gentlemen. The British, considering themselves the most civilized nation of the time, “sought to appropriate Classical Italy,”⁸² the exemplar of antecedent civilization. Rome had achieved the greatness to which England aspired, and experiencing it first-hand was considered essential to the completion of an English gentleman’s education. Italy became a “theme-park of the past”,⁸³ attracting an educated upper-class for whom Rome in particular evoked strong emotional and mental associations:

And what is it that constitutes that emotion of sublime delight, which every man of common sensibility feels upon the first prospect of Rome? ...It is ancient Rome which fills his imagination. It is the country of Caesar, and Cicero, and Virgil, which is before him. ...All that the labours of his youth, or studies of his mature age have acquired, with regard to the history of this great people, open at once before his imagination, and present him with a field of high and solemn imagery, which can never be exhausted. Take from him these associations, conceal from him that it is Rome that he sees, and how different would be his emotion!⁸⁴

⁸¹ Anthony Burgess, “The Grand Tour,” in *The Age of the Grand Tour* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc. 1967), 13.

⁸² Black, “Italy and the Grand Tour,” 536.

⁸³ Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 7.

⁸⁴ Archibald Alison, *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh, 1811), 41-42, quoted by Bull, “British Art and the Landscape of Italy,” 1.

Primed to connect their observations of the Italian landscape with their nostalgic anticipation of it, the British sought the locations of their imaginations and adopted memories, both historical and literary, in the Classical ruins of ancient Rome.

Travel to Italy in the eighteenth century nonetheless meant the fulfillment of two basic requirements: a source of funds and a trip through France. Although few English landscape painters actually made the journey to Italy before the middle of the eighteenth century, such a trip eventually became *de rigueur* for English artists with either a sponsor or independent means until the French Revolution in 1789.⁸⁵ The English Grand Tourist of means was a source of patronage for English landscape artists in a variety of ways. He would either hire an artist to accompany him to Italy to capture memorials of the locations of his travels in sketches and paintings, or he would commission or purchase paintings from resident artists during his stay in Rome. The Grand Tourist would then return to England with souvenirs of his pilgrimage to the *loci* of Classical history and mythology, paintings that would then themselves serve to inspire and influence native painters in England.

The Grand Tours were instrumental in stimulating English connoisseurship, which in turn prompted English collecting. The English tourist who came to Italy was not well educated about art but decisive about what he liked, which at the time were portraits and landscapes, either Classical in tone or topographical. The English traveler consciously connected the landscape through which he passed with the historical sites described by the writers and poets of ancient Rome, responding to nature with a “poetic

⁸⁵ Gowing, *Thomas Jones*, 17.

sensibility”⁸⁶ arising from emotional associations with the observed scenery. He attached the values of the Classical ideal to the actual landscape on which trod the likes of Virgil and Ovid, and found pictorial expression of those ideals in the seventeenth century paintings of Claude, Poussin, Dughet and Rosa. In his search for Arcadia, “the tranquil landscape created by artists in the seventeenth century Rome provided the most powerful image.”⁸⁷ Hundreds of their paintings were sent home by enthusiastic English collectors, and by mid-century even more became available to the discerning public through the medium of engraving.⁸⁸

The demand of the Grand Tourists for pictorial souvenirs of their cultural education stimulated competition among landscape painters seeking purchasers of their paintings. English painters responded to the English desire for Grand Tour souvenirs by both emulating the idealistic landscapes of the seventeenth century and providing topographical view paintings identifying specific sites. Popular topographical views built on the tradition established by such Italian artists as Canaletto and were copied by printmakers: the Tiber River with the Castel Sant’Angelo and St. Peter’s Basilica was the most common and familiar image of Rome in the eighteenth century. This emerging commercial trade in Grand Tour landscapes introduced a small amount of financial independence to the artist, a result of “the general process of commodification which was changing the relationship of artists to their public generally at the time....demand was such that pictures of particular places – Lyon, Avignon, Florence and Naples...could be

⁸⁶ Liversidge, “Grand Tour Landscapes,” 83.

⁸⁷ Vaughan, *British Painting*, 205.

⁸⁸ Andrew Wilton, “Dreaming of Italy,” in *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1996), 40.

painted without prior orders and without the risk of their failing to sell.”⁸⁹ Those artists who did not make the journey to the Continent copied those who did, adopting views of Italy as seen through the eyes of the English painters such as Alexander Cozens and Wilson, in addition to those of Claude, Gaspard and Rosa.⁹⁰ Those artists who made the trip, most of whom served as draftsmen for touring patrons, benefited from direct exposure to both Rome and its cadre of international artists in residence, particularly the French.

The most frequented route to Italy from England was across the English Channel to France. From France, tourists would cross the Alps to Turin, Italy or sail from Marseilles to Genoa. Both had their dangers. Napoleon had not yet established the Simplon Pass through the Alps, and the boat ride to Italy could be rough and hazardous. In addition, Italy was not a single nation, but rather a collection of independent city-states, each with its own border-crossing demands. As a national enemy with an absolute monarchy and the Catholic Church as its state religion, France, though, was viewed as the dangerous “Other” to eighteenth century Protestant England:

anti-Gallicism was a salient feature of nationalist discourse throughout the eighteenth century, taking on a new power and pervasiveness after the Revolution, when France came to embody not simply a foreign power, but an enemy espousing (ir)religious and political ideologies antithetical to the principles of a Protestant monarchy.⁹¹

Tourists in the eighteenth century essentially traveled from major city to major city, so travel to France meant travel to Paris. Where Paris was sophisticated, civilized

⁸⁹ Liversidge, “Grand Tour Landscapes,” 88.

⁹⁰ Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape*, 13.

⁹¹ Kay Dian Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter: Genius as Alibi in the Early Nineteenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 34.

and delightful, the French countryside was found lacking in attractions: “A disaffected bourgeoisie and a starving peasantry were no agreeable part of a young tourist’s education...there is something profoundly disturbing about this massive contrast – the concentration of wealth and refinement in the capital, the wretchedness of rural France.”⁹² Once in Paris, British travelers, patrons and artists alike, would attend the exhibitions at the Paris Salon, thereby gaining exposure to both contemporary French landscape artists as well as the great seventeenth-century classical landscape artists. These encounters, as well as those with works imported into England, suggest that the evolving English understanding of what comprised “the ‘typical’ Grand Tour landscape was “mediated through their knowledge of contemporary French painting.”⁹³ Vernet, the French landscape artist who painted in Rome in the Claudian ideal tradition, exhibited no less than twenty-five paintings at the Paris Salon Exhibition in 1765.

Rome was always the ultimate destination in the eighteenth century, for French artists, English Grand Tourists and English artists alike. Ancient Greece was unavailable to the British search for the classical, comprising as it did a part of the unfriendly Ottoman Empire, making Rome the most accessible site of antiquity.⁹⁴ Rome’s attraction for the British was double-edged: it both offered a desirable objective, the “mantle of civilization,”⁹⁵ and served as a reminder of the transient nature of empires. The Roman Empire, an empire as far-flung and diverse as the modern-day British empire, both

⁹² Burgess, “The Grand Tour,” 15.

⁹³ Liversidge, “Grand Tour Landscapes,” 88.

⁹⁴ John Ingamells, “Discovering Italy: British Travellers in the Eighteenth Century” in *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1996), 23.

⁹⁵ Black, “Italy and the Grand Tour: The British Experience,” 537,

invited comparisons and served as a warning: “The remembrance of the Classical past was linked to the process by which impressions of Britain were reconstituted in, and by, Italy. ...For those who wished to make comparisons with modern Britain as a warning about possible decline, Rome was of great potency.”⁹⁶ Rome and its environs also offered the newer wonders of the Vatican in addition to the glorious sites of the Roman Empire. Since the seventeenth century, supported in part by the patronage of Pope Urban VIII’s determination to sustain Rome’s reputation as the art center of the world, Rome had become the meeting place for the artists of Europe.⁹⁷ The new buildings in Rome and the art in them, the products of Pope Urban VIII’s patronage, beckoned with the glories of the Baroque.

It was Rome’s sites of antiquity, however, that called to the British sense of nostalgia and yearning for an earlier time of heroism, nobility and wisdom. The British imagination resulted in a “reconceptualization of Italy”⁹⁸ that focused more on its glorious distant past and less on its fractured present or recent history; Italy became more of an idea to be venerated than an extant reality to be explored. As the historian Edward Gibbon expressed upon arriving in Rome:

at the distance of twenty-five years, I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the Eternal City. After a sleepless night, I trod, with a lofty step, the ruins of the Forum; each memorable spot where Romulus stood, or Tully spoke, or Caesar fell, was at once present to my eye; and several days of

⁹⁶ Black, “Italy and the Grand Tour: The British Experience,” 537.

⁹⁷ Philip Conisbee, “The Early History of Open-Air Painting,” in *In the Light of Italy: Corot and Early Open-Air Painting* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art and New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 19.

⁹⁸ Black, “Italy and the Grand Tour: The British Experience,” 541,

intoxication were lost or enjoyed before I could descent to a cool and minute investigation.⁹⁹

Not just the city of Rome, but also its environs fed the English appetite for the Classical, from the Tivoli ruins of the Villa of Maecenas, with its grand waterfall, to the legendary Appian Way, to the crater-lakes of Albano and Nemi. The English painter Thomas Jones captured best the Englishman's rapturous response to this countryside surrounding Rome: "I cannot help observing with what new and uncommon Sensations I was filled on first traversing this beautiful and picturesque Country – Every scene seemed anticipated in some dream – it appeared Magick Land."¹⁰⁰

The outbreak of the French Revolutionary War in 1792 pitting France against England made Italy merely a dream in reality, and the Grand Tour was forever altered:

Tourists had been affected by war or the threat of conflict for years, but this war was dramatically different. The bloodier acts of the Revolution aroused a sense of horror that meant that most tourists not only did not wish to visit France, or cross it en route to Italy, but did not consider it safe to do so...As French armies spread across the Continent, defeating Britain's allies and remodeling states, Italy became far distant...the body of experience that was common to most eighteenth-century British tourists was shattered.¹⁰¹

The subsequent Napoleonic Wars and ensuing Blockade of trade by continental ports required Britain to find the means to support itself; British agriculture was the key to survival and British land took on a new status. It was during this era of inward focus that British landscape painting "witnessed a decade of unprecedented detail and naturalistic representations" of the British scenery, exemplified by the work of Constable and Turner.

⁹⁹ John Wilton-Ely, "Rome," in *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1996), 137.

¹⁰⁰ Conisbee, "The Early History of Open-Air Painting," 18.

¹⁰¹ Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour*, 223.

The British countryside replaced the classical past in the search for the Arcadian dream. This “local Arcadia” also carried associative values connected as much with patriotism and “a sense of community as on visual appeal.”¹⁰²

¹⁰² Vaughan, *British Painting*, 209.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH AESTHETICS

The search for and intellectual privileging of idealized Italian landscapes grew out of the English reverence for the Classical at a time in which there was also an unprecedented discourse “on taste and the curiosity about its origin, development, and significance.”¹⁰³ Numerous treatises on ‘Taste’ and ‘Beauty’ categorized and analyzed the constituents comprising them and the sources from which they sprang, promulgating at the same time definitions of good taste and rules of art. In early eighteenth-century England, the concept of taste was based on the rule of reason, and was considered teachable. Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713), claimed in 1711 that the mind discerns beauty by means of a “mental” or “internal” sense, so that objects of taste are objects of the intellect and not material objects. Joseph Addison (1672-1719), however, took the reverse position, claiming that “objects of taste are objects of visual representation,”¹⁰⁴ and so are objects of material substance, rather than of the intellect.¹⁰⁵

Edmund Burke (1730-97) adopted Addison’s materialistic theory, and classified objects of taste according to their inherent and discernable physical properties. Burke offered a rational means of differentiating categories of such objects of taste, from the beautiful to the sublime, based on human responses to qualities of beauty in his famous

¹⁰³ Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 70.

¹⁰⁴ James Shelley, “18th Century British Aesthetics,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall, 2018, ed. Edward N. Zalta: 2.1, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/aesthetics-18th-british/>.

¹⁰⁵ Kitson, “Constable’s naturalism,” 9.

treatise *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). Burke's focus was on the visual characteristics and properties of objects themselves, as smooth and varied or vast and obscure, in determining 'Beauty' and 'Sublimity', respectively, rather than on the subjective experience of the viewer in observing them. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the famous English portraitist and President of the Royal Academy of Art in London, was greatly influenced by Burke's ideas; he also believed in rules of taste and the importance of authority in art. Reynolds delivered a series of lectures at the Royal Academy from 1769 to 1790 that stressed the importance of elevated subject matters in paintings and encouraged the study of the Old Masters: "Instead of endeavouring to amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his imitations, the genuine painter must endeavor to improve them by the grandeur of his ideas."¹⁰⁶ He used "ideal nature and the Old Masters...as a means of regulating the encounter between the individual and external nature."¹⁰⁷ He also subscribed to an associationist viewpoint, declaring that "invention, strictly speaking, is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory,"¹⁰⁸ Both Burke and Reynolds were didactic in their approaches to the definition of Taste and Beauty, striving to inform and teach.

Alexander Gerard attempted to reconcile the competing "internal sense" and materialistic theories. Gerard claimed that "the perceptions of taste, which are pleasures, are not natural to their objects"¹⁰⁹ in the way that Burke supposed, but rather, that

¹⁰⁶ Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 465.

¹⁰⁷ Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 24.

¹⁰⁸ Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 465.

¹⁰⁹ Shelley, "18th Century British Aesthetics," 3.1.

objects of taste must...acquire their pleasurability, and association is the mechanism by which they do so. ...It seems that the mind forges very strong associations between its own processes and their objects, such that any pleasure natural to a mental process will transfer to its object.¹¹⁰

Archibald Alison (1757-1839) followed Gerard in finding that the acquisition of pleasure depends on association in a “seizing of the imagination”.¹¹¹ Alison launched, in his *Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790), “a full-scale investigation”¹¹²

(Bermingham, 70) of the subject of “Taste,” concluding that it manifested itself in emotional connections of the imagination. According to Alison, material objects must be capable of evoking emotion “in order to produce the complex pleasures of taste,”¹¹³ and “they do so...by coming to signify, through association, qualities of mind that are naturally productive of emotion.”¹¹⁴

In 1768, Reverend William Gilpin, himself a watercolorist, entered the aesthetical fray with the introduction of the notion of the “picturesque” in his *Essay on Prints*. The picturesque, which Gilpin would later place between Burke’s ‘Beautiful’ and ‘Sublime’, was defined as “that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture.” Art, in particular the ideal paintings of Claude, now defined beauty in nature, and beauty in nature became the standard by which to appraise art. Two major elements comprised a “picturesque’ scene in nature or in art: it had to feature ‘rough,’ ‘varied’ or ‘broken’ textures and it had to be composed as a unified whole “informed by the conventions of classical design.”¹¹⁵ Gilpin

¹¹⁰ Shelley, “18th Century British Aesthetics,” 3.1.

¹¹¹ Shelley, “18th Century British Aesthetics,” 3.2.

¹¹² Alison, *Essay*, 172, quoted by Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 70.

¹¹³ Shelley, “18th Century British Aesthetics,” 3.2.

¹¹⁴ Shelley, “18th Century British Aesthetics,” 3.2.

¹¹⁵ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 227.

reoriented the concepts of nature and naturalness away from their exemplification in the academic landscape...toward the countryside itself. In the process Gilpin reoriented the formal objective of landscape painting away from creating ideal beauty to depicting the “real landscape.” This orientation stressed less the methods of selecting and abstracting in art than the processes of observing and recording.¹¹⁶

Unlike the Classical idealists before him, who represented scenes of ancient Italy, Gilpin focused on the landscape of Great Britain in his search for the “picturesque” and wrote a number of journals about his travels around the countryside in which he applied his theories to local views. Gilpin’s journals helped to fuel a surge in domestic tourism that started in the 1780s in reaction to political unrest and war on continental Europe, and the vocabulary of the *picturesque* created a language by which both the land and representations of it could be discussed and understood. Its conventions also familiarized and homogenized landscape in their reductions of nature to a formulaic synthesis.

Despite the popular adoption of Gilpin’s concept of the *picturesque*, by the end of the eighteenth century associationism and “a growing interest in the role of memory and emotions in perception”¹¹⁷ functioned to separate it from its purpose as a method of categorization and appreciation and imbue it with an exclusivity of vision, contingent upon the status of the spectator. Feelings or meanings derived from paintings were, according to the principles of associationism espoused first by Alison and adopted by Richard Payne Knight, “the result of trains of associated ideas which the images stimulated in the minds of spectators.”¹¹⁸ Knight maintained that “the minds of the spectators; whose pre-existing trains of ideas are revived, refreshed and reassociated by

¹¹⁶ Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 65.

¹¹⁷ Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 71.

¹¹⁸ Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 54.

new, but correspondent impressions on the organs of sense”¹¹⁹ construct what is considered beautiful or picturesque. Knight was more interested in the subjective act of looking at objects and less in the properties of the objects themselves. Believing that the only visual property an object had was its color, Knight determined that “the origin of the Picturesque...was objective insofar as it had to do with the pleasure we derive from colour and light, and subjective insofar as it depended on an association made between actual objects and those represented in pictures.”¹²⁰ Knight also adopted Alison’s theories in tying “the picturesque as closely to the new theories of perception and romantic sensibility as Gilpin...had tied it to a nonacademic naturalism.”¹²¹

Knight linked the ability to recognize the beautiful or picturesque to only those minds predisposed through education, imagination and sensibility, thereby tying the aesthetics of taste to the possession of property and wealth, particularly land. Although elitist and materialistic in perspective, Knight’s “association of ideas” aided the advancement of landscape painting by reinforcing the role of the artist, the subject, in the creative process:

The association of ideas referred all that was seen to the values of the viewer.... Romantic naturalism issued forth from an introspective subjectivity that found in nature a direct expression of the human spirit. To this extent, Knight’s theory of associationism gave back to landscape painting something of the purpose denied it by Gilpin’s...naturalism and sensationism. For Knight, the purpose of landscape was to arouse the emotions, to stir the imagination, and to delight the eye with its naturalness.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Richard Payne Knight, *An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (London, 1805), 196, quoted by Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 54.

¹²⁰ Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape*, 57.

¹²¹ Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 71.

¹²² Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 72.

To Knight, painting was concerned with visual sensation, not intellectual concepts, a stance that was inimical to academic history painting. This shift away from the guidelines of picturesque naturalism to a more subjective expression of a visual experience in the representation of landscape freed the English landscape artist to pursue his individual path of creativity.

Landscape's ability to stir the emotions and inspire profound thoughts was recognized and cultivated in many ways in the second half of the eighteenth century. [Amateur landscape painting and picturesque tourism] reflect the philosophic principle of associationism which grew out of the theories of perception advanced in the seventeenth century by René Descartes and John Locke. By insisting upon the necessity of perceptual experience as the basis of all higher thought processes, these philosophers pave the way for the final independence of the landscape in art.¹²³

Where the landscape artist had earlier in the century been driven to associate memories and imaginative notions with reality of place, by the end of the century, his imagination and emotions would be reflected in his actual perceptions of nature.

¹²³ Ditner, "Claude and the Ideal Landscape," 156.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FRENCH AESTHETICS

French aesthetics of the eighteenth century, in contrast to the English, was based on the application of “Reason” to judge taste and individuality. In late seventeenth-century pictorial arts, this took the form of the “Coloring quarrel” that erupted in the French Academy in 1671, in which it was debated whether drawing or color was the more important in painting. The *Poussinistes*, so named after Poussin, believed that drawing was the most important element; Poussin had stated that “we must not judge by our senses alone but by reason” (Stanford, French, 1) and drawing was a higher order function of the mind. The *Rubenists*, named after Peter Paul Rubens, maintained that color was primary. Color was the best approach by which “both to deceive the eyes and imitate nature...the difference that distinguishes painting from all the other arts and which gives painting its own specific end.”¹²⁴ The conflict was essentially between the concept of painting as an abstract idea requiring intellectual and reasoned engagement or as the object of perception eliciting imaginative and emotional response. The acceptance of Watteau into the French Academy in 1717 effectively settled the dispute on the side of the *Rubenists* with official recognition of the French Rococo. The turn to the Rococo was paralleled by a similar turn to the subjective in the writing of Abbé Jean-Baptiste du Bos (1670-1742). Du Bos was of the “sensualist” trend in France, believing sensations and perceptions to be more important than abstract ideas, and argued that “aesthetic pleasure

¹²⁴ Jacques Morizot, “18th Century French Aesthetics,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer 2013, Ed. Edward N. Zalta: 1, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/aesthetics-18th-french/>.

is a pure emotion.”¹²⁵ He remained a steadfast adherent to the academic hierarchy within painting, however, disapproving of landscape paintings without figures. Notwithstanding the impact of de Bos on French aesthetic thinking, rationalist thought remained very influential. Under Cartesian rationalism, perception was considered unreliable and reason the sole dependable source of certainty. This philosophy also asserted itself in the privileging of systems of classification along scientifically rational lines, which structured art and painting by rank and order, making the question of the beautiful an objective one, “apart from the subjective function of taste.”¹²⁶ This view of nature was a mathematical construct governed by reason, hardly inspirational or encouraging to the aspiring landscape painter.

The establishment of the official Salon in 1737 to hold regular public art exhibitions helped to guide French judgment and taste within this environment of dueling theories. The rise of the Salon exhibition spawned the Salon review, providing critical reviews of the exhibitions; Denis Diderot (1713-84) contributed to the aesthetic dialogue with his art criticism. Art criticism and aesthetics increased in cultural importance on par with empirical science; Cartesian rationality bowed to the sensualist trend with the added influence of British aesthetic theories in the 1770s, brought about in particular by the translation into French of Burke’s treatise on the ‘Beautiful’ and the ‘Sublime’.

In the last third of the eighteenth century, while British taste was shifting away from the idealist landscape in favor of naturalism, France witnessed a revival of the classicism of Claude and Poussin in reaction to the fanciful and artificial Rococo. This

¹²⁵ Morizot, “18th Century French Aesthetics,” 2.

¹²⁶ Morizot, “18th Century French Aesthetics,” 3.

Neo-Classicism accompanied a renewed interest in antiquity prompted by the discoveries at Pompeii and Herculaneum, but was also precipitated by the desire to shun the excesses of the decadent royal regime overthrown by the French Revolution in favor of a return to simplicity and nobility. For French landscape painting, the eighteenth century

failed to create an aesthetic which would take into account the new notion of nature as a self-sufficient creative force. ...The cult of the antique merely revived another version of *la belle nature*, though it is undeniable that the cult of the antique was also strongly imbued with the new cult of nature...The cult of nature prepared by the eighteenth century was to find fruition and fulfillment among the Romantics. And above all it would be in Northern Europe where this would manifest itself with the utmost clarity....the...attitude of respect, awe, and love of nature can be found...in Constable.¹²⁷

The French had returned to a cerebral construct in a complete divergence from the more subjective response to nature that was then uniquely British. As art historian Kenneth Clark states: "The idea that an appreciation of nature can be combined with a desire for intellectual order has never been acceptable in England."¹²⁸

¹²⁷ R.G. Saisselin, "Art Is an Imitation of Nature," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Art Museum* 52 (1965): 40.

¹²⁸ Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (New York, Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1976), 138.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY

“Academies seem fated: no work academic has ever been a work of genius, whatever the genre. When an artist lives in fear of failing to master his colleagues’ style, his productions will be stiff and constrained; show me a free spirit, full of the nature that he imitates, and he will succeed.”

Voltaire, *Le siècle de Louis XIV*,
1751

“It is not without a feeling of mortification, that I thus proclaim the superiority of the English landscape painters over ours. ...”

Amadée Pichot, *Historical and Literary Tour of a Foreigner in England and Scotland*, 1825

“The old [French]landscape school is battered and ruined beyond recovery...Landscape now aspires to a high, vague, but real and natural poetry...”

Art Critic Gustave Place, *Salon 1831*

In his discourse analysis, Michel Foucault focuses upon the subjection of individuals to systems of power. Within the realm of landscape painting in the eighteenth century, “such ‘systems’ were highly diverse, encompassing modes of patronage, institutions involved in teaching and displaying art, and various attempts to codify methods of viewing and representing the natural landscape.”¹²⁹ The French propensity for intellectual theory, combined with the inhibiting effects of an authoritarian and exclusive academic system and limited sources of patronage, paralyzed the genre of landscape in France for more than a century. The French preference for the rational and cerebral manifested itself in the visual arts through an entrenched Academic

¹²⁹ Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 4.

system of painting that was foreign to the British system of teaching and patronage. Under the French academic hierarchy of painting, landscape was a permissible genre only if it served as the background for classical subjects inspired by ancient history, religion and mythology, in the tradition established by Claude and Poussin, or took the form of the “aristocratic dream world”¹³⁰ of the Rococo. Both were instruments authorized and approved by the Royal Academy, and both were designed to promote and enhance the status of the ruling aristocracy and/or the Catholic Church.¹³¹ For the French at the time, “it was the process rather than the overall effect that counted, and there is little poetry in process.”¹³²

Adherence to process was ensured with the founding of the *Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* in 1648. Established under Louis XIV, it was the product of “a centralizing policy that would bring all artists under government control...to ensure that the talents it nurtured would be engaged in promoting the ideology of Louis XIV and his régime....Members of the Académie had a monopoly on royal commissions, and also had exclusive rights to show works at its official exhibitions at the Salon du Louvre.”¹³³ Managed by the *Surintendant* (or *Directeur*) *Général des Bâtiments du Roi*, the Academy essentially controlled French artistic life in the eighteenth century, selecting and educating art students, managing royal commissions, and dictating taste.

The Academy’s course of instruction was primarily focused on the drawing of the human figure, with history painting the ultimate goal. History painting was the highest

¹³⁰ Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 470.

¹³¹ Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 470.

¹³² Noon, *Crossing the Channel*, 197.

¹³³ Conisbee, *Painting in Eighteenth Century France*, 11.

genre of painting in the hierarchy of art forms “codified by the theoretician André Félibien at the end of the seventeenth century”:

The European humanistic tradition in art theory... stressed that the noblest and most important role of the artist was to represent the actions, ideas and ideals of man, [the] measure of all things. Hence history painting was intellectually and morally the most elevated genre of the art, followed in order of importance by portraiture, genre painting, landscape, and still life....Moreover, it was not simply the depiction of any human activity that was considered the most worthwhile deployment of artistic talent, but that of the actions of the heroes of humanity, at moments of moral or historical significance.¹³⁴

History painting, Leon Battista Alberti’s *historia*, was a concept dating to the Renaissance that embraced both the form as well as the content of a painting. An *historia* is the visual expression of a narrative that also conveys a higher meaning and was considered to be the highest achievement of painting. To be considered *historia*, a painting “had to function simultaneously on at least two levels: it had both to present a convincing depiction of the world and to convey the high meanings of the scene it presented.”¹³⁵

In France, the genre of landscape painting was considered inferior to that of history painting, and so was not viewed as an acceptable art form by the *Académie*. The Classical landscape, however, in which idealized and carefully composed landscape scenes were populated with historical or allegorical subjects, was deemed acceptable by the academies in the seventeenth century and as an art form was perfected by the Classical landscape painters in Rome. Balanced, harmonious, and carefully structured, the classical landscape was painted in the artist’s studio and was composed to reflect the

¹³⁴ Conisbee, *Painting in Eighteenth Century France*, 13-14.

¹³⁵ Jack M. Greenstein, “Alberti on Historia: A Renaissance View of the Structure of Significance in Narrative Painting,” *Viator* 21 (1990): 285.

epitome of nature in its highest and most perfect form and not to represent nature observed and recorded.

The official functions of the Académie reinforced the hierarchical preferencing of history painting and classical landscape, both through its training of young artists and its monopolization of the art market. Louis XIV established a satellite *Académie* in Rome in 1666 to facilitate the training of young artists in the art of antiquity and the Renaissance. The *Académie Royale* in Paris also sponsored an annual painting competition, the *Prix de Rome*, for the prize of a fully-paid three to five-year trip to Rome as a *pensionnaire* of the King. Upon returning from Rome, the prize winner was required to paint or sculpt a special work of art acceptable to the jurists of the Académie in order to be accepted as a member. Being a member then gave the artist access to the Salon, his sole opportunity to publicly exhibit (and possibly sell) his work to prospective buyers:

Leaving aside certain public commissions, works in churches, and private collections which were accessible, there were few opportunities for painters to exhibit their work in eighteenth-century Paris outside the official Salon....The *Surintendants de Bâtiments* were determined to maintain absolute control of artistic matters by means of the *Académie Royale*. The compartmentalized and hierarchical character of eighteenth-century [French] society in general was mirrored in attitudes to art.¹³⁶

Most paintings were executed on commission, and the *Académie* doled out the commissions. A smaller, less structured market of private collectors also existed for preparatory oil sketches, cabinet pictures, and smaller copies of major paintings. The number of private collections in Paris increased from about 150 in the early 1800s to about 500 by the Revolution¹³⁷ and the number of picture sales a year increased from

¹³⁶ Conisbee, *Painting in Eighteenth Century France*, 23.

¹³⁷ Conisbee, *Painting in Eighteenth Century France*, 27.

very few to about thirty over the same period of time; art was collected both as a form of investment and for its decorative qualities. Landscape painting, residing on the lowest rung of the academic hierarchy, was valued as a form of decoration for the homes of the aristocracy and was frequently set in the paneling above doors, windows and chimney pieces.

Certainly, the last quarter of the eighteenth century was a bleak time of instability and violence for France, not the best environment for the patronage and encouragement of the arts. The French Revolution, which ground on for a period of ten years from the storming of the Bastille in 1789, was a decade of brutal political turmoil that saw the establishment of the First Republic, the execution of Louis XVI and the commencement of a Reign of Terror. The traditional sources of patronage for painters, the French state (represented by its aristocratic members) and the Catholic Church, were respectively eliminated and disenfranchised during the years of the Terror. The Salon, which dictated style and determined the success or failure of an artist, was abolished without promise or indication of its resurrection. Post-revolution, French landscape painting reverted to the Classical tradition of the seventeenth century historical landscape painters Claude and Nicolas Poussin, taking an anachronistic turn to the idealized setting for classical subjects inspired by ancient history and mythology. This Neo-classical style would continue to predominate after Napoleon's overthrow of the French Directory and eventual establishment of a dictatorship.

The French generally prospered under Napoleon after his defeat of the Austrians in Italy and the Peace of Amiens in 1802 ended the military actions that had commenced under the French First Republic. Victory against the Austrians served to secure

Napoleon's position as First Consul of France following his *coup d'état* in 1799.

Napoleon wasted no time in initiating stabilizing social reforms that continue in effect today: adoption of a Code of Civil law, establishment of a system of higher education, creation a central bank and restoration of the status of the Roman Catholic Church.

Napoleon's reformist fervor, however, did not extend to the visual arts.

Napoleon's education, like that of the British Grand Tourists before him, was inculcated with Greco-Roman history. The French Revolution had seen first the creation of a French Republic and then a French Consulate after Napoleon's *coup d'état*, both based on ancient Roman models of government. Ultimately, he declared himself Emperor of France. The Neoclassical style best represented the image of grandeur preferred by the new Emperor and provided the means for his self-association with the glories of the ancient rulers of Rome and his self-aggrandizement. History paintings, preferably executed in the heroic and classical style of Poussin, continued to be the highest-ranking genre, with landscape continuing to be considered one of the lowest ranking. Landscape was useful merely as a background in paintings chronicling Napoleon's victories at battle or illustrating allegories touting his virtues and majesty. Although politically stable and economically prosperous, this was not an environment conducive to the sort of autonomous "dialectic between artist and nature"¹³⁸ to which the English landscape artists of the times had progressed.

It would not be until the first half of the nineteenth century that the chain of events in France would prove conducive to the rise of naturalistic landscape as an

¹³⁸ Robert L. Herbert, *Barbizon Revisited: A New Appraisal of the Art of Corot, Daubigny, Diaz, Dupré, Jacque, Millet, Rousseau, Troyon* (New York: Clark & Way, Inc.: 1962), 67.

accepted art form. The restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1815 had a significant impact on landscape painting: it led to the restoration of the Academy (which had also been closed during France's time of troubles), and the creation of a Prix de Rome in historical landscape painting at the instigation of Valenciennes in 1816, after Napoléon's exile to the Island of Elba. The Prix de Rome not only accorded the genre a new status in the hierarchy of academic painting but also recalled French Academic landscape painting of the seventeenth century, an era untainted by painful memories of the Revolution, the First Republic and the Napoléon Empire. Neoclassicism essentially dismissed the eighteenth century in its efforts to revive French landscape painting:

Striving for a vision of the Ideal, based in part on careful visual observation, the neoclassical painters were searching out the supreme beauty inherent in reality. If they despised the works of Boucher and his generation for their artificiality, conversely they admired the art of Claude Lorrain who was able to translate into oil on canvas a direct personal response to nature.¹³⁹

The creation of the Prix de Rome for historical landscape painting in 1817 may have breathed new life into landscape painting, but merely in reviving the idealistic landscape painting of an earlier time,¹⁴⁰ not in advancing the form towards a new naturalism. Neoclassicism, with its simplicity of form and emphasis on rationality, harkened back to the classical values of ancient Greece and Rome. Emphasizing line over color and abstraction over illusion, it would reignite Academic French painting and

¹³⁹ Yukitaka Kohari, "Painting the landscape of Rome and its environs," in *Plein-air painting in Europe 1780-1850* (Shizuoka City, Japan, Sydney, Melbourne: Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art/Art Gallery of New South Wales/National Gallery of Victoria, 2004), 29.

¹⁴⁰ Peter Galassi, "The Nineteenth Century: Valenciennes to Corot," in *Claude to Corot: The Development of Landscape Painting in France*, ed. Alan Wintermute (New York: Colnaghi USA, Ltd., 1990), 237.

introduce it into the modern era. Its effect on landscape painting, however, would be more negative than positive. The renewed interest and status accorded to landscape painting with the Prix de Rome would mean continued institutionalization of its form through the Academic rules of composition devised for the competition:

At the very moment that naturalism was in the ascendance, the notion that a student should paint a tree from memory or comprise [an imaginary] landscape scene of Greece or Italy... rather than transcribing actual experiences of nature, has impressed many observers then and now, with its absurdity; however, memory, tradition and craftsmanship, not empiricism, were the aims of the French pedagogic machine.¹⁴¹

By the 1820s, French Neoclassical landscape painting, disconnected as it was from the real world, had “reduced the classical landscape to a tepid nostalgia for antiquity, devoid of grandeur as well as drama” and become a “static emblem of cultural authority.”¹⁴²

The renewed interest in seventeenth century landscape painting extended, in the middle class and amateur painter ranks, to naturalistic Dutch and English landscape painting. There existed at the time a “cultural apartheid”¹⁴³ that proved to be fertile ground for landscape painters: “early nineteenth century painters and middle-class amateurs” excluded by the Académie “could indulge their tastes for more mimetic forms of landscape painting without risking the censure aimed at academic painters.”¹⁴⁴

This division between the worlds of the bourgeois amateur and the academic landscape painter...[is] important because the history of early nineteenth-century French landscape painting can be characterized in terms of the cultural standards of the former gradually encroaching upon those of the latter. Early nineteenth-century critics, both liberal and conservative, often saw the rise of landscape painting devoid of classical

¹⁴¹ Noon, *Crossing the Channel*, 197.

¹⁴² Galassi, “The Nineteenth Century,” 197.

¹⁴³ Adams, *The Barbizon School*, 40.

¹⁴⁴ Adams, *The Barbizon School*, 40.

or biblical allusion as a general sign of the rising social fortunes of the [less classically educated] middle class.¹⁴⁵

Ultimately, new forces of revolution in France in the mid-nineteenth century would provide the catalyst for the regeneration of the moribund eighteenth-century French landscape painting. It took the influence of a middle class in the 1830s, an influence in full force in Britain for almost a century, for the emergence of naturalistic landscape in France. The increasing influence of the high bourgeoisie of intellectual aristocrats, wealthy businessmen, professionals and financiers culminated in the July Revolution of 1830 and the replacement of the conservative Bourbon monarchy by a more liberal citizen-king, Louis-Philippe d'Orleans. This new, liberal administration opened the door for a more personal form of expression in painting and provided a new base of patronage: the bourgeoisie who had helped to form it. It is at this point, with the participation of the Barbizon painters in the Salon exhibition of 1831, "that a specific school of naturalistic landscape painting started to emerge in France."¹⁴⁶ For its triumph, however, it would have to wait until the democratic uprising of the working classes with the Revolution of 1848 and the short-lived Second Republic.

It has been noted that "the history of more mimetic, naturalistic landscape painting in France is marked not by its appearance on the cultural scene in the first half of the nineteenth century but rather by its changing status."¹⁴⁷ This "changing status" is the direct consequence of the political and socio-economic environment in France at the time, which witnessed a "shift between 'pre-modern' and 'modern' forms of cultural

¹⁴⁵ Adams, *The Barbizon School*, 40.

¹⁴⁶ Adams, *The Barbizon School*, 97.

¹⁴⁷ Adams, *The Barbizon School*, 10.

production and observed marked changes in the way the arts were conceived and the purposes to which they were put.”¹⁴⁸ This shift, identified by Michel Foucault and others, is based on “a distinction between art’s ‘legitimacy’ and its social function in the later eighteenth century in contrast to art’s ‘autonomy’ in the nineteenth century, linked to the contention that art served no purpose other than as a vehicle for creative insights of its author.”¹⁴⁹ Central to this “emergence of an autonomous art”¹⁵⁰ in the first third of nineteenth century France are the events of the times: the growth of a wealthy middle class, the collapse of the Napoléon Empire and restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, and the reopening of the disbanded *Académie*.

Art and politics in nineteenth-century France were linked to such an extent that the ascendancy or demise of a social class, the advent of a revolution or a restoration invariably generated new ideals, anxieties and aspirations which, in turn, affected the production and consumption of painting and sculpture.¹⁵¹

The reality of the restrictions on art and the methods of its patronage stifled landscape painting in France, effectively freezing it in place for most of the eighteenth century. France before the Revolution was “an ordered society”¹⁵² and the Royal Academy’s theoretically based, process-oriented approach to painting reflects the constraints of the society in which it was created and existed. The King of France held absolute power, including the ability to dictate through his agent, the Academy, the structures of taste and art. As has been shown, the few instances of creativity and

¹⁴⁸ Steven Adams, “‘The fault of being purely French’: The Practice and Theory of Landscape Painting in Post-Revolutionary France,” *Art History* 36 (2013): 741.

¹⁴⁹ Adams, “The fault of being purely French,” 741.

¹⁵⁰ Adams, “The fault of being purely French,” 742.

¹⁵¹ Adams, *The Barbizon School*, 93.

¹⁵² Burgess, “The Grand Tour,” 14.

originality in French landscape painting during the eighteenth century were far and few between, leaving art historians a vacuum to be finessed or left unacknowledged all together. Even Philip Conisbee, in tackling the daunting job of writing about eighteenth-century French landscape, inadvertently highlights the century of its stagnation by attempting to turn a negative into a positive. In pointing out how Valenciennes's treatise exhorting naturalism over the ideal supports the position of Roger de Piles in 1708, he enthuses "This comparison between real and ideal nature would be repeated, almost exactly, by Valenciennes in 1800."¹⁵³ It seems that little progress had been made in the artistic debate or practice over the course of one hundred years.

The Academy also acted to remove the artist from effective engagement with the marketplace for his work by controlling both government commissions and artist access to exhibition space. Academic theory of art was made untenable "by the failure to engage with the links between cultural production and a capitalized economy"¹⁵⁴.

For within the academic paradigm, the subject position of the [academic] artist and that of the artist as economic participant in the market were mutually exclusive.¹⁵⁵

Before French landscape artists would be in a position to accept the torch passed by their English counterparts, the monopolistic stronghold of the Academy would have to give way to both freedom of expression and the free market forces of the middle classes. Landscape painting, with its broader popular appeal and history of independence from official support, would flourish with the demise of Academic authority.

¹⁵³ Conisbee, "Watteau to Valenciennes," 99.

¹⁵⁴ Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 32.

¹⁵⁵ Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 32.

BRITISH INDEPENDENT-MINDEDNESS AND FREE MARKET COMPETITION

Eighteenth-century London [was] “a brash, modern, commercial city, eager to cover its naked consumerism in the respectable garb of cultural refinement.”

John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (1997)

The eighteenth century English sense of place and poetic response to nature, enabled by a native environment of comparable artistic freedom and a burgeoning and prospering market for art, fueled the development of naturalistic and subjective landscape painting in Britain. England was spared from the artistic stagnation that befell French landscape painting by its rejection of autocratic control of the arts and its enterprising attitude toward art. The beginnings of the eighteenth century, however, did not appear completely auspicious for what was to become known as the “Golden Age of British Painting”; as Horace Walpole characterized arts in the beginning of the eighteenth century: “We are now arrived at the period in which the arts were sunk to the lowest ebb in Britain.”¹⁵⁶ George I, the German cousin and closest Protestant relative to deceased Queen Anne, assumed the thrown in 1714 at the age of 54. He initially did not speak English and preferred Germany over England. This may have been a blessing in disguise for the future of English painting. Under George,

not only was the royal influence in politics diminished, but the court ceased to be the centre of cultural life and the supporter – as in monarchical Europe – of arts that reflected either the stern authority or the hedonistic indifference of ruler and courtiers....The baroque style, which had been the propagandist weapon of despotism abroad, had no such function in England. Nor was the rococo idiom the mirror of a luxurious court life as it was in contemporary France.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Gaunt, *The Great Century of British Painting*, 9.

¹⁵⁷ Gaunt, *The Great Century of British Painting*, 10.

Paintings, whether portraits or landscapes, were commissioned by individuals: gentlemen, merchants and members of the professions.¹⁵⁸

While the French institutionalized art under the auspices of the King with the creation of the Royal Academy in 1648, the British took the opposite tack. Instead of establishing an authoritative Academy, British artists organized the first public gallery in 1677 for the display of modern English and European painters in the meeting hall of the London guild of painters: the Painter-Stainer's Company Hall in London.¹⁵⁹ The ideal landscapes of Claude and Dughet, which appealed to "a wide spectrum of buyers ranging as far down the social hierarchy as affluent urbanites, and as far up as the King,"¹⁶⁰ were displayed side by side with the more naturalistic and topographical prospect paintings favored by the landed aristocracy and gentry. A British Royal Academy would not be founded until almost a hundred years later, long after the commercialization of British painting. Britain's first art school was also established more than sixty years after its French counterpart. In 1711, a collection of London art clubs created the Great Queen Street Academy in London as a cooperative project, not as an agency of the court.

Unlike France's state-sponsored Académie Royale, the Great Queen Street Academy was an unofficial institution, supported by the annual subscription of one guinea levied from each of its sixty members (mainly professional artists, but including some amateurs as well).¹⁶¹

The Great Queen Street Academy relocated to St. Martin's Lane in 1720 and reorganized under the direction of Louis Chéron, a former student of the Académie Royale in Paris

¹⁵⁸ Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 202.

¹⁵⁹ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 26.

¹⁶⁰ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 27.

¹⁶¹ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 80.

and the Académie de France in Rome. Chéron attempted to introduce to the London Academy the French academic hierarchy and methods of training, stressing direct copying from Old Master paintings, rather than from copies or prints of those paintings, and the execution of finished life drawings. Not all of his efforts found acceptance with the more commercially minded British, however:

By the 1720s...the hierarchy of genres and styles which lay at the heart of European academic theory had yet to gain anything like unquestioned authority in Britain, where the same doctrines were already encountering resistance among print publishers – businessmen whose understandable priority was to make their goods accessible and appealing across the widest possible range of potential buyers....By the 1720s, all...were striving to succeed in an urban cultural milieu where commerce – not the court and not even the Country interest – was now calling the tune, or rather a multiplicity of tunes, some high, some low and others somewhere in the middle.¹⁶²

Despite such promising activity in painting, though, Britain still could not boast of even one full-time landscape artist by the 1740s: what landscape artists existed had to supplement their income with portrait or theatre-backdrop commissions. The number of painters dedicated exclusively to landscape increased by one in the 1750s, with the return of Richard Wilson from Rome.

The connection of the arts with commerce continued in 1754 with the founding of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (“SEAMC”) by a patriotic coalition of businessmen and members of the aristocracy “to promote the nation’s cultural and economic well-being.”¹⁶³ Five years after its founding, SEAMC instituted an annual history-painting competition for artists working in Britain; in 1760, it added a competition for the best ‘Original Landscape.’ The year 1768 would become the

¹⁶² Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 81-82.

¹⁶³ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 150.

most “important date in the entire history of British Art”¹⁶⁴ with the simultaneous occurrence of two notable events: the formation of the Royal Academy of Art, with its exhibition hall, and the commencement of regular public art exhibitions by the newly formed Society of Artists of Great Britain (SAGB), a splinter group from SEAMC.

The Royal Academy was created out of a rift between those who supported native contemporary artists and those who desired the improvement of the status of the arts through the study and promotion of classical art. It also supplied much needed public exhibition space. SAGB was also concerned the lack of public exhibition space, and its creation was a paradigm shift of substantial proportions:

The implications of this development were numerous and profound. Hitherto dependent on limited circles of patronage, and forced to compete for business with picture-dealers who invariably privileged the dead over the living, artists of all kinds...could now bid directly for the support of thousands of potential buyers.¹⁶⁵

Equally significant, SAGB did not sanction the hierarchy of painting genres in displaying works of art; landscapes were hung in equal position with history paintings and portraits. This state of *égalité* was not to last long, however; in the early 1770s, the Royal Academy usurped SAGB’s attempted assertions of authority and strove to install history-painting as the highest level of painting over all other genres. In so doing, the Academy was motivated by the aim of providing for “the moral instruction of the nation through the exhibition of fine art.”¹⁶⁶ As Sir Joshua Reynolds explained, the chief concern of the founders of the Academy was “to set standards of taste, to shape a discerning public, and

¹⁶⁴ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 151.

¹⁶⁵ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 151.

¹⁶⁶ Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 230.

to establish the right of artists to do so.”¹⁶⁷ Notwithstanding its newly acquired position of authority over the British art scene, though, the Royal Academy differed from its French counterpart in one fundamental and crucial aspect: it was neither the procurer nor the donor of large commissions. This meant that commissions for large-scale history paintings in the grand manner were few and far between, a plight that would ultimately diminish the stature of both the Royal Academy and its principal mission.

The introduction of public exhibitions by SAGB and the Royal Academy radically changed the art market in the 1760s by subjecting artists to the forces of competition.

The history of the art market and of British painting in the eighteenth century had two distinct phases. The first saw the growth of a market for painting; the second, beginning in the 1750s, saw the development of a public. First there was an astonishing growth in the trade in pictures, then a proliferation of public exhibitions and venues for art. And, of course, the growth of an art public depended, in the first instance, on a lively and well-developed trade....The enthusiasm for art extended down the social scale. Though rich aristocrats made the most spectacular purchases....[many] were men below the rank of esquire, from the professions and from the higher ranks of trade and commerce.¹⁶⁸

Landscape artists had to move beyond the traditional country-house prospect paintings or picturesque English scenes to attract the new collecting connoisseur. Their pictures had to stand out from the sea of paintings hung closely together side-by-side in exhibitions, filling entire walls from floor to ceiling. In addition, “an economically successful artist had to be able to produce works which held their own in the spaces of display within private homes as well as in public exhibition sites.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 230.

¹⁶⁸ Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 202, 205.

¹⁶⁹ Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 39.

At least one contemporary commentator saw this free market competition “as a sign of English independent-mindedness.”¹⁷⁰ The writer John Scott contrasted the cultural authoritarianism of the French with the free market system in Britain, finding the two directly opposed in the process of consumption of luxury goods, including art.¹⁷¹ In France, the King, as absolute ruler, dictated the appearance of and provided for luxury goods through government patronage, while in Britain, private citizens independently decided matters of taste and secured art through private means. The British citizens’ “‘freedom’ to act on his/her private interests in acquiring luxury commodities without the intervention of a central state authority”¹⁷² is causally connected to the increasing acceptance and appeal of landscape painting. British landscape painters directly benefited from the exercise of individual taste and discretion by their fellow countrymen: landscape paintings appealed to the poetic sensibilities and taste of the Englishman of means, and smaller in scale than the grand canvases of history painting, they could easily and conspicuously be displayed in the fashionable homes of the aristocracy and gentry.

The 1770s and 80s brought a shift in the landscape market that coincided with a Royal Academy debate on an English national school; both were tied to the question of genre. By the 1770s, it was apparent that landscapes of the Italian campagna were declining in demand, opening the door to creativity and innovation in the depiction of scenes closer to home.

British landscape painters were still making the trip to Italy, where the Royal Academy’s institutional authority helped ensure that they continued to pay homage to the revered masters of seventeenth century

¹⁷⁰ Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 35.

¹⁷¹ John Scott, *A Visit to Paris in 1814* (London: Longmans, 1815), quoted by Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 35.

¹⁷² Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 36.

classicism....Upon their return, however, few failed to realize that, unless they wished to follow Wilson into obscurity, they would have to offer exhibition audiences pictures of greater visual and thematic excitement than the standard repertoire of sunlit views of the Roman Campagna.¹⁷³

English landscapes became the new focus with the introduction of the aesthetic theories of Gilpin on the “picturesque.” Domestic tourism was on the rise with the middle class, in part due to continental wars and upheavals. British travelers applied Gilpin’s theories to the British countryside and created a demand for affordable views of picturesque scenes; natural scenery had become a luxury commodity, an amenity. The period of taste for the “picturesque” coincided with the wars with France, a period during which English agriculture also flourished. As discussed earlier, due to Gilpin’s writings:

the picturesque decade attached new supremacy to the values of nature. Its socioaesthetic character is reflected in...the cult of the picturesque, and in the emphasis on the “truth” of painting over the manipulation of nature.¹⁷⁴

Because much of the British landscape painting market was bourgeois, the luxury goods of the mercantile and gentry classes, it was unencumbered by the intellectual and theoretical underpinnings of the Academy. The picturesque landscape of the familiar English countryside represented a “democratic”¹⁷⁵ landscape in contrast to the idealistic, aristocratic landscapes of foreign scenes populated with esoteric heroic figures constituting the Academic style. Concurrent with the picturesque movement, the Royal Academy’s continued efforts to champion history painting were losing ground due to the paucity of available commissions. This disarray created an opportunity for a group of younger landscape artists, such as John Robert Cozens and Thomas Girtin, to develop

¹⁷³ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 222.

¹⁷⁴ Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 83.

¹⁷⁵ Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 85.

their own personal styles and advance the genre of English landscape painting fortuitously at the same time as the broad general increase in interest in the British countryside.

Since the onset of the French Revolution, the British had generally been denied access to the Continent. The British were held captive on their island: trade with the continent was restricted and ultimately cut off altogether in 1805 with the Blockade of Britain. The short Peace of Amiens in 1802 permitted a few to travel to Europe, including Turner, who took advantage of the peace with France to visit Napoleon's collection of art looted from vanquished territories. Generally speaking, however, the perspective of the British landscape painter shifted inward, both of necessity and preference, directed to the glories of the British land rather than to those of a French Emperor.

The Revolution in France in 1789 and the ensuing Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars established a patriotic association of the landscape of Britain with the essence of Britishness across all of its classes. The British had always associated the English landscape with "liberty," and this connection was heightened during the 1790s in opposition to the perceived constraints and evils of the threatening Gallic "other":

The artfully composed "naturalness" of an English landscape – with its unpruned tress, its preference for studied asymmetry and curves over straight lines – was most readily perceptible by the contrast (frequently pointed out) with France, especially the constructed landscapes of the great Sun King....the conjunction, in English landscapes, of Britain with "liberty" and "nature" against absolutism and artifice of France (or, in the 1790s, against the artifice of revolutionary rationalism) was central to the construction of a national consciousness that could appeal beyond the landed, male aristocracy.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Elizabeth K. Helsinger, "Land and National Representation in Britain," in *Prospects for the Nation: Recent Essays in British Landscape, 1750-1880*, ed. Michael Rosenthal, Christiana Payne, and Scott Wilcox (New Haven and New York: Yale University Press, 1997), 18-19.

Naturalism assumed a patriotic importance in promoting “the distinctive character of Britishness by contradistinction with the abstracting bias of the French.”¹⁷⁷ It was the landscape painter who produced, in his scenes of the English countryside, “potent representations of national order”¹⁷⁸ at a time of turmoil in Europe.

Although artistic individuality expressed through imaginative, subjective responses to nature was completely contra to the idealistic mandate of the Royal Academy, it resonated with the discerning and “independent-minded” British public:

Whereas the ideal history painter had been identified in academic discourse as a supra-national subject who represents universal truths through forms divested of national prejudice, the landscape artist in the 1790s and the decades thereafter is figured as a national subject, in both his public and private character.¹⁷⁹

The prevailing political attitude of the time sought the preservation of those aspects of the British culture and nation that were perceived as particularly and uniquely British “against the threat of Jacobinism which aimed to spread its rationalist mantra of ‘Liberty, Equality, Fraternity’ across the entire world.”¹⁸⁰ This inclination made the classical history-painting, with its idealized imagery, seem foreign and suspect.

The Royal Academy’s authority was only as long as its purse strings, and in contrast to the French academic model, it could not stand behind its rhetoric in any meaningful way. With the decline in its authority at the end of the century due to the futility of its efforts to establish a national school of history painting, a group of Britain’s leading collectors and connoisseurs, wealthy men of banking, commerce and property,

¹⁷⁷ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 267.

¹⁷⁸ Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 45.

¹⁷⁹ Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 45.

¹⁸⁰ Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 252.

again took action and created the British Institution in 1805 as a rival to the Royal Academy. The British Institution was established on the basis of two main beliefs:

First, that wealthy private collectors had the knowledge and the means, as well as the obligation, to try to set contemporary art on the correct path; and secondly, that they might justifiably recommend, as models for emulation, Old Masters in line with their own tastes, but who did not necessarily command the high esteem of academic theorists.¹⁸¹

Motivated by patriotism and sentiments of *noblesse oblige*, the founders desired to provide another site for the promotion, exhibition and sale of British art and another school, the British School, through which artists would have the opportunity to copy directly from Old Master paintings owned by the founders. Since paintings by the Dutch and Flemish schools comprised the majority of the founders' collections, this meant that Dutch naturalism had now closed the gap with the idealist Italian school in recognition and influence, to the great consternation of the Royal Academy which found it and the basis for its authority losing further ground.

The Royal Academy objected to the genres of the northern paintings – portraits, landscapes and “familiar scenes” –arguing that the function of the British Institution was “not to co-operate with that Taste, but to correct it”...non-historical paintings were no more than commodities....possessing only exchange value [and]...incapable of morally elevating the individual and the nation. Underlying such a critique is not only a concern about paintings that cannot inscribe “moral values,” but the fear that genres other than history painting, the focal point of academic training and traditional source of the academic artist’s claims to professional status, could come to represent the interests and valued of such a culturally prestigious national establishment as the British Institution.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Solkin, *Art in Britain*, 267.

¹⁸² Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, 42.

Cognizant of its disruptive role, the British Institution exhibited a collection of Old Master Dutch and Flemish paintings for its first exhibition, which coincided with the Royal Academy's annual exhibition.

The 1780s and 90s also witnessed the growth in a less official venue for the exhibition and sale of painting: the art gallery. In an interesting parallel to the French Academy, the Royal Academy was criticized for “institutional tyranny”¹⁸³ in its “overabundance of portraiture, discriminatory hanging, slavish artistic imitation and a disregard for the interests of its public, its students and indeed some of its members.”¹⁸⁴ The new gallery spaces were seen as a more democratic alternative for recognizing both talent on its merits and the interests of the public. Their timing and success was a challenge to the Royal Academy in more than one way: their numbers grew in Pall Mall just after the Royal Academy relocated from there to Somerset House, a grand site greatly removed from what had become London's artistic center, with exhibition halls, museums, auction houses and galleries clustered around St. James's Palace. No sooner had the Academy evacuated its Pall Mall space than that space was occupied by new galleries promoting for sale important private collections. Although initially a financial success in terms of increased exhibition receipts, the Royal Academy's move was strategically ill advised, demonstrating its disconnection not only with the aesthetic sentiments of the times but also the commercial forces driving the London art scene, and merely served to further diminish its standing as a vital force of the artistic community.

¹⁸³ Rosie Diaz, “‘A world of pictures’: Pall Mall and the topography of display, 1780-99,” in *Georgian Geographies: Essays on space, place and landscape in the eighteenth century*, ed. Miles Ogborn and Charles W.J. Withers (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2004), 93.

¹⁸⁴ Diaz, “A world of pictures,” 93.

The foundation of the Royal Academy nevertheless enhanced the status of artists, even if it could not offer meaningful financial support. Artists could now claim “the right not only to paint, but like the connoisseur and collector, to shape public taste.”¹⁸⁵

The spirit of British naturalism itself, with its “scrupulous fidelity to observable, often commonplace phenomena”¹⁸⁶ was the antithesis of the idealistic composition and imaginary themes of academic painting. The English landscape artist now chose what to represent, however ordinary, and that representation was contingent upon his individual, subjective response to what he saw.

The new naturalism...called for a dynamic interaction between an individual mind and an observable but protean world. It was at once more scientific and more sensate. While it was the duty of the modern artist to mirror the natural world, the *poetry* of landscape painting as a high art resided more significantly in the artist’s ability to communicate subjective impressions before those phenomena, however trivial or sublime they might be. That a landscape description of any mundane site could be a vehicle of profound sentiment because an artist willed it so was anathema to French academic thinking.¹⁸⁷

The modern, autonomous painter entered the European art scene in the eighteenth century in the person of the English landscape painter. He emerged from a sense of history and place and was validated and sustained by an aesthetic environment that emanated from British enlightened empiricism, poetic sensibility and associative responsiveness. Finally, he was patronized and nurtured by British traditions of independence from autocratic authority and pragmatic commercialism. His art and influence would be unmatched until the middle of the next century.

¹⁸⁵ Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 251.

¹⁸⁶ Noon, *Crossing the Channel*, 197.

¹⁸⁷ Noon, *Crossing the Channel*, 197.

IMAGES

Image 1

Lorrain, Claude. *A Landscape with Hagar and the Angel*. Oil on canvas mounted on wood, 1646. The National Gallery, London, England.

Image 2

Wilson, Richard. *Tivoli: The Cascatelli Grandi and the Villa of Maecenas*. Oil on canvas, 1752. The National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland.

Image 3

Wilson, Richard. *Tivoli: the Temple of the Sibyl and the Campagna*. Oil on canvas, 1752.
The National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland.

Image 4

Wilson, Richard. *Rome: St. Peter's and the Vatican from the Janiculum*. Oil on canvas, 1753-4. Tate Gallery, London, England.

Image 5

Wilson, Richard. *The Thames at Twickenham*. Oil on canvas, 1762. Marble Hill House, Twickenham, England.

Image 6

Jones, Thomas. *Pencerrig*. Oil on laid wrapping paper, 1772. Tate Gallery, London, England.

Image 7

Jones, Thomas. *Carneddau, from Pencerrig*. Oil on laid paper on panel, c. 1775.
National Museum Wales, Cardiff, Wales.

Image 8

Jones, Thomas. *Lake Albano – Sunset*. Oil on canvas, 1777. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, New Haven, Connecticut.

Image 9

Jones, Thomas. *An Excavation of an Antique Building Discovered in a Cava in the Villa Negroni at Rome*. Oil, pencil on paper, c. 1780s. Tate Gallery, London, England.

Image 10

Jones, Thomas. *The Bay of Naples and the Mole Lighthouse*. Oil on Italian writing paper, 1782. Tate Gallery, London, England.

Image 11

Jones, Thomas. *A Wall in Naples*. Oil on paper laid down on board, c. 1782.
National Gallery, London, England.

Image 12

Jones, Thomas. *Buildings on a Cliff-Top, Naples*. Oil on paper, 1782.
Tate Gallery, London, England.

Image 13

Stubbs, George. *Newmarket Heath, with a Rubbing-down House*. Oil on canvas, c. 1765.
Tate Gallery, London, England.

Image 14

Cozens, John Robert. *View from Mirabella, the Villa of Count Algarotti on the Euganean Hills*.
Watercolor, 1782. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England.

Image 15

Girtin, Thomas. *The White House at Chaelsea*. Pencil and watercolor, 1800.
Tate Gallery, London, England.

Image 16

Turner, Joseph Mallord William. *Caernravan Castle*. Watercolor, 1799. Private Collection.

Image 17
Turner, Joseph Mallord William. *Crossing the Brook*. Oil on canvas, 1815.
Tate Gallery, London, England.

Image 18

Turner, Joseph Mallord William. *Harvest Dinner, Kingston Bank*. Oil on canvas, 1809.
Tate Gallery, London, England.

Image 19

Turner, Joseph Mallord William. *Norham Castle, Sunrise*. Oil on canvas, c. 1845.
Tate Gallery, London, England.

Image 20

Constable, John. *The Harvest Field*. Oil on canvas, c. 1797. Private Collection.

Image 21

Constable, John. *Dedham Vale*. Oil on canvas, 1802. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England.

Image 22

Constable, John. *The Hay Wain*. Oil on canvas, 1821. The National Gallery, London, England.

Image 23

Watteau, Jean-Antoine. *Pilgrimage to the Isle of Cythera*. Oil on canvas, 1717.
Le Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Image 24

Fragonard, Jean-Honoré. *Blind Man's Bluff*. Oil on Canvas, c. 1775/80. National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

Image 25

Cozens, John Robert. *The Colosseum from the North*. Pencil and watercolor, 1780.
National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Image 26

Desportes, Alexandre-François. *Ciel nuageux au soleil couchant*. Oil on beige paper, undated.

Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres, France.

Image 27

Michel, George. *Landscape with a Windmill*. Oil on panel, c. 1790-1800.
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England.

Image 28

Vernet, Claude-Joseph. *An Italianate river landscape*. Oil on canvas, 1753.
The Matthiesen Gallery, London, England.

Image 29

Vernet, Claude-Joseph. *View at Tivoli*. Oil on canvas, c. 1745. Private collection.

Image 30

De Valenciennes, Pierre-Henri. *A Capriccio of Rome with the Finish of a Marathon*. Oil on canvas, 1788. Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, California.

Image 31

De Valenciennes, Pierre-Henri. *Fabrique a la Villa Farnese: Les deux peupliers*. Oil on paper on cardboard, 1780. Le Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

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Member, Brandeis Honor Society
American Jurisprudence Book Awards in seven subjects
Full academic scholarships for five semesters

B.A., cum laude, History and Art History
Vanderbilt University, 1977
Fall Semester, Florence, Italy
Syracuse University, 1976

PROFESSIONAL
EXPERIENCE:

Senior Counsel, Commercial and Transactional Law
General Electric Company, GE Appliances
Louisville, Kentucky
2003-2016 (retired)

Acting Lead Counsel
GE Lighting, Budapest, Hungary
July-December, 2009

GE Crotonville Business Management Course (BMC) 2011
Legal Growth Traits Award for Imagination 2009
Management Award for Business Development 2008
Business Growth Traits Award 2007
Supply Chain Special Recognition Award 2004

Principal Consultant, Executive Compensation
Mercer Human Resources Consulting
Louisville, Kentucky
1999-2003

Regional General Counsel
BANC ONE CORPORATION
Louisville, Kentucky
1995-1999

Vice President and Asst. Counsel
Liberty National Bank and Trust Company
Louisville, Kentucky
1989-1995

Associate Attorney
Woodward, Hobson and Fulton
Louisville, Kentucky
1986-1989

Pre-Law School: Director of Development, The Louisville Ballet,
Louisville, Kentucky

General Manager, The Headley-Whitney Museum,
Lexington, Kentucky

Business Manager, Living Arts and Sciences Center
Lexington, Kentucky