GENIUS AS AN ALIBI:
THE PRODUCTION OF THE ARTISTIC SUBJECT
AND ENGLISH LANDSCAPE PAINTING, 1795-1820
by
KAY DIAN KRIZ
B.S., Indiana University, 1966
B.A. Western Washington University, 1981
M.A. University of British Columbia, 1985
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THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Stemtment of Fine Arts)

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Nineteenth-century writers and modern scholars have agreed that there was a major shift in the practice of landscape painting in England around the turn of the nineteenth century. Paintings by up-and-coming artists such as J. M. W. Turner, Thomas Girtin, and A. W. Calcott were seen to exhibit a concern for atmospheric effects and an "expressivity" lacking in earlier works. This shift has often been explained by invoking artistic genius: the keen intellect and sensibility of the artistic producer has served as a self-evident explanation of the rise to prominence of this form of landscape painting. This study endorses the centrality of the artistic subject to the enterprise of landscape painting, but disputes the notion that genius is a natural and self-evident phenomenon. It is argued here that the native landscape genius was a category of the creative individual which was socially produced at this historical moment in conjunction with or in opposition to other contemporaneous formulations of the artist.

This examination of artistic subjectivity as determined by gender, social status, education, wealth, and so forth, is organized around three interrelated subject positions: the "man of letters" derived from the notion of the academic history painter, the "market slave," a negative construction of the artist who was seen to pander to the demands of the market and
the "imaginative man of genius." The inscription of these positionalities in landscape imagery is contingent upon a range of historically specific social phenomena. The discussion focuses particularly upon the discourse of nationalism during and immediately after the Napoleonic wars, epistemological debates concerning the type of knowledge appropriate for a commercial society, and the discourse on the market as it relates to the circulation of paintings as cultural commodities. Determining the relationship of the artistic subject to these various social phenomena involves an examination of the physical spaces in which paintings were displayed and exhibited, the discursive spaces in which they were discussed and evaluated—including art criticism, aesthetic treatises, illustrated county histories and social and political commentary—and the institutional practices which shaped their production and reception.

The power and appeal of the landscape genius, I argue, lay in its ability to serve broad range of social interests in negotiating successfully the seemingly contradictory demands of the market in luxury commodities and of a social ideal of Englishness marked by independence, intellectual power and sensibility. The genius's imaginative encounter with external nature provided it with an alibi which served to obscure its activities as an economic producer in a highly competitive market society.
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The members of my dissertation committee have in different ways enhanced my understanding of how art participates in the production of social meaning. My thanks go to Maureen Ryan and Ed Hundert for their unflagging support, helpful comments and judicious criticism. Serge Guilbaut has not only provided thoughtful criticism and suggestions with regard to this project, but has given me the benefit of his wisdom, wit, and encouragement throughout the entire period of my graduate studies. My largest debt of gratitude is to David Solkin. Not only does his intellectual enthusiasm and curiosity continue to inspire my own study of British art, but his provocative criticism has stimulated my growth as a scholar far more than he will ever know.
INTRODUCTION

It might be fairly argued that the notion of artistic genius is the very last thing needing scholarly attention in the field of early nineteenth-century English landscape painting. Indeed, with a few notable and important exceptions the art historical literature devoted to this period takes as its basic assumption and ultimate conclusion that native genius was the determining factor in the success and importance of the English landscape school. Thus, the patron saint of English artists, J. M. W. Turner, was described by John Walker (former director of the National Gallery in Washington) as "a short, stocky man with rather striking features, who without advantage of education or birth, became through genius, determination and boundless energy the greatest artist England has ever known." Such an acceptance of genius as a natural, self-evident category, whether openly stated, as in this instance, or tacitly assumed, forms the basis for a wide range of traditional art historical studies of early

1 Among those scholars who have resisted treating artistic genius as a natural and self-evident category and have instead analyzed early nineteenth century landscape painting as a hegemonic practice are John Barrell, Ann Bermingham, Michael Rosenthal, and Andrew Hemingway. See Bibliography for specific references to their publications.

nineteenth century landscape painting. This orientation around the notion of genius has assured that most of scholarship published in this area to date, whether devoted to the study of an individual artist, or broader topics such as touring in Wales, naturalism and the development of watercolour, is organized almost exclusively around issues of individual style and speculations about artistic intention.

It is not my intention to expose the tautological nature of these accounts. Rather, I accept and endorse the absolute centrality of native genius (the adjective is as important as the noun, as will become apparent in what follows) to the enterprise of English landscape painting at the turn of the nineteenth century: Genius and its attendant terms, imagination and sensibility, operated as a nexus of master signs which organized, legislated, and validated particular forms of landscape practice.

The importance of genius as a means of characterizing a particular notion of the landscape painter in England at this historical moment is forcefully indicated in Archibald Alison's all important *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790). In the *Essays* Alison declared that

it is not for imitation we look, but for character. It is not the art, but the genius of the Painter, which 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 awakened, than those which we experience from the useful tameness of common scenery.\textsuperscript{3}

The difficulty with much of the secondary literature is that it is content to acknowledge and accept uncritically this contention that the character of the artist, manifested through feeling and the imagination, is to be the primary criterion for judging landscape painting. For example, Andrew Wilton, who cites the same passage from Alison in a catalogue of English drawings and prints, does not question its privileging of artistic personality.\textsuperscript{4} Instead, here as elsewhere, Alison's emphasis on artistic character and genius is pressed into the service of a canonical history of English art which celebrates the individual achievements of a few select men: "The great men, Constable, Turner, Palmer, and Cotman," Wilton declares "...pursued more obscure paths [than topographical artists], reaching towards a more elusive yet more profound truth in nature, a truth that could only be expressed in the warmest human terms--the terms of their own intense experience."\textsuperscript{5} This statement is predicated upon

\textsuperscript{3}Archibald Alison, \textit{Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste}, 3rd ed., (Edinburgh, 1812), 1:129. All further references are to this edition unless otherwise noted.


\textsuperscript{5}Wilton, Preface to \textit{English Landscape}, p. xxi.
an understanding of genius ("great men"), "nature" and "truth" as essences which are self-evident and transcendent. Such essentialism guarantees that the historical conditions which made specific forms of landscape painting possible and desirable for artists working at this time will remain as "obscure" and "elusive" as the truths those artists were purported to represent.

Contemporary writers and modern scholars have observed that the English landscape produced by Turner, Girtin, Callcott, and others differ in appearance and function from those of older artists such as Loutherbourg, Ibbetson, and Sandby. It is my contention that our understanding of these distinctions is largely dependent upon submitting to a historical analysis the formulation of the artist as imaginative genius which Alison's text so clearly registers. This study seeks to provide just such an analysis by examining the artistic genius as a category of the individual which was socially produced in conjunction with or in opposition to other contemporaneous notions of the artist.

My investigation is organized around three prevailing conceptions of the artist: 'the man of letters,' deriving from the academic notion of the history painter; the 'market slave,' a negative construction of the artist who was perceived to be lowering professional standards by pandering to the demands of the market and fashion; and the 'imaginative man of genius.' For
the purposes of analytic clarity I will be addressing in turn each formulation of the artist as if it were a discrete entity. In fact these subject positions were interactive and hence not rigidly fixed in character. This fluidity is to be expected since these formulations were contingent upon an ongoing and highly contentious cultural debate about the nature of the creative individual during a period of profound social and economic transformations.

I shall consider landscape painting and its attendant discourses as a cultural participant in these wider historical processes occurring throughout the years 1795 to 1820, a period which saw the rise to prominence of a self-declared national school of landscape painting. My account will focus on three aspects of these social and cultural transformations which were

"The generally acknowledged strengths of the British School at this time are typified by the following evaluation published in the Monthly Magazine in 1810: "To be retrograde in grand historical and poetical composition; to be increasing in correct drawing and chaste coloring; eminent in portrait; and beyond competition in landscape" ("Monthly Retrospect of the Fine Arts," Monthly Magazine, July 1810, p. 577).

My focus is upon the social function of landscape paintings exhibited in London and discussed in the metropolitan press, and upon works which circulated publicly in the form of published prints. Thus I will not be concerned with private utterances about landscape, speculations about the artistic intentions concerning their production, or works produced at and for provincial centres. Since Constable's paintings received only limited public attention in London in the 1800-20 period they will not be considered in this investigation. However, I would hope that the analysis presented here of the reconstitution of the natural via ephemeral effects will provoke a consideration of Constable's work in the context of epistemological shifts which are more ideologically complex than have been heretofore suggested.
particularly relevant to questions of artistic identity and landscape painting: the phenomenon of nationalism during and immediately after a period marked by wars with France and conservative reaction to the French Revolution; epistemological debates relating to the modes of knowledge appropriate to the increased division and specialization of labour, both manual and intellectual; and the discourses on the market and on fashion as they relate to the circulation of paintings as cultural commodities.

These inter-related social phenomena, whether described in terms of nationalism, intellectual specialization, capitalization, or privatization were manifested in all forms of artistic practice. History painting, above all, was especially implicated in these transformations, since it was the genre which traditionally was understood to represent public values and ideals. Possessing this important social function, it was seen as conferring the highest professional status upon the artistic producer, and was therefore the principal object of academic discourse and institutional concern. Given the public importance of history painting, and also its direct engagement with issues relevant to a study of subjectivity—the status of the professional artist and the representation of the human figure—why then, it is fair to ask, focus upon landscape? One goal of this study will be to demonstrate the capacity of certain forms of landscape painting to participate in the social
transformation of subjectivity in ways which history painting could not, either in theory or in practice. However, I do not intend to analyze the inability of the English to produce a 'successful' school of history painting; John Barrell has ably considered this phenomenon from a theoretical standpoint in his examination of the writings of Reynolds, Barry, Fuseli, Blake, Haydon and Hazlitt, and his argument will briefly be examined in Chapter I. Nonetheless, the subject position of the professional artist as history painter produced in academic discourse will be an important feature of this study for it represented the ideal, however outmoded or problematic, against which other notions of the artist were defined and evaluated.

Considered on its own terms (apart from history painting) it is also possible to indicate why landscape painting was such a crucial site for the production of the subjectivity. For in England the public and private identities of individual subjects were inscribed not only in images of people, but also in images of the land, as the above-cited passage from Alison's Essays so strikingly suggests. Central to this understanding the rôle of landscape imagery in the cultural construction of identities during the early nineteenth century is an awareness of the historic relationship which existed throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries between landed ownership and the idea of

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personal autonomy. This relationship was fixed in laws which required ownership of real property not only as the qualification for political identity, and thus participation in the activities of governance, but also as the criterion for the most privileged forms of social identity as defined in and through leisure pursuits such as hunting. As J. G. A. Pocock has demonstrated, oppositional as well as dominant discourses were predicated upon conflating the ownership of land with the notion of independence. For example, in the early 1700s Neo-Harringtonians such as the Third Earl of Shaftesbury and Tory radicals deployed a discourse derived from the civic humanist tradition of fifteenth century Florence as a means of countering what they saw as a dominant Court party comprised of corrupt ministers and a parasitic breed of placemen, speculators, and stockjobbers. Within the parameters of this republican discourse, ownership of land was seen to produce an economic 'disinterestedness' or independence which was the precondition for public virtue and active citizenship. Although developed as a country ideology in the late seventeenth century, this

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oppositional discourse was still employed in the Napoleonic period by provincial anti-war liberals such as Walter Fawkes, the prominent Yorkshire landowner who was renowned for his collection of British watercolours, and bourgeois reformists such as Robert Hunt, whose attacks on ministerial corruption could be found in his reviews of Royal Academy exhibitions.¹⁰

The resilience of this country ideology, its ability to signify one hundred years after its inception testifies to the immense symbolic, political and economic power which was attached to land forty to fifty years after "take-off"—that moment in the 1760s which marked the rapid acceleration of capitalist enterprise in commerce and trade.¹¹ This said, it should not be assumed that the subject position of the virtuous landowning citizen, constructed in both dominant and oppositional discourse, was unchallenged (even in the eighteenth century) or unmodified by the turn of the nineteenth century. The chapters which follow will largely be concerned with tracking the changes in subjectivity which accompanied these cumulative transformations in the economic, social, and political spheres. Such an analysis will examine how the discourses and practices of


landscape painting were able to capitalize on the symbolic attributes attached to land in order to represent those forms of knowledge, social relations, and economic organization associated with commercial society.

As noted earlier this investigation is organized around three such notions of the artist, the 'man of letters,' the 'market slave,' and the 'imaginative man of genius,' each of which engaged these social phenomena in distinctly different ways. However, while the discussion will center on the production of various notions of the artist, there will also be a strong emphasis on the constitution of viewers and the relationship between the artist and the viewing subject. For ultimately our concern is to understand how the landscape genius as an ideal of the creative, interiorized individual was implicated in the production of viewing subjects whose own imagination and singularity were acknowledged at the same time as they were policed and regulated.

Since the parameters of this investigation are set out in terms of the notion of the subject, it is necessary to delineate how this concept is being defined. Subjectivity is here taken to be the production of the individual as a category defined by gender, nationality, social status, wealth, education, moral
codes and so forth. I have found it most appropriate for the topic under consideration to conceive of subjectivity in terms which acknowledge both the subject's production in representation (visual as well as textual) and its ideological positioning in the larger social sphere. That is, the artistic subject is produced in and through representation, and is deployed by a range of ideological interests in the process of interpellation. In adopting the term 'subject position' throughout this study I wish to emphasize the contingent nature of a particular notion of the artistic subject: such a subject is defined by its position in discourse and social formations relative to other conceptions of the individual. This formulation of the subject derives from two major sources: the semiotic subject, constructed through the shifting positionalities in language represented by 'I,' 'you' and the other pronouns, as set out by Emile Benveniste; and secondly, Louis Althusser's notion of the interpellated subject which comes to 'recognize' its position in the social via the ideological

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Race is obviously a major factor in determining the nature of the individual as a subject. Landscape painting was an important vehicle for the production of racial difference during the period in question. However, this production was most clearly evident in landscape paintings and prints of foreign sites and in landscapes based upon literary themes—subgenres which are excluded from consideration here. A most compelling analysis of landscape painting and racial as well as gender difference is Harriet Guest's "The Great Distinction: Figures of the Exotic in the Work of William Hodges," *Oxford Art Journal* 12:2 (1989), pp. 36-58.
apparatuses of education, religion, the family, and so forth.\footnote{13}

By combining and modifying these two formulations, I seek to avoid the hermeticism of a linguistic system in which the subject is forever banished to the realm of texts where it circulates endlessly among a shifting chain of signifiers. At the same time I find problematic the totalizing tendencies implicit in an Althusserian social schema which reduce subjects to passive victims locked into prescribed roles. Göran Therborn usefully suggests a more active notion of the subject when he introduces the term 'qualification' to complement that of (passive) subjection. Emphasizing the ambiguity of the word 'qualify' he notes that "although qualified by ideological interpellations, subjects also become qualified to 'qualify' these in return, in the sense of specifying them and modifying their range of application."\footnote{14} The manner in which subject positions are modified, negotiated, and contested in the realm of

\footnote{13} See Emile Benveniste, Problems in General Linguistics (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1971; orig. pub. in French, 1966), pp. 223-30. Benveniste writes, "It is in and through language that man constitutes himself as a subject, because language alone establishes the concept of 'ego' in reality, in its reality which is that of the being... Consciousness of self is only possible if it is experienced by contrast. I use I only when I am speaking to someone who will be a you in my address (p. 24). For the Althusserian notion of interpellation see Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in Lenin and Philosophy (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971; orig. pub. in French, 1969), pp. 127-86.

landscape representation must be understood within the context of such a process of qualification.

In taking up an investigation of subjectivity, it is crucial to differentiate between the notion of individuals and subject positions. As Therborn and many others have pointed out, individuals take up a number of subject positions in the course of their lives, positions which can mutually reinforce or even exist in tension with each other. And thus a painting or a text can be taken as an interpellation, that is, an invitation for the viewer/reader to take up a particular subject position in terms of social status, gender, sexual orientation, nationality and so forth. However, there is no guarantee that the 'offer' will be accepted or be understood in the same terms by everyone. This final point is important, for as we shall see, there is no simple one-to-one correspondence between a particular subject position delineated by a given representation or set of representations and a particular ideological position. Rather, Mikhail Bakhtin's insistence on the social "multi-accentuality of signs" within a specific social formation is true of visual as well as linguistic signs. That is, a particular representation becomes an arena of contestation, as diverse interest groups, classes, and class fragments adopt the same signs and adapt them to their particular needs and interests. This contentiousness in the

\[^{15}\text{V. N. Voloshinov (Mikhail Bakhtin), } \text{Marxism and the Philosophy of Language} \text{ (New York: Academic Press, 1973), pp. 21-3.}\]
marking out of subject positions in landscape representation will be a major focus of this project.

Within the domain of eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century cultural studies, the work of John Barrell and Peter de Bolla has been extremely important in promoting an understanding of the way in which the private, interiorized subject has been rejected or denied in representations which seek to produce various formulations of a public or social subject. De Bolla introduces the notion of "transparency" to indicate this social subject whose private character is repressed, so that the creative self becomes a screen upon which only universal or communal values and interests can be read. I have extended the use of this visual trope to include that of the 'opaque' subject, whose private character is seen to debase or obliterate the representation of communal ideals, and that of the 'translucent' subject, whose private character facilitates the representation of a national community which increasingly is recast in terms of a heterogeneity of private interests.

It should be clear by now what is being omitted as well as


included in my working definition of subjectivity: namely, the psychoanalytic notion of the subject, split by its unresolved and unconscious Oedipal fears and Imaginary desires. Such an omission is prompted, not by a lack of interest in how the unconscious participates in the construction of specific subject positions, but by a lack of conviction that current theory, predicated as it is upon a dynamic specific to the bourgeois nuclear family, is applicable to the historical period under examination.

I have further reservations about the potential for the misappropriation of a theory designed to explain how infants come to take up their positions as gendered subjects in representation, language, the social order. As Stuart Hall has perceptively observed, "there is all the difference in the world between the capacity to use Language as such and the appropriation and imaginary identity with particular languages and their specific ideological and discursive universes."

Referring to his specific concern with analyzing Thatcherism historically Hall continues:

What Thatcherism poses is the problem of understanding how already positioned subjects can be effectively detached from their points of application and effectively repositioned by a new set of discourses. This is precisely a historically specific level of application of the interpellative aspects of ideology that is not adequately resumed or explained by the
transhistorical generalities of Lacanianism.\textsuperscript{16}

While our context is quite different from Hall's, the theoretical problems in dealing with the repositioning of subjects who are already placed into the symbolic order are similar.

Although I will not address specifically a split subject, this does not imply an unwillingness to engage with issues of gender, desire, and fantasy as socially constructed phenomena. I concur with Joan W. Scott that gender is most usefully theorized as "a primary way of signifying relationships of power."\textsuperscript{19} Conceived in this way, as an organizing principle rather than as a set of social roles men and women assume, then, in Judith Newton's words, "there is no gender-free zone."\textsuperscript{20} Throughout this investigation, therefore, when I use the pronoun 'he,' it should be understood to refer only to males or a masculine subject position. Anonymous art critics are also referred to as 'he' since there is no evidence to suggest that women were involved in writing published art criticism at this


It is not the psycho-sexual coherency, then, but the very viability of certain subject positions within a shifting social field that will form the principal focus of this study. Attention will initially be focussed upon the artistic subject and the liberally educated viewer as produced through those aesthetic theories and painting practices promoted by the academy. This conceptualization of artist/viewer as liberal man of letters was increasingly incapable of accommodating the complex and interrelated demands of the market (as represented both in critical discourse and the discourse of political economy) and the demands for a quintessentially English school of painting, over a fifteen year period marked by counter-revolutionary reaction, war and domestic political and social unrest.

An early sign of the failure of this notion of the artistic subject to meet these varied contemporary demands was the concern, voiced by critics and commentators in the 1790s, that English artists, especially landscape painters, had surrendered their independence and ethical principles in order to accommodate a highly competitive market for cultural commodities and the desires of a fashionable public which lacked taste in matters of art. Consideration of a negative subject position of the artist as 'slave of the market,' which was produced in this artistic and
social commentary, will be followed by an extended examination of a formulation of the artistic subject which offered one form of resolution to this crisis in subjectivity: the landscape artist as 'native genius.'

Theoretically secured by an emerging discourse on the imagination, this position was defined by professional and specialized knowledge and a native sensibility which taken together guaranteed its social utility. This subject position will be discussed in terms of its capacity to accommodate a range of ideological interests as it entertained a vexed and intricate relationship with the demands of the market. The success of the 'native genius,' it will be argued, lay in his ability to negotiate the economic demands of the market under the cover of a moralized and socialized artistic subject. Hence genius's ability to act as an alibi: Under the guise of genius the artist claimed to be someplace other than where he was—in the marketplace rather than in the disembodied realm of artistic imagination, experiencing his connection to the social through a personal encounter with Nature.
CHAPTER I

The Rationalized Landscape and the Transparent Subject

The artist is a true logician: not content with producing effects, he is ever inquiring after causes founded on visible demonstration, to exhibit them in his work.¹

We are almost led to describe it [Turner's Snowstorm: Hannibal Crossing the Alps] as the effect of magic, which this Prospero of the graphic art can call into action, and give to airy nothing a substantial form...All that is terrible and grand is personified in the mysterious effect of the picture; and we cannot but admire the genius displayed in this extraordinary work.²

The extent to which the artistic subject was a category undergoing transformation through a process of contestation in the years around 1800 is suggested in the above quotes, the first by the topographer Edward Dayes in 1802, the second from the Repository of Arts in 1812. Landscape painting became a site on which various claims were staked for a certain type of artistic producer and for a particular conception of the viewer as well.


This contestation of artistic subjectivities within landscape was profoundly affected by the moribund status of history painting. Contemporary art criticism and commentary devoted to painting in England at the turn of the nineteenth century registers a broad census that the country had failed to produce a successful school of history painting, traditionally regarded as the most prestigious form of public art throughout Europe. The most common reason given for this state of affairs was that both the English church and government (and in some accounts private patrons) had failed to provide commissions and other forms of support for the most elevated forms of public painting, in contradistinction to public bodies in ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy. Portrait painting, on the other hand, was acknowledged to be a flourishing practice in England, but it was identified with a form of self-promotion and private interest which was invariably tied to the pursuit of commerce and trade.

On the level of practice there were a number of attempts to produce a form of painting that would resolve this crisis in cultural production—a crisis arising out of the problem of how

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3We will explore the debates for and against public support of the arts in Chapter V. In addition see William Carey, Observations on the Probable Decline or Extinction of British Historical Painting... (London, 1825), for a contemporary account of the failure of a domestic school of history painting.

4For a typical attack on English portrait painting as feeding the need of nobles and merchants for self-gratification in a commercial centre like London, see the review of Thomas Lawrence's portraits at the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1803 in the St. James Chronicle, 28-30 April 1803.
to represent a communal identity in a society increasingly organized as an aggregate of competing, self-interested individuals. In the latter half of the eighteenth century these efforts at resolution included attempts by Reynolds to elevate portrait painting to the level of history, by Edward Penny and Joseph Wright to incorporate the didacticism of history painting with the more intimate format of the conversation piece, and by history painter James Barry to represent the division of labour which marks commercial society in terms of classical forms and allegorical figures."

Although some of the individual works of art produced in these various attempts enjoyed considerable success, the larger crisis in public art production lingered, fed not only by

repeated demands in the metropolitan press for traditional history painting as a public artform, but also in the Royal Academy itself. For the public voice of that institution, embodied in the utterances of its first president, Joshua Reynolds, and its Professors of Painting in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, James Barry, Henry Fuseli and John Opie, insisted that only works which promoted the academic ideals of history painting could elevate the status of artists beyond that of artisans by representing the 'public good,' however problematic that term had become. Throughout the course of this investigation we will examine the incapacity of this theoretical position to accommodate the needs either of artists or viewers operating in a increasingly privatized, capitalized society and the attempt to redress that failure through a new form of landscape painting, secured by a self-declaredly 'scientific' theory of the imagination.

While 'academicism' came increasingly to be questioned, it still retained a measure of institutional authority throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century and thus was able to shape public notions of the artistic subject and viewer in terms of visual production, artistic discourse and institutional practices. It is a testimony both to the residual power of academic discourse to affect contemporary art production and its inability to guarantee a viable form of history painting that history painter and President of the Royal Academy Benjamin West
turned his attention to the production of historical landscape paintings in the closing years of the eighteenth century.* An examination of one of these works will give us some sense of the way in which academic theory as applied to the genre of landscape painting attempted to legitimize the social power of a particular type of viewer, and in the process elevate the status of the artistic producer.

In 1797 West exhibited at the Royal Academy Cicero Discovering the Tomb of Archimedes (Figure 1), a work which instantiates precisely those qualities which the Academy most esteemed: high moral seriousness, erudition and reverence for the grand tradition. In both its composition and theme the work evokes Richard Wilson’s Cicero and his Two Friends, Atticus and Quintus, at his Villa at Arpinum (R. A. 1770).” David Solkin


†Wilson’s Cicero (private collection) is reproduced as Plate 130 in David Solkin, Richard Wilson, The Landscape of Reaction (Tate Gallery exhib. cat., London, 1982). Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley have stated that the subject seems clearly to have been inspired by Wilson’s Cicero [von Erffa and Staley, p. 120]. An inspection of the two pictures reveals the extent to which West has based his composition on the Wilson as well: the massing of cliffs on the left and trees on the right in the Wilson follows the basic forms of Wilson’s framing trees; both compositions close the backgrounds with mountains topped by fluffy clouds; the recession of alternating dark and light planes is found in both works; and the disposition of the principal figures is similar as well. This basic configuration derives ultimately from Claude, as David Solkin notes in his account of the Wilson, "The Battle of the Ciceros; Richard Wilson and the Politics of Landscape in the Age of John Wilkes," Art History,
argues that this latter work is a visual assertion of patrician power, virtue and knowledge at a time when they were being contested in the political arena.® West’s picture also naturalizes the epistemological, cultural and economic authority of a landed patriciate, despite the fact that nearly three tumultuous decades separate it from Wilson’s Cicero, bringing marked changes in the political climate and class alignments.

The subject of West’s work is taken from Book V of Cicero’s Tusculans. At this point in the narrative, Cicero, who it should be recalled was a wealthy landowner from Arpinura and quaestor in Sicily, is relating his discovery in Syracuse of the grave of Archimedes. The mathematician is offered here as a model of the virtuous, public-spirited scholar in contradistinction to the Sicilian tyrant, Dionysius. But the narrative also presents its author himself as an exemplar. Cicero emphasizes that he was not simply engaged in a private antiquarian pursuit, but rather an act of public virtue, by claiming that "one of the most famous cities in the Greek world...would have remained in total ignorance of the tomb of the most brilliant citizen it had ever

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®Specifically, this challenge was mounted by middle class urbanites pressing their own claims to power through the vigorous protests which followed Parliament’s refusal to seat the elected member from Middlesex, John Wilkes (Solkin, "The Battle of the Ciceros," p. 412).
produced, had a man from Arpinum not come and pointed it out!"

The seemingly disinterested nature of this action is underscored here since Cicero's discovery conferred honour on a city that was not his own.

For his painting West has adopted a classical text which celebrates the virtuous actions of the citizen-scholar. This subject position in late eighteenth-century England was available only to those few individuals whose wealth, leisure, social status and gender permitted them to study classical languages, history, and literature. These preconditions restricted classical learning to men seeking entry into the professions which specifically required it (law, medicine, and the clergy), and to cultivated gentlemen whose source of income was largely unearned. Such scholarly pursuits were first and foremost the province of landowners, whose affairs were largely delegated to managers. Men actively employed in industry and trade might have had the money, but not the leisure to devote to serious study of the classics. For women, time and money were not the only obstacles to classical training. Although a small number of middle- and upper-class women did receive training at home in the classics from their fathers or brothers, they were forbidden

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access to universities. What private or institutional education women did receive was focussed most commonly on refining their manners through the teaching of music, French, drawing and dancing, or on developing their domestic virtue through training in needlework and Bible study.\textsuperscript{11} The educational constraints placed upon women and the vast majority of lower- and middle-class men were justified on the basis of social utility: highly developed mental powers and a vast range of knowledge were deemed unnecessary for individuals who occupied the lower ranks of the 'natural' hierarchy which ordered society.

The powerful social connotations of the classical subject for the contemporary viewer of West's \textit{Cicero} did not go unremarked by John Taylor, art critic for the ultra-conservative \textit{True Briton}. In his review of West's painting upon its exhibition at the Royal Academy, he claimed that the connoisseur and amateur landscape artist Sir George Beaumont had suggested the theme, adding that it was "suitable to the taste and intelligence of that Gentleman."\textsuperscript{12} Whether or not Beaumont actually was responsible for the subject, he evidently was pleased with the final production. The landscape artist and diarist Joseph Farington recorded that Beaumont declared West's landscape to be better than a Poussin, noting that "for grandeur and variety, and


\textsuperscript{12}[John Taylor], "Royal Academy," \textit{True Briton}, 6 May 1797.
entertainment it is remarkable.\textsuperscript{13,14} Such a response is not surprising since the formal characteristics of the composition were geared to the taste of a patrician of Beaumont's rank and sophistication. Only such a cultivated individual would have been able to identify and thus appreciate West's compositional allusions to Wilson, and beyond him to Claude and Poussin, the seventeenth-century masters so revered in academic tradition and so highly prized in the sales room.\textsuperscript{15}

John Barrell convincingly argues that beyond the cultural prestige accruing to a work such as West's Cicero, with its classical theme and reliance on old master models, the very use of a generalized compositional syntax signified mental capacities reserved for male members of the educated elite.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13} Joseph Farington, The Diary of Joseph Farington, eds. Kenneth Garlick, Angus Macintyre, and Kathryn Cave (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978-1984), 9 April 1797. Note: in this and subsequent references to the Farington Diary, the date of the entry, rather than the page and volume number will be cited.

\textsuperscript{14} Claude's landscapes were fetching prices as high or higher than historical or religious pieces by the Italian masters during the Napoleonic period; Poussin's paintings, although not as highly valued, were commanding respectable sums of well over one thousand guineas. See Gerald Reitlinger, The Economics of Taste: The Rise and Fall of Picture Prices 1760-1960 (London: Barrie and Rocklett, 1961), pp. 275 and 414-5.

\textsuperscript{15} John Barrell, "The Public Prospect and the Private View: The Politics of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain," in Reading Landscape: Country-City-Capital, ed. Simon Pugh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 19-20. This argument is even more fully elaborated with respect to the academic discourse of history painting in Barrell, The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt.
Only such gentlemen were presumed to have the knowledge and intellectual capacity to recognize that the Cicero was the pictorial end-product of a process of abstraction and synthesis. Within such a signifying system, a pictorial element such as a tree or classical temple was taken to represent the essential and universal qualities inherent in all trees and temples—qualities which the artist has learned to recognize and to depict from the study of past art and nature. These diverse elements were then harmoniously integrated into a unified and idealized whole. In comprehending such a landscape then, the knowing viewer demonstrated his capacity to distinguish the general from the diversity of the particular. Barrell argues that this ability to generalize signified not only aesthetic acumen, but political capacity as well.

Barrell's interpretation of this "political theory of painting," as he calls it, derives from the highly provocative thesis developed by the anti-Marxist political historian J. G. A. Pocock, who asserts that a civic humanist or republican discourse was a major intellectual and political force in eighteenth-century England. This was a discourse which, according to

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16 This is a condensed summary of the theory of central forms which was the centrepiece of Joshua Reynolds' program of history painting. See his Discourses on Art, ed. Robert Wark (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1959), especially Discourse III. All further references are to this edition. Later in this chapter Reynolds' theory of academic practice will be further discussed in relation to the writings of landscape artist, Edward Dayes.

Pocock, identified landed ownership as a precondition for public virtue and political action: an individual's virtue and independence were understood to be most firmly secured by ownership of landed property, since this allowed him to have as few contingent relationships with other men as possible. Such an economically independent subject was best suited for participation in the public (i.e., political) domain, since his freedom from the corrupting power of private interest permitted him to 'take the large view' and act on behalf of the general interests of the whole society.  

In drawing a connection between this political discourse and certain artistic discourses and practices, such as the production of history paintings and idealized panoramic landscapes, Barrell identifies a common link in the ability to abstract the general from the particular. That is, the political capacity to discern the public interest from a nexus of private interests was demonstrated on the aesthetic level by a taste for representations like the Cicero, which were produced by observing and comparing a wide range of human characters and natural phenomena in order to arrive at a general synthesis. Although he does consider the enhancement of status that accrues to the artistic subject in producing a liberal art which requires elevated intellectual capacities, Barrell's analysis focusses  

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largely on the construction through visual representation of the viewer, singly and as a community of viewers, that is, a public. Through their ability to mobilize their social knowledge (the ability to abstract the general from the particular) in viewing and enjoying the most elevated forms of painting, viewers are able to recognize their common character, and therefore the common good is made visible to them.26

26Barrell, The Political Theory of Painting, p. 63. Critics such as Cesare Vasoli charge Pocock with transforming civic humanism into a metaphorical category inadequate to describe the historically specific ways in which individuals positions themselves with respect to commercial society [Cesare Vasoli, "The Machiavellian Moment: A Grand Ideological Synthesis," Journal of Modern History 49:4 (December 1977), pp. 661-2]. Barrell has failed to acknowledge this and other critiques of Pocock's work, and therefore his own analysis is open to the same charge of ahistoricity as Pocock's. At issue in both Pocock's and Barrell's account is how pervasive civic humanist discourse was. Especially in his later writings Pocock is careful to identify civic humanism as an oppositional political discourse, which combined notions of virtue, autonomy and landed ownership with a historical appeal to the rights guaranteed under the Ancient Constitution (whose origins were located in "time immemorial," or variously, consigned to the vagaries of a gothic, usually Saxon, past) [Pocock, Virtue, Commerce and History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 95-7]. These arguments and appeals were then deployed as a means of critiquing a corrupt Court party composed of men (including landowners) whose incomes were derived in part from government pensions, sinecures, loans, and financial speculations. By the early 1800s anti-ministerial advocates for Parliamentary reform would, upon occasion, invoke notions of republican virtue and the Ancient Constitution in their campaign against governmental corruption. But it is necessary to distinguish between civic humanism as an oppositional political position, and a much broader endorsement of landed ownership. As indicated in the Introduction, asserting that landed proprietors were the natural claimants to public virtue and political authority was not the exclusive property of Tory radicals, Old Whigs, and other political dissidents. This claim was also enshrined in law and upheld within the bastions of the dominant court party, however 'corrupted' by abstract forms of capital. To connect an academic theory of painting based upon ideal or general forms to an oppositional political discourse, deployed only by certain
While the immediate viewing community for public art might be considered as that constituted within the confines of the national, theories of academic practice encouraged artists to paint for a supra-national community of knowing viewers who could identify universal ideals in the generalized forms which are represented on canvas.\(^{21}\) Hence Joshua Reynolds recommended that history painters select subjects from the scriptures and classical literature and history since they were "familiar and interesting to all Europe, without being degraded by the vulgarism of ordinary life in any country."\(^{22}\)

This formulation of a universalist aesthetic ideal accords well with the eighteenth-century phenomenon of cosmopolitanism which distinguished British and continental elites from the lower orders of society.\(^{23}\) While the lower ranks lacked the wealth, education and leisure to broaden their focus beyond local concerns, the propertied classes in Britain had access to landowning interests against other landowners who were allied with finance capital, is to take too narrow a view of the function and appeal of academic discourse. Rather, the power and appeal of that artistic discourse lay in its compatibility with this much more widely received notion of public governance based upon landowners' capacity to discern the general interests of society.

\(^{21}\)Barrell briefly discusses this point with reference to Shaftesbury (Barrell, Political Theory of Painting, p. 6).

\(^{22}\)Reynolds, Discourse IV, p. 58.

\(^{23}\)Gerald Newman has considered the issue of cosmopolitanism at some length in The Rise of English Nationalism, A Cultural History 1740-1830 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), see especially pp. 1-47.
continental culture and shared common interests (political as well as social) with the ruling elites of other European states. The notion of cosmopolitanism, then, was an important feature of an elite identity secured by cultivation and refinement as well as virtue and independence. That such an identity could represent the antithesis of a national subject is suggested in this breezy characterization of the British gentleman which appeared in the short-lived fashionable weekly, the Lounger, in 1786:

A well-educated British gentleman is of no country whatever, he unites in himself the characteristics of all foreign nations; he talks and dresses in French, and sings in Italian; he rivals the Spanish in indolence, and the Germans in drinking; his house is Grecian and his offices Gothic; and his furniture Chinese.\(^{24}\)

Such an overtly anti-nationalistic formulation of the British gentleman became increasingly rare after the French Revolution and the entry of Britain into war with France in 1793. After this time the propertied classes and their advocates increasingly emphasized their ties with the lower orders of their own nation and proclaimed the benefits which their broad knowledge and experience could bring to the national community.\(^{25}\)

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\(^{25}\) See Chapter IV for a discussion of this issue in connection with the events of the immediate post-war period, 1815-1820.
The Lounger's description of the cosmopolitan restricts its focus to males only. As such it accords with the type of viewing subject produced by a painting such as West's Cicero and by academic theory generally. By the 1790s the existence of class and gender specific differences in intellectual capacities was accepted as a matter of 'common sense' throughout the entire spectrum of the commercial, financial and landed elite. Thus, the bourgeois liberal journalist Leigh Hunt, writing in 1815, regarded "men as possessing the more active and powerful intellects, and women the more general taste and amiableness...We think, however, that this distinction is confined to the superior classes; and that the common stock of men and women are pretty nearly the same." Hunt's views on the mental capacities of women were shared by the evangelical and politically conservative writer Hannah More who declared in 1799 that

Both in composition and action they [women] excel in details; but they do not so much generalize their ideas as men, nor do their minds seize a great subject with so large a grasp...A woman sees the world, as it were, from a little elevation in her own garden, where she makes an exact survey of home scenes, but takes not in that wider range of distant prospects which he who stands on a loftier eminence commands.²⁷

²⁶[Leigh Hunt], "The Round Table, #8," Examiner, 19 February 1815, p. 123. Hunt continued by declaring that great numbers of men in trade and business have no ideas whatsoever unconnected to money-making. Hunt's article was written in defense (!) of women's intellectual powers as a response to a previous "Round Table" essay by William Hazlitt in which that writer claimed women had no ability to think at all.

Within the epistemological paradigms of both the liberal Hunt and the conservative More, West's prospect of ancient Sicily, populated with idealized human figures and classical ruins, would have been considered far beyond the reach of the uneducated multitudes and women, confined as they were to the narrow spheres of their private and domestic interests.

It must be remembered, however, that these contemporary notions of what constituted private and local interest versus universal and public "disinterestedness" were profoundly ideological. The fact that a gentleman possessed large amounts of property, landed or otherwise, years of classical education, and cosmopolitan tastes was no guarantee of his placing public before private interests. Beaumont, to whom West gave an oil sketch of the Cicero, had, it is true, been uninterested in overseeing the management of his own estate; but this neglect was turned to the temporary advantage of his estate manager, who was later found guilty of "scandalous imposition."\[28\] Beaumont regained his interest in such affairs in 1795 when his colliers rioted and he helped finance their prosecution. This assertion of control over his domestic labour force was consistent with his supposedly public-spirited actions as Tory M. P. from 1790-6. During this period he consistently supported repressive

legislation such as the Seditious Meetings Bill, designed to quash any democratic sentiments among the middle and lower classes.\ citation

The function of a highly erudite classicized picture such as the Cicero, then, can be said to render invisible such private desires and interests of the knowing subject of the painting (i.e., a viewer such as Beaumont).\ citation

In addition to being the most influential connoisseur of his day, Beaumont was also a well-known amateur who exhibited at the Royal Academy in the mid-1790s and early 1800s. Amateurs, a term which at this time was applied to those members of the elite who devoted part of their leisure to a serious study of the arts or sciences, frequently exhibited at the Academy. Rarely, however, did an amateur attain the prominence of Beaumont, who was regarded by many art critics, members of the nobility and academicians as among the two or three leading landscape painters\ citation

\citation

Owen and Brown, pp. 93 and 84-87.

Works such as West's Cicero, which confirmed the superior status of those forms of knowledge, cultural pursuits and political values associated with patrician society, could serve interests other than those of cultivated landowners such as Beaumont. The purchaser of West's painting, Henry Hope, was not of Beaumont's class or nationality, but a wealthy Dutch merchant who fled Holland when the French invaded that country in 1794. He emigrated to England where he retired from business and devoted part of his time to collecting paintings (he owned at least five of West's) and classical artifacts (von Erffa and Staley, p. 520). Neither a liberal education nor an appointment to public office was required in order for wealthy merchants such as Hope to appreciate the social prestige associated with the ownership of antique art, old master paintings, and contemporary history paintings.
of the 1795-1800 period.\textsuperscript{31} Few of the works which Beaumont exhibited at this time have been located; but from what has been identified, it would seem that he, like many of his professional counterparts, produced works which were patterned, more or less freely, after old master compositions. A case in point is The Forest, (R. A. 1800?, Figure 2). Felicity Owen and David Brown have described The Forest as a "competent essay in the fashionable Dutch picturesque manner," but the disposition of the trees, both on the left and in the centre, the massing of forms in the foreground and the placement of the vista through the trees in the left centre suggests a close and careful modelling after the composition of a Claude which Beaumont had purchased in 1787, the Landscape with Goatherd and Goats.\textsuperscript{32}

That such an artistic practice, which conformed so completely to traditional models, affirmed Beaumont's possession of public virtue is suggested in reviews of his exhibited work from the 1790s. John Taylor, the conservative art critic who in 1797 had praised Beaumont's taste in suggesting to West the subject for the Cicero, also had warm words that same year for one of the amateur's own landscapes (R. A., #163, unlocated):

\textsuperscript{31}Owen and Brown, pp. 80-81 and 95. Among those most frequently cited in press reviews as the leading landscape painters were Francis Bourgeois, and Philippe de Loutherbourg, with Turner and Girtin mentioned frequently as the most promising among the younger artists.

\textsuperscript{32}Owen and Brown, p. 148. Claude's landscape is now in the National Gallery, London; it is reproduced in Owen and Brown as Figure 27.
There is higher feeling than mere gratification of the eye, in looking at the productions of this Gentleman...for we see GENIUS in possession of rank and affluence, yet following the bent of taste and sensibility...There is nothing glaring and gaudy, but on the contrary all is truth, simplicity and nature.\textsuperscript{33}

In a formulation which we will encounter more than once in the course of this investigation, the possession of creative power (genius) and social power (rank and affluence) are presented as conditions to be admired, but also to be monitored and controlled. Beaumont's willingness to model his own production after the themes, composition, and subdued colouring of the old masters is seen by Taylor as a sign of the amateur's willingness to submit to the legislative force of tradition and social feeling. Genius at this historical moment connoted a divine or naturally endowed creative force which operated outside of established rules and convention.\textsuperscript{34} Taylor's remarks suggest that when such genius was combined with the possession of wealth and elevated rank, the potential to defy or ignore established

\textsuperscript{33} [John Taylor], "Royal Academy," \textit{True Briton}, 4 May 1797.

\textsuperscript{34} The control and management of this naturally-endowed creativity that characterizes genius is a central concern of Joshua Reynolds' \textit{Discourses}. Reynolds sought to bring this unruly power "to law" through the program of study promoted at the Royal Academy (see especially Discourses VI and XI). Although, as Robert Uphaus argues, Reynolds attempted to redefine and pacify the concept of genius, most of his account of academic theory is directed to the task of control and management. For Uphaus' discussion of the \textit{Discourses}, see "The Ideology of Reynolds' \textit{Discourses on Art}," \textit{Eighteenth Century Studies} 21:1 (Fall 1978), pp. 59-73.
rules (social or artistic) was increased. Hence he commends Beaumont for resisting the temptation to deploy the power which wealth and creativity can bring for the purposes of personal aggrandizement through "glaring and gaudy" self-display. Within this context the terms "truth, simplicity and nature," serve to do more than naturalize a complex and highly allusive representation of the external world; what is also being signified is a virtuous and public-spirited social subject, whose identity is confirmed by his responsible, controlled exercise of power.

The need for self-control in the exercise of power and privilege was a recurrent theme in counter-revolutionary Britain. Despite their economic and political differences, the bourgeoisie, landed gentry and the financial elite discovered a common purpose in securing their property and authority against any attempt by the multitude to follow the lead of what were perceived as their revolutionary counterparts in France. In such a climate political opposition rarely found expression through a radical critique of the unequal distribution of property and political power. Rather, the attack took the much more

Those radicals who did continue to advocate such overtly democratic opinions found themselves subject to prosecution and imprisonment. For example, between 1795 and 1812 Daniel Eaton was prosecuted seven times, imprisoned fifteen months, and outlawed for three years (for the period when he fled to the United States) because of his activities as a publisher of Paine's *Age of Reason* and other radical tracts [Edward P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), p. 105].
moderate form of appeals or demands that the dominant elite govern wisely and set a good moral example as the ‘natural’ leaders of the society. Within the parameters of such a critique, condemning the excesses of the wealthy and powerful was not a call for a reorganization of the social and economic structure, but for a recommitment to the ideals which were seen to underlie the existing arrangements. As a result there was a broad consensus among diverse classes and interests (financial, commercial, landed, and industrial) that the national welfare required a moral, public-spirited ruling elite. The major point of contention was whether the existing elite was the embodiment of this ideal or living proof of its corruption.

In either case, during the 1790s men such as the Tory landowner Beaumont could be held up as a model of the modest, citizen-scholar by conservatives such as Taylor as well as political liberals such as the acerbic art critic Anthony Pasquin. In a review of the landscapes Beaumont exhibited at

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36 The liberal political sympathies of Anthony Pasquin (the pseudonym for John Williams) were apparent in the art reviews which he published in pamphlet form and in newspapers such as the Morning Post in the 1790s. See Shelley Bennett, "Anthony Pasquin and the Function of Art Journalism in Late Eighteenth-Century England," British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies 8:2 (1985), pp. 197-207. His reviews frequently contained vehement attacks on artists whom he disliked for personal or political reasons. Thus both West’s person and his art were strongly criticized by Pasquin in 1794, largely because of his close ties with the court of George III. Pasquin became the object of a Tory counter-attack in the pages of the reactionary and xenophobic Anti-Jacobin. In 1797 Pasquin lost a libel suit which he brought against the paper’s editor, William Gifford; it was later revealed that the Tory government had paid part of
the R. A. in 1794 Pasquin interjected a paean to the amateur which served as an attack on the corruption of the leisured classes:

I congratulate society upon these testimonies of laudable endeavour [i.e., Beaumont’s paintings], which prove, that amidst the ocean of contamination, which sullies and wrecks so many of our flimsy sprigs of distinction, a few of both sexes are discoverable, who have the hardihood to prefer the consolations arising from invigorating study, to the succeeding abominations of what is termed a life of fashion.37

This text, which invokes images of natural growth and decay in its choice of language, demonstrates how the amateur pursuit of landscape painting could be deployed in a critique of the corruption of the propertied elite. Within the terms of such a discourse, a practice such as Beaumont’s was construed not as a fashionable leisure pastime, but as a rigorous activity, morally and intellectually superior to the easy, ‘contaminating’ pleasures of fashionable life. In Chapter II I will examine more closely the fear surrounding the debasement of the individual situated within a social sphere which was increasingly identified with the private pursuit of sensuous pleasures and the possession of cultural commodities which were seen to feed those sensuous desires. Pasquin’s paean to Beaumont is an attack on Gifford’s legal expenses (Bennett, p. 204).

that construction of a debased public sphere, analogous to that of Pocock's civic humanist who attacks the corruption of commercial society by an appeal to an ethical and epistemological authority grounded in the ownership of land.

The artistic personality 'Sir George Beaumont' which was publicly constructed in such writings occupied at one and the same time two subject positions which were closely interrelated: that of knowing viewer (connoisseur) and amateur producer—positions socially superior to the artisan status traditionally held by professional artists in the eighteenth century. A primary function of the Royal Academy in its promotion of history painting as a liberal practice was to elevate the professional artist beyond this artisanal position. Such a project is evident in the advice which Reynolds gave to students in his Seventh Discourse where he encouraged them to seek out the company of "learned and ingenious men:"

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This project of elevating artists to the status of learned gentlemen was not unique to the English Academy, but was taken up by Italian writers in the late sixteenth century. See Rensselaer Lee's classic study, *Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting* (New York: Norton, 1967), pp. 41ff.
There are many such men in this age; and they will be pleased with communicating their ideas to artists, when they see them curious and docile, if they are treated with that respect and deference which is so justly their due. Into such society, young artists, if they make it the point of their ambition, will by degrees be admitted..."³⁹

The academic history painter, then, was an artist who through his practice and docile submission to the authority of his social superiors, aspired to the status of the liberally educated gentleman.

It is important to note, however, that the converse of this statement was not true—the gentleman did not, in his study and practice of painting, aspire to produce history paintings. The exhibiting history of painter-turned-aristocrat Nathaniel Dance is extremely revealing in this regard. The artist exhibited history paintings at the Society of Artists in the 1760s and at the Royal Academy the year of its first exhibition, 1769. During the next two decades he exhibited primarily portraits and the occasional history painting. In 1790 Dance resigned his membership in the Royal Academy upon his marriage to the wealthy widow, Harriet Dummer. He took the name of Holland, became a parliamentary representative for East Grinstead, and assumed a baronetcy in 1800.⁴⁰ Between 1790 and 1800 he continued

³⁹Reynolds, Discourse VII, p. 118.

occasionally to exhibit at the R. A. as an honorary exhibitor, but from this time forth he exhibited only landscapes. The cultivated man of property might choose to advise history painters on a choice of theme, as Beaumont evidently did in the case of West's *Cicero* but he did not execute history paintings. Instead, landscape painting (and even more so landscape drawing) was the genre identified with the learned and leisured man of property.

While landscape painting as an amateur activity may have confirmed the superior social status of the propertied gentleman in the waning years of the eighteenth century, landscape painting did not similarly enhance the status of the professional painter. During these years the production of topographical landscapes remained one of the most common and also one of the lowliest forms of artistic practice. One such topographical artist was Edward Dayes, whose writings and art signal an acute, even painful awareness of the disjunction which existed between his own professional status and the academic ideal of the history

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*Beaumont produced and exhibited landscape paintings with sublime or poetic associations, such as the *Peel Caste in a Storm* (ex. R. A. 1806, reproduced as fig. 64 in Owen and Brown), but he attempted neither history nor historical landscape paintings of the type West and Turner were painting.*

*Further study is needed of amateur landscape painting and drawing as practices which signifies gentility and erudition.*
Remembered chiefly for some derogatory comments published in 1805 about his late pupil, Thomas Girtin, and less so for the topographical watercolours and history paintings he produced from the 1790s until his death in 1804, Dayes also wrote ten essays on the art of painting and drawing. The essays have been virtually neglected in art historical scholarship, probably because of their singular lack of originality. It is this very fact, however, that commends them to our attention. For these essays restate and affirm, with a few important modifications, the principles of academic practice set down in their most authoritative form by Joshua Reynolds a quarter of a century earlier. I would argue that in his restatement of the rules of

The actual practice of history painting in the early 1800s was as problematic as that of topography. The latter was much in demand but provided little professional status, while the former produced few commissions, but conferred professional esteem on the few men who actually made a living at it. Even Benjamin West, President of the Royal Academy and History Painter to the King, turned to the production of landscapes and "fancy" subjects (including cloying representations of bacchantes and cupids) in order to diversify a once successful, but, after 1800, declining career. For examples of West's paintings of bacchantes and cupids see catalogue nos. 125-136 in von Erffa and Staley.

Nine of his essays were published in the Philosophical Magazine from January 1801 to March 1803; they were then collected after Dayes' death in May 1804 and published in 1805 along with the tenth essay on colouring landscapes, a series of brief biographies of British artists, and a tour of Derbyshire and Yorkshire.

Reynolds' Discourses are the principal eighteenth-century texts dealing with academic practice to be cited here because Dayes, like many of his contemporaries, considered them the most authoritative. This is not to suggest, however, that Reynolds'
academic practice, Dayes, like Reynolds, was chiefly concerned with advancing his own status as a professional artist—a status jeopardized by contemporary practices in landscape painting as well as by the continuing lack of patronage for history painting.

Like so many of his fellow artists, Dayes' advancement was hampered by a familiar circumstance—an inability to attain professional success as a history painter. The artist exhibited over a dozen history paintings, primarily scriptural subjects, at the Royal Academy in the years between 1798 and 1801. My survey of periodical reviews indicates that these works received almost no critical notice. His essays might arguably be seen as an attempt to reassert the principles of an academic practice which he was unable to enact successfully in his own production of grand style paintings.

Dayes' principal professional activity was centred upon the production of architectural and landscape drawings for a burgeoning trade in topographical engravings issued in sets or used in illustrated tours, county histories and the like. Not

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notions were original. As Robert Wark points out, they were largely a synthesis and modification of aesthetic theories of seventeenth and eighteenth century British and French writers (Wark, "Introduction," Discourses, p. xxiii).

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47 The only reference I have discovered to Dayes' history paintings was a favourable review of his Fall of the Angels, R. A. 1798, in the Whitehall Evening Post, 12-14 June 1798.
only was Dayes frustrated in his attempts at history painting, but he was also evidently dismayed at the growing success of young landscape artists such as his student Thomas Girtin, who had achieved before the age of twenty-five what Dayes had failed to gain at forty—critical acclaim and numerous commissions from the leading members of the landed aristocracy and gentry. Dayes' biographical sketch of the recently deceased Girtin insinuates that the artist's early death was caused by his moral dissipation, posited in terms of the passions overpowering reason. Following these aspersions on the late artist's morals, Dayes, unwilling to disavow totally the work of his own student, characterizes Girtin's watercolours as "slight," but also admirable as the "offspring of a strong imagination." Thus, Girtin's strong imagination is not-so-subtly linked to his passionate nature, which, uncontrolled, is presented as having been incapable of producing a serious or substantial body of work. These remarks were very likely inspired by the resentment

46 Dayes' jealousy of Girtin is asserted by Richard and Samuel Redgrave in their biographical account of British painters, A Century of British Painting (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981; orig. pub. 1866), p. 155. Despite the highly subjective nature of the Redgraves' biographies, this account is compatible with Dayes' published attack on Girtin's character. In addition, Girtin was apprenticed to Dayes, but did not serve out the full term of his contract. Martin Hardie finds no documentary evidence to support stories circulating decades after the deaths of both artists that Dayes had Girtin jailed for breach of contract [Hardie, Water-colour Painting in Britain (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 2:2]. Nonetheless, some strain between student and teacher may have precipitated the early termination of Girtin's apprenticeship.

of an older artist whose student had surpassed him. What is of interest here is the manner in which Dayes' essays on art also served as a critique of the techniques and the theoretical precepts informing the work of landscape artists like Girtin. This critique took the form of a defense not only of academic theory, but of the product of that discourse—the virtuous, and in Dayes' account, supremely rational, artistic subject that was being challenged by a new subject, the imaginative man of genius.

Although most of these essays deal with the general practice of painting, the topographer Dayes begins and ends his series with discussions of landscape painting. Many of the same intellectual, moral, and aesthetic principles which underwrite history painting are applied to this 'lower' genre. The first essay, "On the Principles of Composition as Connected with Landscape Painting" (1801) concludes by exhorting artists to "endeavor to create a nature of our own, if possible, more dignified and noble than the one that strikes our senses; we should feel an enthusiasm in our pursuits not to be satisfied with a perfection short of divine." This is a goal scarcely less ambitious than that marked out by the most zealous advocate

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50 I am not implying that Dayes' essays were a conscious attack on Girtin's practice, although they may have been. At issue here is the elucidating the relationship between Dayes' formulation of the artistic subject and that constructed in and around newer forms of landscape painting.

of history painting. Accordingly the emphasis is upon representing an ideal of nature that exerts a morally elevating influence upon both the producers and viewers of landscapes. Dayes repeatedly cautions his readers that this ideal of nature is not to be discovered and represented initially by a direct encounter of the individual imagination with external nature, but by a mind, disciplined by reason, conducting a long and careful study of past art. The relationship between nature as ordered by art and virtuous behaviour is clearly articulated in a later essay on drawing:

To have a just relish for what is elegant and proper in painting, sculpture, and architecture, must be a fine preparation for true notions relative to character and behaviour. Should such a one be overpowered by passion, or swerve from his duty, we need not fear but he will return on the first reflection, and with a redoubled resolution not to err a second time; for he cannot but observe, that the well being of nature, as well as of the individual, depends on regularity and order; and that a disregard of the social virtues will ever be accompanied with shame and remorse.

In this passage Dayes forcefully represents the underlying order

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52 The idea that the function of painting was to represent public virtue via universal and ideal forms, rather than the external appearances of nature, was promoted by English aestheticians beginning with the Third Earl of Shaftesbury early in the eighteenth century. Reynolds reasserted this association between public virtue and ideal beauty in his Discourses. For a discussion of these issues in Shaftesbury’s and Reynolds’ writings see John Barrell, The Political Theory of Painting, pp. 27-33 and 76-99.


of nature as an active moral power capable of bringing the passionate individual back to his 'true' identity as a social subject. But this natural order can only be comprehended, Dayes implies, by those whose taste for nature has been tempered and refined through a thorough study of art.

Although he briefly notes the utilitarian benefits of drawing, both for amateurs and professional artists, Dayes is primarily concerned with demonstrating that the process of study involved in acquiring mastery of drawing "improves the reasoning faculty," "harmonizes the temper," and "regulates moral conduct." The cultivation of such moral and intellectual qualities is not presented as a matter solely of private enrichment, but on the contrary is seen to impinge upon the well-being of the nation. For example, the gentlemen who travels is advised to educate himself about the arts so that he may enrich the "national stock of knowledge," upon his return. Such "informed" tourism, far from being a private leisure indulgence, is in fact presented as a public-spirited activity. This essay reaffirms, then, the subject position of the liberal man of letters as embodied in the knowing amateur.

Dayes also acknowledges in passing the position of the female amateur within such a social paradigm. In a footnote in which he praises the amateur practice of Sir George Beaumont and

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Sir Richard Colt Hoare (a Wiltshire landowner and collector), he addresses women readers for the first and only time in his writings:

While we are recommending to gentlemen to learn to draw, it must not be understood, that we wish to deprive the ladies of the pleasure and advantage that must result from their practising an art that stands, perhaps, before all others for improving our taste, particularly in such things as are connected with decoration.

Relegated to a place on the margins of his text, and to a marginal and artisanal practice, that of decoration, women are thus effectively excluded from Dayes' operative subject positions—that of knowing viewer and liberal artist.

Like Reynolds before him, Dayes believed that for this liberal notion of the artistic subject to prevail, the power of individual artistic imagination and genius had to be devalued and regulated. Academic rules and the study of past art could make no claim upon the development of an artist if genius and imagination—commonly understood as inherently and arbitrarily endowed upon particular individuals—were accepted as the necessary and sufficient qualifications for the professional mastery of painting. Reynolds' strategy was to submit imagination and genius to the rule of law by invoking tradition.

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We have seen how Dayes also invokes nature (in its ideal form) and tradition, through reference to the canon of the old masters, as a means of regulating the encounter between the individual and external nature. He also seeks to diminish the power of the artistic imagination by de-emphasizing its creative role and emphasizing its function as a storehouse of images which serve as raw material for the reasoning artistic mind to process. The imagination is involved in selecting these images, but he cautions that this selection is only part, and a lesser part at that, of the process of artistic production. Combining these images to form a unified composition is the key operation: "Imagination is shown in the production of materials, but to arrange them requires the soundest judgment."

That the power of the imagination must be circumscribed even in the rather mundane function Dayes assigns to it is evident in

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See infra, p. 37 n. 34, for brief remarks concerning Reynolds' attempts to regulate the power of individual genius. In seeking to explain how such discrete discourses function within a larger discursive nexus literary historian and theorist Peter de Bolla has determined that adjacent discourses are frequently deployed as a means of legislating (i.e., regulating) a given discourse which threatens to become excessive, such as the discourse on the imagination or the sublime. The success of such a regulatory move is dependant upon the authority of the neighbouring discourse being unquestioned. Key legislative terms (such as nature and reason) remain undefined and unexamined, since they remain outside of the discursive analytic (de Bolla, pp. 11-13 and 54-5).

"But unless all this [compiling of imagery by a 'lively fancy'] be accompanied by a good judgment, the imagination will riot at the expense of reason, and we shall never possess a sound and accurate style. Hence it is that we often confound genius with an active imagination, not recollecting that excess is not its character."

It is fair, I think, to read this injunction against excessive imagination as a response to artists such as Girtin (and also Turner). These artists were hailed publicly and privately as geniuses who had powerfully transformed Dayes' chosen genre of topographical watercolour drawing from an imitative art to one which was boldly expressive of the individual imagination.

Dayes was unusual among contemporary writers on art in advocating the importance of reason in the control of the imagination. During this period of conservative reaction to the French Revolution and its aftermath, reason retained the anti-religious and politically radical resonance it had earlier assumed in the writings of the French philosophes, especially after the publication of Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* in 1795.

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\*As we shall see in Chapter V, there was criticism as well as praise of Girtin's and Turner's work. For contemporary references to the genius and originality of both artists see, for example, the reviews of the Royal Academy exhibitions in the *Monthly Mirror*, July 1798, p. 29 and the *Sun*, 13 May 1799.
and 1796. At such a moment, in fact, both reason and imagination could connote the false systems and visionary practices which were regarded as synonymous with radical republicanism. Dayes’ invocation of such a politically loaded term as ‘reason’ does suggest a past or present (but discreetly veiled) sympathy with a radical politics, although his writings can be even more clearly identified with what was at this moment a more commonly-held (and safer) reformist position, critical of the abuses of power, but not the system which authorizes it.

In any event, Dayes’ appeal to reason was secured not by an...

\[ \text{\footnotesize It is noteworthy in this regard that Dayes promotes the regulatory function of reason much more strongly than Reynolds, who relies more heavily on the force of tradition. The older artist’s suspiciousness of reason discernibly increases throughout the Discourses, which were delivered over the years 1769 to 1790. For example in Discourse XIII (1786) he warns that “all theories which attempt to direct or to control the Art, upon any principles falsely called rational...independent of the known first effect produced by objects on the imagination, must be false and delusive. For though it may appear bold to say it, the imagination is here the residence of truth” (p. 230). Both Robert Uphaus and John Barrell connect Reynolds’ concern that what passes for reason may in fact be only a theory based upon false principles, with the radicalization of the political discourse on reason. This discourse was countered in the late eighteenth century by conservatives such as Burke and Johnson (both friends and mentor-figures for Reynolds) with an appeal to custom and tradition. See Uphaus, pp. 59-73; and Barrell, The Political Theory of Painting, pp. 141-158.}\]

\[ \text{\footnotesize In Chapter V I will discuss John Foster’s writings which connection the romantic imagination with utopian political systems.}\]

\[ \text{\footnotesize Dayes’ support for the British political system is indicated in his essay on drawing. In remarks concerning foreign travel he touts the Britain’s political and economic superiority. Every Briton, he says should travel in order to add to the stock of national knowledge, for "it cannot be said that he travels to enjoy the advantage of a better government, or because other nations have a greater commerce" ("Essays," p. 259).}\]
appeal to individual deduction or speculation, but through its connection to taste as a form of judgment based on prolonged study.

Whereas other writers, such as Prince Hoare, were to associate taste with desire, Dayes emphasizes its judicial function, and thus its close connection with reason. In a passage worth quoting at length Dayes explains that

taste is not an imaginary something, depending on the accident of birth, but arises from, and is immediately connected with, a sound judgment. Were there not in art, as in every thing else, a standard of right and wrong, all opinion must be capricious; but to acquire just notions, we must habituate ourselves to compare and digest our thoughts, be well read in human nature, as connected with the characters, manners, passions, and affections of man; this, with some knowledge of the human mind, will, in time, enable us to distinguish right from wrong, which constitutes the true principles of taste...Real truth does not depend on opinion; it is immutable, fixed, and permanent, and in it must be sought whatever is grand and beautiful. Apparent truth depends on fashion, and like that, is fluctuating and uncertain; it may be considered as a sort of impostor, for though it carries the appearance of science, it is far from having any true connection with it.

In this text Dayes, again following Reynolds, sets out a contrast between "apparent" and the "real" truth upon which sound judgment

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*In his short-lived publication, The Artist, Prince Hoare describes taste as an arduous desire which "pants to leave the shackles of laborious scrutiny, and indulge its own propensities" (Hoare, "On the Premature Exercise of Taste and Its Effects on Works of Genius," The Artist, 4 April 1807, p. 2).

It is revealing to note those words which take on a pejorative cast as Dayes draws out the chimerical qualities of "apparent truth:" imaginary, accident, opinion, fashion. These terms all connote that which is fleeting, insubstantial, outside the bounds of reason and thus beyond control. Their frame of reference lies not solely in the domain of art and aesthetics, but in the realm of the social and the economic as well. There, accidents of birth can confer power, if not taste, and opinion and fashion drive a commercial market which feeds on the fluctuations of insatiable popular demands.

It is significant that Dayes employs the term 'opinion,' used in the early and mid-eighteenth century, rather than 'public opinion,' which had gained increasing favour in the 1790s. Jürgen Habermas has traced the transformation of opinion into public opinion during the eighteenth century. He observes that the earlier term, "'opinion' in the sense of a judgment that lacks certainty, whose truth would still have to be proven, is associated with 'opinion' in the sense of a basically suspicious

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"Dayes' argument here closely follows Reynolds' discussion of taste and opinion in Discourse VII, especially pp. 120-22. However, unlike Dayes, Reynolds adopts a pragmatic position in recommending that artists should to some extent accommodate opinion, for "whilst these opinions and prejudices ...continue, they operate as truth; and the art, whose office is to please the mind, as well as instruct it, must direct itself according to opinion, or it will not attain its end" (p. 122). For a further analysis of opinion and prejudice in Discourse VII see Barrell, The Political Theory of Painting, pp. 141-5."
repute among the multitude." This is clearly the sense that Dayes wishes to invoke in opposing the capricious desires and ideas of the multitude to a standard of taste which is permanent, immutable, and only discernable after "habituating" oneself through a slow process of study. Habermas notes that it was in the public debates around the American and French Revolutions that the notion of 'public opinion' was formed (appearing first in the writings of Burke). In these debates 'opinion' was transformed into 'judgment' though reasoned public arguments by private individuals (a bourgeoisie defined by their ownership of commodities rather than land) about affairs of state. This notion that public opinion was the outcome of contemporary conflicts between interested private individuals was well-suited to the exigencies of a public sphere increasingly defined in terms of private economic interests rather than disinterested political virtue.

But in the context of his essays, Dayes is unwilling to

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Habermas, p. 94. As Habermas points out, the sphere constituted by public opinion, which he calls the bourgeois public sphere, is an ideological construct formed by the conflation of two incongruent spaces. The public space in which privatized individuals (including women and men unpossessed of property) in their capacities as human beings engage in critical literary debates about their private experiences is rendered indistinguishable from the public space in which the male owners of goods and persons (the bourgeois, but also his economic and social superiors) conducted critical political debates concerning the state regulation of their private lives (pp. 55-6).
accept that reasoned aesthetic judgments could arise from debates among self-interested individuals. For him, an aggregation of private individuals speaking in their own interests produces collective fantasies, not critical judgments. This conclusion is born out in his essay on beauty in which the potential excesses of the private imagination and the collective fantasies forming opinion are reduced to equivalence: "Fancy, or opinion, will go but a little way towards illustrating a subject that seems to influence on some universal principle, and to affect all persons, and at all times."^^

^^Dayes, "Essays," p. 214. The above-cited passages are only two of several in Dayes' writings in which his anti-commercialism and aesthetic traditionalism are articulated in a language which derives from the discourse of civic humanism. It should be recalled that civic humanism is an oppositional discourse which advocates certain notions of property ownership, citizenship and virtue together with a return to the original precepts of the Ancient Constitution. Although Dayes does not specifically refer to the Ancient Constitution, his condemnation of William the Conqueror and glorification of the Saxon King Alfred and General Fairfax (a leader in Cromwell's army) in the tours section of his writings are strong indications of his sympathy with a constitutionalist reading of early English history (Dayes, "An Excursion through the Principal Parts of Derbyshire and Yorkshire," in Works, pp. 158, 161, and 168). As Christopher Hill has argued, this reading understood the Norman Conquest as the imposition of a foreign system of oppressive and absolutist rule on a society which, although ruled by monarchs, had been egalitarian and just. Although the notion of a "Norman yoke" had originated in radical circles in the late seventeenth century, it witnessed a resurgence a century later, being promoted by English Jacobins and parliamentary reformists as late as the mid-1790s. Dayes' endorsement of such a reading of history, combined with his appeal to reason, critique of luxury and fashionable life and exhortations to personal and public virtue strongly indicate a reformist politics which was expressed in civic humanist language. The most authoritative discussion of the "Norman yoke" conceptualization of English history remains Christopher Hill's. See his Puritanism and Revolution (London: Secker and Warburg, 1958), pp. 50-122. For the association of the "Norman yoke" with English radicalism at
Such an insistence on defining an artistic practice which addresses a supra-national public via universal principles and ideal forms severely circumscribes the degree to which the individual's private character can be inscribed in public works of art. In his essays on manner and watercolour technique Dayes addresses, perhaps more directly than anywhere else in his essays, the problem of regulating the artist's own character as it is made visible in his paintings. Following Reynolds he defines manner as "expressive of certain peculiar marks that invariably characterize the works of each individual...So far is a new manner from being a mark of genius, as some assert, that, could perfection in painting ever be attained, it would be unaccompanied by any peculiarity whatever." Dayes is concerned here primarily to discourage contemporary artists from slavishly imitating the manner of any particular master--a danger deriving not only from the emphasis academic discourse itself places upon copying the old masters, but also from the desire of some English artists to cash in on the popularity of seventeenth century continental paintings (old masters and their imitators) which

the end of the eighteenth century see E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, pp. 94-5.

Dayes, "Essays," p. 26. These remarks derive from Reynolds' discussion of manner; see especially Discourse Six, pp. 102-3.
were flooding the London markets during the Napoleonic Wars.\footnote{Britain had been a market for continental painting throughout the eighteenth century, to the chagrin of domestic artists like Hogarth. In the 1790s and early 1800s however, this situation was exacerbated by large number of princely and aristocratic collectors on the Continent who were selling off their paintings to avoid fines or confiscation at the hands of the invading forces of Napoleon (Reitlinger, pp. 39-40). As a result the trickle of old masters and old master imitations which made their way across the Channel increased to what seemed like a disastrous flood when viewed from the perspective of alarmed British artists.}

Thus Dayes cautions students, when copying, to select works which exhibit a manner which is "purest" and the least "vicious"—that is, which exhibits the least singularity. To ignore this advice is to give up one's independence, and thus one's claim to be a liberal artist, "for the arts cannot be liberal in the hands of those who want spirit to think for themselves."

The independent-mindedness of a liberal artist, however, is not displayed through the cultivation of one's own particular manner, for as Dayes notes in the passage just cited, the ideal artist, would have no discernable manner at all. Such a procedure not only produces an object, Nature, which is perfect, but an artistic subject which is transparent. That is, the private personality of the subject is repressed—rendered transparent—in order that it not act as a medium which distorts the "truthful" representation of Nature.\footnote{Dayes, "Essays," p. 262.}

\footnote{My use of the concept of "transparency" derives from de Bolla's analysis of eighteenth-century English treatises on oratory. The public orator in these accounts is forbidden to...}
that such perfection is not attainable, and thus, "every artist, of necessity, will have a manner; but in proportion as he succeeds in approaching perfection will his manner become more pure." Although he does not explicitly set out what a "pure" manner is, it can be inferred from his declaration that "the word manner may be applied to color, light and shade, and penciling [i.e., brushwork]." Reynolds, it should be noted, offered a broader definition of manner which also included a lack of selection of the objects of representation and a failure to use just proportions in drawing figures. For Dayes, then, manner is more specific and relates precisely to what he terms in his watercolour essay execution or "touch"—those manipulations of colour, light and brushwork which produce a brilliant, eye-catching surface. Such effects were what distinguished the productions of the young 'geniuses' Girtin and Turner, as well as older artists such as Loutherbourg and Richard Westall, from

impose his private personality on the texts he speaks. Rather, he must become "transparent," so that the meaning and expression of the texts may pass through his body unaffected by his individuality (de Bolla, p. 151). Reynolds' discussion of manner, interestingly, comes in Discourse VI where he defends the practice of imitation against that of disregarding academic rules and models and following the bent of one's native genius. To think for oneself, Reynolds argues, is to engage in a process of critical assessment, imitation, and synthesis of the work of past masters, not to fall prey to "that false opinion, but too prevalent among artists, of the imaginary power of native genius" (Discourse VI, pp. 112-3).


Reynolds, Discourse VI, p. 103.
those of artists like Dayes and Paul Sandby who relied upon line and comparatively muted colour. Dayes' association of effects with singularity was a commonplace at the turn of the century. What was disputed was whether that singularity was to be viewed as a form of commercial self-promotion or an innate quality of the individual which allowed him to express the 'true' character of nature. Before considering further Dayes' views on this issue, it is worth examining briefly his general conceptions of landscape, and especially landscape watercolours, as set down in his final essay and in a drawing which follows the precepts of that essay.

Within the parameters of an academic practice such as Dayes has outlined, it is not only the artistic subject which is rendered transparent, but the also the genre of landscape and the medium of watercolour. Nowhere in his essay on landscape painting and his final essay on the colouring of landscapes (where he specifically refers to watercolours rather than oils) does Dayes offer an endorsement of that genre and medium comparable to his spirited defense of art in general. One can discover modest claims for what he terms "pastoral" landscape promoting a domestic ideal in his first essay on landscape. And in his essay on 'grace' he also includes a passing reference to his own practice of topography: "Equally interesting [as the pastoral], though in a less degree meritorious, stands the simple

reprenter of nature; he acquires a new character as a
topographer, provided he attach fidelity to his
representations." Clearly these statements do not amount to a
defense of landscape on its own terms. Rather they support the
absolute exclusion of artists who (like himself) work in genres
such as landscape, from the elevated ranks of their profession,
since such faithful imitations of external nature represent the
antithesis of a universal art based upon generalized, idealized
forms. Throughout the essays there is a persistent tension
between Dayes' acknowledgement of the lowly status of landscape
painting and his continued insistence that it attempt to conform
to the very academic standards which it is unqualified to meet.

This tension is registered in the essay on watercolour
where technical advice regarding the mixing and application of
watercolour pigments is accompanied by recommendations that
students copy monochrome prints of works by past masters such as
Claude, Wilson, Gainsborough, Titian, Cuyp, and Rembrandt, known
primarily for their oils." The techniques he recommends are


\*\*Dayes, "Essays," p. 282. Following the traditional mode of
instruction in drawing, Dayes advises beginners to copy the
human figure (Dayes, "Essays," p. 281). Kim Sloan has observed
that the practice of teaching beginning students to copy the
human figure, even if they were seeking training in another
genre such as landscape, was common procedure among private
drawing masters, in academies where drawing was taught, and in
eighteenth century drawing books [Sloan, "Drawing--A 'Polite
Century Culture 2 (1982), pp. 219 and 236].
restricted to firm underdrawing in black-lead pencil, and then either "dead colouring" the surface or laying in the shadows with Prussian blue, and working up the picture from dark to light through a series of washes.\textsuperscript{80} No mention is made to new techniques specific to the medium, used since the late 1790s by Turner and Girtin, which had generated widespread interest, if not universal approval.\textsuperscript{81}

The visual impact of such techniques becomes evident when we compare a work by Girtin, his Durham Castle and Cathedral (Figure 3, c. 1799) with a view by Dayes such as his Kelso Abbey (Figure 4, c. 1792).\textsuperscript{82} Dayes' drawing was produced by the techniques the artist himself recommends in his essay on watercolour. First the outlines are carefully drawn, followed by a controlled laying in of shadow "with a soft or tender colour."

The manner of arranging the light and shade is both "broad and simple" in order to avoid a distracting and confusing surface.

\textsuperscript{80}Dayes, "Essays," pp. 301-2.

\textsuperscript{81}For the development of "stopping out," scraping, and other techniques in this period see Hardie, 1:33-40. Hardie records that as early as 1800 James Roberts, the author of a practical guide to painting, recommended that students consult the watercolours of Turner and Girtin (Hardie, 2:1). See also James Roberts, Introductory Lessons with Familiar Examples in Landscapes for...Painting in Water-Colours (London: Bulmer, 1800), p. 9.

\textsuperscript{82}Christopher White notes that Dayes view of Kelso was one of several drawings based upon rough sketches by the antiquarian James Moore. It has not been possible to determine whether Dayes worked directly over Moore's original sketch or began with a new sheet of paper (English Landscape 1630-1850, p. 54).
"flutter." Thus the principal light in the work is confined to the section of sky above the abbey in accordance with Dayes' strictures that there be one major light in a composition (with no more than two others subordinate to the first). Throughout this essay Dayes emphasizes the need to produce a harmonious effect by avoiding strong contrasts, which indeed he does achieve in his abbey scene, with its gently darkened foreground, and carefully modulated sky and architecture. Girtin's view, by contrast, capitalizes upon just those active surface effects which Dayes endeavours so assiduously to avoid. Interspersed throughout the composition are three dark masses of trees and bushes and another dark mass in the central buildings by the bridge. It is difficult to speak of a 'central' light—is it to be found in the bold sweep of the clouds or the complex of architecture atop the hill? Instead, the entire composition flickers with areas of light, broken both by the dark masses and lesser shadows as well as the many dot-like touches interspersed throughout the roofs and walls of the buildings. Contemporary writers such as W. H. Pyne explained the differences in such works not only in terms of Girtin's superiority in technique but also of his "superior mental power and capacity." As suggested from his previously considered remarks on manner, Dayes took quite a different view of such matters.

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Far from endorsing these effects, Dayes warns against undue concern with individual "touch" or execution: "though execution is an excellence, it is an excellence of an inferior kind; its fascinating power ought to be guarded against, and the artist concealed as much as possible, otherwise he will lose more than he will gain." The physical transparency of watercolours is not to be subverted and manipulated into bold effects, for it is precisely that transparency which permits the artist to remain hidden and protected from a fascinating power. Dayes elsewhere defines this fascination as the lure of material rewards and popular acclaim:

To paint for what is termed effect, may answer the purpose of the idle, the ignorant, and those who make a trade of the art, but will not satisfy the discerning. The only apology the artist can offer is, that he must fish with such baits as will take: unfortunately, he does not live to paint, but paints to live.

This was the central contradiction facing artists who attempted to fashion their practice on the basis of the academic rules and precepts. Such principles ignored or dismissed the private

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Cf. Reynolds, Discourse VI: "Art in its perfection is not ostentatious; it lies hid, and works its effect unseen" (p. 101).

Dayes, p. 206. Becoming despondent over his straitened finances, Dayes neither lived to paint nor painted to live, but committed suicide in 1804. R. W. Lightbrown is perhaps not being overly dramatic when he suggests in his introduction (unpaged) to the artist's Works that "Dayes' life, in its aspirations and in its failure, is a version in miniature of the tragedies of Barry and Haydon."
functions of works which adorned the walls and occupied the portfolios of private homes, and aggressively denied the private needs of artists who had to compete in a commercial market in luxury goods in order to survive. For within the academic paradigm, the subject position of the artist as liberal man of letters and that of the artist as economic participant in the market were mutually exclusive. It was this unwillingness to recognize how untenable a theory of art had become which failed to engage with the inextricable links between cultural production and a capitalized economy, that doomed at the outset both Dayes’ attempts at history painting and his attempts to regulate landscape painting via a theory of academic practice.

Before turning to the texts and images which presented both a critique and an alternative to such a tradition-bound academicism, it will be useful to explore more fully the subject position of the artist and viewer as creatures of the market and of fashion. For this is the position that traditionalists and their critics would deplore, attempt to negate, or accommodate, but which increasingly they found impossible to ignore.
CHAPTER II

The Aesthetics of the Market and Its Artistic Offspring:
The Opaque Subject and Defiled Object

We have seen how Benjamin West, Anthony Pasquin, and Edward Dayes each constructed his version of the artistic subject by establishing its difference from and superiority to the artist as slave of the market, popular opinion, and fashion. This negative subject position in English social and cultural discourse was frequently (if not invariably) conceived of in terms of corrupting foreign influences or characteristics. Artists and viewers who were deemed to be slaves to the market were often portrayed as infected with a fascination for French fashions and ornaments. At the same time private collectors and institutional supporters of old master painting were increasingly attacked for being mercenary and also unpatriotic in their lack of support for domestic artists. Analysing such cultural phenomena will allow us to examine the tensions and interconnections which were perceived to exist between the antithetical subject positions set out thus far.

Just as the eighteenth-century concept of the artistic subject as liberal man of letters was constructed in and identified with specific discursive and institutional spaces—the aesthetic treatise, the scholarly library, the schools and
lecture halls of the Royal Academy—so its market-bound antithesis was associated with particular sites. The artistic producer and consumer of high art as a fashionable commodity were identified most closely with those sites within the metropolis in which luxury goods were sold, promoted, and displayed.1 These included auction houses, emporiums, private commercial galleries, the public exhibition spaces of the Royal Academy and British Institution, and the not so private mansions and townhouses of 'Society,' whose routs, dinners, and assemblies were reported in the 'fashionable life' columns of the press. These were sites of consumption, an activity which extended from the upper classes through an increasingly prosperous middle class and which, as Neil McKendrick, J. H. Plumb, Colin Campbell and others have emphasized, reached unprecedented dimensions by 1800.2

McKendrick has noted that the luxury of the English raised a 'deafening chorus of comment' from Russians, Germans, and other

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1 See also Andrew Hemingway, "Discourses of Art and Social Interest: The Representation of Landscape in Britain c. 1800-1830" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of London, 1988), Chapter X, for an astute analysis of the commodity status of painting as described in the writings of Reynolds, Humphrey Repton, and Martin Archer Shee. I would like to thank Andrew Hemingway for kindly allowing me to read the penultimate draft of his dissertation. I have been unable to secure a copy of the final draft at this time, therefore citations to this work will include chapter references only.

foreign visitors. But it is domestic comment on the spaces of consumption that concerns us here—how the spectacle of luxury consumption was made to signify in public discourse. The contemporary periodical literature furnishes one point of access to this discourse.

Before embarking on an analysis of this literature, it is important to note the danger in quoting from various periodical reviews and essays on art and fashionable life without situating those texts in their appropriate institutional and discursive contexts. Periodical publication expanded rapidly in the early nineteenth century, its ranks swollen in part by a growing number of magazines specializing in the commodities and activities associated with fashionable life and leisure. A perusal of newspapers and periodicals reveals that art criticism and news of fashionable life served a variety of different purposes, consistent with the larger interests and editorial aims of the particular organ. We find, for instance, that the fashionable Repository of Arts carried among the most extensive and frequently the most positive reviews of watercolour exhibitions to be found in the press. This is not surprising when one considers that the publisher, Rudolph Ackermann, owned a business which sold watercolour paper and watercolour drawings,


published drawing books, and manufactured and sold watercolour pigments. Less culturally-oriented publications, such as daily newspapers, varied considerably in the quantity and type of attention they gave to art exhibitions and other social events. In the early decades of the century, for example, the Morning Post carried frequent and extensive accounts of balls, dinners, routs and national celebrations such as that held in honour of the Peace of Amiens. Although it had been a liberal journal in the 1790s, by the time it was sold in 1803 it had become staunchly conservative. Its new editors defended the power and privileges of the propertied classes and repudiated claims that British political and economic institutions were in any need of reform. The Post's society reporting in the early 1800s served as a celebration of elite privilege and was designed to appeal to the vanity and curiosity of its polite readership. But society news also targeted readers from the lower echelons of society, functioning as an agent of cultural hegemony in maintaining "popular mentalities of subordination," as E. P. Thompson puts it, among the dominated. That is, such descriptions of the "theatricality" of the elite's ritual leisure served to mark their social superiority and to naturalize their right to rule.7

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Because the leisure pursuits of Society had such potent social and political connotations, critics of the ruling elite attended to such activities and commented upon them in print. In the decades after 1800 oppositional journals, such as Leigh Hunt's liberal Examiner, frequently used art reviews and reports of routs and assemblies as occasions to attack the corruption and frivolity of the Prince Regent, his Whig and Tory ministers, and the fashionable circle which surrounded them.

What needs to be emphasized, then, is that society and cultural news was not irrelevant to the larger editorial project of a given periodical; as a consequence, reports of such leisure events in various publications could take on quite different cultural and political connotations. Although it is beyond the scope of this investigation to examine in detail the journals which will be cited here, where appropriate, I shall provide relevant contextual material concerning sources that are used.

As luxury commodities, paintings entered into a arena of competition that took on an explicitly physical dimension with

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*See for example, [Leigh Hunt], "Court and Fashionables—Routs," Examiner, 29 April 1810, p. 267, in which Hunt compares the behaviour and rationality of the hundreds of guests at a rout to the "mob" in the streets.

*For a thoughtful analysis of the major periodicals which published reviews of art exhibitions in the first three decades of the nineteenth century, see Hemingway, "Discourses of Art and Social Interest," Chapter VII.*
the establishment of public exhibitions in the 1760s. By 1806 the Royal Academy, the British Institution, and the Society for Painters in Water Colour all provided spaces in which artists could exhibit their wares annually. Pictures were hung close together, blanketing exhibition walls from floor to ceiling. In such an exhibition situation, it is not surprising that some artists would choose to heighten the visibility of their canvases through the use of bold effects and brilliant colouring in order to attract viewer attention. In one of his lectures to the Royal Academy, John Opie, Professor of Painting at the Academy from 1805-9, made such a connection between painting for effect and the circumstances of an exhibition: "In a crowd, he that talks loudest, not he that talks best, is surest of commanding attention; and in an exhibition, he that does not attract the eye, does nothing." Opie went on to deplore such practices, urging artists to paint "for eternity," not for fashion and the contemporary acclaim of "corrupt and incompetent judges." Such practices may have prompted changes in the exhibition sites themselves. In 1807 a commentator on the state

10 Martin Hardie notes that in 1808 the Microcosm of London published an illustration by Rowlandson and Pugin of the annual exhibition of the Society of Painters in Water Colour. The print showed rows of closely hung watercolour drawings set in heavy gilded frames. Considering the large size of the drawings, their bright colours and the heavy gold frames, Hardie speculates that the works were designed to compete not only with the pictures hung beside theirs, but with oil paintings on exhibit across the city at the Royal Academy (Hardie, 1:41).

of the arts, writing in the short-lived Beau Monde, speculated that the (much-hated) red walls of the new British Gallery might serve "perhaps as a precaution against too vivid colours, which a desire of attracting notice has introduced into the school of painting." However the same writer vigorously promoted the notion of a free and open competition in the sale of paintings, rather than a system of public or private commissions. This propensity to support public exhibitions and a "free" market competition in art while disavowing their artistic consequences (an exhibition style based upon eye-catching colour and effects) placed artists in the same untenable position as Edward Dayes had done, in his essays on painting, by denying the need for artists to function in a market system and promoting instead an aesthetic predicated upon economic self-sufficiency.

Such conflicting economic and aesthetic pressures rendered artists vulnerable to pedlars of secret schemes and potions which promised to improve the visual effect of their pictures. In 1796, for example, Benjamin West and George Beaumont, along with a number of their fellow artists, fell prey to the lure of the "Venetian Secret," a process promoted by Thomas Povis and his daughter Mary Ann, which was reputed to produce colours of the depth and brilliance of Titian and other Venetian masters. Joseph Farington, Thomas Daniell, Beaumont, and Richard Westall each paid Povis ten guineas to be instructed in the 'Venetian'

method in 1796-97, but the resulting landscape paintings thereby produced proved disappointing.\footnote{William Whitley. \textit{Artists and Their Friends in England 1700-1799} (New York and London: Benjamin Blom, 1968; orig. pub. 1928), 2:209-12.} Perhaps the primary artistic beneficiary of the scheme was James Gillray, whose engraving \textit{Titianus Redivivus—or--The Seven Wise Men Consulting the New Venetian Oracle} satirized the Academicians duped by the Povises for their cupidity and slavish reverence for the old master tradition.\footnote{Gillray’ s engraving was published 2 November 1797. For a colour reproduction see the frontispiece, Draper Hill, \textit{Fashionable Contrasts: Caricatures of James Gillray} (Oxford: Phaidon, 1966.)} Like Gillray, modern commentators have rightfully discussed the Povis affair in terms of the Academicians’ desire to capitalize on the market for old masters and old master imitations.\footnote{See for example the discussion in Owen and Brown, \textit{Collector of Genius}, pp. 94-5.} What must not be overlooked, however, is the specific type of effects such a process was designed to produce—rich and heightened colour capable of attracting viewer attention away from works which were more subdued in tone. And thus West employed the Povis process in painting his \textit{Cicero Discovering the Tomb of Archimedes} without betraying any sense of the ‘Venetian’ colour scheme working at cross purposes with a Poussinesque composition. As we saw in Chapter I, West’s historical landscape spoke through its subject matter and formal vocabulary of the intimate relationship between public virtue, patrician culture, and a transparent artistic subject whose
personal identity was subsumed into the social. However, the artist's truck with the Povis scheme is an acknowledgment that even for the most elevated category of landscape painting, such a work had to compete as a commodity in a competitive market situation.

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. Some idea of the general trend in the contemporary taste which governed the decoration of recently built and refurbished London townhouses can be ascertained from those interiors, furnishings, and decorative ornaments which have survived, as well as from visual and written accounts of interiors. Typical of such accounts are the descriptions of Montague House, redecorated in the 1780s by the society hostess, Elizabeth Montague. The house included a room decorated entirely in brightly coloured feathers and a "great room" with a barrel-vaulted ceiling, elaborate stucco ornaments, gilded Corinthian capitals, and lavish furnishings.

In the 1770s there was a immense surge in building in urban centers; townhouse construction in London accelerated after 1774 with the passage of the London Building Act [David Cannadine, Lords and Landlords: the Aristocracy and the Towns, 1774-1967 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1980), p. 31]. A constellation of factors contributed to the financial boom of the Napoleonic War years among the upper and upper middle classes: huge profits made in agriculture, sharp increases in domestic consumption and foreign trade, and vast fortunes made from a National Debt that nearly tripled between 1780 and 1800 [Peter Kriedte, Peasants, Landlords and Merchant Capitalists, Europe and the World Economy, 1500-1800 (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1980), p. 130ff].
The *St. James Chronicle* in 1791 enthused: "the curtains are of white satin fringed with gold; the chandeliers and large looking-glasses are superb; and the whole is an assemblage of art and magnificence which we have never witnessed in a private room."\(^1\)

Such an emphasis on brilliant reflective surfaces, colour and light was enthusiastically endorsed by the Prince Regent whose admiration for the lavish decorations which marked the Bourbon court at Versailles was evident in the plans for remodelling of Carleton House, conducted under the auspices of Walsh Porter.\(^1\) A colour engraving from 1816 of the crimson drawing-room (Figure 5) suggests the overall effect achieved from the rich glowing colour of the walls, the heavily gilded ceiling, and the immense crystal chandeliers which, when lit for evening entertainments, would be reflected in huge mirrors which occupied the wall spaces between the windows. Such splendour was reproduced to varying degrees in other remodellings, such as those completed at Grosvenor House in 1808 and at Devonshire House a decade later.\(^1\)

Since these metropolitan 'palaces' were designed for


\(^1\)Sykes, p. 234.

\(^1\)See Sykes, pp. 234-7 and his Colour Plate 15, for descriptive material relating to these two projects.
spectacular entertainments on a large scale (attendance at balls and assemblies frequently was measured in the hundreds), especially revealing are press accounts of those events, which frequently were hosted by prominent art collectors such as Thomas Hope, the Marquis of Stafford, Francis Baring, Lord Egremont, and the Prince Regent. Favourable reports of such events appeared in conservative newspapers such as the Morning Post and the English Chronicle which were eager to impress upon their readers that such spectacles were visible signs of Britain's imperial wealth and power. This physical display would have taken on a heightened significance in the years between 1806 and 1819 when the government suspended the gold standard in order to facilitate increased financing of the war with France. During a period in which bank notes were no longer convertible into gold upon demand, visible demonstrations of the wealth of private individuals and the royal family was proffered as evidence of continued national prosperity. Here, for example, is a report from 1806 in the ultra-nationalistic and conservative True Briton of the gala hosted by the daughters of Sir Francis Baring, whose family was involved in commerce and financing government loans:


A report in the Sun from 7 June 1814 states that Mess. Baring, Angerstein, and Co. was one of two firms contracting for government loans of £25 million for England and £5 million for Ireland.
The unbounded wealth of Sir Frances Baring, acquired by the most honourable and extensive mercantile concerns, is a theme not confined to this country but discussed throughout Europe. It cannot, therefore, occasion surprise, that the Cornu-copiae was liberally discharged. Every apartment in the house exhibited a profusion of the most costly and well-chosen Ornaments... In the Anti [sic] Drawing Room, the Connoisseur was delighted with a collection of Paintings by the most approved Masters, truly valuable and unique, and highly creditable to the discernment of SIR FRANCIS in the beauties of the Fine Arts... [In attendance were] the most distinguished ornaments of the Haute Ton, who were not more dazzled by the riches, than they were delighted by the attention, and gratified by the hospitality of the BRITISH MERCHANT. 

Dazzling ornaments, human and otherwise, are presented here as signs of both personal and national wealth, virtue, and pride. Baring's collection of "the most approved Masters" qualifies him not only as a man of taste, but at the same time, an exemplar of the successful British merchant—subject positions which would have been deemed antithetical in both academic and republican discourse.

This attempt to conflate the man of commerce with the man of taste as defined through the activity of collecting and promoting of old master paintings was contested with increasing vigour in the opening years of the nineteenth century. In 1810 a stinging attack on old master collecting was made in the fashionable Whig

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"The Baring Fete," True Briton, 8 May 1806. Due to a merger in 1804 the name of this journal changed from the True Briton to the Daily Advertiser, Oracle and True Briton. For the sake of simplicity, the former name will be used throughout the period of its publication, from 1801 to 1809.
magazine, *La Belle Assemblée*. Asserting that old master paintings are little understood by their wealthy owners, the author remarks: "Their fortunate possessors are always calculating their worth, and having them surveyed and appraised as frequently as the timber on their estates." The reference to the surveying of timber serves to underscore the fact that profit-making and commercial calculation, far from being restricted to a commercial bourgeoisie, were of fundamental concern to landed proprietors. This mercantile consciousness, rather than a liberal taste, the argument ran, is what fuelled the contemporary market for old masters. Such an indictment of old master collecting, then, serves to undermine the subject position of the liberal viewer/patron whose appreciation of the master works of the grand tradition was based upon a prolonged and disinterested study of past art.

Concurrent with such critiques of private collectors was a growing dissatisfaction with the rôle of the newly formed British Institution (founded in 1805). Unlike the Royal Academy which was governed by artists, the British Institution was directed by a committee composed of connoisseurs and patrons whose wealth derived from banking, commerce and land. In announcing the establishment of the new institution its governors declared it to be dedicated to the patriotic enterprise of promoting British art.

and artists—a claim which was repeated in the press and the Institution's literature throughout the following decades.\textsuperscript{24}

From the beginning it was clear that the Institution's criteria for artistic excellence among modern British painters were set by the works of Dutch and Italian masters—by those same works, in fact, which formed the a greater part of the collections of its wealthy Directors and Governors. As a means of reinforcing these criteria, the Institution promoted the direct copying of old master paintings by young British artists. In 1806 the Directors and Governors of the Institution established the "British School," where continental master works were made available for artists to copy; these copies were then placed on exhibition at the British Gallery.\textsuperscript{25} A review of one such exhibition in 1813 appeared in the Morning Post, which at this point was a Tory organ, vigorous in its support of the British Institution and the Prince Regent, who was the Institution's titular president. The review discusses two landscapes, a \textit{Death of Regulus}, copied by William Marshall Craig from the original by Salvador Rosa, and William Westall's copy of Cuyp's \textit{A Fête on the Water at Dort}. What is striking about the reviewer's comments is that they are restricted solely to praise for the original


\textsuperscript{25}Fullerton, pp. 64-5.
masterworks and their British owners. Thus, after duly noting Rosa's felicitous union of historical figures with the grandeur of his landscape, the reviewer concludes that "Lord Darnley may feel proud to be the possessor of such a performance." Similarly the remarks on the second copy are confined to praise for the rich colour and sunny calm of Cuyp's harbour scene. For the reviewer, then, the artistic producer has become not transparent (in the sense of repressing his private interests and desires) but totally absent. The copy functions as a sign of judgement, sensibility and intellect only for the subject positions of old master or modern collector.

Objections to the British Institution's promotion of past foreign art grew over the next decade. In 1815 the Institution mounted an old master exhibition at the same time as the Royal Academy exhibition. The Royal Academicians so resented the Institution's support of 'foreign competition' that they refused, almost unanimously, a special invitation by the B. I. Directors to a private evening viewing. This gesture of disapproval was accompanied by an acerbic attack on the British Institution which was published serially in the Morning Chronicle and as a pamphlet entitled A Catalogue Raisonné [sic]

26 "British Gallery of Pictures," Morning Post, 18 June 1813.

27 Farington, Diary, 21 May 1815. In addition to Farington's Diary, accounts of the Academicians' resentment of the British Institution's promotion of old masters are provided in Owen and Brown, pp. 176-83, and Fullerton, pp. 59-72.
of the Pictures Now Exhibiting at the British Institution (1815). The attack was directed mainly at the Directors of the British Institution, who, it was alleged, had only a superficial understanding of ancient pictures, yet set themselves up as arbiters of art. Such a rôle was unsuitable for such men since they came "to the judgement seat unprepared with any information at all drawn from the contemplation or study of nature...Their ONLY standards are old pictures..."

At the heart, then, of the critiques of individual collectors of old masters and of the institution that most strongly promoted these works, was the claim that contemporary regard for these masterworks of the Grand Tradition of European painting was motivated by a self-interest borne of the desire for financial profit, fashionable display, and public acclaim. Within the terms of such an attack, the subject position of the liberal man of letters threatened to collapse into its antithesis—that of the man of the market, spurred not by virtuous disinterest, but by private desire.

Speculation about the authorship of this notorious pamphlet raged at the time of publication and continues into the present. Although the attribution in the British Library Catalogue is given to the painter Robert Smirke, there is no hard evidence to support it. David Blayney Brown has noted the similarity between certain passages of this work and a letter which the landscape painter A. W. Callcott wrote in 1808, but as Brown also correctly observed, a number of artists at the time made similar criticisms of the British Institution (Owen and Brown, pp. 183-4).

A Catalogue Raisonnée of the Pictures Now Exhibiting at the British Institution, London, 1815, quoted in Fullerton, p. 68.
This critique of the old master tradition was lodged primarily by artists forced into competition with foreign imports and by writers whose journalistic affiliations were anti-ministerial and liberal. The fact that the most vitriolic attacks on the British Institution were published in the quasi-official Whig organ, the Morning Chronicle, was very likely related to the fact that the Prince Regent was the titular head of the Institution. The Whigs felt intense frustration and disappointment when the Prince Regent withdrew his support of that party in favour of the Tories in 1810-11. Criticizing the British Institution provided a way of berating the Prince Regent indirectly. To complicate matters, some anti-ministerial liberals and radicals staunchly defended the British Institution against the charges laid against it in the Catalogue Raisonnée, and attacked the Royal Academy instead. The radical critic and essayist William Hazlitt, for example, portrayed the latter institution as a corrupt mercantile body engaged in the manufacture of portraits, governed by a cabal from within and Royal authority from without (George III was the R. A.'s royal

30 The Morning Chronicle, Belle Assemblée, Morning Post (in the 1790s), and London Packet, all cited in the above discussion of the old masters and the British Institution, were Whiggish in orientation.

31 Direct verbal attacks on the royal person of the Prince were dealt with harshly: John and Leigh Hunt, owner and editor of the Examiner respectively, served two years in prison for libelling the Prince in their newspaper in 1813. For an account of this affair see Edmund Blunden, Leigh Hunt's "Examiner" Examined (London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1928), p. 22.
patron). And thus, since both institutions had royal patrons who were frequently in opposition politically and supported by rival political factions, both were subject to partisan attacks and support.

It is clear, however, that more was at stake in this artistic debate than sectarian squabbling. The rejection of old master models entailed an epistemological challenge as well. Such a challenge is evident in the sequel to the *Catalogue Raisonné*, published in 1816 in response to the British Institution's spring exhibition of Italian and Spanish masters. Like its predecessor the new *Catalogue* continued to belittle the expertise of connoisseurs such as Richard Payne Knight and George Beaumont, who were directors of the British Institution as well as contributors of old masters to the exhibitions. Such "expertise," the writer claimed, was in fact based upon "prejudice, high-sounding names, and the self-love, self-importance, and self-interest of the owners of the several works [on exhibit]." Seeking to discredit the ultimate ground of connoisseurial authority, the writer implied that their formal education should be accorded no more status than that of a fashionable accomplishment: "The interest exerted to keep up the absurd prejudice that professional men cannot be proper critics

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in art, because they have not an **university education** is daily losing ground. The progress of science has shown, that men who busy themselves about **things** will always say more to the purpose, than those who busy themselves about **words**." He continued by claiming that "university critics no doubt talk very prettily at a dinner table," but could not sustain a convincing exposition of their theories in book form.\(^3\)\(^4\) As we shall see in Chapter III, this questioning of the ability of traditional forms of knowledge to meet the demands of contemporary English culture and society was to be repeated throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century and was to have important consequences for landscape painting.

In their attempt to compete in a market fueled by a fascination for foreign luxury goods and fashions domestic artists were also accused of promoting their own financial self-interest over the artistic needs of the nation. A common complaint lodged against both portrait and landscape paintings was that their colours were too gaudy, their highlights too brilliant, and their lights too scattered (i. e., not grouped into the academic formula of one principal and no more than two subordinate lights). Although portrait painters such as Thomas

\(^3\)\(^4\)"Catalogue Raisonné of the Pictures in the Late Exhibition of the British Institution," *Morning Chronicle*, 7 June 1816. The claim that connoisseurs were incapable of presenting their theories convincingly in book form is a thinly veiled attack on Richard Payne Knight, whose *Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* was published in 1805. Despite the sarcastic allusions to university education, Knight never attended university.
Lawrence were consistently criticized on this basis, this critique was subsumed into the broader allegation that portraiture as a genre pandered to the personal vanity of individuals rather than representing those commonly held ideals which distinguished and elevated the national character. The most fully elaborated attacks on such eye-catching effects were directed to landscape painting in language which testifies to the increasing importance of that genre as a site for the production of national identity.

One of these attacks on landscape painting occurred in the rather curious context of a popular poem, Walks in a Forest (1794) by the Anglican clergyman and Staffordshire landowner, Thomas Gisborne. Like his friends and fellow evangelicals William Wilberforce and Hannah More, Gisborne advocated a moral reform of all levels of British society in order to maintain and defend the existing hierarchy of class and gender relationships. The poem is structured around the theological

\[35\] Although a discussion of portraiture is outside the scope of this investigation, further examination is needed of the debates around this genre around 1800. While portraiture continued to be attacked by those critical of the effects of commerce on both the arts and the moral character of individuals, there were also, increasingly, defenses of the genre as representing English sociability. For such a defense, see [John Britton], "Royal Academy," British Press, 5 May 1803.

\[36\] The work went through at least nine editions in the first fifteen years after its publication.

\[37\] Gisborne’s program for the moral reform of society is fully elaborated in his widely read An Enquiry into the Duties of Men, 2 vols. (London, 1794) and An Enquiry into the Duties of
notion of concordia discors, a harmonious disposition of discordant elements. This concept was frequently invoked in the eighteenth century as a means of representing social inequality as divinely ordered social diversity. Gisborne repeatedly draws an analogy between the harmony of external nature, exemplified by the forest, and a divinely ordered human society in which "harmonious though dissimilar, all conspire to swell the sum of general bliss." Following a passage in which the forest is described as "one congenial mass, brilliant but chaste, with every dye that stains the withering leaf/Glowing yet not discordant," Gisborne interjects this stern advice to landscape painters:

Hither come,
Ye sons of imitative art, who hang
The fictions of your pencils on our walls,
And call them landscapes; Where incongruous hues
Seem their constrain'd vicinity to mourn; Where gaudy
green with gaudy yellow vies,
And blues and reds with adverse aspect glare.
Here deign to learn from nature: here though late,

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the Female Sex (London, 1797). Both works went through multiple editions in the decades after they were published.

See Solkin, Richard Wilson, pp. 68–70, for a discussion of Wilson's landscapes and the philosophical concept of concordia discors, a harmonious disposition of discordant elements in nature.

Learn the peculiar majesty which crowns
The forest, when the slowly passing clouds
Triple preponderance of shadow spread,
And separate the broad collected lights
With corresponding gloom.\textsuperscript{40}

Gisborne defends the rules of academic practice (which dictate a
"triple preponderance of shadow" compared to light in a
composition) as being an observable feature of the "forest,"
which here represents both external nature and, metaphorically,
the social order.\textsuperscript{41} Gisborne's use of "majesty" and "crown" in
the passage serve to displace onto the forest the royal character
of its owner—for much of Britain's forests were property of the
king, including the forest in which Gisborne's own estate was
located.\textsuperscript{42} Against this (literally) noble harmony of nature
Gisborne opposes the "fictions" called landscapes which are
unnatural precisely because they make discord visible. The
vocabulary of social conflict is used to describe the
juxtapositioning of "incongruous" and "adverse" colours which
"vie" with each other, "mourning" their constrained proximity.

\textsuperscript{40}Gisborne, pp. 64-5.

\textsuperscript{41}Regarding this passage, Gisborne states that he is
following Reynolds' notes on Charles du Fresnoy's \textit{De Arte
Graphica} on the proper disposition of light and shade throughout
a composition (Gisborne, p. 65).

\textsuperscript{42}Gisborne's own residence, Yoxall, was located in Needwood
Forest. A friend of his, Bishop Porteus, writing to Hannah More
in 1797, noted that Gisborne "has a very handsome and delightful
habitation in the very heart of Needwood Forest, a large tract of
ground belonging to the crown, and abounding with all those rude
and picturesque scenes which produced his 'Walks in a Forest'
[quoted in Benedict Nicolson, "Thomas Gisborne and Wright of
This passage functions neither as a purely aesthetic criticism couched in political language, nor a purely political attack on revolutionary disorder via an artistic metaphor. Rather, landscape painting is presented here as an active participant in the *production* of social disorder at a moment of crisis—this was the year after the French king and queen had been executed, and counterrevolutionary reaction in Britain was at its height. The inclusion of a critique of landscape painting in such a text testifies to the growing importance of the landscape artist as a producer of such potent symbolic representations of national order in a period of social upheaval throughout Europe. Whereas the ideal of the history painter had been identified in academic discourse as a supra-national subject who represents universal truths through forms divested of national prejudice, the identity of the landscape artist in the 1790s and the decades thereafter is figured as a quintessentially national subject, both in his public and private character.

The importance of the landscape painter as a national subject was reaffirmed the following year, 1795, in a vehement...

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This same year, 1794, also saw the publication of Richard Payne Knight’s didactic poem, *The Landscape*, which images society as a diversified landscape. Unlike Gisborne, Knight used the image of the forest as a metaphor for wild "native liberty," which drew a charges of Jacobinism from more conservative Whigs like Horace Walpole, who thought Knight was advocating revolution [Nicolas Penny, "Richard Payne Knight: A Brief Life," in *The Arrogant Connoisseur*, eds. Michael Clarke and Nicholas Penny (Whitworth Art Gallery exhib. cat., Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), p. 10].
attack on contemporary landscape painting by the reviewer for the Morning Post when that journal was profoundly anti-court and anti-ministerial. These remarks occurred in the context of a review of Paul Sandby’s topographical watercolours. Favourably disposed to the works, the critic had even more praise for Sandby himself, hailing the artist as a pillar of the academy and expressing the regret that he had so few pictures in the exhibition.\textsuperscript{44} In a passage worth quoting at length, he explains that Sandby’s presence is necessary because landscape painting is in need of reform:

There is a taste spreading abroad for gaudy hues, glittering effects and mechanical fopperies dazzling to weak-sighted connoisseurs and unfledged students—with the meretricious ornaments of a courtezan, they lure the idle and inexperienced, while unobtrusive modesty has no attraction. If this extravagant perversion of all taste is not checked and exposed—if we are not brought back from the delusive mazes of eccentric art, into the plain, but unfrequented road of nature, the worst consequences may be prophesied to the Arts. We shall quickly be precipitated from the eminence to which we have attained, and degenerate into all the vices of French frippery and affectation, to the utter exclusion of Nature, Simplicity and Truth.\textsuperscript{45}

This text employs a constellation of tropes to connect a

\textsuperscript{44} The works Sandby exhibited that year are untraced. They included a view of Tunbridge, a view of the Eagle Tower of Caernarvon Castle, and two other works titled Morning and Evening (Graves, s. v. Sandby, Paul).

\textsuperscript{45} "Royal Academy," Morning Post, 4 June 1795. Given the similarity between this review and those written by Pasquin at this same time, it is highly possible that Pasquin himself was the author of this anonymous review.
painterly play of surface effects, light and colour with illicit sexual desire, fantasy, display, artificiality and French taste. Dazzlingly delusive, such effects are capable not only of seducing the "idle and inexperienced," but threaten to pervert the general taste, precipitating moral and cultural decline. Significantly, this decline is represented as a falling out of national eminence and a falling into the character of another nation. To embrace the gaudy and artificial in art is to abandon one's social and national identity by taking on the vices and affectations of a debased Other--an Other which at this moment was invariably characterized as French.

As Gerald Newman has argued, in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England national identity was largely constructed in

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"Amidst the plethora of attacks by art critics and other writers on the glitter and vulgarity of French painting there are few references to specific French artists. However, it seems likely that Watteau and Boucher, artists whose works were known in England, were among the principal targets of this attack. Later, in 1815, Watteau's work is singled out by the bourgeois liberal editor and author, John Scott, as a typical representation of pre-Revolutionary French art, marked by levity and a lack of intellectual force ([John Scott], "Lucien Buonaparte's Collection, Champion, 22 January 1815, p. 32).

"In addition to contemporary France, Venice, Holland, and Carthage were offered by artists and cultural critics as historical examples of the negative impact of commerce on the arts. Thus Henry Fuseli, Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy from 1801 to 1805, argued in a lecture before the Academy in 1801, that the commercial activity of Venice's patricians as well as its princely merchants and artisans, ensured that Venetian paintings could be little more than fashionable luxury goods [Henry Fuseli, Lectures on Painting, in Wornum, pp. 392-3]."
opposition to a French stereotype. This anti-Gallic stereotype functioned not only to elevate England's image among other nations, but even more importantly, it was marshalled by specific factions of English society as a means of discrediting rival political factions or socio-economic groups. In the first half of the eighteenth century anti-Gallic imagery featured prominently in the bourgeois critique of a cosmopolitan elite whose fascination with continental fashion, art, and leisure activities was taken to be the sign of their social and political allegiance to elites on the continent, rather than to English society and culture.

Gerald Newman, The Rise of English Nationalism. In the period of the Napoleonic wars, national identity was variously structured around notions of Englishness or Britishness, terms which obviously call up two very different political, cultural, and historical notions of what comprises "the nation." Unless a text or image is specifically addressing the idea of Britishness, I will use the term 'Englishness;' this was the designation most commonly used by contemporaries in the metropolis, and one which itself was constructed visually and textually in terms of difference from 'Welshness,' 'Scottishness,' and 'Irishness.'

Linda Colley convincingly argues that nationalism was not promoted by the British state, but served sectional interests. She notes that nationalistic enterprises (such as establishing patriotic war funds) were especially popular among the wealthy bourgeoisie, a "commercial aristocracy," whose social and political status did not match their economic power [Linda Colley, "Whose Nation? Class and National Consciousness in Britain 1750-1830," Past and Present, #113 (November 1986), p. 110].

Newman, pp. 10-12 and 63-7. Pre-eminent among the artists involving in fashioning this critique was William Hogarth, whose promotion of a specifically English national school of painting took the form of satirical attacks upon a Gallicized aristocratic culture. A series such as Marriage A-la-mode (painted 1742-3 and engraved 1744-5) is in part a visual chronicle of the English elite's fascination with French fashions and hair styles, continental leisure activities (operas, balls and masquerades),
In the wake of the French Revolution, the 'Terror,' and the rise to power of Napoleon anti-Gallicism increasingly focused upon the sinister machinations of the French state, which was presented as having fallen simultaneously into tyranny and anarchy.\textsuperscript{51} English counterrevolutionary writers and artists during the '90s and the following decades frequently deployed anti-Gallic imagery in order to discredit English radicals, anti-war liberals, and Foxite Whigs by showing them as bestial, atheistic French Jacobins, bent upon destroying the very fabric of English society.\textsuperscript{52} At the same time, however, evangelicals and anti-war liberals and reformists like the editors and writers for the \textit{Morning Post} redeployed the earlier eighteenth century critique of foreign leisure and fashion against those monied elements in polite society (whether middle or upper class) whose sensuous desires and need for social emulation were identified as a primary threat to the health and stability of the social order.\textsuperscript{53}

and Old Master paintings. The most thorough iconographical interpretation of \textit{Marriage A-la-mode} is to be found in Robert Cowley, \textit{Hogarth's Marriage A-la-mode} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983). This book contains colour plates of the entire series. The paintings are now in the National Gallery.

\textsuperscript{51} For an example of a counterrevolutionary polemic against French tyranny and anarchy see "The Dreadful Picture of France," \textit{Repository of Arts}, June 1809, pp. 345-51.


\textsuperscript{53} See Newman, pp. 233-40, for a discussion of evangelism and anti-Gallicism.
It is noteworthy that as early as 1781 an art critic in the *Morning Chronicle* had also warned against English imitation of "French fripperies" and explained the profusion of brightly-coloured paintings set in large gold frames as an artistic attempt to capture a specifically middle-class market within an exhibition setting. By the 1790s, journalistic commentary avoided any mention of class—a shift which is indicative of the nature of counterrevolutionary alliances, which were made on the basis of property ownership (whether landed or moveable) against those without property, rather than on the basis of landed ownership as opposed to moveable and abstract property.

Typical of this later type of commentary was the above-cited passage from the *Post*. Although directed specifically toward "unfledged students and weak-sighted connoisseurs," its references to idleness, extravagance, and ornament, conjure up a wider public of fashionable pleasure-seekers, whose property holdings were unspecified and whose elevated class status was no longer a guarantee of their taste. The post-Revolutionary reference to "French frippery" in this text could be taken to imply that the French Revolution was not solely, or even primarily the result of mob hysteria, as counterrevolutionary rhetoric maintained, but was rather the consequence of the moral dissolution, affectation, and frivolity of the propertied classes. This stance was consistent with the *Post’s* increasingly...
veiled, but still discernible republican sympathies.®

What is suppressed in the Post’s indictment of fashionable landscape painting is the fact that the desire for ostentatious display was in large part an English phenomenon, the consequence of a highly competitive social environment, be it the marketplace or the ballroom, where private individuals vie with each other for power and acclaim. Such an unwillingness to identify as English productions which are regarded as gaudy and commercialized is a strategy commonly deployed in republican discourse, which locates the ideal of Englishness in a pre-commercial social order (namely, a republic of landowning citizens).®® Ostentatious self-display instead is read as an abandonment of one’s ‘natural’ (modest, moral, English) social identity and the taking up of another which is not only foreign but private in its predisposition for the sensual.

The Post critic’s use of sexualized and feminized metaphors

Such sentiments can be read in the scathing review which Zoffany’s overtly anti-republican painting, Plundering the King’s Cellar at Paris, August 10, 1893, received in the Post on 7 May 1795. Not surprisingly, on 6 May this same picture received a glowing review by the anti-Jacobin True Briton.

Within the parameters of this anti-commercial and politically reformist discourse, such a retrospective vision of Englishness is reinforced by the invocation of the system of parliamentary representation authorized under the Ancient Constitution. This mythical document (held to be in force in a vaguely specified pre-Norman past) was presented by reformers as the "true" source of England’s political principles (for a fuller discussion of the Ancient Constitution see infra, Chapter I, p. 157, n. 69).
is also consistent with a civic humanist construction of the subject as a citizen who suppresses his sensuous needs and desires (as we saw in the public representation of Beaumont). This arises from the fact that 'disinterest' signifies not only economic independence, but as John Barrell argues, a form of masculinity which is desireless.\(^{57}\) Within the parameters of such a discourse, then, it is only in their character as private individuals that male viewers could be seen as susceptible to seduction by pictures possessing the "meretricious ornaments of a courtesan." If such paintings are figured as female, then gaudy colour and painterly effects assume the status of ornaments or make-up applied by the artist, who becomes identified as a pimp—the lowest form of "merchant" within the commercial sphere.\(^{58}\)

Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century exponents of mercantilism had repeatedly defended the consumption of luxury goods by the leisured classes as the "engine" which drove the


\(^{58}\)Like the Post critic, Fuseli described the "allure" of colour in highly sexualized terms, as did John Opie in his Royal Academy lectures of 1807, where colour is described as "the Cleopatra of the art" [Henry Fuseli, Lectures on Painting in Wornum, pp. 392-3; John Opie, The Lectures of John Opie, in Wornum, p. 314.] For a discussion of the manner in which seventeenth-century French aesthetic discourse constructed analogies between painted canvases and painted women see Jacqueline Lichtenstein, "Making Up Representation: The Risks of Femininity," Representations #20 (Fall 1987), pp. 77-87. I would like to thank Jill Cassid for calling my attention to this article.
national economy. In 1810, for example, a writer, in offering evidence for the superiority of England over France as a commercial power, reasserted this contention that luxury consumption by the elite stimulated domestic manufacturing and hence brought prosperity to all. He concluded with the observation that "a peculiarly masculine character, and the utmost energy of feeling, are communicated to all orders of men—by the abundance which prevail so universally." This masculinization of luxury production and consumption could be seen as a general counter to attacks on such economic activity.

There was, however, little in the way of a fully elaborated artistic defense of painting for effect analogous to this general defense of luxury consumption. Although neither Gisborne nor the Post critic named specific artists and works in their censure of landscape painting, we can gain some sense of the works in

Luxury consumption by the propertied elite was sanctioned by the French physiocrats, and confirmed by the writers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century such as Thomas Malthus (in his *Essay on Population*, 1798) and William Spence (in *Britain Independent of Commerce*, 1806). See infra, Chapter IV, for a further discussion of the role of landowners as consumers rather than producers.

The Two Pictures; or A View of the Miseries of France Contrasted with the Blessings of England (London, 1810), p. 41.

In actual fact, in 1790 perhaps the major defense of landscape painting "for effect," based upon a psychological theory of association, was made by Archibald Alison in his *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*. However associationism did not play a major role in public debates about painting until the turn of the century. Alison's *Essays* will be considered at length in Chapter III.
question, for art critics repeatedly identified "spotty" effects, gaudy colours, and surface glitter with a few individuals, particularly Julius Caesar Ibbetson, Francis Bourgeois, Philippe de Loutherbourg and Richard Westall.\textsuperscript{22}

Ibbetson’s Alum Bay: Sand Quarry (Figure 6, c. 1792) is indicative of this type of work.\textsuperscript{23} Even in a black and white photograph the broken, active quality of the picture’s surface is apparent. The cliffside on the right is represented as an intricate array of frothy projections. Following the general form of the cliffs below, the clouds appear as a series of separate daubs, picked out with highlights. The fragmentation of forms is carried into the representation of the water. Its surface is broken by the highlights of the whitecaps, laid on in a thin, nervous line, which thickens and intensifies at the water’s edge. There the brilliant white of the foam contrasts

\textsuperscript{22}Loutherbourg’s work will be examined in Chapter V. Francis Bourgeois was a student of Loutherbourg who exhibited rustic landscapes ("landscape with cattle" being a favourite theme) at the Academy throughout the 1790s and early 1800s. Dayes harshly criticized his colour as "chalky" and his handling of light and shade as "often violent and spotty" (Dayes, "Professional Sketches," p. 322). Other critics complained simply that his work was mannered and repetitive (see R. A. reviews in the Morning Chronicle, 4 May 1792 and British Press, 14 May 1803).

\textsuperscript{23}Ibbetson made a tour of the Isle of Wight, where this scene is located, in 1791. In 1792 he exhibited seven views of the island at the Royal Academy. The artist’s biographer, Mary Rotha Clay, suggests that Alum Bay: A Sand Quarry may have been the work exhibited that year under the title View of the Beach, Isle of Wight (#449) [Clay, Julius Caesar Ibbetson 1759-1817 (London: Country Life, 1948), p. 30].
sharply with the dark rocks of the foreground. Water, land, and sky, then, vibrate with the activity of the artist's brush—and activity which lead some critics to characterize his manner as "spotty." One of the artist's harshest critics, the reviewer for the London Packet, attributed this mode of execution directly to the pressures of the market. Writing of the artist's Miners Setting out to Encounter the French exhibited at the R. A. in 1798, he declared, "It appears to be a work of haste, painted for sale." Broken surface effects, then, could connote a slap-dash manner, provoked by the need to produce quantity, not quality, while also serving to draw viewer attention away from less eye-catching visual displays.

Unlike Ibbetson, Richard Westall produced few domestic landscapes in which figures are subordinated to natural scenery. However, landscape settings feature prominently in the latter's sentimentalized rustic genre pieces and titillating mythological scenes produced from the 1780s through the early 1800s. These

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"In 1796, Anthony Pasquin accused Ibbetson of "running to extremes" in painting landscapes with a "brazen hue" (Pasquin, quoted in Clay, p. 8). The critic for the Star praised Ibbetson's landscapes exhibited at the R. A. in 1804 for their "spirited style," but went on to declare that "he has fallen into a spotty manner, peculiarly his own, which robs his productions of much of the merit which they would otherwise possess" (Star, 19 May 1804).

"Royal Academy Exhibition, 1798," London Packet, 9-11 May 1798; the same critic, commenting on Ibbetson's Bowder Stone in Borrowdale, exhibited the following year, declared its "spottiness of manner" to predominate to the point of "slovenly excess" ("Royal Academy Exhibition, 1799," London Packet, 29 April-1 May 1799).
works are worth considering since they exhibit the same attention to surface display as the works of Ibbetson, Bourgeois and Loutherbourg.

Typical of the rustic landscapes which Westall was producing in the mid-to-late nineties is Storm in Harvest (Figure 7, R. A. 1796), purchased by one of the most pre-eminent connoisseurs of the day, Richard Payne Knight. The scene depicts a group of agrarian labourers, under a bower of trees, anxiously waiting out a passing rainstorm. The central figures are illuminated by a strong light from the left which bathes the woodland setting in a luminous ochre glow. The subsidiary lights, picking out the branch in the upper left and the distant vista visible through the trees below it, combine with a feathery handling of the foliage and an overall emphasis on a coiling and twisting line to produce an active, flickering pictorial surface. Although it seems clear that Westall was drawing upon the rustic genre scenes

"This work was one of a number of scenes Westall produced in the late '90s which depicted shepherds, harvesters, and other members of the agrarian working class caught in the midst of a storm, faithfully persevering in their labour, or alternatively, waiting patiently for the disturbance to pass. Such a theme was no doubt a reassuring one to the propertied classes who bought artworks and patronized exhibitions at a time when workers in France had instigated a revolution metaphorically cast as a natural cataclysm by Burke and other British commentators. As Alex Potts has noted, Knight, who not only purchased Storm in Harvest but was Westall's principal patron, was a strong supporter of traditional hierarchies and by 1796, a savage critic of the French. In that year Knight voiced concern that the repressive measures imposed by the British state in the wake of the Revolution were not strong enough to control the growing power of the mob [Alex Potts, "A Man of Taste's Picturesque," Oxford Art Journal 5:1 (1982), p. 72]."
of Gainsborough (such as his Cottage Door with Children Playing, ca. 1778) this connection was only rarely made in the press. Most critics avoided any association between Westall’s work and that of other English artists, choosing rather to insist on the foreign quality of his manner.

Although popular with George III and connoisseurs such as Horace Walpole and Payne Knight, in the decades around 1800 Westall provoked consistent criticism from artists and critics, ranging from Beaumont, Constable, and Paul Sandby to critics writing for periodicals with diverse political and cultural views. Published accounts praising Westall’s art were rare and brief. While the critic for the True Briton, writing in 1798, praised his watercolours for their "powerful impulse and elegant controul," most favourable accounts of his oils tended to ignore his use of colour and light effects. For example, Payne Knight praised the Westall’s selection of a theme from "common life" as

"The Cottage Door with Children Playing is now in the Cincinnati Art Museum. Only two such references to Gainsborough have come to my attention. One occurred in the London Packet, 27-30 April, 1798, in which the critic noted that Westall’s Sunset was reminiscent of the best of Gainsborough. The other appeared in the radical Monthly Magazine, which in its "Retrospect of the Fine Arts, April 1801, praised Westall for eschewing arcadian fantasies, and continuing the tradition established by Gainsborough, of showing English figures set in English scenery. The openness of works of art to contrary readings is well-illustrated by such a response, for most published criticism of Westall’s work insisted on the unEnglish quality of his figures and his surfaces effects.

the subject of *Storm in Harvest*, describing it as affecting and full of pathos. More frequently, however, Westall's work was accused of being affected rather than affecting—of appealing to the vanity and base appetites of viewers rather than their higher sensibilities.

In a review from 1796 Anthony Pasquin connected Westall's artistic practice directly to the demands of competition within an exhibition space:

Mr. Westall's drawings appear to more advantage in the Exhibition, than they do out, which is derived from their gaudiness of tinting...There is nothing more certain, than that a picture chastely coloured, may be ruined in character by being placed next to a glaring composition, in such an assemblage.

To characterize colouring as chaste was to invoke the discourse of sexuality as a means of regulating artistic practice, which, along with the gendering of colour and painterly effects, was an extremely common tactic in aesthetic and critical writing. By means of this regulatory move, excessive colouring is doubly condemned as both aesthetically offensive and immoral. Such a rhetoric of sexual and moral contamination is further mobilized here to suggest that the good character of a picture can be "ruined" when placed next to one which is 'unchaste.' This

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Pasquin, cited in Bennett, p. 201.
language of contamination recalls the remarks of the critic for the Post a year earlier, in warning of the spread of a perverse taste for "gaudy hues, glittering effects and mechanical fopperies," which if unchecked could topple English painting from its position of international pre-eminence.

The art critic for the conservative St. James Chronicle seems to have concurred in this negative assessment of Westall's rustic landscapes for he accused the artist of being a "disgusting mannerist" in reviewing his Peasant's Return of 1800. An excessive manner was the visual evidence not only of the self-interested artist who 'shows himself,' but also of a debased viewer, who is defined by a love of sensuous display, rather than by social sensibility and intellect. Such a concern about the character of the viewers of Westall's paintings was voiced privately by the writer C. R. Leslie, who in a letter from 1812, supposed that his showy style appealed to those "who are not in the habit of thinking when they look at a picture." This same criticism was also made publicly, by Anthony Pasquin, who, in reviewing Westall's Hesiod Instructing the Greeks, R. A. 1796, declared that "this is such an effort, as no person, possessing taste and knowledge, can regard with satisfaction; yet it involves that trickery and finery which is so captivating to

\[7^{1}\] "Exhibition of Paintings...at the Royal Academy," St. James Chronicle, 6-8 May 1800.

\[7^{2}\] C. R. Leslie, letter, 14 September 1812, quoted in Westall, p. 25.
vulgar minds." Other critics writing about Westall's work in the period between 1795 and 1815 similarly implied, or openly asserted, that the artist's work was predicated upon an insensitive, unknowing viewer.

One of the few critics who attempted to defend Westall's painting from this general censure was the critic for the *True Briton*. Writing in 1800, in regard to Westall's *Bower of Pan*, which depicted the god accompanied by trio of nude, nubile women taking their ease in a luridly-coloured, 'bower' of flowers and foliage, the critic praised its "rich, voluptuous, and splendid scenery," and went on to assert that if some viewers find the colouring too gaudy, then they should observe that it is not "mere Nature" being represented. The limitations of this defense can be inferred by what it fails to say. For while paintings of classical subjects were traditionally regarded as improving upon "mere" nature by representing its ideal or essential character, the critic does not go so far as to assert openly that Westall's landscape, described in this highly sexualized manner, represented a universal ideal. Indeed this remark leaves open the possibility that something other than the

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73 Pasquin, quoted in Westall, p. 24.

74 See, for example, the *True Briton*, 22 May 1807, and Gillray's attack on Westall as one of those Academicians duped by the Povises in his print, *Titianus Redivivus*, previously discussed.

75 "Royal Academy," *True Briton*, 3 May 1800. The painting is in the Manchester City Art Gallery.
natural is being represented by such a "gaudy" and "voluptuous," display, which somehow pleases without debasing the artist and the viewer. Such a tentative defense was abandoned a few years later, in 1807, when critic John Taylor, writing for the same newspaper, harshly attacked a similar painting of richly "embowered" nude females by Westall, his *Flora Unveiled by the Zephyrs.* He complained that "it has all the spangle and catching light of Watteau's work," and then warned young artists, who are too readily smitten by dazzling professional witchery, that, of all the style of painting, the French is the lowest and most contemptible. It has nothing of nature to please the eye, nothing of sentiment to gratify the mind: its frippery and tinsel please Frenchmen alone.\^\textsuperscript{7}

Again, the move to identify brilliant effects with a debased French taste is here posited against a notion of Englishness ultimately based upon sensibility and intellect. Young artists who adopt such foreign techniques jeopardize their ability to address an English public (these effects "please Frenchmen alone")—and therefore risk alienating themselves from their true

\textsuperscript{7} The work is reproduced as Plate 203 in Clarke and Penny, *The Arrogant Connoisseur*; it was purchased by Richard Payne Knight and remains at Downton Castle in the collection of his heir, Denis Lennox. Michael Clarke's catalogue entry for the work notes that Knight's enthusiasm for Westall's *Flora* was considered "additional proof of his bad taste," by banker and poet, Samuel Rogers, and also "regretted" by Knight's friend, George Beaumont (Clarke, *The Arrogant Connoisseur*, p. 186).

\textsuperscript{77} "The Arts—Remarks on the Present Exhibition," *True Briton*, 22 May 1807.
character as national subjects.\textsuperscript{76}

The wide array of critical writings devoted to the critique of artists such as Richard Westall demonstrates that the subject position of the moral, knowing viewer could be marshalled in support of divergent ideological positions. For an oppositional journal like the Post in the 1790s, such a critique of fashionable taste and vulgar knowledge was directed at a decadent monied elite and served as a stark contrast to the virtues of study and labour that were increasingly associated with the educated sector of the middle class and patriciate. When presented in the context of more conservative publications such as the True Briton and St. James Chronicle, however, this type of critique could serve as a way of distinguishing the superficial knowledge and philistine pleasures of a increasingly wealthy, but as yet culturally unsophisticated commercial middle class from the erudition of traditional propertied elites. Attacking the debasement of taste which resulted from the debasement of taste which resulted from the

\textsuperscript{76}It is possible that the critic defending the Bower of Pan in 1800 may have regarded such a rich, voluptuous image, reminiscent of French rococo painting, as constituting a cosmopolitan rather than a liberal viewer—that is, a subject whose prestige derived from his familiarity with pre-Revolutionary French painting and other forms of continental culture and fashion, rather than with classical learning. Although these two subject positions were constituted by many of the same qualifications, the harsh attack on the decadence of the French aristocracy by bourgeois reformists in the late 1790s and beyond resulted in the abandonment of cosmopolitanism as a social ideal in the late 1790s and early 1800s by many defenders of the propertied elite, including John Taylor, the critic who attacked Flora Unveiled by Zephyrs in 1807. See Chapter IV for a further discussion of the rejection of cosmopolitanism in favour of a ideal based upon national character.
corrupting power of monied interests, then, could serve the interests of diverse, even opposed, social and ideological interests.

Such positional moves recall similar strategies employed by Burke and Paine in their polemics on the French Revolution. J. G. A. Pocock argues that the central crime of the revolutionaries in Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) is not the assault on the bedchamber of the Queen, but the confiscation of church property. This act, Burke alleges, was conducted in order to provide the security for a system of public credit which would benefit only monied men who were "neither noble nor newly noble." 

Paine, on the other hand, insisted that Burke's anger was misdirected; in fact it was the courtier ("whether he be in the Court of Versailles, or the Court of St. James") and the British placeman and pensioner who were responsible for the corruption of the former French court and the present British government. Despite their fundamental disagreement, both writers attacked the corrupting power of monied interests.

We have examined how a variety of artistic texts engage in

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this same form of social critique when they evaluate fashionable
modes of art production, consumption and viewing. The linking of
glittering style and high key colour with the foreign, the
fashionable, and debased modes of knowledge featured directly in
political discourse as well. An anonymous volume, Political
Essays on Popular Subjects, Containing Dissertations on First
Principles; Liberty; Democracy and the Party Denominations of
Whig and Tory (1801), offers a Burkean defense of the English
state against attempts to reform the constitution. Its author
uses the language of contemporary artistic discourse to condemn
the "novel characteristics" of the present age:

A general diffusion of the lowest species of knowledge,
a dashing style of composition, a tinsel sort of
elocution, together with a deficiency of solid thought,
a want of logical precision, and an ignorance of
original principles, mark the features of the times
with colours too glaring to be mistaken, with foreign
tints which shame the modest simplicity of nature,
which disguise the genuine dignity of truth.11

Lest readers have any doubts about the origin of the unnatural
"foreign tints" which disguise logical thinking and truth, the
author goes on to assert that the French Revolution sprung from
false principles, unleashing abroad a "daring spirit of

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1 Political Essays on Popular Subjects, Containing
Dissertations on First Principles; Liberty; Democracy and the
Party Denominations of Whig and Tory, 3rd ed. (London, 1801),
p. 15.
innovation. What is striking about this passage in our context, is the ease with which it appropriates the language of aesthetics and art criticism in order to attack the political precepts of Revolutionary and Napoleonic France. So strong were the associations of tinsel, glaring colours and "dashing" composition with a debased, vulgar, and foreign form of painting that these pejoratives could be confidently expected to call up unnatural and ephemeral modes of political knowledge—specifically those 'levelling' principles which toppled the French monarchy.

The "modest simplicity of nature," defiled by these innovative political principles, is a phrase that has a strong resonance with the debasement of nature incurred by fashionable painting so disparaged by the Post, Pasquin, the True Briton, and Edward Dayes. In these political and artistic discourses "nature" signifies the customary order of culture and society as it has been in past, and would be in the present if not contaminated by new and artificial principles and practices.

\[\text{Political Essays, pp. 22–3. The term "innovation" took on an almost universally pejorative meaning in the late '90s and early 1800s, being synonymous with revolutionary political and social change. Thus, in arguing for a moderate reform of Parliament in a speech before the Commons in 1800 Charles Grey was extremely carefully in distinguishing between reform and innovation: "It is said...that the example of France should deter us from innovation. Certainly; I should be one of the last men in this House to propose or to encourage any innovations. Hating innovations, however, I consider it my duty to promote Reform. It is by timely reform alone that the danger of great crises and of violent innovations is prevented" ("British Parliament--House of Commons," Star, 25 April 1800).}\]
'Customary' in this context refers to those accidental, particular and local features which a society has acquired over its history and which render it distinct from others. This association of custom with nature and the natural is a signal feature of Burke's Reflections which turns on a comparison between the monstrous artificiality of the abstract systems that produced the idea of democratic rule and the naturalness of submitting to the traditional authority of kings, priests, nobles, and the entailed inheritance of a constitution which has stood the test of time.\textsuperscript{33}

Literally conservative in its emphasis on the authority of past, the appeal to custom was employed in the last half of the eighteenth century by Burke, Johnson and other defenders of the English oligarchy as a means of countering the universalist claims of middle class radicals. Radicals like Paine, drawing on the writings of Locke and Rousseau, appealed to the general nature of men and to the theoretical origin and function of all governments in order to criticize the abuses of monarchical power.

\textsuperscript{33}Burke, pp. 37-9. The discussion that follows is heavily indebted to John Barrell's analysis of the ideological function of the discourse on custom in the political writings of Johnson, Burke, and Coleridge (Barrell, The Political Theory of Painting, pp. 136-41. Barrell claims that it was the radicals' appropriation of the universalist discourse of civic humanism that spurred Joshua Reynolds to endorse, albeit hesitantly, the inclusion of some aspects of the customary (such as specific types of ornament) in painting. Although Barrell takes pains to emphasize the tenuousness of Reynolds' turn to custom, he does not indicate that the oppositional dyad "custom/universality" operated quite differently in political and in artistic discourse nor explore the connections between "custom" and "nature."
in France and England.\textsuperscript{34} Thus the universal nature of 'man' propounded by Paine was set in opposition to the customary nature of English culture and society. Johnson and Burke maintained, to the contrary, that the cumulative wisdom distilled in the laws and traditions of the English polity were superior to abstract and universal systems of government because the customary had been tested over time by a process of trial and error.\textsuperscript{35}

Such a privileging of English nature and custom came increasingly to figure in visual representation as well as political discourse. However the opposition between universal Nature and English nature established in a highly specific political debate cannot be mapped straightforwardly onto artistic practice and aesthetic discourse. While universalist notions of natural rights may have been appropriated by radicals for certain strategic reasons, 'universalism' in artistic discourse, that is, the generalization and idealization of forms, still connoted an erudite liberalism that was in the 1790s far from radical in its institutional base and its theoretical positioning.

Nonetheless, the turn to English nature does engage with this wider debate on what constitutes the natural. The genre which was understood to represent English nature most directly

\textsuperscript{34}Paine, \textit{The Rights of Man}, pp. 304-5.

and unaffectedly in landscape painting was topographical painting. In the 1790s and early 1800s Paul Sandby's topographical watercolours were sometimes invoked as a positive alternative to the Gallic glitter of fashionable landscape painting. Recall that the Post critic in 1795 praised Sandby as a founding member of the Royal Academy, who therefore represented the tradition, albeit a recent one at this point, of English academic painting. Typical of Sandby's work at the turn of the century is his Carreg-Cennen Castle (Figure 8, c. 1800). The muted colouring, simply delineated forms and even lighting starkly differentiates this composition from the flamboyant colours of Westall's works and the scattered lights and frothy forms of Ibbetson's. Although drawing on the general pictorial conventions of the seventeenth century classical landscape painters (in this case Claude and Dughet), such a work by Sandby was not commonly identified with a particular old master source.

In the 1790s this lack of obvious foreign "influence" came to be seen as one of Sandby's major strengths as an English painter. Here, for example, is what the art critic for the Morning Chronicle had to say about the artist's productions in 1792:

Mr. Paul Sandby was one of the first English Artists that thought for himself. Instead of resorting to the delineations of RUYSDALE, VAN GOWEN and WATERLOO, for ideas of beautiful scenery and picturesque nature, he considered the prospects that are presented in our provinces--took them in the most happy points of view;
and has, by his long practice and taste, formed a style perfectly original and English. 

Rejection of foreign (in this case Dutch) style and subject matter is seen to connote an independent-mindedness and originality that this writer clearly wishes to identify with a general notion of Englishness, not simply the achievement of a single domestic artist. These critical remarks are consistent with another short piece on painting, probably by the same author, which appeared in the Chronicle a week earlier. English artists, it was claimed, were ill-served by taking as models the works of old masters, which were dark and dingy in colouring. But an even worse option was to emulate "French glitter, which glares upon the eye like a bed of Dutch tulips." English artists were advised to avoid both of these alternatives, and "look to nature." Sandby's work, then, had the virtue of avoiding two types of negative foreign influence, "French glitter" and the blackened colour of the old masters.

While an avoidance of extremes in colour could win Sandby praise from some of the critics who were promoting a national school of landscape painting, it could not guarantee him success in the marketplace. The artist's incapacity to compete with other artists was manifested in his turn to oil painting after

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86 "Exhibition of the Royal Academy," Morning Chronicle, 17 May 1792.

87 "Painting," Morning Chronicle, 11 May 1792.
1806 because he could no longer afford the glass needed for framing watercolours. Although the critic for the *London Packet* in 1799 praised Sandby's *View of Denton Lodge* for not possessing "any of that glare and glitter which distinguishes a number of drawings around it," and then asserted that "this venerable artist will hardly live to see his own works outdone by any disciples of the new school," his works were already being surpassed in popular and critical interest by those very works which "glittered" on the walls near *Denton Lodge*. By 1808, Robert Hunt, art critic for his brothers' new weekly, the *Examiner*, was recommending that Sandby retire, since his landscapes looked as if they were "floured over with a dredging box," a phrase which calls attention to the opacity and dullness of Sandby's colour in comparison to that of other landscape artists. Such an opinion was not fuelled by a high regard for established artists like Westall (who, although receiving mixed praise, was scolded by Hunt for sacrificing "the purity of his taste to the vicious relish of others") or Francis Bourgeois (whose works the critic variously dismissed as a poor imitation of Rosa or ironically deprecated for their lack of grandeur.

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harmony and "depth of effect"). It was in fact Turner, Girtin, and Callcott, young artists comprising the "new school" referred to by the London Packet critic, who drew the attention of writers like Hunt, patrons, and the exhibition public away from the works of Sandby as well as those of Westall, Ibbetson, and Dayes.

Although the landscapes of these young artists were often discussed in terms of visual effects which worked well in the private and public spaces of display which we have considered in this chapter, their appeal was not purely sensory. Like Sandby's works, these landscapes also were the site for the production of the artist as a specifically English subject whose identity was secured via the discourse on nature and custom. However, the notion of natural which confirmed these new works was no longer configured predominantly by academic discourse or the aesthetics of picturesque viewing (to be discussed in the next chapter)—modes of knowledge which traditionally were the province of the liberally educated man of property. Rather, the natural was increasingly defined through an aesthetic arising from a specialized study of the human mind which prominently featured the individual imagination over reason, and direct observation of external nature over the study of past art. In examining this new form of landscape painting, it will be important to determine whether it is possible to inscribe the

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[Robert Hunt], "Royal Academy," Examiner, 8 May 1808, p. 300; 29 May 1808, p. 347; and 12 June 1808, p. 380.
artist as a social subject within a form of representation which privileges specialization and individualization. And if such a social subject is indeed produced, then we must consider how the parameters of the social were defined and secured.
CHAPTER III

The Imaginative Man of Genius, Specialized Knowledge, and Associated Pleasures

In his essay "A Brief History of the Subject," John Forrester observes that "the modern subject is introduced within a climate of uncertainty as to ethics and knowledge, yet at the same time the modern subject is an answer to these persistent doubts."¹ We have traced just such a 'climate of uncertainty' in examining the conflicts involved as a variety of institutions, images and texts sought to reconstitute both the artistic and the viewing subject of painting in the politically and economically volatile period of the Napoleonic Wars. The first two chapters have focussed on the ethical problems in such a project—how painting can represent virtue as a defining characteristic of the individual when artists and consumers compete in a capitalized market for cultural goods. But as suggested in the last chapter, the authority of traditional epistemological systems was also being challenged within and without the artistic domain. In this and the following chapter we will examine the consequences of this epistemological challenge for both landscape and history painting, and also analyze the formal strategies and theoretical premises of a form of landscape painting which capitalizes upon

accidental, but highly unified and visually striking effects to instantiate a new type of artistic subject. Although the epistemological authority of this subject position remains grounded in many of the precepts derived from the academic theory of history painting (notions of character, imagination, sensibility and unity of expression) these principles are reformulated according to an emergent specialized discourse of associationist psychology. What is noteworthy about this newly formulated associationist aesthetics is that the artistic subject position most closely identified with it was the not the history painter, but the landscape artist, whose productions were seen to inscribe an ideal of English genius marked by social sympathy, imagination, and originality.

In the previous chapter we saw that two commentators writing in the 1790s suggested that topographical watercolourist Paul Sandby represented the ideal of an independent English artist who had rejected both the mannered imitation of the continental masters and the allure of Gallic glitter. Independent native character was, in this instance, predicated upon a rejection of foreign models, an attachment to British scenery, and, not least, a founding membership in the national academy.² By the turn of

²Although the two commentators in question did not mention the fact, Sandby's chosen medium, watercolour, was commonly identified by contemporaries as a specifically English medium, thus further enhancing the artist's independence from foreign influence. Thus, for example, Martin Archer Shee, in his Rhymes on Art (1805), which was a versified appeal for public support of art, claimed that "Britain has displayed a power, a vigour, a
the century the possibility that a topographical artist, whose productions depended upon some degree of site specificity, could serve as an ideal of the professional artist had become a contentious enough matter to warrant public attention by Professor of Painting Henry Fuseli in one of his lectures delivered at the Royal Academy in 1805. The well-known history painter associated the localized nature of topographical subject matter with a public constituted strictly by confined and private interests; such a connection disqualified topographical painting from serving as a public artform, and hence, within the academic paradigm, disqualified its practitioners from aspiring to the status of liberal artists.

Fuseli’s remarks on topography follow a discussion which dismisses the public value of portraiture through the (by then) common expedient of linking it to the spread of commerce and the concomitant ‘leveling’ of taste:

To portrait-painting, thus circumstanced, we subjoin, as the last branch of uninteresting subjects, that kind of landscape which is entirely occupied with the tame delineation of a given spot: an enumeration of hill and dale, clumps of trees, shrubs, water, meadows, cottages, and houses; what is commonly called views. These, if not assisted by nature, dictated by taste, or chosen for character, may delight the owner of the acres they enclose, the inhabitants of the spot, perhaps the antiquary or the traveller, but to every spirit, a richness of effect in water-colour drawings, which rival the productions of the easel, and surpass the efforts of every other age, and nation” [Rhymes on Art in Elements of Art and Rhymes on Art (London, 1809), pp. 43-4 n.].
Such a form of painting is presented here as problematic because it involves the imitation of common nature, and therefore accords the artist a mechanical rôle—the production of "map-work" as Fuseli terms it in the continuation of this passage. This is inconsistent with the elevated professional status which the author, as an academic history painter, is committed to promoting.

Note that not all forms of landscape painting are rejected; the concern is with "tame" delineations of a particular spot—that is, topographical landscapes which are visually unremarkable (presumably landscapes depicting sublime scenery are exempt from his charges). Even unremarkable scenes, he suggests, can be redeemed by taste—a term subject to various inflections, but almost invariably connoting an appreciation for past art. For a landscape to be "dictated by taste" would thus imply its subjection to the models of Claude, Dughet, Poussin, and perhaps the Dutch and Flemish masters. Fuseli further qualified his statement by invoking nature and character as other means of elevating the representation of tame scenery beyond the status of mechanical imitations. In a later lecture Fuseli followed the tradition of Reynolds and earlier writers in defining nature as "the general and permanent principles of visible objects, not

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3Fuseli, Lectures in Wornum, p. 449.
disfigured by accident or distempered by disease, not modified by fashion or local habits. Nature is a collective idea, and though its essence exists in each individual of the species, can never in its perfection inhabit a single object." Character, he went on to indicate, represents that "essence" which inhabits this collective idea of nature. These substantial qualifications have the effect of subjecting topographical landscapes to the same aesthetic principles which informed history painting, although without 'serious' subject matter, such representations could not aspire to the elevated status of epic painting in the grand style.

From his itemization of features such as hills, trees, water and cottages, it is also apparent that Fuseli is here attacking not only topographical 'map-makers' but the conventions of the picturesque, which Sandby helped to define and popularize, initially through his aquatint series of Views in Wales published in the 1770s. Well into the nineteenth century such views of British scenery were produced by scores of artists (including Dayes) and proliferated in the form of paintings, drawings, and collections of prints issued as sets or incorporated into

\footnote{Fuseli, "Lectures," p. 495.}

\footnote{Fuseli's criticism carried much more critical weight than that of Edward Dayes, coming as it did from the Professor of Painting in the form of lectures at the Royal Academy. Thus, while Dayes' articles elicited little, if any, public response, Turner was disturbed enough about Fuseli's remarks to urge his publisher, John Britton, to reply to them in print. Britton's response is discussed below (see infra, p. 173-5).}
illustrated tours, antiquarian studies and county histories.

Fuseli's disparaging remarks could also be taken as a reproof to the best known contemporary writer on picturesque, the Whig landowner Uvedale Price. In an essay published in 1801, Price insisted that beauty was universally recognizable, consequently a cultivated taste for pictures or natural scenery is not demonstrated by an appreciation of beautiful vistas or the representation of ideal forms. On the contrary, it is the ability to derive aesthetic pleasure from the deformities of nature which distinguishes the man of taste. Hence an untrained viewer would undoubtedly react to a scene of hovels, dunghills, and ragged old women with disgust, whereas a connoisseur of the picturesque would be able to appreciate and enjoy such figures

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\(^6\)Uvedale Price, *Essays on the Picturesque*, 2nd ed. (London, 1810; first ed. 1794), 3:275f. This section of the Essays was originally published in 1801 as *A Dialogue on the Distinct Characters of the Picturesque and the Beautiful*, which was a response to Payne Knight's charge that Price had erred in making a distinction between the beautiful and the picturesque. In this context the term aesthetic pleasure connoted a range of feelings (such as pleasure, empathy, awe, melancholy, and even, in some formulations, terror) stimulated by viewing works of art. Determining what social, intellectual, or other qualifications were required in order to experience aesthetic pleasure was a highly contentious issue throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, English commentators throughout the this period frequently agreed on the moral benefits of developing a taste for art; the pleasures involved were regarded as milder and less morally objectionable than the venal pleasures associated with the physical gratification of the appetites. For an early account of the moral benefits of viewing art see Joseph Addison, *Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination* (London, 1813; orig. pub. in the *Spectator*, 1712), p. 6.
and objects for the visual variety and contrast they afforded.  

While the connoisseur and landowner Richard Payne Knight disagreed with Price about the existence of the picturesque as a distinctive aesthetic category, he, too, regarded a learned awareness of continental art as a precondition for a full appreciation of a landscape composed of such elements.  

Such an educated awareness was, of course, predicated upon much the same social and economic criteria that defined the man of letters—the leisure and social access to education, travel, and the paintings themselves which only a substantial degree of wealth could provide.  

As Ann Bermingham has demonstrated, this aestheticization of the rural poor was part of a larger attempt by the propertied elite to contain or negate the socially destabilizing effects of enclosure, rural depopulation, and urban industrialization on the labouring population of the countryside. The ability to convert rural decay and poverty into a cultural ‘asset’—an aesthetically pleasing view or picture—was ascribed to the same class of property owners whose capital investments in agricultural land and control of systems of poor relief largely produced the extremes of wealth and poverty which were the sources of rural dislocation and discontent [Bermingham, Landscape and Ideology. The English Rustic tradition 1740-1860 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 73-83].  


This insistence on the elevated character of the picturesque was consistent with the shared opinion of Knight and Price that current taste in landscape gardening was in dire need of reform—an issue which affected most directly the landed gentry and those gentlemen of the commercial and financial classes who could afford to purchase enough property to landscape. For a cogent ideological analysis of Price's attack on the mode of landscape gardening popularized by Capability Brown, see Stephen Daniels, "The Political Iconography of Woodland in Later Georgian England," in The Iconography of Landscape, eds. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 43-81.
It was, however, the writings of William Gilpin, not Price or Knight, which had the greatest impact in popularizing the picturesque. Since the 1770s Gilpin had been promoting the picturesque specifically for the benefit of travellers viewing the actual countryside. His goal was to train tourists to see domestic scenery through the mediating structures of landscape painting, and then to translate this composed vision of nature into their own drawings. Far from being exclusively designed for the liberally-educated connoisseur, such a practice, Gilpin wrote in *Three Essay on Picturesque Beauty* (1792), was ideally suited to the man of business. Whereas history painting and portraiture were too difficult to execute, "the art of sketching landscapes is attainable by a man of business; and it is certainly more useful; and I should imagine, more amusing, to attain some degree of excellence in an inferior branch, than to be a mere bungler in a superior." Sketching landscapes, then, provided an accessible cultural accomplishment for the man of business, who perhaps had the time to take a summer tour of the Lake District, Wales, or Scotland, but did not have the time or the motivation of the professional artist to take up the serious study of painting.

The type of drawing advocated by Gilpin can be found in graphic form not only in his tour guides and essays, published...
in the last third of the eighteenth century, but also in prints
after his drawings which continued to be issued in the
nineteenth century. For example, in 1810 Edward Orme issued an
aquatint of one of Gilpin’s many picturesque compositions in the
Lake District (Figure 9) which displays the formal arrangement
and many of the particular landscape features which had come to
signify the picturesque. The two mounted tourists moving into the
view on the road in the foreground provide a point of
identification for the picturesque viewer, whose gaze traverses
this landscape in order to possess it visually, rather than
inhabit it corporeally either as a proprietor or labourer. The
composition is organized into a clearly delineated foreground,
middleground and background, bracketed by side-screens of
sketchily denoted trees. Although Gilpin preferred this type
format, derived from the compositions of Claude, other
practitioners of the picturesque based their compositions on
those of the Dutch masters, such as Ruysdael and Hobbema.
Whether or not an identifiably Dutch or Italian model was
followed, the format of a picturesque composition usually can be
seen to conform to such a structure of well-marked planes
receding into distance, framed at least on one side by trees, a
road, or rock formations.

For Gilpin, as for Price, the hallmark of the picturesque
was variety and contrast, discernable in this work in the trees
with their sinuous limbs and varied clumps of foliage silhouetted
against the light of the sky. Also enhancing the picturesque effect are the irregular outlines of the rocks in the foreground, the promontory jutting into the lake, and the distant mountains. As with all of Gilpin's productions, colour and light effects are subdued; contrast and variety are provided almost solely via outline and gently modelled masses.\textsuperscript{11}

Although such a picturesque landscape frequently was purported to represent scenery associated with an actual site, topographical accuracy was abjured; natural features often were significantly altered in position, scale, and form in order to produce visual variety and pleasure. In this sense, the basic principles of the picturesque were consistent with academic theory, in which the 'character' (or underlying 'essence') of a scene was represented in forms which deviate significantly from those visible in external nature. But unlike academic theory, the picturesque was not designed to elevate the status of professional artists, but to empower aesthetically a broad range of viewers among the touring and sketching public.

\textsuperscript{11}Such an emphasis on form and line, over colour and light conforms to basic tenets of academicism which privileged line over colour as a means of representing forms in a manner which was both permanent and intelligible—that is, in such a way that meaning could be fixed and not misconstrued. See for example Fuseli's statement that "languages perish; words succeed each other, become obsolete and die; even colours, the dressers and ornaments of bodies, fade; lines alone can neither be obliterated nor misconstrued; by application to their standard alone, discrimination takes place and description becomes intelligible" (Fuseli, \textit{Lectures}, in Wornum, p. 491).
The accessibility of compositions such as Gilpin's to reproduction by non-professionals had the potential of reducing the subject position of the artist producer to that of the casual tourist or the amateur dabbler. This situation was particularly acute in the case of professional watercolour artists, since their chosen medium had been the special province of amateurs on the one hand, and topographical draughtsmen on the other. In the years around 1800 watercolour remained associated with those private interests which Fuseli detailed in his attack on landscape in general—landowners, mapmakers, tourists and antiquarians.

However, public recognition of watercolour as a professional practice grew in the early 1800s as artists began to produce larger-scaled works to meet the demands of public exhibitions at the Royal Academy, the Society of Painters in Water-Colours (first exhibition, 1805), and the Associated Artists in Water-Colours (first exhibition, 1808). Although the landscapes seen in these exhibitions were not public works of art in the traditional sense, they entered into the public discourse on painting in ways that other private artworks on public display (such as miniatures and still-lifes) did not. Commentaries on watercolour and press reviews of landscape watercolours on exhibit used the same critical criteria and language that was applied to oil painting, frequently employing nationalist rhetoric in celebrating English preeminence in the medium.¹²

¹²See infra, p. 118, n. 2.
Although amateur engagement with watercolour provided much support for the public promotion of the medium, professional watercolourists could not hope to surmount their identification as artisans if their works were deemed indistinguishable from topography or novice productions. A reviewer for the Repository of Arts said as much in a review of the watercolour exhibitions of 1810. Mediocrity, he wrote was a signal feature of landscape painting, "because, to a certain degree, its requisites are within the reach of almost every capacity. A mechanical expertness in delineation, and a tolerable proficiency in colouring, may be attained by a course of lessons from a drawing-master." The critic went on to encourage artists to persevere in their study and exert their mental powers.\textsuperscript{13} Intellect and industry function as a means of distinguishing a professional practice from mechanical imitation and the dabblings of the novice. What threatens professional artists here are not the artistic incursions of a select elite of learned amateurs like Beaumont, but those of a much broader segment of society, encompassing men and women from the middling classes who engaged in landscape drawing as a fashionable accomplishment.\textsuperscript{14}

The trivialization of the practice of landscape painting and

\textsuperscript{13}"Water-colour Exhibitions," Repository of Arts, June 1810, supplement, p. 429. This statement appears more than a little hypocritical given the context in which it appeared—a periodical published by a firm which vigorously promoted the sale of landscape drawings and prints as well as drawing manuals designed to increase the amateur production of landscapes.

\textsuperscript{14}Sloan, pp. 234-6.
drawing was also a prominent theme in the parodies of the picturesque which appeared around the turn of the century. The most famous of these was William Combe's tales of the hapless Dr. Syntax (a parody of the Rev. Gilpin), whose misadventures were first issued serially in Ackermann's Poetic Magazine in 1809, accompanied by illustrations by Thomas Rowlandson, and later reissued in book form. Dr. Syntax, a preacher cum schoolmaster, set out touring in order to reverse his financial misfortunes by publishing an account of his travels: "I'll ride and write and sketch and print, And thus create a real mint; I'll prose it here, I'll verse it there, And picturesque it ev'ry where."\(^1\)\(^\text{\textsuperscript{15}}\)  
Aside from suggesting that for some, an interest in the picturesque might be motivated primarily by thoughts of financial gain, the narrative also satirizes the artistic liberties taken in one of the Doctor's drawings of a view of natural scenery, which, nonetheless, readers are assured "preserves its character."\(^1\)\(^\text{\textsuperscript{16}}\)

Another way in which picturesque viewing and sketching were satirized and trivialized was by presenting them as particularly feminine occupations. For example, in Chapter Eighteen of Sense and Sensibility (1811) Marianne, Jane Austen's exemplar of sensibility, feelingly describes a view of the surrounding

\(^{16}\) [Combe], pp. 10-1.
countryside in picturesque terms. Her expressions of delight are countered by the "sensible" Edward's rejoinder; his pleasures, he insists, derive from wholly utilitarian judgments about the productivity of the timber and farms that fall within his gaze. Within the parameters of Austen's commentary on contemporary manners and morals, picturesqueness and utility are gendered signifiers of the undesirable extremes of sensibility—the former representing its excess, and the latter its absence.

The picturesque could not only represent excessive sensibility, but also signify that equally feminized quality, capriciousness. In his unperformed opera *The Lakers* (published in 1797), the Rev. James Plumptre, an experienced and avid tourist, gently satirized Gilpinesque drawing practices through the medium of a female character. Miss Beccabunga Veronica, a wealthy amateur botanist in search of a titled husband, takes recourse in the picturesque to defend certain 'renovations' she has wrought in a landscape she has drawn: "I have only made it picturesque. I have only given the hills an Alpine form, and put some wood where it is wanted, and omitted it where it is not wanted and who would put that sham church and that house into a picture? It quite antipathizes." Feminine capriciousness is here conflated with and defended by a picturesque vocabulary and visual practice which have become the hallmarks of the tourist.

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Such parodies and critiques should not be taken as sign of the decline or demise of the picturesque, as has been asserted by writers like Christopher Hussey.\(^\text{18}\) The continued vitality of the picturesque is evidenced by the sheer number of picturesque landscape paintings, and drawings produced in the Napoleonic War period (and beyond), which were multiplied by their reproduction in individual prints, series of picturesque views, and illustrations in tour guides and local histories (such as the heavily-illustrated *The Beauties of England and Wales*, which ran to eighteen volumes between 1801 and 1815). The problem, then, for artists who wished to paint landscapes, either in oil or watercolour, that elevated their status beyond that of hack producers for the tourist and antiquarian market, was determining a visual language which would inscribe a less accessible mode of artistic knowledge than the picturesque entailed, and at the same time produce works which could compete visually with the eye-catching productions so reviled by critics and so popular with consumers.\(^\text{19}\)

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\(^{19}\)Although oil painters may not have been as deeply affected by the ‘levelling’ effects of novices encroaching upon their practice, the market for oil paintings of popular tourist sites in the Lake District, the Peaks, Wales, and Scotland, was strongly affected by the popularity of the picturesque. In 1800 when Turner exhibited as his Academy diploma piece his sublime view of Dolbadern Castle, in which picturesque variety of outline and form is sharply limited in favour of varied arrays of indistinct masses of shadow and light, one of the few critical comments it elicited in the press indicated the public to whom...
In order to identify with some specificity the type of formal strategies and painterly techniques employed by some landscape painters to assert a professional status above that of topographical 'imitators' and amateur 'dabblers' in the picturesque, it will be useful to consider a watercolour by Thomas Girtin, *Kirkstall Abbey* (Figure 10, 1800). As Lindsay Stainton has observed, the artist has chosen a type of scene commonly identified with the picturesque: an abbey, replete with meandering river, variegated clumps of trees and brush, rural labourers and rustic cottages. But, as she goes on to point out, the artist has represented this assemblage in a manner which would have been regarded as wholly unpicturesque. Rather than emphasize the irregularities of the surrounding hills and the intricacies of the ruined abbey and rural dwellings, these and other features are simplified and subordinated to the emphatic breadth of the panorama, dominated by a sky swept with darkening clouds. Although the range of colours in the work is severely limited, part of the drama and visual interest of the composition lies in the application of broad washes of colour--blue, set against the greys and white of the clouds above, and the nearly

the writer perceived the work to be directed. The critic declared that it was "a Picture of the first merit, which the Gentlemen who draw for tours in Wales might very profitably study" ("Exhibition of Paintings, ect. at the Royal Academy," *St. James Chronicle*, 29 April-1 May 1800).

monotone brown of the landscape below—punctuated by the
brilliant white of the abbey, the sheen of the river, and the
lights dappling the hills. Whereas in the previously-discussed
view of Kelso Abbey by Edward Dayes the 'picturesque' eye is
couraged to dwell on the linear elaborations of the
architecture and foliage, Girtin's scene calls forth an
appreciation of his handling of sunlight as it penetrates the
clouds, picking out natural and architectural forms which are
only cursorily indicated by outline.

The anti-picturesqueness of Girtin's abbey view serves to
distance it from the amateur productions increasingly associated
with genteel "dabblers."\textsuperscript{2} A glimpse at contemporary manuals
designed to teach landscape watercolour techniques attests to the
fact that the effects which dominate the abbey view are those
which novices are encouraged to avoid. For example, James
Roberts' Introductory Lesson...in Landscape (1800) advises the
student (who is always referred to as he, although these books
served an increasingly female audience) to learn how to sketch
before "he bewilders himself with the seducing witchery of
colours."\textsuperscript{22} We recognize this warning from discussions in Chapter

\textsuperscript{2}James Roberts' instruction manual for painting landscapes
in watercolour alludes to this characterization of amateur
landscape painting as a trivial pursuit. Roberts begins by
stating that painting has long been practiced by both the
"dignified and opulent," who pursue it as a "graceful
accomplishment," and the "middling ranks" who find it a "useful
acquirement;" he goes onto cite the "spirited performances" of
several titled amateurs as a refutation of the accusation that
they are merely dabblers (J. Roberts, pp. 1-2).

\textsuperscript{22}J. Roberts, p. 2.
II as part of the larger discourse on the corruption of painting, and especially of landscape. Associated in academic discourse with the passions, colour is regarded as threatening the unambiguous production of meaning secured through outline. Since colour is regarded as seductive and technically difficult to control, it is seen as particularly dangerous in the hands of the young and inexperienced.

This guide follows its eighteenth-century predecessors in advising students to copy the works of established masters before venturing to sketch from nature directly. The reason for this practice, according to Roberts was that it was difficult "to seize upon the transient and ever-varying beauties produced by flying clouds, and the various evanescent effects, which often elude the grasp, and mock the skill of the able professor." Taken in this context, Girtin's Kirkstall Abbey could almost be said to form a compendium of effects and techniques to be studiously avoided by all but the most skilled professional.

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23 In addition to the discussion in Chapter II, see Chapter III, p. 126, n. 11.

24 Sloan, p. 236.

25 J. Roberts, pp. 6-7. Although Roberts most frequently cites as models older artists, such as Sandby, whose work relies upon form and outline more than colour, at one point he also recommends that students study and copy the drawings of Turner and Girtin (p. 9). Such copying would presumably facilitate a control of colour and effects much more difficult to acquire by sketching from nature directly.
Changes in the professional practice of landscape painting and drawing affected amateur practices as well, so that the
appearance in 1812 of Ackermann's *New Drawing Book of Light and Shadow*, ostensibly designed to teach novices how to produce
atmospheric effects of light (but not colour), should not seem surprising. However, the crude aquatints of standard picturesque
subjects which are reproduced in the book would have offered little aid to the aspiring amateur wishing to produce a work
possessing subtle nuances of tonality or dramatic illumination. The emphasis is upon the juxtapositioning of objects and
landscape features which are simplified into schematized masses of uniform tones: dark billowy clouds are shown outlined against
a lighter sky, or as in a view of Kenilworth Castle, sharply delineated shafts of light stream down from clouds in a wide,
unmodulated band. The text accompanying the plates sheds no further light on the subject; technical directions are cursory
and vague.

The book, in fact, functions less as a how-to manual than as a paean to professional English watercolourists. The
introduction sets the tone by tracing a history of watercolour

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26 *Ackermann’s New Drawing Book of Light and Shade*, (London: Ackermann’s, 1812), plate xxiv.

27 The text is most likely by the watercolourist, printer, and writer W. H. Pyne, who was known to have worked for Ackermann and whose essays on landscape painting, published in Ackermann’s *Repository* in 1812, share similarities in language and intent with the *New Drawing Book*. 
from Thomas Hearne and Sandby to Richard Westall, whose works are described as "elegant and masterly." Since that time, the author continues, "a constellation of geniuses has arisen; of whom were Girtin, whose works were distinguished by a force of colouring which astonished...and Turner, who has united in his drawings every excellence that powerful genius and fine feeling could accomplish." The distinctions between terms such as elegant and masterly (the first being commonly associated with the manners and polite accomplishments of genteel society) and those used to describe these newer artists and their work—"force," "excellence," "powerful genius," and "fine feeling" are distinctions of type rather than merely degree. Turner and Girtin are not simply more elegant and masterly than Westall and Sandby, but possess both an intellectual force and a sensibility which increasingly came to characterize the native genius. The artistic genius is presented here as a professional, armed with a specialist's knowledge as well as inherent creative capacity, in contradistinction to the liberal artist modelled after the

\[\text{\textsuperscript{28}}\text{Ackermann's New Drawing Book, p. ii.} \text{ Whereas modern accounts of the history of watercolour frequently cite the medium's transparency as one of its unique and distinguishing features, Sandby is credited in this text with introducing the translucence found in oil painting to the domain of watercolour. This is but one indication of the very complex relationship that was seen to exist between oil and watercolour painting by contemporary artists and writers. This relationship deserves a close and attentive study. What can be said with confidence is that there existed no contemporary consensus about the direction or the exact nature of the influence of the one medium upon the other.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{29}}\text{Ackermann's New Drawing Book, p.ii.}\]
identity of the leisured gentleman.

This construction of the landscape genius was not confined to the medium of watercolour. This point was forcefully made by the radical essayist William Hazlitt in connection with Thomas Gainsborough, who then, as now, was known primarily for his work in oils. In an essay published in 1814 in the liberal weekly, the Champion, Hazlitt criticized Gainsborough for modeling himself after the gentlemen amateur:

He [Gainsborough] was to be considered, perhaps, rather as a man of taste, and of an elegant and feeling mind, than as a man of genius; as a lover of the art, rather than an artist. He pursued it, with a view to amuse and sooth his mind, with the ease of a gentleman, not with the severity of a professional student. He wished to make his pictures, like himself, amiable; but a too constant desire to please almost necessarily leads to affectation and effeminacy. He wanted that vigour of intellect, which perceives the beauty of truth; and thought that painting was to be gained, like other mistresses, by flattery and smiles.30

This passage is as much an attack on the subject position of the leisured gentleman as on Gainsborough. The radical essayist presents the gentleman here as lacking in discipline, industry and intellectual power. Divested of any notion of virtue (civic or otherwise) and intellectual superiority, the gentleman as man

of taste and amateur lover of art is presented as an idler, given over to elegant pleasures and amusements which soothe rather than actively engage his mind. He is a courtier who attempts to "win" painting, personified as a mistress, through the devices of flattery. This indolent, effeminate creature, Hazlitt tells us, has nothing in common with genius, which achieves success in (and 'over') painting by the manly application of a powerful intellect, a keen perception, and a professional's willingness to study.

The polarites which Hazlitt sets up between the qualities of genius and the leisured amateur take both their language and social relevance from contemporary debates in which Hazlitt himself was involved regarding the social utility of the leisured classes as consumers. In 1807 Hazlitt wrote an essay attacking the writings of Thomas Malthus, who was among the most prominent contemporary apologists for the landed elite. In elaborating his theory of population and agricultural production Malthus defended the importance of landed proprietors in stimulating domestic manufacture by their consumption of luxury goods.

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31 Hazlitt’s A Reply to the Essay on Population, by the Rev. T. R. Malthus (London, 1807) was published first in an abbreviated form as letters which appeared in Cobbett’s Political Register.

32 Malthus’s Essay on Population (1798) was the most widely discussed and circulated of his writings at this time. For a brief and cogent analysis of Malthus’s writings see Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow, That Noble Science of
Hazlitt was one of a number of political radicals and economic liberals who opposed such a defense of the leisured classes. In his *Extracts from the "Essay on Population" with a Commentary and Notes* which was appended to his essay, *A Reply to Malthus*, he engaged in a lengthy diatribe against consumption by the rich, linking it directly to the impoverishment of the labouring classes. He concluded by asking: "Have not the government and the rich had their way in every thing? Have they not gratified their ambition, their pride, their obstinacy, their ruinous extravagance? Have they not squandered the resources of the country as they pleased?" The essayist’s remarks on Gainsborough were far less heated than these angry interrogatives, but their underlying intent was remarkably similar. The indulgent man of leisure could no longer provide a model for serious artists to emulate; genius was the self-conscious antithesis of that effete and corrupted ideal—productive, studious, vigorous, and manly. 

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David Ricardo was perhaps the most well-known political economist to engage Malthus in a sustained debate about aspects of his theories. See Collini et. al. for a discussion of the debates between Malthus and Ricardo.


Attacks on the gentlemen of leisure, whose social utility was defined by his patterns of consumption, took on a special force in the years after 1806. At this time the British government passed the Orders in Council, which placed severe restrictions on foreign trade; the restrictions proved far more injurious to manufacturers than to agricultural interests. Writers such as William Spence reiterated a defense of luxury
Although the term genius was occasionally applied to women artists, when intended to convey the sense of singularity (having a particular genius 'for' a given type of endeavour), as it is used in both by Hazlitt and by the author of Ackermann's New Drawing Book, it is taken to mean a specifically masculine creative power. This point is underscored by a passage in the latter publication which follows the above cited account of the stellar appearance of genius in the English firmament:

It is with feelings of national exultation, that we can ascribe, in a great degree, this improvement in so elegant a department of the fine arts, to our lovely countrywomen. It is to the cultivation of the study of drawing in watercolours, by the enlightened ladies of our time that the best artists have owed their encouragement; and the patronage of the fair sex has thus produced an epoch in art which will be a lasting honour to the country.  

Women participate in the production of national genius, but not as public producers of art; rather their role is to study, to encourage and to patronize the work of "the best artists," who, consumption in responding specifically to the attacks made on the landed interest by manufacturers and political economists, such as James Mill, who sought the repeal of the Orders [see Spence, Britain Independent of Commerce (London, 1806; and Mill, Commerce Defended (London, 1806)]. Hazlitt's Reply to Malthus, published the year after the Orders went into effect, must also be situated within the specific context of this debate. For a discussion of the Orders in Council and the successful campaign to repeal them (effective in 1812) see J. E. Cookson, The Friends of Peace: Anti-war Liberalism in England 1793-1815 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 65-8.

according to the list of names the writer goes on to supply, are all men.

In a later discussion in the New Drawing Book the writer elaborates upon the changes which these male artists introduced: "The incidents of light and shadow being admitted to constitute a very material part of the beauty of a landscape, the improved state of landscape painting may be attributed to the mode of practice of the artists of our day." Formerly, he maintains, there was an overemphasis on outline and linear accuracy. Turner, Girtin, John Glover, William Havell, John Varley and other English watercolourists "judiciously sacrifice the minutiae of details to the general effect, or sentiment of the subject." Genius here is associated with specific techniques—the use of forceful colour and of light and shade, rather than outline—in order to produce "feeling" and "general effects." We have seen how such techniques signified the technical mastery of the professional over the unschooled novice. But technical facility in itself did not suffice as a mark of genius. Such a linking of light effects and colour to the production of feeling and expression had been admitted by academic professors such as Reynolds, Fuseli and Opie. But these effects were always to be deployed in a manner which would enhance, not replace the delineation of form through outline and subtle modelling—

unambiguous fixing of meaning. To allow colour and light effects to dominate drawing was, within this aesthetic paradigm, equivalent to the effacement of both the object represented and its expressive character. The resultant composition would be reduced to an ornamental surface, incapable of registering any character beyond that of the artist himself.\(^{39}\)

Academic discourse did allow for this type of practice in the case of "uninteresting" and "negative" subjects (the terms are Fuseli's) such as portraiture, low-life scenes and common landscape paintings. The subject matter of such genres was seen as possessing, in Reynolds' words, "neither expression, character, or dignity" and thus was incapable of eliciting an elevated aesthetic response.\(^{39}\) As Fuseli remarked, the interest accruing to this class of painting "depends entirely on the manner of treating; such subjects owe what they can be to the genius of the artist."\(^{40}\) And thus paintings of common landscapes could provide the site upon which genius could display itself—where the artist did not have to remain hidden or transparent. But such productions of genius could not claim to have anything but a private function, since the objects depicted were deemed incapable of addressing a public (whether constituted as a

\(^{39}\)See for example, Reynolds, Discourse XI, p. 201; Fuseli, Lectures, in Wornum, p. 436; and Opie, Lectures, in Wornum, pp. 256-7.

\(^{39}\)Reynolds, Discourse XI, p. 201

\(^{40}\)Fuseli, Lectures in Wornum, p. 436.
'universal' republic of taste or a national community of citizens).\textsuperscript{41}

The account of native genius given in the \textit{New Drawing Book} appears to have modified and expanded the function which academic discourse accorded to 'common' landscape. Far from providing a strictly private arena for the demonstration of artistic genius, domestic landscape is presented as a site of public significance, capable of representing national character. On such symbolically potent 'ground' a specifically English form of genius could display itself, and in the process, confer honour and glory on the nation.

The firm of Ackermann's, which published both the \textit{Repository} and the \textit{New Drawing Book}, promoted watercolour artists over and above oil painters, in keeping with its own financial interests in the medium. However, critically acclaimed and financially successful landscape painters working primarily in oil, such as A. W. Callcott (or in both oil and watercolour, such as Turner) also came to adopt compositional devices and techniques which served to distance their work from the

\textsuperscript{41}See Fuseli, \textit{Lectures}, in Wornum, pp. 437-8, for a discussion of epic, dramatic, and historic subjects, which address the intellect and/or human sympathy, and thus constitute varying types of viewing publics.
conventional representations of the picturesque. Callcott produced both picturesque and anti-picturesque compositions early in the first decade of the century. Among the oil paintings he exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1807 were two works, Market Day (Figure 11) and Cowboys (Figure 12), both closely modelled on Dutch prototypes.

In its tonality and presentation of subject matter Market Day plays upon the forest views of Ruysdael, calling up as well Gainsborough's reworking of such Dutch views. Ruysdael's forest scenes commonly display features which later English viewers regarded as picturesque, as does Callcott's composition: A rutted and serpentine road leads past a decayed log with twisted limbs lying in the foreground, and plunges into the irregularly massed foliage of the woods. Although Callcott utilizes stark contrasts of light and shade to indicate the sun's breaking through the storm-darkened sky, the general tone of the work is exceeding somber in keeping with Dutch landscape tradition. Although the work was not extensively reviewed in the London press, David Brown notes that several artists (West, Henry Thomson, and Constable) criticized the work for its heavy colour and the

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42 John Gage has carefully considered J. M. W. Turner's encounter with the picturesque in the decade of the 1790s ("Turner and the Picturesque," Burlington Magazine 107 (January-June 1965), pt. 1, pp. 16-25; pt. 2, pp. 75-81). However, Gage devotes less attention to the manner in which Turner reworked, rejected, or subverted the picturesque in his later watercolours and oils. The discussion of Turner's Views in Sussex (1820) which follows in Chapter IV takes up some of Turner's anti-picturesque tactics.
artificial appearance of the trees." The critic for the Star concurred, complaining that the work lacked breadth but noting that colour was applied "in a good scholastic style." This was hardly enthusiastic praise coming from a reviewer who was generally opposed to the imitation of old masters and who advised artists to turn to nature, not past art for their models.

In contradistinction to this work is Cowboys, also exhibited in 1807. Cowboys is based upon the compositional format of another Dutch artist, Cuyp. Specifically 'Cuyp-like' is the adoption of a low viewing position and a low horizon line and the juxtapositioning of the pastoral figures against a light background of hills, seen through an atmosphere suffused with light. Encompassing a full two thirds of the canvas is the uninterrupted expanse of sky in which closely modulated tones can be seen to convey the heat and humidity of a summer day. While the picture includes standard picturesque features--

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44 "Royal Academy--Exhibition, 1807," Star, 14 May 1807.
45 The following year, 1808, Turner exhibited in his private gallery an oil painting of a forest scene, a relatively rare subject in his oeuvre, entitled the Forest of Bere [illustrated as Plate 87 in Martin Butlin and Evelyn Joll, The Paintings of J. M. W. Turner, rev. ed., 2 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984)]. Although more closely allied in composition to a work such as Gainsborough's Conard Wood (c. 1748, London, National Gallery) than to Callcott's more distant forest view, it is tempting to see Turner's forest scene, its picturesque features subsumed in a golden glow of afternoon sunlight, as a response to Market Day, with its blackened, "scholastic" colouration.
trees, rustic figures and farm buildings—the work is aggressively anti-picturesque in its disposition of these elements. All but the boys and their dog are relegated to the distant horizon, with the picturesque grouping of these figures undercut by the simplification of the composition and the overarching dominance of the sky.

Arguably as artificial in its compositional conceits as Market Day, Cowboys earned much higher praise from the Star critic than he had bestowed on the former work: "This is one of Mr. Callcott's best pictures, because in it he has trusted more to his own observance of English Nature than to Foreign Works of Art." He goes onto praise the "great simplicity in the design" and the "well-observed" gradations of light and shade. It is tempting to attribute the critic's acclaim for the 'naturalism' of Cowboys to his lack of familiarity with the works of Cuyp. However the identification of vaporous atmospheric effects with "English nature," in works where those effects were the dominant features of the canvas, was becoming increasingly commonplace in art criticism and commentary, even among writers who recognized (and approved) such domestic referencing of foreign models. Although Callcott continued to produce the occasional picturesque composition in the years to follow, these became increasingly

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""Royal Academy--Exhibition, 1807," Star, 22 May 1807."
dominated by atmospheric effects.\textsuperscript{47} The works which brought him the most critical acclaim, however, were those coastal and harbour scenes which, like \textit{Cowboys}, eschewed picturesque devices in favour of simplified compositions dominated by broad expanses of near monotone, often high-keyed colour.\textsuperscript{48}

Although, as suggested above, landscape artists working in watercolour faced somewhat different problems and professional challenges compared to artists producing landscapes in oil, the artistic "solutions" to these problems arrived at by Turner, Girtin and Callcott--the new artists who were regarded as the most innovative by contemporaries around the turn of the century--were remarkably similar. All three men increasingly focussed upon light and colour effects rather than highly elaborated forms and outline, and concomitantly upon what academicists would have regarded as the circumstantial and accidental features of nature, rather than the permanent structures supposed to underlie it. In this process they were not only redefining what constitutes the natural in representation, but also what characterized their own identity as artistic producers.

\textsuperscript{47}See for example \textit{A Mill Near Corwen}, c. 1808, produced for Richard Colt Hoare, which remains at Stourhead in the Hoare Collection. It is reproduced as Plate 9 in Brown, A. W. \textit{Callcott}.

\textsuperscript{48}Callcott’s works will be discussed further in Chapter V.
The theoretical elaboration of this new type of artistic subject -- the landscape genius, who produces character through forceful effects, rather than effects at the expense of character -- derives not from English academic discourse, but from an increasingly important aesthetic based on associationist psychology. The text which most thoroughly elaborated this artistic subject position was also the most highly regarded and influential piece of aesthetic writing published between 1790 and the appearance of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* in the 1840s. Archibald Alison's *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* was published first in Edinburgh and London in 1790, appeared in a second edition in 1811, and by 1817 had been through three more editions. Alison drew upon associationist psychology, developed out of the philosophical thought of the Scottish Enlightenment, to propound a highly relativized theory of taste.

Whereas academic discourse was predicated upon the existence of


50 The principles of associationism can be traced back at least as far as the writings of John Locke. However it was only in the late eighteenth century, with the publication of Archibald Alison's *Essays* that a fully elaborated aesthetic based upon associationist psychology was formulated. For a history of associationism see Martin Kallich, *The Association of Ideas and Critical Theory in Eighteenth-Century England* (The Hague and Paris, 1970); more recently Andrew Hemingway has analyzed associationist aesthetics within the philosophical tradition of the Scottish enlightenment in "The 'Sociology' of Taste in the Scottish Enlightenment," *Oxford Art Journal* 12:2 (1989), pp. 3-35.
of an external, fixed ideal of beauty from which standards of
taste and a hierarchy of artistic production could be
determined, associationism propounded just the opposite. This
was an aesthetic which conceived of external objects not as
repositories of beauty, sublimity, and so forth, but rather as
stimuli, capable of triggering a train of associated ideas and
feelings in the mind of the viewer.\textsuperscript{51} Alison declares that when
viewing a scene in nature the spectator is conscious of a variety
of images that spring to mind, which are very different from the
object of the gaze: "Trains of pleasing or of solemn thoughts
arise spontaneously within our minds; our hearts well with
emotions, of which the objects before us seem to afford no
adequate cause."\textsuperscript{52} Such trains of thought are seen to be linked
by circumstantial associations, rather than through the logic of
a narrative system. It is the quality, intensity, and sheer
number of these associations, not the original object, which are

\textsuperscript{51} Andrew Hemingway rightly emphasizes the conflicts between
viewer-based associationist aesthetics and producer-oriented
academic discourse, which were played out on the social level as
a debate over whether artists or connoisseurs were the fittest
judges of art [Andrew Hemingway, "Academic Theory versus
Association Aesthetics: The Ideological Forms of a Conflict of
Interests in the Early Nineteenth Century," \textit{Ideas and Production},
#5 (1985), p. 18-42]. However it is necessary also to emphasize
the degree to which associationist concepts were amalgamated with
academic precepts—this mélange being discernable after the turn
of the century in academic writings, art criticism and commentary
and even in watercolour manuals such as Ackermann's \textit{New Drawing
Book}. For a brief account of how associationism was variously
deployed in art criticism in the first half of the nineteenth
century, see H. Roberts, "Trains of Fascinating and of Endless
Imagery," pp. 91-105.

\textsuperscript{52} Alison, 1:5.
the actual source of aesthetic pleasure.

Within this scheme the imagination is the primary mental faculty which serves as the 'engine' of aesthetic pleasure. The imagination is conceived of as a vast storehouse of memories; when any one of those is stimulated, then a chain reaction is possible with other ideas that are related to the first one. The nature of the emotional response to the original object is governed by a range of circumstances particular to the viewing subject. Alison notes that young people seem to possess more fertile imaginations and thus stronger feelings than their elders; likewise individual personality and national character also condition the nature of the associations generated in a specific situation.\(^{33}\) The writer's major concern, however, is with those specific circumstances which must prevail for the feelings generated by these associations to be the "emotions of taste," as he terms aesthetic pleasure.

Consistent with the Alison's focus on the viewing subject rather than the object, these conditions relate more to the disposition and character of the viewer than the nature of what is viewed. The subject must be in a quiescent state, his mind distracted by no external pressures or concerns. The circumstances mentioned above—age, personal disposition, nationality all have their effect, but it is the occupation and

\(^{33}\)Alison, 1:13, 20.
education of the viewer that is most heavily stressed:

It is only in the higher stations...or in the liberal professions that we expect to find men either of a delicate or comprehensive taste. The inferior situations of life, by contracting the knowledge and the affections of men, within very narrow limits, produce insensibly, a similar contraction in their notions of the beautiful or the sublime.

The liberal man of letters--privileged subject of political discourse and academic history painting--emerges triumphant once again. Not only is he the most fit to govern and the most capable of being edified by grand style painting, but he possesses the greatest capacity for aesthetic pleasure of any type--be it in response to natural scenery, a landscape painting, or a poem. While the various trains of associations produced by such external stimuli may be "circumstantial," they are by no means equivalent in terms of their capacity to produces aesthetic pleasures. Predictably, the associations Alison most prizes are those related to poetry (ancient and modern) and classical history. That Alison, a Whig clergyman who was the prebendary of Sarum, establishes, within a relativized theory of taste, a hierarchy of associations which validates the social and intellectual supremacy of the landed gentry and professional classes is not surprising. However it would be misleading to leave the matter there. By emphasizing the circumstantial nature

\(^{54}\text{Alison, 1:89}\)

\(^{55}\text{Alison, 1:63-7.}\)
of the associative processes of the imagination and the resulting relativized concept of taste, the possibility was created for this aesthetic to be redeployed in the validation of subject positions which privilege competencies other than genteel disinterest. This 'redeployment' will be discussed later. First it is worth considering how Alison himself utilizes associationism to elevate an artistic subject—the landscape painter—to a status denied him by academic discourse.

Within Alison’s Essays the elevation of the subject position of the landscape painter is intimately bound up with the elevation of natural scenery as a site capable of producing the highest forms of aesthetic pleasure. Although the text does deal with the associative aspects of the human figure, it is the landscape—actual, painted, or described in poetry—that is adduced as the principal object of aesthetic discourse. Thus the author observes that "the majesty of the Alps themselves is increased by the remembrance of Hannibal’s march over them." Likewise "even the familiar circumstances of general nature, which pass unheeded by a common eye, the cottage, the sheep-fold, the curfew, all have expression to them" for those privileged

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In fact the first edition is even more strongly oriented to landscape than later ones, for the major section on the human figure was added in the second edition. This raises the intriguing, if, at this point, unanswerable question of whether or not the author was requested to add the later material to redress a perceived overemphasis on landscape.

—Alison, 1:27.
viewers possessing a knowledge of pastoral poetry. Just as the study of the ancients had once helped secure the elevated status of history painting, now it was being placed in the service of an aestheticized viewing of the landscape.

Beyond the use of such examples, Alison draws upon arguments drawn from Thomas Whately's *Observations on Modern Gardening* (1770) to support his claim for the landscape's 'natural' capacity to arouse associations leading to aesthetic pleasure. After speaking of the associations which are triggered by the sight of ruins Alison quotes Whately:

> Even without the assistance of buildings or other adventitious circumstances nature only furnishes materials for scenes which may be adapted to almost every kind of expression. Their operation is general, and their consequences infinite: the mind is elevated, depressed, or composed, as gaiety, gloom, or tranquility prevail in the scene, and we soon lose sight of the means by which the character is formed.

The aesthetic power of natural scenery, it is suggested here, lies partly in its universality—its ability to stimulate emotions in all of humankind—and partly in its versatility—its capacity to activate an infinite array of sentiments in such a surreptitious manner than the viewer becomes unable to determine the original source of the emotion. Alison observes that

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*Alison, 1:67.*

because the power of the emotion resides in the imagination of the viewer rather than in the object, all types of natural scenery are capable of stimulating this at once general and varied aesthetic response. This is a fortuitous situation for "if certain elements in scenery alone were beautiful, then all men to whom these appearances were unknown must be deprived of all the enjoyment which natural scenery could give."* But while Alison insists upon the need for all men to have access to the pleasures of nature, he emphasizes that it is not equal, but differential access which is afforded by the associative powers of the imagination.

As noted above, the age, occupation and education, and by implication, gender and class of the viewer affect the scope and intensity of the aesthetic experience. But where external nature is the specific object of aesthetic interest, it is the landscape painter and gardener (rather than the liberally educated gentleman) who have the most privileged access of all:

The beauty of any scene in nature is seldom so striking to others, as it is to a landscape-painter, or to those who profess the beautiful art of laying out grounds. The difficulties both of invention and execution which from their professions are familiar to them, render the profusion with which nature often scatters the most picturesque beauties, little less than miraculous. Every little circumstance of form and perspective, and light and shade, which are unnoticed by a common eye, are important in theirs, and mingling in their minds the ideals of difficulty, and facility

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*Alison, 2:425-6.
in overcoming it, produce altogether an emotion of
delight, incomparably more animated than any that the
generality of mankind usually derived from it." 1

Alison suggests in this passage that it is the professional eye,
trained in the keen observation of circumstance and transient
light effects, which is capable of extracting the most aesthetic
pleasure from a natural scene. But Alison's statement sits
rather uneasily with his repeated contention that knowledge of
classical literature and modern poetry is the most important
imaginative "source material" in the production of aesthetic
pleasure. Such a disjuncture may signify Alison's basic
incapacity to reconcile his belief in the need for specialized
knowledge based upon empirical observation with his commitment to
a social and political hierarchy secured by traditional forms of
classical education.

Whatever the reason for the disjuncture, it is apparent that
the subject position of the producer of landscape imagery (or
landscaped grounds) is based upon different criteria than those
of the educated viewer. For although Alison treats the artist
in the above passage as a viewing subject, his primary concern is
with the artist as producer. When considering the competencies
for the artistic producer, classical learning is not invoked;
instead the emphasis is on direct empirical observation of nature
and a powerful imagination which can store these images and then

1 Alison 1:38-9.
organize them on canvas around a single "expression." He notes, for example, that the landscape painter has the capacity to produce a more aesthetically powerful work than the landscape gardener, because the former has more control over what he selects:

In a landscape...the whole range of scenery is before the eye of the painter. He may select from a thousand scenes, the circumstances which are to characterize a single composition, and may unite into one expression, the scattered features with which nature has feebly marked a thousand situations. The momentary effects of light or shade, the fortunate incidents which chance some times throws in, to improve the expression of real scenery, and which can never again be recalled, he has it in his power to perpetuate upon his canvas.\footnote{Alison, 1:125-6.}

The stress here is not only upon choice, but upon the formation of a unified composition. Unity was also a prominent feature of academic theory, where it served as a way of hierarchically ordering the forms which were represented within a composition, and hence the relationships among the figures and objects featured in the representations.\footnote{See for example, Reynolds, Discourse IV, pp. 58-9.} Such an ordering is an inherently ideological process, for it serves to privilege certain individuals, experiences, and relationships at the expense of others. Associationism did not abandon such systems of hierarchical ordering, but rather altered the epistemological framework within which that ordering took place. Whereas the
discourse of history painting relied upon representations of that which was generic and permanent to enforce this unity, Alison calls up the particular, the transient, and even the 'fortunate incidents of chance' as the affective constituents of an aesthetically unified landscape painting. Rejecting both the tenets of history painting, and the picturesque, with its emphasis upon visual variety, Alison insists that such unity requires not only selection of the transient and particular effects, but the rejection of all that does not contribute to the single expression which the work seeks to convey.*

An artist capable of producing a work of great expressive power via such a process of distillation and simplification provides the knowing viewer—those privileged to have formed their sensibilities through a classical education, and especially a knowledge of poetry—with a more profound and satisfying understanding of landscape painting as well as of natural scenery itself. Armed with such knowledge, the viewing subject rejects topographical accuracy in favour of expression:

The crowd of incidents which used to dazzle our earlier Taste as expressive both of the skill and of the invention of the artist, begin to appear to us as inconsistence or confusion. When our hearts are

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* The picturesque also calls for the careful selection and rejection of features to be included in a composition; nonetheless, the picturesque require a visual play of variety in forms and incidental details which is substantially different from the visually simplified and expressively unified production Alison is recommending.
affected we seek only for objects congenial to our emotion: and the Simplicity, which we used to call the Poverty of landscape, begins now to be welcome to us, as permitting us to indulge, without interruption, those interesting trains of thought which the character of the scene is fitted to inspire.

According to Alison, then, it is through the 'impoverishment' of the natural in the production of a landscape that the artist is able to facilitate the knowing viewer's indulgence in the rich play of imaginative fancy spun around a single unifying expression.

We have seen how this magical transformation of simple materials into signifiers of intense expression was a signal feature of works like Girtin's Kirkstall Abbey. The painting is a tour de force in its subjugation of incident and reliance upon the expressive effects of broad horizontal brushstrokes of somber colour. A gentle melancholy would appear to be the 'unifying expression' of the scene, stimulated by the highlighted form of abbey, with its associations of the decline and fall of a once powerful religious authority. According to the ideas set out by Alison, it is the very simplicity of an image such as this, with its emphasis on tonal and formal unity and circumstantial effect, which provokes the highest form of aesthetic pleasure.

Alison argues that the feelings and associations stimulated

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Alison, 1:129-30.
by landscape paintings which privilege simplified and unified expression are intimately connected with the nature of the artistic producer. His most succinct and authoritative statement about the elevated status of the artistic subject occurs in a discussion of the relative merits of imitative versus imaginative landscape painting. In the passage which directly precedes the previously quoted discussion of the simplification of landscape imagery he writes:

> It is not for imitation we look, but for character. It is not the art, but the genius of the Painter, which 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 awakened, than those which we experience from the useful tameness of common scenery. 

The writer's call for an art of expression rather than "accurate Imitation" is hardly surprising or original; Fuseli's rejection of "map-work" is predicated upon the same distinction, as are most contemporary texts dealing with landscape painting. What is noteworthy in this passage is the prominence given the artistic subject— a prominence which arises out of instability and vagueness of the word "character" appearing at the end of the first sentence. We are told to look for character in art, a

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Alison, 1:129.
character which would seem to be related to the "greater expressions of Nature" referred to towards the end of the passage. And yet the sentence which immediately follows the first sentence leads us not to nature, but to the genius of the painter— which is the source of "value" in such paintings. "Character," then, is placed in close syntactical relation to "genius," leaving open the possibility that it is the character of the artist as well as "nature" which is presented on the canvas. This slippage between character, artistic genius, the value of painting and nature suggests that the identity of the artist and the character of the landscape are intimately related in ways unlike either of the subject-object relations we earlier considered. If, as maintained in Chapter I, the artist as man of letters is transparent—his private self effaced in the process of transmitting public virtues and traditional knowledge, and, as described in Chapter II, the slave of the market is opaque, presenting only himself—feminized, Gallicized, and debased—in place of nature, virtue and knowledge, then the imaginative genius is translucent. Specific aspects of nature are revealed by his powers of observation and specialized knowledge of art, combined with his unique creativity and sensibility. What becomes visible when such "genius" is at work is not the personal manner of the artist, or his 'hand,' but his mind—a mind that concentrates and intensifies the emotions generated in a natural scene according to his particular sensibility, but which does not distort or degrade either the objects or the feelings in the
While Alison accords great imaginative and creative power to the artistic producer, he insists that the best judges of art are not artists, but those schooled in philosophical criticism. With the dispersion of the science underlying this type of criticism, taste will be improved, and ultimately art itself. Not surprisingly, such an emphasis upon the judicial authority of ‘scientific’ principles rather than the universal concepts of form and beauty instantiated in academic theory and the old master tradition, earned the 1790 edition of Alison’s book an unfavourable and dismissive review by Fuseli in the Analytical Review. The artist rejected the associationist principle that there are no qualities inherent in material forms capable of exciting aesthetic feelings in the viewer. "In this," Fuseli observed, "most of his [Alison’s] readers will probably think he has warped his natural feelings by love of system." Although Fuseli pitted the natural against artificial system, what was at

Ann Bermingham analyzes Constable’s landscape practice in the 1820s in terms of a similar conflation of the character of the artist and of nature. She argues that his sketch-like finish "functions as evidence of both a naturalistic observation and a subjective response. Its dual signification works to collapse the distinction between Constable and the landscape that he paints. In its most radical form, it makes it impossible for us to decide which is being represented" ["Reading Constable," Art History 10:1 (March 1987), p. 39].

The first edition of Alison’s Essays received a more enthusiastic reception from the Monthly Review, which endorsed it precisely for its empirical approach. The review began by noting that all our knowledge is derived by experience; and as it has been from the patient method of experiment and observation that the greatest discoveries in physical science have been made, it is reasonable to suppose that the same method of research will be equally successful in the philosophy of the human mind.

Fuseli’s battle with the proponents of associationism was an extended one. Thirteen years after his review of Alison appeared, the Edinburgh Review, a strong critic of liberal education and an advocate of the division of the intellectual field into specialized fields of scientific investigation (such as associationist psychology), attacked Fuseli’s adherence to ideal forms and then went to mock his habit of: illustrating all subjects [with] the toilsome and unproductive researches into those mines of antiquity, in which, while the labourer is dazzled by the specious appearance of valuable ores, nothing is to be found but a confused mass of rubbish or dross, from which all the valuable metal had been long ago extracted (Edinburgh Review, July 1803, p. 462).

Artists who rely upon general forms and classical models emerge here not as elevated men of letters, but misguided labourers, producing rubbish rather than objects of use or beauty.

"Alison’s Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste" (review), Monthly Review 3 (December 1790), p. 361; also cited in Hemingway, "The Sociology of Taste," p. 6. That Alison’s conception of landscape painting and the artistic subject was seen as an important aspect of his aesthetics is suggested by the fact that the passages quoted above about the genius of the artist and the need for unified expression in landscape painting were cited at length in the Monthly Review.
Such an endorsement of scientific observation and experiment was not an ideologically neutral stance. The Monthly was at this time the leading liberal reformist journal, edited by religious Dissenters. It promoted empiricism, rooted in a seventeenth century scientific tradition associated most commonly with Locke, as a means of critiquing dominant religious (Anglican) and political authority by calling into question the systems of knowledge and belief which supported them. Such diverse responses to the Essays as Fuseli's and the Monthly Review's should alert us to the wider epistemological issues at stake in Alison’s connecting aesthetic pleasure to artistic productions based upon empirical observation. One of the consequences of

72 Andrew Hemingway properly cautions against assuming that Lockean empiricism supported only anti-institutional political and religious positions: "Despite the heterodoxy of some of Locke's opinions, the success of the work [Essay Concerning Human Understanding] was linked with that of Newtonian science, and like that discourse, it was assimilated into the dominant orthodoxy of Anglican natural theology" (Hemingway, "Sociology of Taste," p. 7). The liberal reformist programme of the Monthly Review, it should be recalled, was antithetical to the interests—social and religious— which Alison, an Anglican clergyman, supported. But as I have noted, Alison fails to resolve the tensions which are set up in his own text between the epistemological authority of empirical science versus classical learning. Alison’s religious and political attitudes can be discerned most clearly in his published sermons. These writings celebrate the notion of 'man' as a "being susceptible both of intellectual and moral improvement," but reject radical reforms in government to effect that improvement: "There was a time when, in the passion for innovation, the experience of ages seem to have been forgotten, and when, amid the warm visions of political enthusiasm, all the sober ties which bind society together seemed likely to be dissolved. That time has passed." [Sermons (Edinburgh, 1815), 2:174 and 1:229]. Such a statement testifies to the way in which the French Revolution and its aftermath served to reinforce among the dominant elite in Britain a Whiggish belief in slow progress within the confines of traditional institutional structures.
such an aesthetic position is the devaluation of less empirical modes of knowledge, and the concomitant devaluation of the authority of the classically educated gentleman. The classically educated viewer can take intense pleasure in such productions, but without the specialized knowledge of the artist he cannot produce them himself, and without the specialized knowledge provided by associationist psychology he cannot even judge of them intelligently.

Although the subject of Alison's Essays was the "emotion of taste" his concern centres upon the production of this emotion via chains of associated ideas, rather than the effect of aesthetic pleasure itself. The nature of aesthetic pleasure was taken up, however, by Francis Jeffrey, in the most important and extensive review of the second edition of the Essays, published in the Edinburgh Review in 1811. This review is as much an elaboration as it is an evaluation of Alison's aesthetics in terms of the social nature of aesthetic pleasure. Fully

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73 He does repeat Joseph Addison's often cited statement that artistic pleasures serve "to exalt the human Mind, from corporeal to intellectual pursuits" in the Introduction of the Essays. And in the conclusion he makes the equally commonplace assertion that the ability to derive intense pleasure from nature's magnificence awakens feelings for the divine creator. But these are passing comments, rather than points presented for discussion and analysis (Alison, 1:xii and 2:445). For Addison's account of the moral pleasures of the imagination see Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination, p. 6.

74 Jeffrey's review of Alison appeared in a modified form as the entry for "Beauty" in the supplement to the 1824 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica.
accepting the associationist principle that aesthetic feelings are produced in the mind and are only stimulated by external objects, Jeffrey goes on to argue that

except in the plain and palpable case of bodily pain or pleasure, we can never be interested in any thing but the fortunes of sentient beings;--and that every thing partaking of the nature of mental emotion, must have for its object the feelings, past, present or possible, of sensation...[therefore] the emotions of beauty and sublimity must have for their objects the sufferings or enjoyments of sentient beings.\[^5\]

A consequence of this intrinsic characteristic of humans to be interested only in other sentient beings is that aesthetic experience is ultimately a social experience. Jeffrey considers literature to the exclusion of painting, but like Alison, his arguments rest largely on examples from the visual perceptions and poetic descriptions of natural scenery rather than human actions. The reviewer observes that loudly roaring water brings to mind associations of lamentation or violence; autumn recalls the end of life, or the decline of empires, the sun connotes glory and ambition, and so forth.\[^6\] While Alison cites similar examples to demonstrate the process by which objects generate feelings, Jeffrey emphasizes the social nature of human responses to inanimate nature.

\[^5\][Francis Jeffrey], "Alison on Taste" (review), Edinburgh Review, 18 (May 1811), pp. 8-9.

Jeffrey's insistence on the importance of empathy (or as it was then termed, "sympathy") derives not from aesthetic discourse, but from the domain of Scottish moral philosophy as articulated by Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith, and the professor of moral philosophy with whom Jeffrey himself studied, Dugald Stewart (to whom Alison dedicated his Essays). These writers asserted that moral evaluations are not a function of the reasoning faculty which distinguishes right from wrong, as many other philosophers had contended. Rather, Stewart explained, "the word Right and Wrong express certain agreeable and disagreeable qualities in actions which it is not the province of reason, but of feeling to perceive." Smith designated these feelings as moral sympathy or "fellow feeling" and in his The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759) wrote that "nothing pleases us more than to observe in other men a fellow-feeling with all the emotions of our own breast."

Steward occupied the chair of moral philosophy at the University of Edinburgh (previously held by Adam Smith) from 1785 to 1810 and had an immense impact on the intellectual thought of the editors of the Edinburgh Review [for a recent account of intellectual tradition of the journal see Biancamaria Fontana, Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society; the Edinburgh Review, 1802-1832 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)]. The literature devoted to the Scottish Enlightenment is vast. I have found a most concise and insightful account to be Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, eds., Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); for more bibliography see Hemingway, "The Sociology of Taste," esp. p. 32, 71.


Smith, p. 3.
Within this philosophical paradigm, such social empathy is not only the ground of ethical behaviour, but also a powerful social force which binds together self-interested individuals in commercial society. The fundamental importance of the happiness of the individual is the link which permits social empathy, based as it is upon pleasure, to operate as an ethical imperative and to underwrite social cohesiveness. Such happiness, Stewart declared around 1800, overrides the need for freedom of political action: "Happiness is in truth the only object of legislative intrinsic value; and what is called Political Liberty is only one means of obtaining this end." This appeal to individual happiness over civic freedom is the fundamental precept of a liberal ideology which promotes the adoption of an economic rather than a political model of commercial society. By this account, the reconfiguration of the civic sphere does not involve a loss of virtue, as civic humanists would argue, but

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\(^{80}\)This is a basic argument of Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*; see for example, p. 497.

\(^{81}\)Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Political Economy*, 2 v., ed. William Hamilton (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1855). These lectures were delivered between 1800 and 1810; the editor recounts that Francis Jeffrey made extensive notes of the lectures which he attended in 1802.

\(^{82}\)As Maxine Berg has observed, by the second decade of the nineteenth century such economic liberalism had gained increasing acceptance among a wide range of members of the propertied classes, including establishment Whigs and progressive Tories [Maxine Berg, *The Machinery Question and the Making of Political Economy, 1815-1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 41].
rather its reinscription within the realm of private feeling.\footnote{Within this liberal paradigm such private feelings are far from inconsequential in terms of forging political assent. It is by redirecting (rather than repressing) the feelings associated with self-esteem and self-interest that individuals become subjects of the state. In an essay defending the "natural" rights of the propertied to hold political office Jeffrey observes that...nothing can conduce so surely to the stability and excellence of a political constitution, as to make it rest upon the general principles that regulate the conduct of the better part of the individuals who live under it, and to attach them to their government by the same feelings which ensure their affection or submission in their private capacity. [(Francis Jeffrey), "Parliamentary Reform," (review of The Speech of the Right Hon. William Windham), Edinburgh Review, 17 (February 1811), pp. 266-7.]

Jeffrey's insistence on the specifically social nature of aesthetic pleasure must be situated within this broader formulation of the ethical basis of human relationships in commercial society. Following these principles, the social empathy which is aroused by aesthetic pleasure enjoys the elevated status accorded to public virtue within what for him was an outmoded social paradigm—-that of classical republicanism.\footnote{This privileging of social empathy as a value equal or superior to public virtue was instantiated in other genres as well as the landscapes under discussion here. For a discussion of an early conversation cum history painting which inscribed these social values, see Solkin, "Portraiture in Motion: Edward Penny's Marquis of Granby." The extent to which human sympathy rather than public virtue could be seen to underwrite the authority of history painting by the early 1800s is made starkly clear by William Carey's Critical Description and Analytical Review of "Death on a Pale Horse," Painted by Benjamin West (London, 1817). Carey declares West's choice of subject to be excellent for combining so many deep and awful interests, or exciting so many domestic passions and sympathies.}
Like Alison, Jeffrey insists that social feelings and aesthetic pleasures are circumstantial, and therefore that age, education, and local custom lead to the formation of distinctive tastes among individuals and nations. But the reviewer also takes pains to formulate these distinctions in taste in terms of the "social emotions" produced by different types of external objects, which he classifies into three orders of signification.

Despite his insistence that external objects possess no essential qualities of beauty or sublimity, Jeffrey argues that some of these objects operate as "natural signs"—that is signifiers which invariably and 'naturally' are connected with specific emotions through the laws of nature. Thunder, for example is always connected with sublime feelings of danger and power. These natural signs are distinguished from a secondary order of signs which are the arbitrary or accidental concomitants of social emotions, or thirdly, those signs to which there is only a fanciful resemblance. Although the writer maintains that natural signs are important because of their power

Even the last judgment, by being placed beyond the pale of mortality, is withdrawn, in some degree, from its full operation on the household charities and passions, which alternately soothe and agitate the heart of Man in his mortal state (Carey, p. 6). Carey's remarks suggest that for history painting to remain a viable practice, its stern heroicism must be 'domesticated' through the invocation of human sentiment.

[Jeffrey], "Alison on Taste," p. 21.

to engage the social emotions of all people, it is the capacity
to bring into play all three orders of signs, and especially the
latter two, which is the mark of a highly developed taste. For
it is accidental, analogical, and fanciful associations which
generate "an endless variety in the trains of thoughts" that
produce the most intense and elevated forms of aesthetic
pleasure. 87

Two points, then, emerge from Jeffrey's account of
associationist aesthetics: the social nature of aesthetic
pleasure, and the contingency of that pleasure on the imaginative
power to manipulate and to read a complex interplay of natural,
accidental, or fanciful signs. The ideal viewer is not a
disinterested subject, but one whose personal and social
circumstances allow him/her to be deeply engaged by the trains
of personal associations generated by the viewing of a landscape.
This interest, however, does not remain self-focused, for the
emotions which are generated are inescapably empathetic feelings,
uniting the subject to others in the social sphere.

At the end of his essay Jeffrey takes pains to prescribe
the type of imagery which artists and poets should represent. He
makes a sharp distinction between the public and private function
of art, and insists that only "natural signs" should be employed
in works destined to go before the public. "His taste will then

87 [Jeffrey], "Alison on Taste," p. 15.
deserve to be called bad and false," he writes, "if he obtrude upon the public, as beautiful, objects that are not likely to be associated in common minds with any interesting impressions." But he then turns to defend the varied tastes of private individuals, attacking those critics who would wish to impose a single standard of taste upon everyone: "This intolerance... is often provoked by something of a spirit of proselytism, and arrogance in those who mistake their own casual associations for natural or universal relations." He concludes that artists "who labour for applause" should consider having two tastes, one "to work by" (founded upon universal associations) and "another guided by all casual and individual associations, through which they look[ed] fondly upon nature, and upon the objects of their 'secret admiration.'" This sanctioning of the 'split identity' of the artist testifies to the writer's commitment to the importance of the private pleasures of the individual. But even more importantly for our context, Jeffrey seems to conceive of "the public" in terms which Dayes or Fuseli would have disapproved. His references to the "common mind" and the social function of the artist as one who "labours for applause," suggest a broadly constituted contemporary audience which has access to art (and literature) which is displayed publicly (through exhibitions) and/or circulates widely (via literary

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[Jeffrey], "Alison on Taste," p. 45.

[Jeffrey], "Alison on Taste," p. 45.

[Jeffrey], "Alison on Taste," p. 46.
publications). It is an audience consistent with Jeffrey's notion of the body politic seen as a collection of private individuals, who come together critically to evaluate contemporary affairs and thus to form "public opinion."

The pairing of natural signs with this broadly defined social body raises two dilemmas for the artist who seeks to represent the collective interests and values of that public. First, he must be able to distinguish natural from circumstantial signs—no easy matter, since Jeffrey himself accuses "arrogant" critics of confusing the two. Furthermore, if the artist's public is not conceived as a universal abstraction, but restricted by circumstance of nationality, class, gender, and so forth, then the artist must identify that body of customary signs which will communicate "naturally" to that particular public.

The other dilemma for the artist follows from the superior aesthetic power the writer accords to accidental signs. Since the public language of natural signs is understood by Jeffrey to be associated universally and 'necessarily' with particular social feelings it makes far fewer demands upon the imagination and knowledge of the viewer than the analogical and fanciful signs associated with specialized knowledge and private

\(^1\)For a discussion of the term 'public opinion' in a late eighteenth century context see infra, Chapter II.
Jeffrey does not pursue the consequences of such a semiotic system which, contrary to the precepts of academic tradition, seems to consign the highest forms of aesthetic pleasure to the realm of private production and consumption.

Although few commentators elaborated such a complex system of natural, accidental, and arbitrary signs in writing of the visual arts, the practical issue of communicating with an expanded public for art was one which occupied those who were engaged in a burgeoning "paper culture" of prints, illustrated books, and periodicals. Two such individuals were John Britton, a publisher of illustrated county histories, and John Landseer, an engraver specializing in topographical landscapes; their various publications targeted the more prosperous, but not necessarily liberally educated, members of the middle class and gentry.

In 1812 Britton published a book of prints of English paintings titled Fine Arts of the English School, which included a defense of circumstantial effects in landscape painting. These

Jeffrey illustrates this point with an extended comparison between a "typical" English pastoral scene, filled with "natural" signs of peace, harmony, and abundance, and a more aesthetically rewarding and demanding Celtic landscape of lofty mountains, "nameless and gigantic ruins," and "ample solitudes." The secret to deciphering this sublime language lies, Jeffrey insists, in establishing "sympathy with the present or the past, or the imaginary inhabitants of such a region." Such a sympathy requires a knowledge of Celtic history and literature, as well as a forceful imagination and a warmth of social affections [(Jeffrey), "Alison on Taste," pp. 13-4].
remarks were the result of a request by Turner, whose painting of 1808, Pope's Villa at Twickenham, was being engraved for inclusion in the work. In a letter to Britton in 1811 Turner expressed a desire to have a remark Britton had made privately concerning Fuseli's attack on topography included in the introduction to the engravings, "for it [Britton's comment] espoused the part of Elevated Landscape against the aspersions of Map making criticism." The publisher acquiesced, including his comments in the context of a paean to Wilson in which Britton disparaged Fuseli's comments, and then went on to defend the representation of particular locales. Although he agreed with Fuseli that artists who copy nature indiscriminately are unworthy of notice,

the artist who, like Wilson and Turner, after having chosen a scene for pictorial representation, can portray all the local features of that scene, and at the same time embellish them with the most favourable effects of light and shade, sun, mist, cloud, and varied colours of the season, is entitled to our admiration and praise. It speaks a language to be understood by all persons of every nation and every situation in life; because the scenery of nature is unfolded to all eyes, and 'he who runs may read.'

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Footnotes:


175. John Britton, Fine Arts of the English School, London: Longman, Hurst, 1812, pp. 65-6. Britton here follows other contemporary writers on Wilson, by emphasizing not the classical harmony of his landscapes, but their atmospheric effects. Such an emphasis accords with the issues under examination here—the shift from classical to empirical modes of knowing and seeing.
Public acclaim is to be accorded such an artist whose landscapes communicate to the broadest audience possible through a combination of the local interests accorded to a specific site and a "universal" language of nature, represented through circumstantial effects. The emphasis upon circumstantial effects functioning as universal signs understood by all, rather than ideal forms understood only by the most erudite, has clear affinities to Jeffrey's notion of natural signs necessary for public art. Britton's remarks also echo Jeffrey's in intimating that it is the nature of humankind which determines the language and character of art, rather than it being the task of art to constitute a public capable of understanding and appreciating it.

John Landseer took up this issue of the degree to which a contemporary public must be accommodated rather than constituted by art in his short-lived Review of Publications of Art. In a review of the British Institution Exhibition of 1808 he addressed the relative superiority of history compared to landscape painting by noting that "general truths and perhaps heroic actions, may be of most importance, but of particular truths we are more immediately and especially sensible." He concluded with the pragmatic observation that artists were faced with the choice of representing that which "ordinary men" have encountered within their daily experience or of "teach[ing] them to value the
language and science of superior art." Our consideration is for those artists who refused to make this choice, who wished to command public esteem by communicating with contemporaries in a more elevated form of landscape painting than that supplied by the conventions of topography or the picturesque. As we have seen, the principles of associationist psychology offered the possibility of constructing an elevated "language and science of superior art" from a vocabulary of natural phenomena operating in the guise of natural and accidental signs.

[John Landseer], "British Institution," Review of Publications of Art 1 (1808), p. 82. Six years later, in a lecture on art at the Royal Institution, Landseer once again attacked the notion of general forms, now on the grounds that it was unscientific, and advocated, as before, a mode of representation which included circumstance and accident ("Sketch of Two Lectures at the Royal Institution, on the Philosophy of Art," Examiner, 24 April 1814, p. 27).
CHAPTER IV

The Profession and Politics of Native Genius

In the midst of an enthusiastic review of the paintings J. M. W. Turner had on exhibit at the Royal Academy and at his Harley Street Gallery in the spring of 1810 Robert Hunt, art critic for the Examiner, interjected a snide reference to one of the more notable (or notorious) visitors to Turner’s Gallery:

I find that Mr. Fuller does not waste all his spare money in purchasing an opportunity to sound in the ears of the nation worse oaths and jokes than would grace a Whip Club dinner, for he has a contradictory relish for paintings, and has purchased one in this admirable collection, called the Fish-Market.¹

The target of these remarks was Tory M. P. John Fuller. As intimated by Hunt, who was a staunch critic of governmental corruption, the Sussex landowner and Jamaica slave-owner had bought his way into the Commons. During the election of 1807 he spent over £20,000 in order to overcome the strong opposition of Sussex freeholders who disapproved of his open advocacy of slavery. While in London for the parliamentary session of 1810 he purchased the Fish Market at Turner’s Gallery.² During that

¹ [Robert Hunt], Royal Academy Exhibition," Examiner, 10 June 1810, p. 362.

²"Fishmarket on the Sands" (1810) is illustrated as Plate 112 in Butlin and Joll; it is owned by the William Rockhill Gallery and Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, Kansas City. Eric Shanes notes
same period Fuller commissioned from Turner an oil painting of
his seat, Rosehill, and contracted the artist to paint several
watercolour views of the county of Sussex.  

Are we to take Hunt's remarks at face value and assume that
there is a basic contradiction in Fuller's interest in
paintings—particularly those of the leading genius of the
English school of landscape painting—and his brutish country
manners and corrupt Tory politics? Heretofore we have
considered how the production landscape artist as the native
genius was in part a response to the epistemological irrelevance
and moral corruption of the position of the artist as man of
letters—the latter social position having traditionally been
secured by the ownership of landed property. In order to
determine with some specificity the extent to which the interests
of a landowner like Fuller, who was openly accused of being
politically and morally corrupt, might be well served by the
productions of the native landscape genius at this historical
moment, it will be helpful first to examine in some detail a

that although Butlin and Joll suggest that Hastings may be the
setting for the scene (because the buyer, Fuller, lived near
Hastings, and was acutely interested in such local views), there
is nothing in the work explicitly to connect it with that site
[Eric Shanes, Turner's Rivers, Harbours and Coasts (London:
Chatto and Windus, 1981), p. 156, n. 3].

Shanes, p. 5. This is the most informative account
currently available of Fuller's patronage of Turner. Shanes'
brief descriptions of the Sussex watercolours include useful
information about the history and ownership of the sites
depicted. The view of Rosehill Park (private collection) is
reproduced as Plate 212 in Butlin and Joll.
lavish volume of engraved views of Sussex, based upon the watercolours Turner executed for Fuller. After analyzing how these images and their accompanying text marshalled associationist principles in the production of the landscape artist as native genius, we will turn our attention to the historical circumstances which enabled this particular subject position to attain social and political relevance in the years after the termination of the Napoleonic Wars.

Views in Sussex, Consisting of the Most Interesting Landscape and Marine Scenery in the Rape of Hastings, published in 1820, comprises five engravings based upon watercolours by Turner, a historical introduction, and a commentary on the individual plates by the landscape painter, Richard Ramsay Reinagle. Taken together the engravings and text serve as an indication of how the character of the artist and of the natural were being redefined in terms of specialized modes of knowing, seeing and feeling. As noted above, the project was initiated in 1810 by Fuller, who commissioned Turner to produce a series of watercolours. Eric Shanes recounts that Fuller intended to present coloured aquatints of some of these drawings to friends, relatives and the neighbouring gentry; and indeed, most of the views Turner made represent property associated with prosperous

According to Eric Shanes, the imprint date of 1819 is incorrect, as the Views in Sussex was not published until 1820. For a discussion of the difficulties Cooke encountered in publishing the volume see Shanes, pp. 8-9.
landowners living in the area around Hastings. Several years after the completion of this initial project W. B. Cooke secured Fuller's financing to engrave and publish five plates based on Turner's Sussex watercolours, provided with the explanatory text by Reinagle.

Both images and letterpress of the Views in Sussex are quite unlike the usual material published in such folios. Turner's drawings are assertively unpicturesque panoramas which incorporate distant views of the country houses and historic monuments found in the district. Although these edifices are distinguished in these compositions through their placement and lighting, it is the play of light and dark dappling the hillsides, and the spectacular skies, with their displays of storm clouds interspersed with brilliant sunlight, which provide the dominant interest in the scenes.

Reinagle's commentary is unprecedented, as far as I have been able to determine, in its fixation upon the production of these effects, rather than upon the terrain and buildings which are depicted. Usually such texts present information about the geographical, historical and/or commercial importance of the sites represented, and only occasionally comment upon the beauty

—Shanes, p. 5.

"Thus, the drawings circulated in two forms—privately, in the form of aquatints, and publicly in the less expensive form of engravings in the published volume, Views in Sussex."
or masterliness of the images. This emphasis on subject matter is found not only in those text-oriented county histories which include illustrative material, but also in volumes of engraved views such as this one, in which the text serves primarily as a gloss on the prints. Although Reinagle's text does present site specific information, it is largely a promotion of the genius of the artist, evidenced by his sensibility and command of 'scientific' knowledge. The professional authority of the enterprize is underscored by the fact that a landscape painter was engaged to write the commentary, as well as by the title of that text, "Scientific and Explanatory Notes." As the complement of image/text makes clear, it is a specific type of science--devoted to the empirical observation and study of the human mind and natural phenomena--which secures both the artist's and the artist/writer’s professional authority.

Whereas most topographies stress the natural beauty of the sites depicted in word and images, Views in Sussex constitutes the landscape around Hastings as visually unremarkable. Only when this landscape is subjected to the powerful and sensitive mind of genius, can it be seen to instantiate English character and values. Thus in the commentary for The Vale of Heathfield

See for example, the letterpress for Philippe de Loutherbourg's Romantic and Picturesque Scenery of England and Wales (London, 1805), or the more elaborated Description to the Plates of Thames Scenery (London 1818) which accompanied W. B. Cooke's engravings of Thames Scenery (London 1814-29), based upon drawings by S. Owen, P. De Wint, R. Reinagle, and others.
(Figure 13) Reinagle emphasizes the power of genius to transform an unexceptional panorama by noting that the swelling forms of the gently wooded hillsides would seem to offer little visual excitement to the viewer accustomed to the sublime and picturesque forms of rough-hewn cliffs and mountain vistas:

...the learned eye in the choice of nature, for the purposes of art, would rather travel on, until some sharpened and angular forms bespeak grandeur, or the distant beauty of mountain scenery, satisfies its anxious search; than rest among forms and features of indecisive character. Is it not a most convincing proof of the genius of the eminent artist we are following, when he surprises, astonishes, or pleases us to a degree of ecstasy, with scenes that the rule of art might condemn? He finds an easy path, which to every other than a genius like his own, would prove a wilderness, and occasion a certain failure."

That viewers can experience sublimity—ecstatic transport and astonishment—in relation to an unremarkable view is presented as evidence of artistic genius. The aesthetic experience of sublimity is not produced here through the representation of a particular set of objects and phenomena—mountains, storms, darkness, and the like. In accordance with the precepts of associationist aesthetics, it is rather a mental response to the transformation of common nature by artistic genius.

Reinagle continues his discussion of the scene by

emphasizing, as he does repeatedly throughout the text, that it is science rather than imitative art, which is responsible for evoking the essential character of the scene:

There is great science in the contrivance of the sky, and particularly over the house [the seat of Lord Heathfield]; that is the spot to be preferred in the picture as the chief object, though distant; and our admiration is drawn to that point as by a magic spell. Science alone, aided by genius, can do this. These are the high qualities that can enslave and enchant the eye.9

The emphasis upon the scientifically accurate delineation of the cloudy, rain-swept sky suggests that the artist has marshalled his knowledge of meteorology in order to produce a scene which magically enslaves and enchants the viewer. The writer is concerned that this 'magic' not be confused with the affectations of manner and glittering effects which, as we saw earlier, were so strongly associated with artists' pandering to the caprices of fashion and the market. Thus he writes in connection with another plate in the series, The Vale of Ashburnham (Figure 14), that "there is neither affectation in light and shade, nor any seductive attraction created that way: the scene alone recommends this view in a most impressive manner."10 The view's spectacular light effects represent the natural as mediated through the knowledge and genius of the

9Reinagle, "Scientific and Explanatory Notes."
10Reinagle, "Scientific and Explanatory Notes."
It is noteworthy that in both the views of Ashburnham and the Heathfield the "spot to be preferred," in Reinagle's words, is that occupied by the house of a landed proprietor. Although the compositions do not feature these stately edifices at close range, or set them off in a picturesquely framed view, their importance within the panorama is unmistakable. The 'accidental' effects which highlight their presence render their dominance of the landscape as natural as the sunlight and the clouds which play over its surface. Traditional social hierarchies are here naturalized and sustained by an aesthetic of the circumstantial, based upon self-proclaimedly "scientific" principles.

Although Reinagle at no point provides readers with an explicit definition of the term 'science,' his pictorial analyses leave little doubt as to the epistemological authority which underwrites both the images and the commentary. Hence in explaining the placement of a rainstorm on the left of the view of Brightling Observatory as Seen from Rosehill Park (Figure 15), the writer states that the view affords little extension into vast distances to engage the imagination of the viewer. Consequently the artist
expressed a shower proceeding from the left corner, by which we forget the absence of distance, as that affects the mind two ways. In the first place, it is a natural barrier to the feeling and search in that direction, nor can we avoid proceeding onward as the storm or shower leads. Secondly, the mind, by its own operation, assents, from common experience, that rain generally obscures whatever it passes over. It is thus we are bound to the spot, and feel more interest in what is before us, than if the effect had induced the mind to wander out of the limits of the picture.\textsuperscript{11}

This awkward attempt at psychologizing the viewing process signals the adoption not only of the empiricism of the physical sciences, but also of associationist principles as the epistemological ground upon which aesthetic judgments of the images are to be made. Both the image and text evidence a concern with boundaries—with preventing the gaze of the viewer from wandering off into distances which may promise more interesting vistas. Limiting the gaze by means of a natural and 'accidental' phenomenon (a rain shower) limits the potential for the viewer to engage in an unregulated flow of associations and feelings. As a result, the viewer is encouraged to experience an intensity of feeling, and hence an enhanced appreciation of the power of artistic genius, in the process of contemplating this unremarkable stretch of Sussex scenery.\textsuperscript{12} Reinagle's emphasis upon the visual techniques used to limit and to enhance images of natural scenery testifies to the regulatory power invested in the

\textsuperscript{11}Reinagle, "Scientific and Explanatory Notes."

\textsuperscript{12}I would like to thank Laurie Monahan for her thoughtful comments concerning the issue of boundaries in relation to this passage of Reinagle's text.
landscape genius. The appeal to the imagination of the viewer is not made by inviting an unrestricted play of imaginative associations, but through a controlled and selective display of features and circumstantial effects which reinforce and enhance a limited set of social feelings associated with the scene represented.

Turner's representation of the historic battleground at Hastings, *View of Battle Abbey—the Spot where Harold Fell* (Figure 16) presents a virtuoso demonstration of the associative possibilities which can be developed from a seemingly uninteresting array of natural features through the selection and enhancement of circumstantial features. After calling attention to the meagreness of objects in the scene (a "plain foreground with some scattered weeds...a meagre distance, of no importance in a picturesque point of view, a couple of half withered firs") Reinagle explains how the associative aspects of circumstantial effects produces a scene which powerfully expresses the historic character of the battle site:

A violent storm is just passing away, having burst its fury at no great distance; this we gather not so much from the mere effect of light and shade, as by an accurate attention to the formation of clouds. Thus a commotion or contention and strife of the elements help to give a feeling necessary to the purpose of this design...The direction of the lines of the clouds in their convolutions calls attention to the spot the Artist has to depict; the decline of the day, expressed by a low light, and long sloping shadows, together with the beautiful circumstance of a fallen tree, add an unexpected strength to the conception. The decay of the
few straggling yet standing firs, united with the above circumstances, gives a powerful impression of melancholy and sadness to the scene. To add to all this admirable feeling and exquisite sensibility of combination, both in form and effect, Mr Turner has given us an episode, a hare, just on the point of being run down by a grey-hound, which fills the mind of the observer with only one sentiment, that of death, as no other living objects interpose to divert the mind from it.13

All of the effects noted in the passage are "accidental"—an animal chase, a passing storm, lengthening shadows, and decayed trees. And yet when selected and combined by imaginative genius, such transient effects have the power to operate as 'natural signs,' to use Jeffrey's term, of sadness and strife, and thus to evoke the historic character of the scene. 'Character,' then, is not a quality represented in the general and permanent forms underlying material nature, as formulated by academic theory. Rather, what signifies 'character' are the transient and arbitrary occurrences of selected episodes of human activity ('historical' or literary) which are associated with a specific site. These episodes are then represented through an imaginatively constituted representation of transient, but 'universally' significant effects of atmosphere and weather.

This representation of history via the natural effects of a landscape is a profoundly ideological process, for it serves to naturalize the social. The displacement of specific feelings

13 Reinagle, "Scientific and Explanatory Notes."
associated with social conflict and other human actions onto representations of natural scenery involves a repression of human agency in favour of natural law. Present social relations and historical events are not represented as objects of moral or intellectual scrutiny, but function as sources of aesthetic pleasure deriving from the feelings they arouse. When transposed onto natural scenery, these social feelings appear to be in harmony with natural law and therefore immune to question. Hence, in the view of Battle Abbey, since it is seemingly 'natural' to feel sadness at the sight of decaying trees and the onset of evening, viewers are invited to conclude that it is also equally 'natural' to feel sadness at the defeat of the Saxons in a conflict further naturalized through its representation in the fury of a passing rainstorm and the violence of the animal chase.

In the context of this historical moment, however, to feel sadness at the violent defeat of the Saxons could be a highly politicized sentiment, and one not shared by all British subjects. Some factions among the political opposition to the ruling oligarchy at this time had incorporated a harsh condemnation of the Norman Conquest as part of their construction of British history. On the other hand it was at this same time that Sir Walter Scott, a Tory supportive of the oligarchy, produced his own defense of the Normans in the novel *Ivanhoe*.

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14 For references and a brief discussion of the "Norman Yoke" see infra, Chapter I, pp. 57-8, n. 70.
written in 1820 (the same year that the Sussex prints were published). The associative processes which underwrote this kind of landscape painting, then, served to deny ideological conflicts and were predicated upon a community of viewers united in their local interests and a shared body of political, as well as literary and historical associations.\textsuperscript{15}

To acknowledge such local interests was not to abandon one's

\textsuperscript{15}That an adherence to associationist psychology does not preclude the promotion of universal values and interests is apparent from the writings of Richard Payne Knight. Earlier it was noted that Knight supported the precepts and models of the old masters. Consonant with this position, he, like the advocates of academic history painting, advised artists to avoid the temporary and the local in representing contemporary and historical events, noting that natural modes of expressing strong passions are the same in all ages and all countries and "the less these natural modes are connected with those of local and temporary habit, the more strong and general will be the sympathies excited by them."[Knight, p. 286.] For the same reason "all real history, of a date sufficiently recent for such particulars to be generally known, cannot afford proper subjects for serious dramatic, and still less for epic fiction...in the mind of the reader, individual is necessarily substituted to general nature; and consequently, the imagination is cramped and restricted; so that it can no longer expand itself sufficiently to receive the exaggerated images of poetry." He goes on to recommend the feats of the Greek heroes as subject matter superior to the exploits of Julius Caesar or Henry IV.[Knight, p. 288.]. This insistence upon the existence of universal (natural) modes of expression brings the author in conflict with a totally relativized theory of the human mind. Accordingly, he argues that some phenomena (colour, as well as the passions) produce universal associations which are not derived from individual experience, but are inherent features of the human mind. Francis Jeffrey, in his review of Alison's Essays criticized the Knight for just such methodological inconsistency ("Alison on Taste," p. 36). Such difficulties in reconciling associationism to the precepts of academic history painting go some way to explaining why associationist principles were most commonly employed in commentaries and criticism devoted to landscape painting directed to a national ("local") rather than a universal constituency.
social identity in favour of the private self, but rather to define the social in terms of customary difference rather than universality. In the dedication of the *Views in Sussex* John Fuller was duly praised by the publisher W. B. Cooke: "The love of the Fine Arts blending itself with your Local Affections... induced you to obtain one of the first Artists the present age has produced, to exercise his powerful pencil on its selected Scenery." Although this was a conventional tribute to the beneficent patronage of a landlord, such a concern with the local was particularly acute at this time. Both country Tories and politically liberal reformists were growing increasingly critical of absentee landlords who preferred the high life of the metropolis to the duties of the rural proprietor. Fuller's private interests as an absentee landlord and slave owner in the West Indies had prompted his vigorous defense of the slave trade in the House of Commons in 1810 (at the very moment he commissioned the Hastings watercolours from Turner). As noted earlier, this action made him an unpopular figure within his local constituency—so unpopular, in fact, that he was dropped by the Tories at the next election in 1812. For Fuller, then, the

16 W. B. Cooke, "Dedication," *Views in Sussex*.


18 Shanes, p. 5.
private circulation and later publication of these views by Turner served to bolster his reputation locally, as a promoter of the historic sites and landed properties of Hastings, as well as nationally, through his patronage of the leading genius of English landscape painting.

Those national characteristics which both distinguish and unite a community of viewers are directly invoked in Reinagle's commentary on The Vale of Ashburnham. The view is a wide panorama which includes the sweep of Pevensey Bay, its edges dotted with the distant forms of the Martello towers, shoreline defenses against French invasions. Ashburnham Place, the country seat of the Ashburnham family, John Fuller's neighbours, occupies the centre of the composition. It is bathed in a bright patch of sunlight which sets it off from the surrounding wooded hillsides. Unlike the account of Battle Abbey, the commentary here emphasizes the richness of the "splendid English view"—a luxuriance derived partly from the wooded hills (which provide fuel for the estate's iron smelter, discreetly hidden behind the trees on the right), hop-grounds and cornfields, and partly from the light which dapples the hillsides. After the "delighted eye" roves with pleasure over the scene it alights finally on the house itself. The sight provides Reinagle the opportunity to connect the feelings of luxury stimulated by the view with distinguishing characteristics of Englishness:
English magnificence is then in full view...the splendour of English wealth and taste is more displayed in our grand palaces and parks throughout the country than by our metropolitan residences. England is very peculiar in this respect; nor do we think more happy proof can be given of the truth of it than in the scene before us.19

Reinagle’s interpretation of Turner’s panorama as representing the superiority and distinctive character of English political organization accorded well with the nationalist rhetoric which dominated political discourse of the counterrevolutionary period.20 In a world where the social and cultural ties that previously bound together English and continental property owners had been rent asunder by popular revolution and imperial wars, national difference, rather than genteel cosmopolitanism became the ground upon which social character was secured.21

19Reinagle, "Scientific and Explanatory Notes."

20See for example, The Two Pictures; or a View of the Miseries of France Contrasted with the Blessings of England (London, 1810), where an extended description of the English countryside is presented as evidence of English prosperity and political stability in stark contrast to the economic and political distress rampant in France: "The neat cottage, the substantial farm-house, the splendid villa, are constantly rising to the sight, surrounded by the most choice and poetical attributes of the landscape...A picture of as much neatness, softness, and elegance, is exposed to the eye, as can be given to the imagination by the finest etching, or the most mellowed drawing. The vision is not more delightfully recreated by the rural scenery, than the moral sense is gratified, and the understanding, elevated by the institutions of this great country" (p.22).

21For a discussion of eighteenth-century ‘cosmopolitanism,’ that cultural and intellectual phenomenon which united European elites, especially those in England and France, see Newman, pp. 1-18.
By the second decade of the nineteenth century the need for the landed interest to reassert its authority to rule in the interests of national harmony took on a new urgency. Both the growing economic power of bourgeois industrialists, especially in the north of England, and the increasing disaffection of the working class were becoming more visible and less easy to ignore or to explain away as temporary aberrations. Before the Napoleonic Wars had ended there were two major demonstrations of middle- and working-class opposition to the oppressive power of rival interests: the provincial manufacturers' campaign to revoke the Orders in Council (in effect 1806-1812), which imposed severe restrictions on world trade, and Luddite attacks by labourers in 1811-2 in response to the introduction of power looms and shearing-frames into the cotton and woolen industries in the North.33

The successful attempt by the manufacturing interests to revoke the trade embargo established by the Orders in Council, the British government's response to Napoleon's blockade of Britain, was a demonstration of the growing economic power of the industrial middle class. This economic power translated into an increasingly vocal political presence which placed itself in active opposition to the commercial interests of corporations

33For an account of the successful campaign to revoke the Orders in Council by manufacturers see Cookson, pp. 65-8. A concise and cogent discussion of the Luddite movement is provided by E. P. Thompson in The Making of the English Working Class, pp. 569-659.
such as the East India Company (which profited from the Orders in Council) and to landed interests, evidenced in the later, unsuccessful attempt by manufacturers to prevent the passage of the Corn Laws in 1814.²³

At this same time the power of the manufacturers was being less successfully contested by labourers. Luddite activity was, as E. P. Thompson puts it, "the nearest thing to a 'peasant's revolt' of industrial workers" yet experienced in England.²⁴ Incidents of machine-breaking, combined with an organized campaign to petition Parliament to provide monetary compensation to labourers, ultimately were ineffective in assuaging the effects of mechanization and in preventing the repeal of legislation protecting the interests of workers.²⁵ Nonetheless, the year-long agitation of thousands of workers disturbed the Government to the extent that, fearing a full-fledged insurrection, it sent 12,000 troops to the North—more troops than were then fighting Napoleon in the Iberian Peninsula.²⁶

²³The Corn Laws effectively restricted the importing of foreign grain, thus allowing farmers and landed proprietors to maintain a higher price for domestic grain. Since the wages manufacturers paid to their labourers was determined by the price of bread, it was in the manufacturers' interest to maintain low grain prices.

²⁴Thompson, Working Class, p. 656.

²⁵Thompson reports that in the first two decades of the century minimum wages clauses, apprentice clauses, and the Arbitration Acts were all repealed, while at the same time worker resistance to these actions in the form of organized trade unions was outlawed by the Combination Acts (Thompson, Working Class, p. 595).

²⁶Thompson, Working Class, p. 617.
Despite Government success in quashing these actions, it is highly likely that former Luddites played a primary rôle in organizing the widespread agitation for parliamentary reform which marked the immediate post-war period.

This period, the years between 1815 and 1820, saw a resurgence of inter-class hostility. The post-war trade depression, evident by 1816, combined with bad harvests in 1817 and 1818, provided the context for intense radical and liberal-reformist opposition to oligarchical power—an opposition which, some historians have argued, catalyzed the development of both middle and working class consciousness. One opponent of working class agitation acknowledges the development of inter-class hostility during this period when he declared in 1820:

Never in any age or country was there more firm an alliance betwixt the higher and lower orders as there existed in Great Britain, until it was fatally disturbed of late years by...the spirit of turbulence

Harold Perkin argues that both the working class and the middle class became publicly recognized socio-political formations in the debates and agitation around the reform issue during the period between 1815 and 1820 [The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1830 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 178-217. E. P. Thompson suggests that it was not until the end of the 1820s that a working-class consciousness was developed. In either case, it is clear that in the years immediately following Waterloo inter-class conflict became a topic of public debate.
This account suggests that a momentous and irreversible change had occurred; current hostilities were more than just a temporary break-down in the allegedly amicable relations which traditionally existed between rich and poor: the "cord has been snapped," never to be repaired.

Reinforcing this notion of a deep and irrevocable class antagonism were the writings of the leading political economist of the period, David Ricardo.\(^2\)\(^s\) A primary figure under attack in Ricardo's writings was the landlord who, in seeking to maintain an artificially high price for grain through the restricting of foreign grain imports, caused the wages of labourers to rise and industrial profits to fall. These concerns were specifically relevant to the debates and eventual passage of the Corn Laws in 1814 which imposed just such a duty as a means of bolstering the post-war agricultural economy. A committed free trader, Ricardo emphasized in his *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* of 1817 the conflict of interests inherent between landowners,

\(^2\)\(^s\)[J. E. Taylor], *Notes and Observations... on the Papers Relative to the Internal State of the Country Recently Presented to Parliament* (1820), quoted in Perkin, p. 213.

\(^2\)\(^p\)Elie Halevy notes that Ricardo was the first person to publish a complete treatise on political economy since Adam Smith in the 1770s [Halevy, *The Growth of Philosophical Radicalism* (1928), cited in Berg, p. 36.]
manufacturers and consumers in a capitalist economy. His policies elicited vocal opposition from the most widely read quarterly of the day, Blackwood’s, which maintained a staunchly Tory defense of the landed interest. In 1818 a writer in that journal took to task both Ricardo and his supporters on the editorial staff of the Edinburgh Review for asserting that "the interest of the landlords is always opposed to that of every other class of the community." And again in 1819 Blackwood’s published another essay attacking Ricardo’s dictum that rising wages cause falling profits as "a theory which teaches that by the nature of human society, there is a constant and irremediable contrariety of interest between its members, and that a general amelioration, in which all should participate alike, is

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30 David Ricardo, The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation (London: Dent, 1973; orig. pub. 1817), p. 225. These remarks on class conflict occur in Ricardo’s section on rent and the relationship between the price of grain and the wages of labourers. For a cogent discussion of Ricardo see Eric Roll, A History of Economic Thought, 4th ed., revised (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), esp. pp. 171-205. Scholarly debate continues concerning the degree to which Ricardo’s theories taken as a whole are an attack upon landed proprietors [for an account contrary to Roll’s which argues that Ricardo was not biased against landowners see Samuel Hollander, The Economics of David Ricardo (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), pp. 589-93)]. Whether or not this issue is ever satisfactorily settled, it is clear that contemporary writers defending the landed interest (Thomas Malthus being foremost among them) interpreted Ricardo’s theory of rent and labour to be hostile to landowners and to a view of economics based upon a mutuality of social interests.

impossible.¹¹³²

It is within the context of post-war social and political
dissension and the concomitant emergence of an economic
discourse emphasizing the endemic nature of class conflict to
capitalist enterprise, that the continued promotion and cultural
articulation of the ideal of native genius should be located.
Such events clearly provided a strong incentive for the landed
elite in England to reformulate their own class identity in a way
which emphasized their attachment to other classes within the
nation, rather than their similarities with continental elites.

Thus in 1820, at the same time that it was repeatedly
attacking Ricardo's economic theory, Blackwood's published an
essay, "On the Analogy between the Growth of Individual and
National Genius," which vaunted the power of national character
in binding together a people. By making an analogy between a
nation and an individual the writer effaces social conflict as a
defining feature of a given national community: "For the spirit
of a people, as that of a single being, entering upon the world
of life it is to possess, finds allotted to itself its own
peculiar and individual condition of existence, distinguishing it
from all others." Difference is understood here to operate only
between national groups; the "spirit of a people," which, the

³²"On the Influences of Wages on the Rate of Profits,"
writer indicates, enters into the social body upon its 'birth,' enforces a coherence on a nation's history and character.  

This national character, the writer claims, is strengthened and sustained by the same process of introspection which is the hallmark of the individual artistic genius:

> It is an essential quality of genius in the individual mind, perhaps its distinctive and most constituent quality, that it draws its powers from sources within itself— that its faculties are but the organs, as it were, of a deeper spirit, residing in, and blended with its deepest nature. The man himself... with all his sensibilities, recollections, loves... is the deep and exhaustless source from which his genius draws the materials of its conception— the elements of its ceaseless creations. It is the expression of his own individual being, the colouring of life derived through his own sense to his work, that makes the impress of genius on the productions of his art.

Although published accounts of associationist psychology and aesthetics are largely ignored by Blackwood's, it is apparent here how compatible a theory of the imaginative genius based upon associative memories is with such a construction of both individual and national genius. Such a native subject is not

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34 "On the Analogy between... Individual and National Genius," p. 376.

35 As indicated in Chapter III, associationism was the intellectual product of those philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment who were identified with economic liberalism and promoted in the early 1800s by the Edinburgh Review, Blackwood's strongest rival among the quarterlies.
only introspective, but profoundly retrospective. Hence, the
creative impulse derives its power not primarily from innovation,
but from a continuous meditation on its own "deepest nature" as
revealed through memory, feeling and local attachment.

The politically reactionary nature of such a formulation of
native consciousness is made clear in the author's discussion of
the dual impulses which determine the progress of a nation--
subjection to the past and freedom to change. He concludes that
"among ourselves the tendency of deviation [from a balance of
these two impulses] seems to be towards too great relaxation of
the subjection of our minds to the great generations from which
we spring." We should, therefore, "understand how much of our
welfare...depends on our adherence to the spirit and life of our
forefathers." Throughout the essay such customary restraints
are promoted in connection both with the individual and the
national community. Within the terms of such an analogy the need
to regulate through custom and history an excessive desire for
political change is addressed on the level of the individual as
the necessity to control the creative intellect:

336 "On the Analogy between...Individual and National Genius,"
p. 379. Profoundly conservative and culturally isolationist in
its ideological positioning, this essay ends with an impassioned
(and prescient) warning about the consequences of imposing
British traditions, both intellectual and cultural, upon the
people of India at a time when British dominance of that area had
increased with the conquest in 1817-18 of territories around
Bombay: "Alas! our civilization, our knowledge, wars with her
[India's] spirit; and subjugated as her strength is by our arms,
her ancient mind will perhaps, be yet more prostrate under the
ascendancy of our conquering intellect" (p. 381).
The human intellect, searching life, nature, and itself, and re-moulding what it has seen into forms of its own, is not an unfettered intelligence, ranging through absolute existence, and creating ideal form. It is the power of a being who in all parts of his nature, is subjected to conditions of life, who, in his sensibilities, his knowledge, his productions, is under restraint of his nature, and of his place among mankind.\textsuperscript{37}

Such a formulation of the self-reflecting national subject, then, critiques notions of the subject as an unconstrained universalizing intelligence creating ideal forms. The writer proposes instead a subject deeply bound by the conditions of his/her present life. One of these formative conditions is the geographical space which that subject occupies. In describing what constitutes the character of a people after the "spirit" has entered into their collective being, the writer declares that the life they are to lead dawns on them as they set foot on its [their country's] soil. The earth itself, and the sky, to which their existence from that hour is committed, are the groundwork of that arising life. Mountains, and waters, and woods, and soil, and the climate, which overhangs them all give the first determination to their existence, allotting many of their avocations, and holding in themselves the numberless influences which are to be showered continually from the countenance and the hand of nature on their progressive existence.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{37}"On the Analogy between...Individual and National Genius," p. 380.

\textsuperscript{38}"On the Analogy between...Individual and National "Genius,"" p. 376.
The landscape and climate, then, not only form and unify the initial character of a people, but continue to exert a profound influence over their collective development.

Turner's Sussex landscapes and their accompanying commentary make a similar claim about the nature of national and individual genius. These images of landed property and historic sites also inscribe a notion of the national which naturalized the continued dominance of landowners such as Turner's reactionary patron, Jack Fuller. Appearing the year after the bloody 'Peterloo' massacre of reformists at Manchester and in the same year as the *Blackwood's* essay on native genius, the prints appeal to a retrospective impulse which naturalizes the unequal distribution of wealth and property and banishes social conflict into battles from a distant Saxon past, where even they are sublated into the realm of the natural.  

The prints can be interpreted as a visible manifestation of the constraints which the *Blackwood's* writer placed upon genius. The landscape genius is not involved in the creation of ideal forms, but is "subjected" to the conditions of his own (considerable) knowledge, sensibility and position in the social order. The productions of such an artistic subject in turn

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35 The Peterloo Massacre refers to the Manchester yeomanry's attack on the crowd (sixty to one hundred thousand people) massed for a reform rally at St. Peter's field, Manchester on 16 August 1819. Eleven people were killed and hundreds, many of them women and children, were wounded (Thompson, pp. 745-57).
invite a viewing experience which is similarly circumscribed. Turner's and Reinagle's engagement with associationist precepts, far from endorsing a free, random, or uncontrolled train of ideas and images, instead serves to limit and direct the type of associations stimulated in the mind of the viewer. Both prints and text privilege "trains" of mental images and ideas customarily associated with specific histories and social forms. Hence the notion that social hierarchy induces social harmony is represented visually in the image of the country house situated upon a hilly prominence, at one with the surrounding landscape, and yet commanding attention through the brilliance of "natural" highlighting. The "unity of expression," to use Alison's term, which Turner achieves in organizing these views through sweeping panoramic views, limited and enhanced by use of broad and dramatic effects of colour and light, underscores the notion that there is only one appropriate 'social feeling' which is to be associated with the character of the scenes. What remains invisible (such as political hostility toward Fuller in his own county) is rendered unthinkable within the parameters defined by such images, so closely related are vision and knowledge within a sensationist aesthetic which privileges the externally observed

40 Kathleen Nicholson has carefully analyzed Turner's use of poetic glosses on many of his landscapes exhibited at the Royal Academy as a tactic designed to elevate landscape painting to the status of history painting ("Turner, Poetry, and the Transformation of History Painting," Arts Magazine 56 (April 1982), pp. 92-7). These tags were a direct attempt to control the types of associations the spectator was to experience when viewing the artist's work.
appearances of things as the key to identity.\textsuperscript{41}

The images and texts of the Views in Sussex suggest that the artistic genius is one who can reveal national character as it inheres within the locus of the domestic landscape. Furthermore he can identify with this native character inherent in the landscape through his own sensibility. "Mr. Turner feels every subject as he ought," Reinagle writes in connection with the view of Brightling Observatory; and in his remarks on The Vale of Ashburnham: "Mr. Turner has the essential knowledge and felicity to preserve the real character of all he paints or draws, and by feeling it himself makes his beholders feel it."\textsuperscript{42} Given the writer's explicit acknowledgement of the social character of the scene in question, this process of representation, contrary to some modern conceptions of romanticism, involves neither projecting one's private feelings and character onto external nature, nor experiencing the feelings inherent in wild nature, untouched by the concerns of human society. Rather, feeling and expressing a scene's "true"

\textsuperscript{41}Foremost among modern theorists who have considered the relationship between seeing and knowing is Michel Foucault. In The Order of Things he connects the development of botany and natural history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the increasing authority which visual evidence was to enjoy compared to that provided by the other senses [The Order of Things (New York: Vintage Books, 1973; orig. pub. in French 1966), pp. 132-8]. For a useful discussion of Foucault's conception of power, knowledge and visibility see John Rajchman, "Foucault's Art of Seeing," October 44 (Spring 1988), pp. 89-117.

\textsuperscript{42}Reinagle, "Scientific and Explanatory Notes."
character involves the sensitive and knowing artist in a process of representing visually the shared body of customary associations which lends social significance to the scene.

As Reinagle's text suggests, the artist's own character is not effaced in this process; rather his particular sensibility and, equally importantly, his knowledge, is what permits him to identify and communicate these social feelings to less sensitive and knowledgeable viewers. This accords with Alison's account of the superiority of the landscape painter and Jeffrey's emphasis upon the superior sensibility and knowledge of the poet in his review of Alison's *Essays*.

Whereas the subject position of the artist as man of letters posits the artist as aspiring to the status of the knowing viewer, the formulation of the imaginative, sensitive artist reverses this ordering. It is the viewer now who seeks to achieve the sensibility of the artist, stimulated by the associations aroused in the aesthetic contemplation of his works.

The artistic genius's superior power to stimulate the feelings and imaginations of viewers is celebrated without

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43 Jeffrey writes: "As the poet sees more of beauty in nature than ordinary mortals, just because he perceives more of these analogies and relations to social emotions, in which all beauty consists; so, other men see more or less of this beauty, exactly as they happen to possess that fancy, or those habits, which enable them readily to trace out these relations" ("Alison on Taste," p.45).
reservation in Reinagle's commentary and Alison's Essays. Nonetheless there are constraints placed on the artist and/or viewer which seemed designed to insure that this creative power does not go out of control. Reinagle, as we have seen, identifies the powerful emotions generated by the landscapes as socially binding feelings such as patriotic grief (in the case of the view of Battle Abbey) or national pride (in the view of Heathfield), hence the possibility of genius manifesting and arousing disturbing emotions is foreclosed. The regulation of the viewer's gaze is presented in Views in Sussex as a sign of Turner's virtuosity, since, as noted above, this control was required in order to enhance the expressive intensity of the viewing experience. As noted in Reinagle's remarks about the Vale of Heathfield, this artistic virtuosity is demonstrated by a work's capacity to "enslave and enchant the eye," and to surprise, astonish, or "please [the viewer] as to a degree of ecstasy."

These same criteria are presented by Alison when describing the process of viewing the landscapes of Claude, hearing the music of Handel or reading the poetry of Milton:

It is then, only, we feel the sublimity or beauty of their productions, when our imaginations are kindled by their power, when we lose ourselves amid the number of images that pass before our minds, and when we waken at last from this play of fancy, as from the charm of a romantic dream.**

**Alison, 1:5.
In this passage the fantasies kindled in the viewer's imagination by the productions of the artistic genius do not assume a disturbing aspect. Alison emphasizes the link between strong aesthetic feelings and the socialization and passivity of the viewer. Only viewers who are liberally educated and whose minds are unoccupied by private grief or business can have an intense experience of sublimity or beauty (Alison does not distinguish between these two categories in terms of their aesthetic power). So constrained socially and mentally, such viewers would presumably be incapable or undesirous of dangerous imaginings as the result of their fantastic visions.\(^4\)

In contradistinction to Alison and Reinagle, the writer for Blackwood's overtly acknowledges the threat posed by genius in rejecting the notion of "unfettered" intellect. Recall the passage cited earlier which insists that

> the human intellect...is not an unfettered intelligence, ranging through absolute existence, and creating ideal form. It is the power of a being who in all parts of his nature, is subjected to conditions of life, who, in his sensibilities, his knowledge, his productions, is under restraint of his nature, and of his place among mankind.

Such an emphasis upon the retrospective rather than the innovative aspect of native genius signals a fundamental concern with the power of the creative individual to stimulate through

\(^4\)Alison, p. 9.
his productions, new and dangerous modes of thinking, feeling, and imagining. Whereas the genius's endorsement of the existing social hierarchy was tacitly assumed by Alison, and visibly demonstrated by Turner in his Sussex views (and textually reinforced by Reinagle's commentary), the writer for Blackwood's was less confident about the power of genius to subject itself to a retrospective vision of its own inferiority and power at a time of intense social upheaval. He was not alone in harbouring such misgivings. As we shall see in examining the critical response to landscape painting in the next chapter, the superior power of the artistic genius to provoke the imaginations of viewers was seldom questioned. What was very much in question, however, was whether the effects of that power on individual viewers and the national community were beneficial or dangerous.
In May 1814 the critic for the London Chronicle began his review of the Royal Academy Exhibition by noting the lack of "epic" paintings, a situation which was assuaged by the presence of some pleasing landscapes "which while they record no particular event, excite historical recollections by the happy mixture of general costume and figures, with the magnificence of national edifices, and the charms of rural scenery." He continued by noting that "the eye is dazzled on entering the large room by the glowing freshness and brilliant colouring which distinguish both portraits and landscapes, in this highly decorated chamber. The intermixture and contrast renders the first coup d'oeil highly gratifying."¹ While history painting languishes in what literary historian Jon Klancher refers to as this "postrhetorical, postrevolutionary world" "historical recollections" are represented through landscape paintings.² Narrativity is forsaken (these works record "no particular event") in favour of associative chains of memories excited by an array of costumes, figures, architecture, and natural scenery. This refraction of history through landscape contributes to the

¹ "Royal Academy," London Chronicle, 3-4 May 1814, p. 419.

general brilliance of the exhibition space, where the eye is
dazzled and gratified by the combination of portraits (of "female
loveliness" we are told later in the passage) and colourful
landscapes. Such an enthusiastic response to the Exhibition’s
plethora of colour, mixture of genres, and mixed genres testifies
to the provisos set out in the Introduction of this present
investigation: landscape painting at this historical moment is in
a state of dynamic flux—a flux which can be discerned in a
concomitant resonance within and between the various artistic
subject positions we have been considering.

We have seen how the subject positions of both the artistic
producer and viewer as virtuous man of letters were undermined as
the ideological notion of economic disinterest and the
epistemological authority of a liberal education came
increasingly into question. Many opponents of market-oriented
forms of cultural production bemoaned the situation in which the
subject position of the man of letters had become virtually
indistinguishable from that of the slave of the market. However,
the above passage from the London Chronicle celebrates, rather
than deplores an artistic display which would seem to signal the
collapse of all three subject positions (the imaginative genius
as well as market slave and man of letters) into that of an
impresario who effects the imaginative transformation of history
and nature into a dazzling spectacle for the eye. We will now
examine some of those critical discourses on painting especially
pertinent to the resonance between artistic subject positions—a resonance and/or hybridization which occurs when the imaginative, sensitive individual is positioned as a performer in the market. But before analyzing various responses to the performance of the imaginative genius in the market we will first consider briefly the extended debate surrounding the appropriate form of patronage or support for a national school of painting—a debate which deserves a full-length scholarly study. It was in the context of this debate that a defense of a free market model of production/consumption was mounted contemporaneously with a redefinition of the artist as an independent-minded professional, distinguished by his imagination and singular character, rather than his liberality and disinterestedness.

One of the most highly publicized defenses of state sponsorship of the arts—particularly of history painting—was Prince Hoare's *Inquiry into the Requisite Cultivation and Present State of the Arts of Design in England* (London, 1806). Hoare first focussed upon the benefits which a flourishing artistic culture brought to the nation and then presented arguments in favour of public rather than private patronage. These arguments are largely pragmatic: state patronage is necessary because individuals rarely if ever commission history paintings, and the major artistic institution, the Royal Academy, is concerned with instruction and exhibition, not patronage (the British Institution had only just been established, thus it did not enter
Another supporter of public funding for history painting was the portrait painter, Martin Archer Shee, whose *Rhymes on Art* (1806) and *Elements of Art* (1809) received great attention in the periodical press. More openly critical of government neglect of the arts than Hoare, Shee warns that it is a mistake unworthy of an enlightened government to conceive that the arts, left to the influence of ordinary events...to fight and scramble in the rude and revolting contest of coarser occupations, can ever arrive at the perfection which contributes so materially to the permanent glory of a state.\(^3\)

As literary historian Morris Eaves notes, this description figures the arts as "ladies and gentlemen forced to consort with their rough-and-tumble inferiors while enduring the rigors of the marketplace."\(^4\) Shee was not opposed to commerce, and in fact supported the idea of commercial society as a competitive struggle of various classes for gain and advancement. But the


\(^5\) Eaves, p. 129.
arts were to rise above this struggle, crowning the achievements of commerce, without entering into the fray."

Other interests beyond those of the professional artist were activated in this campaign as well. For example, Examiner critic Robert Hunt also favoured the government sponsorship of the arts, again, particularly of history painting. Although concerned about the accommodations artists had to make in order to survive in a competitive market, Hunt’s primary target was political corruption. His review of the Royal Academy in 1810 begins with the assertion that the lack of history paintings

reflect[s] disgrace on the sordid government of this country, but not on its genius...It is insulting to the genius, the understanding, the patience, and wasted industry of the British people for government to plead necessity while lazy noblemen and court-sycophant commoners meanly receive many thousands without giving a shilling’s value in return."

Lack of public support of the arts served as a sign of governmental corruption, an assertion in keeping with Leigh Hunt’s editorial attacks in the Examiner on the private and public misconduct of the Regency court and its ministerial

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"[Robert Hunt], "Royal Academy Exhibition," Examiner, 29 April 1810, p. 268."
supporters.

The assertion that forms of artistic patronage were a measure of political or national character was also a prominent feature of accounts opposing public support of the arts. Although the Champion under the editorship of John Scott (1814-7) was generally critical of the abuses of power and privilege among the British ruling elite, these concerns were set aside when Scott set about comparing the political and cultural patronage systems of Britain and France. In a section from his A Visit to Paris in 1814, which also appeared in revised form in the Champion, Scott discovers sharp distinctions between English and French identity which encompass patterns of art patronage. Scott set the tone for the entire book at the outset, noting that the English love of travel "shews a freedom and custom, as well as a power to think,—a bold and independent disposition...and feeling certain of commanding respect." The French, on the other hand do not have the public curiosity of the English, are indifferent to the past, even their own revolutionary history.  

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9 Leigh Hunt and his brother John, who owned the Examiner were imprisoned for two years, 1813-4, for what was ruled to be a libellous attack on the character of the Prince Regent (Examiner, 7 February 1813, pp. 81-3).

9 [John Scott], "Reflections on the Patronage of the Fine Arts," Champion, 14 May 1815, p. 159.

10 John Scott, A Visit to France in 1814 (London: Longmans, 1815), pp. 5 and 7. Scott was either being purposely obtuse or naive in believing that at the time of the Bourbon restoration Revolutionary history would be a likely topic to be discussed with a visiting Englishman.
English independent-mindedness is set against French slavishness in an opposition familiar from eighteenth century political discourse. However, the post-revolutionary French state's active involvement in culture provides Scott with an institutional illustration of difference in the two national characters. After cataloguing an array of past and recent French cultural projects—from the commissioning of public sculpture and "self-willed" and "extravagant" buildings to fêtes that "put one in the mind of those at Versailles"—Scott reminds his readers that these all have arisen from the "indisputable mandate of a Louis or a Napoleon." He then goes on to contrast this with the state of cultural affairs in England:

The public of England have been accustomed to look to themselves—to their own spirit and opinion,—for their own comforts, luxuries, and ornaments. Little, or nothing, is performed by the English executive government, but the details of state business,—and it seems safest to entrust it with no power, and to enter no expectations beyond this...When the people originate what they enjoy, it is but reasonable to conclude that the people's welfare will be consulted,—but in France it is directly the reverse--The French people have been accustomed to look to themselves for nothing; their rulers have given them every thing of which they boast.  

This notion that the independent thought of individuals exists

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11 Scott, Visit to Paris, p. 209.

12 Scott, Visit to Paris, p. 209. See also Scott's piece in the Champion, "The Public Exhibition of Paintings," (7 May 1815, pp. 149-50), which makes the same point about the English preference for individual choice and taste in the arts, over the need for large public displays.
in an adversarial relationship with the cultural power of public institutions is consistent with the writer's broader views on the importance of public opinion. In praising the ordering of ranks in English society as opposed to the disorder marking France under Napoleon, Scott reiterated the sentiments of eighteenth century political leaders such as Charles James Fox and Edmund Burke, in emphasizing the need for "an intelligent and sensitive public" to act as a check on the abuses of governing class of property owners.\footnote{Scott, \textit{Visit to Paris}, p. 228. See also his piece on "Discrimination of the Public Mind," \textit{Champion}, 31 March 1816, pp. 97-8, which again emphasizes the need for an intelligent public to resist the corrupting power of professional politics.} While Scott professes respect for the aristocracy and belief in maintaining the present social and political order, he identified independent-mindedness with this middle-class public rather than with the ruling elite, contrary to the traditional tenets of civic humanist discourse. It is important to note here that public opinion is a political term which is forwarded in a economic discussion of support for the arts. Scott's emphasis on the non-intervention of the state in the circulation of luxury goods is clear reference to a free market system. By interweaving references to public opinion and a laissez-faire economic policy, the notions of a free market and public opinion converge, becoming synonymous expressions of the English individual's independence from state control.

Whereas Scott's attack on public patronage rested on an
declaration of the self-evident superiority of the English political system and the independent-minded public which ensures the stability of that system, other arguments appealed overtly to the authority of the nationalist discourse on commerce and the competitive market. This argument was, for example, proffered in response to Hoare's Inquiry in an article published in 1807 in the Beau Monde, a periodical which celebrated British commerce and the free market and defended the political status quo. The writer disputes Hoare's contention that the arts in England are unsupported, and further insists that artists are harmed by liberal patronage, rather than its lack. Rather than give artists commissions, public and private patrons should allow works to enter into public competition. Artists would then feel they deserved the remuneration they received. He concludes,

"we therefore entreat our countrymen, as they value their own happiness, as they hope for the continual prosperity and independence of Britain, to refrain in every practicable instance, from giving commissions for works of art. Let every professor then, as he certainly will, bring his works to public competition and sale..."

National prosperity, happiness, and independence, then, are the concomitant features of a cultural market in which artists compete freely for financial rewards and public acclaim.

Seven years later a writer in the conservative New Monthly

Magazine mounted an even more vigorous defense of this free market system of cultural patronage; in the process he also defined the particular characteristics of the producer and consumer within such a market structure. In a letter to the editor, "On the Patronage of the Arts," the anonymous writer "Claudius" explains that "the high prices which speculative men are disposed to give for works of merit are strong excitements to renewed efforts." Beyond monetary rewards, he adds, "the writer and the painter feel their independence without being shackled by the arbitrary dictates of great men upon whom they are dependent for bread." Whereas financial speculation was invariably considered the plague of the commercial system by anti-war reformers and other critics of governmental corruption, this writer invokes it as the spur to artistic independence, which is presented here as synonymous with aesthetic excellence.

This economic argument is bolstered by a political argument which implicitly invokes a comparison between English support of

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1 The New Monthly Magazine was established in this year, 1814, by Henry Colburn in overt opposition to the liberal-to-radical Monthly Magazine. The "Preface" to the third volume (January-June 1815) reaffirmed the magazine's commitment to state institutions: "it would ill become those who have stepped forward in defence of its [the nation's] institutions, to relax their efforts to counteract the mischievous assiduity of those miscreants, and to uphold the establishments by means of which Britain has attained an elevation and influence unequaled since the dissolution of the Roman empire." For an account of the New Monthly's textual strategies in forming an educated middle-class readership see Klancher, especially pp. 62-8.

the arts with royal and noble patronage on the Continent. "True patronage," "Claudius" writes, "consists rather in facilitating the productions of meritorious works by encouraging the purchase of them, than in taking their authors under the protection and royal and noble personages, which is, at the very best, but little more than a splendid state of servitude." He continues by noting that a free market system is appropriate for English artists and patrons because "in this island men of distinguished abilities ought to be left to the vigour of their minds, and to the application of their powers, according to the bent of nature, without being cautioned or directed by the caprice of an illustrious patronage." This description of the independent-minded English artist encompasses both characteristics associated with the notion of genius—mental vigour and singularity ("the bent of nature"), and strongly suggests that such genius is well-equipped to meet the demands of a competitive market.

17"Claudius," "On the Patronage of the Arts," p. 121. This description of a "free" market system of patronage for the arts begs the issue of how artists who are not geniuses acquire the competencies necessary to compete in that market. The author appears to accept the notion that geniuses, like the nobility, are born, not made, but must study in order to develop their native powers. For those less generously blessed, that is, those born without genius, the implication seems to be that they still may compete in such an economic system by following the "bent" of nature even if their talents are less distinguished.

18William Hazlitt occupied a singular position in this debate. He vocally opposed any form of state and/or institutional art patronage, since he viewed all public institutions as corrupt. Neither did he view public opinion as offering support to genius, since matters of taste require a refined understanding lacking in the general public. "The public taste, is therefore, necessarily vitiated in proportion as it is public; it is lowered with every infusion it receives of common
These and other defenses suggest that the notion of a "free market" in art achieved such a large measure of support because it could be marshalled in favour of varied political and economic interests—from that of the most vehement defenders of commercial speculations and the political status quo, to those moderate and liberal reformists who were critical of both. Such a positioning of genius in the market was not unproblematic, since a market is predicated upon attracting consumers, broadly defined by private needs and desires, rather than upon engaging a learned public. Hence, the independent-minded, 'manly' native genius, positioned as he was within a cultural economy defined by the intersection (or, variously, the elision) of public opinion and the free market, entered into an intricate and sometimes vexed relationship with the market slave.

At the heart of this relationship was the issue of "effects"—including brilliant colouring, dramatic use of light and shade, the use of broad expanses of light colour in very simple compositions, indistinct rendering of forms, and the

opinion" (William Hazlitt, "Whether the Fine Arts are Promoted by Academies," in Complete Works, 18:46 (orig. pub. in the Champion, 1814). For Hazlitt, contemporary genius must content itself with the very limited moral and economic support of a few enlightened, liberal-minded individuals acting in their private capacities—a "republic of taste" which no longer has any connection with the public sphere. As we shall see later in this discussion, despite Hazlitt's dismissal of the public function of art, he does insist that 'genius' maintain some connection with the social realm.
selection of what was deemed exceedingly unremarkable views as subject matter. When we consider the type of landscape painting produced by Turner, Callcott, Girtin, Copley Fielding, John Varley and others, and sanctioned by associationist aesthetics as presented by Alison, Jeffrey, and as taken up in the writings of critic-cum-publishers like Britton and Landseer, it becomes evident that the visual strength of such 'expressive' landscapes has much in common with the glittering displays of light and colour we witnessed in the works of older artists such as Westall, Ibbetson and Bourgeois, and Loutherbourg. As we shall see in considering contemporary art criticism, such eye-catching techniques worked well in the competitive spaces of the Royal Academy, British Institution, and the watercolour exhibitions. What was at issue was how these effects signified—as natural or artificial—and whether they were judged to display the hand of the artist (seeking to promote himself in the marketplace) or his mind (which was the 'natural' effect of genius).

An examination of some of the art criticism devoted to landscape painting in the periodical press from 1800 to 1820 will give some indication about the various ways in which such techniques and practices signified, although the difficulties in making an ideological analysis of such criticism are formidable. Exhibition reviews of paintings, especially landscapes, tended to
be brief and formulaic. Nonetheless, some general patterns and tendencies can be usefully traced. First, consistent with the concerns raised in the 1790s, landscapes produced from 1800 to 1820 continued to be attacked by some writers for their dashing effects and brilliant colour. However, unlike the earlier period, in which no critical voices were raised in a fully elaborated defense of such works, there now were distinctions made among the types of effects produced. Strong defenses were raised in favour of certain works and artists, although critical consensus was rare, if not non-existent.

While landscapes were highly saleable cultural commodities, their discursive value in critical writings was limited compared to history painting. One could with some justification say that history painting and landscape painting each maintained an inverse relationship to patronage and publicity. History painting lacked patrons and market support but received a large amount of critical attention, while landscapes enjoyed just the opposite fate: strong market support, but little publicity. Generally press criticism tended to regard the production of a 'successful' school of history painting as a sign of national cultural supremacy within the European community, as well as (or instead of) a sign of public virtue in the domestic realm. Most exhibition reviews during this period began with an assessment of how the English school of history painting was faring that particular year (an assessment which was almost always negative), followed by exhortations for its public and/or private support. By the second decade of the century such assessments frequently were tied to (increasingly virulent) critiques of the Royal Academy and British Institution as promoters of national taste. See for example the reviews of the Royal Academy exhibitions (usually in May) and British Institution exhibitions (in February) published in the Champion, Examiner, Repository of Arts, and New Monthly Magazine in the mid-to-late teens. A full analysis of the role of art criticism in the debates around patronage and the hierarchy of genres is sorely needed, but beyond the scope of this present investigation. For a further analysis of art criticism in this period see Hemingway, Discourses of Art and Social Interest, Chapter 7.
If a critical consensus did exist it was fixed on the superiority of native artists over foreigners who had formerly achieved a considerable measure of success in England. This phenomenon was not restricted to landscape painting, and can most clearly be seen in the critical reaction to the British Institution's exhibition in 1814 of works by four prominent eighteenth century artists, William Hogarth, Richard Wilson, Thomas Gainsborough, and Johann Zoffany. Although the latter artist, a native of Germany, had enjoyed considerable popularity in England in the second half of the eighteenth century as a painter of conversations pieces and theatrical subjects, he was virtually ignored in reviews of the exhibition by writers united in their praise for three of the "founding fathers" of the British School.\textsuperscript{20}

Such nationalistic fervour also affected the critical reception of landscapes by the Alsace-born Philippe de Loutherbourg, who since coming to England in 1771 had pursued an active career both as a painter and as a scene designer.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{20}Cf. reviews of the exhibition in the \textit{Repository of Arts}, June 1814, pp. 350-4; \textit{New Monthly Magazine}, 1 June 1814, pp. 468-9; Hazlitt's review in the \textit{Champion}, 22 May 1814, p. 165 (augmented by individual essays on Wilson, Hogarth, and Gainsborough, but not Zoffany, which can be found in Hazlitt's \textit{Complete Works}, v. 18). Robert Hunt in the \textit{Examiner} (8 May 1814, p. 302) did have some words of praise for Zoffany's portrayals of the stage of Garrick's time.

Although his paintings encompassed a range of subjects and genres, in the last two decades of his life (he died in 1812) he was best known at the Royal Academy exhibitions for his dramatically coloured landscapes and marines, which depicted sublime phenomena such as storms, shipwrecks, and avalanches. While the artist had always had his detractors, his works of the late '90s and early 1800s had generally been well-received. For example, his Coalbrookdale by Night (R. A. 1801) and Avalanche or Ice-fall in the Alps (Figure 17, R. A. 1804) were widely praised for their brilliant colour and bold effects.\textsuperscript{22} Avalanche marked the last work which was to garner such acclaim, however. Increasingly reviews stressed criticisms which had been made about his work by earlier writers such as Joseph Pott, in an 1782 essay on landscape painting, and Anthony Pasquin in reviews from the mid-1790s. Both men criticized his use of high key colours and dramatic effects as affected and artificial. Pott saw his style as affecting a "French pomposity," while Pasquin insisted that the figures which populate his English landscapes had a Gallic look to them.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{22}For Coalbrookdale, see brief comments in the Monthly Magazine, June 1801, p. 439 and St. James Chronicle, 7-9 May 1801; for Avalanche in the Alps see Monthly Mirror, July 1804, p. 16, Morning Post 5 May 1804, British Press, 7 May 1804. Sir John Leicester bought Avalanche in the Alps; his friend and fellow collector, Richard Colt Hoare so admired it that he had watercolourist Francis Nicholson make him a copy of it.

\textsuperscript{23}Joseph Pott was an early proponent of a specifically English school of landscape painting based upon Dutch and Flemish models. In An Essay on Landscape Painting (London: J. Johnson, 1782) Pott declares that Loutherbourg's pictures are visionary, affected and extravagant, and are "painted with all that French..."
In the early 1800s this criticism was taken up by periodicals as ideologically diverse as Ackermann's pro-ministerial, pro-commercial Repository of Arts and Leigh Hunt's liberal and anti-commercial Reflector. In 1809 the Repository of Arts' review of the Royal Academy Exhibition included a brief comment on Loutherbourg's art production generally, before going on to praise works by Turner and Callcott:

His pictures always bring the painter too much to our mind; and instead of dwelling on the majesty of the scene and partaking of the sentiment intended to be conveyed by the composition, we can think of nothing but the dexterous touch and fine execution of the artist.\(^\text{24}\)

This assessment is similar to the criticism of "manner," deriving from academic discourse, which relegates such effects to the status of attention-getting market ploys.

Such criticism is consistent with the evaluation of Loutherbourg's work by Leigh Hunt in an analysis of English art pomposity so unlike the truth of the Flemish, or the chaste elegance of the Italian manner" (p. 78). Anthony Pasquin, whose art criticism we encountered in Chapter II, wrote of Loutherbourg's Landstorm with an Overturned Waggon, "this is not English nature...The figures are not of any nation, but a species of Gallo-Britons, sturdy and muscular, with French lineaments" ("Royal Academy," Morning Herald, 11 May 1809).

\(^{24}\)"Exhibition of Paintings--Royal Academy," Repository of Arts (June 1809), p. 490.
published in the *Reflector* in 1812. Here he writes,

Loutherbourg, a foreigner, wants the English cast of judgment; he is highly picturesque, and occasionally sublime, particularly in his Alpine scenery; but his luxuriance is apt to become mere flutter and tawdriness, and he works his colours up to such a glow that his landscapes sometimes appear lit up with a conflagration.

Hunt begins by identifying Loutherbourg as a foreigner lacking an English mode of thinking, and then suggests that it is primarily his Swiss views that are the most praiseworthy, despite the fact that the artist’s sublime industrial landscape, Coalbrookdale as well as his many scenes of Welsh castles, had been critical and popular successes. Such a statement reinforces the notion, articulated by the *Repository of Arts* critic, that the Alsace-born painter lacks the particular sensibility needed to represent the English landscape. Thus his ability to produce highly picturesque compositions does not insulate his work from criticism. On the contrary, the overtly contrived nature of his picturesque scenes, combined with his use of brilliant colour and effects and his identification as a French artist (by training and reputation, if not birth) renders his work liable to charges of Gallic affectation, with all that this phrase implied. Given

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²²*The Reflector* was a short-lived journal which focussed on literature, theatre and art. Since it was under Hunt’s editorship it presented the same critique of commerce and governmental corruption that the *Examiner* did.

the strength of nationalist sentiment at this moment it is questionable whether anyone but a native British artist could have been regarded as capable of depicting the "true character" of a domestic landscape. Such a position was strengthened by the increasing epistemological authority of associationism, which, as we saw in Alison's Essays and Reinagle's commentary on Turner's Sussex views, elided the character of the artistic subject with the natural object of representation.

That nationalist sentiment claimed great power in cultural discourse during these years of the continental wars is suggested by its invocation in journals as politically opposed as the Repository and the Reflector. In articles on national character written in 1812, both periodicals stress the intellectual strength and independent-mindedness of the English—a quality which Hunt in the Reflector locates in the middle classes and the Repository finds throughout the social hierarchy. The latter journal marshals this notion of Englishness in defense of the political status quo. The writer adopted a militantly anti-French stance, declaring the corruption in the English system of

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On the other hand, the Swiss-born Henry Fuseli maintained his leading position as history painter and Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy in the early years of the nineteenth century. Sorely needed is an analysis of how this artist managed to maintain such a privileged status, especially given the harsh press criticism garnered by his "eccentric" productions, in a climate so hostile to foreign artists.

political patronage to be insignificant compared to the military despotism of Napoleonic France.\textsuperscript{29} Hunt, on the other hand, stresses that it was domestic political corruption—specifically engendered by the ministry of William Pitt and "his unphilosophical school"—which threatens to undermine the tradition of English independence and independent thinking.\textsuperscript{30}

Given this consensus about what constitutes the ideal of Englishness (if not the best method of maintaining it), it is not surprising to find that domestic painting would be defended and criticized on the grounds of native artists' intellectual vitality and originality. In 1819, the \textit{London Chronicle} reviewed Turner's Swiss and Yorkshire watercolours on exhibit at Walter Fawkes's Grosvenor Square townhouse in just such terms. "Turner," he declares,

\begin{quote}
\textit{is perhaps the first artist in the world in this powerful and brilliant style, no man has ever thrown such masses of colour upon paper...The art itself is par excellence English, no continental pencil can come near the force, freedom, and nature of our professor, and as such independently of the general promoting of fine taste, there is patriotic spirit displayed in its patronage.}\textsuperscript{31}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{29} "The Dreadful Picture of France," \textit{Repository of Arts}, June 1809, p. 345-7.
\item \textsuperscript{30} [Hunt], "The English Considered as a Thinking People," p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{31} "Mr. Fawkes' Pictures," \textit{London Chronicle}, 10 April 1819, p. 347.
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\end{footnotesize}
English genius ("par excellence"!), is distinguished by a power and bravura which ensures that "effects" and intense colour--so frequently identified with a feminized, Gallicized practice--could instantiate a masculine Englishness if presented with "force" (colours are "thrown," rather than applied) and "freedom," the essential characteristic which distinguishes English artists and English subjects from their continental counterparts. Secured by such a manly, independent, English identity, the artistic subject can "show himself" in the most fashionable sphere of society, and emerge as a genius, and not as a sycophant.

It is in this sense that genius operates as an alibi, functioning in places regarded as inimical to the "transparency" of the subjects and cultural objects of traditional academic discourse. Graced by genius, the spaces of fashionable leisure and of high culture merge, transforming the people who inhabit them--at least that is what the Repository of Arts claims for Fawkes' Gallery, which was inundated by visitors from the haute ton: "When a picture-gallery becomes a fashionable lounge, the art itself steals insensibly on the imagination, and captivates the mind by the richness and variety of its moral energies."32

The language used here, with its allusions to the enthrallment of the imagination by rich and varied images, conjures up notions

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32"Mr. Fawkes's Gallery," Repository of Arts, 1 May 1819, pp. 299-300.
of associationist psychology, revised and reformulated for a fashionable setting. Whereas Alison insisted that it was the viewer at rest, undisturbed by business or personal cares, who was capable of producing imaginative associations upon viewing landscape paintings or natural scenery, the Repository writer suggests that the imaginative viewer, actively engaged in the pursuit of metropolitan leisure, can be surreptitiously captivated by works radiating "moral richness and energy"—a phrase which is resonant both with the plenitude of images and the social feeling called up by the powers of associative imaginings.

It is highly significant, and far from accidental, I would argue, that the commercial house of Ackermann sought to dissolve the traditional antipathy between high, moral public art and the world of commerce and fashion, and at the same time vigorously promoted native artistic genius as manifested in the new school of landscape painting. The Repository repeatedly touted the heightened imagination and sensibility possessed by artists in comparison with the rest of humankind—a distinction allegedly evident in the painter's enhanced capacity to respond to scenes of common nature.33 Although they possess diminished

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33See, for example, "On the Superiority of the Painter's Feelings," Repository of Arts, March 1816, pp. 140-3. The writer of this piece cites that moment when the "sun tinges the horizon or recedes from the eye, until the whole outline is melted into vapour," as productive of feelings which are both luxurious and morally elevating (pp. 140-1).
sensibility and creativity, ordinary viewers can "luxuriate" effortlessly in the moral richness which the productions of genius provide. Indeed, the appeal of such imagery, as represented in Ackermann's publications, is the ease with which viewers can be morally elevated through viewing visually sumptuous landscape imagery. Hence an essay of 1817 from the Repository, "On the Superiority of the Painter's Feelings," opens with the assertion that

> to indulge in the contemplation of the purest scenes of pastoral nature, to pore over the near and distant landscape, and to watch the gradations of light and shade on the surrounding scenery, have ever been the highest enjoyment of those on whom Providence has lavished the luxury of intellect.  

Such a description amalgamates commonly opposed discourses on commerce and the countryside by presenting the traditional notion of the countryside as locus of moral purity and harmony (opposed to the evils of city and court) in a language of luxury, indulgence and pleasure commonly associated with commercial life in the metropolis. The ease with which the moral and the sensual are combined is authorized by an associationist psychology which describes the workings of the

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imagination as a spontaneous process in which images and thoughts arise unbidden to consciousness. Thus, while promoting the immense powers of genius on the one hand, the purveyors of commerce and fashion construct the viewer as a consumer of "morally rich" imagery; this spectator is either an admiring female (as in the New Drawing Book, which praises women who support native genius by their patronage and amateur interest in landscape painting) or a passive male, enthralled by the charms of painting, personified as a seductress who preserves both her modesty and nature.

For paintings to "steal insensibly on the imagination," in the crowded spaces of public exhibitions and private galleries, they not only had to appear natural and unselfconscious, but had to compete visually with the highly coloured works and richly dressed visitors that filled both public and private exhibition spaces. In 1810 the critic for the Monthly Magazine evidenced awareness of both of these criteria. He begins his Royal Academy review by warning British artists that if domestic painting runs "riot after effect and manner" it might "sink below the level of the Dutch and Flemish schools of fac-similists and face-

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It is noteworthy here that female viewers are not presented as being enthralled by (feminized) painting, but rather as supportive of (masculine) genius. Thus are subtle, but important differences marked out in masculine and feminine viewing positions.
painters." But in the next month's issue the critic writes of Turner's Petworth, Sussex, the Seat of the Earl of Egremont:

Dewy Morning: "the uncommon brilliancy of this charming picture produces the same effect on the neighbouring pieces, as hanging them against the pier of a window through which the sun is shining." Turner's painting is seen here to kill the works around it, but the brilliance of its orange-gold sky and water do not raise the charge of affectation and self-display that Loutherbourg's works garnered. Other criticisms which the painting received suggest the reason for such a distinction: they all focus upon the degree to which Turner was successful in representing the vaporous atmosphere and the water. These judgments range from the censure of La Belle Assemblée, which sees the work as descending into confusion because it lacks sufficient tonal contrast, to the Public Ledger's praise for the light scumbling and glazing that "happily expressed" the water and dewy air. Despite such differences of opinion, these and other critics tacitly indicate that the artist's concern was with


39 La Belle Assemblée, 1810, p. 250 and Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser, 9 May 1810, quoted in Butlin and Joll, p. 80. Butlin suggests that the effects achieved in the Petworth view was the result of Turner's attempt to achieve high key colour by using a white ground, which derived from his experiments with watercolour.
the accurate representation of natural effects, and not self-representation.

This is a crucial, if subtle distinction, and marks the difference between the man of genius and the man of the market. Robert Hunt describes the complex relationship which exists between genius and nature at the conclusion of his review of the British Institution Exhibition of 1814. He complains that most of the artists in the exhibition lack originality and then goes on to define that term as "the power that makes us, while looking on their works, forget the workmen, and pay due homage to Genius and Science, by thinking only of the aspects and operations of Nature." Unlike the subject position of the 'market slave,' this formulation of the artistic subject is not opaque, obliterating our experience of the character of nature, for viewers are to think 'only' of nature when we view a truly original work. But neither is the artistic subject transparent, insofar as homage is to be paid to genius and knowledge. The artistic Mind is ever present, but the hand has vanished.

In order to understand how the subject is being constructed within the terms of this definition it is useful to consider the distinction Peter de Bolla makes with regard to subjectivity in the context of oratory. He differentiates between a subject's

being a product of discourse on the one hand and being an effect of discourse on the other. The distinction is a subtle, but very important one. In the first instance, "the account of subjectivity as product is based on a notion of self-projection, as if the internal subject strives to give as good an impression as possible to the others who constitute society. It suggests that one might make oneself in discourse."\textsuperscript{41} The situation is analogous to the critical construction of Loutherbourg as an artist who tries 'too hard'—who shows himself too strongly in his works, so that we 'forget nature and think only of the workman,' to reverse Hunt's terms. The second form of subjectivity as an effect is described by de Bolla as something which just happens to appear in certain discursive forms and operations; it is less a property of the individual than a function of specific discursive situations. In this case one should not appear to be trying: in order to present oneself in the best possible light to others one should be not seen to be making any perceptible effort.\textsuperscript{42}

De Bolla is writing here about the social subject, whose private characteristics are submerged or erased by a public persona which appears effortlessly in the process of speaking.

Hunt's formulation of genius and originality possesses some of this public 'impersonality,' since viewers are to pay homage

\textsuperscript{41}de Bolla, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{42}de Bolla, p. 170.
to "Genius and Science," the capitalization suggesting that it is the abstract properties of these entities which viewers come to honour when confronted with an original work. Nonetheless, the artistic genius differed from the kind of public man de Bolla is describing, since genius was understood to connote singularity as well as creative power, and therefore it could only be recognized as a particular attribute or manifestation of an individual artistic personality. Critics throughout the period frequently characterized artists by the expressive character of their work. Thus in 1813 W. H. Pyne, writing in the Repository of Arts, compares the genius of Turner and Girtin: "Turner's works were the most admired for sentiment, and Girtin's for boldness and spirit; yet each adhered so cleverly to nature, and posses such original merit, that it became difficult to decide which was the greater genius."[43] Eleven years earlier the St. James Chronicle characterized Turner as the master of the sublime and Beaumont the master of the beautiful.[44]

Making stylistic differentiations was a traditional feature of art criticism, but in the case of landscape painting at this particular moment, these expressive distinctions took on a special force, sustained by the powerful authority of

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nationalist discourse and associationism. For it was through the landscapes of artists with such distinctive sensibilities that less sensitive and imaginative viewers gained access to the essential character of the natural world—a character not hidden below the surface in ideal structures, but playing over its surface in the form of transitory effects.

Among the effects which both Callcott and Turner were

My examination of exhibition reviews in the periodical press between 1795 and 1820 suggests that in the case of women painters distinctions in personal style were seldom if ever made among women artists; their gender was presented as the major determinant of their manner of painting. For example, Leigh Hunt, in his previously cited *Reflector* essay on art in Britain, condemned the Angelica Kauffmann's forays into the male preserve of history painting as "feeble" and "fluttering" ("Remarks on the Past and Present State of the Arts," p. 215). Robert Hunt shared his brother's preconceptions and opinions on this issue as is obvious from his obituary of Kauffmann in 1808: "The grandeur of epic painting has never been conceived by female genius;" he went on to assert that women are only capable of displaying the "gentle feelings of the human heart" ["Angelica Kaufmann (sic)," *Examiner*, 17 January 1808, p. 45]. On the other hand both brothers professed a fondness for the rustic genre scenes of Harriet Gouldsmith. When she exhibited *The Fisherman's Cottage* at the Royal Academy in 1810, Robert Hunt praised it for its delicacy, elegance, lack of affectation and simplicity—terms that could be taken to apply equally to the character of the image and to a widely disseminated contemporary feminine ideal which the work's female producer could be seen to embody (*Examiner*, 17 June 1810). Although we have noted that simplicity in landscape painting could signify the transformative powers of a masculine imagination, its appearance here with the terms elegance and delicacy undercuts any notion of magical power or intellectual boldness. Gouldsmith's chosen genre was seen to be fitting for a woman artist since it was deemed to require imitative skill rather than imaginative power. As we noted in the previous chapter, landscape painting lent itself to copying by women amateurs, but the kind of expressive landscapes (including domestic views and imaginative and historical scenes) which gained publicity both in print and on exhibit in public and private collections, were clearly regarded as the province of male professionals.
employing in the second decade of the century were those obtained by abandoning local colour and abrupt light-dark oppositions in favour of saturating the canvas with broad expanses of gradated warm-toned colours, especially ochres, yellows, and orange. This use of closely modulated high key colour produces works which were capable of functioning in an exhibition space quite effectively, as we saw in the case of Turner's Petworth, which was seen to "kill" the paintings around it. Not only does the general high key colour attract the eye, but the sheer expanse of such a nearly monochrome rendering of reduced and simple forms, distributed over a large canvas, serves to distinguish such a picture from its neighbours.

This point was made by the reviewer for the London Chronicle in 1812. Commenting upon Callcott's Little Hampton Pier (which may be identifiable with Old Pier at Little Hampton, 1812, Figure 18) he writes that it is a "delightful performance, with daylight finely expressed; it does not owe its beauty to strong oppositions, and although placed in the midst of red coats and strong-coloured pictures, keeps its ground on account of its unaffected simplicity."46 "Unaffected" is the key word, for what distinguishes the translucent artistic subject—the man of genius and sensibility—from the opaque man of the market, is that he seeks the representation of nature, not himself.

As indicated earlier, consensus was a rare commodity among art critics. With regard to Callcott, most agreed that his works were highly simplified and atmospheric, but there was less agreement upon how natural and unaffected they were. Those who defended the artist’s work did so on two seemingly contradictory grounds—that he represented English scenery "naturally" and that his works evoked and equalled (or surpassed) the productions of the Dutch school, especially Cuyp. His reputation was made on the basis of predominantly English scenes—panoramic sea, forest and coastal scenes like Old Pier at Little Hampton, which were frequently compared with the works of Turner as well as with the seventeenth-century Dutch masters. Broad expanses of water and sky—either scumbled with clouds and waves, or calm and translucent—are relieved by a few figures or ships, and painted in a near monotone. The effect is close to what Alison described as the "Poverty" of landscape: elemental landscape forms are represented as though seen through a vaporous atmosphere, bathed by a golden or silvery light.

"For an account of Callcott’s relationship with Turner, see Brown, Augustus Wall Callcott. Brown notes that although Callcott was a great admirer and friend of Turner’s, and was profoundly affected by his work, there existed a reciprocal professional relationship between the two artists, especially in the mid-to-late teens, when both artists were producing Cuyp-like river and harbour scenes such as Callcott’s The Entrance to the Pool of London (1816) and Rotterdam (1819) and Turner’s Port (1818) (Brown, pp. 36-7). Determining the "influence" of one artist upon another, however, is far less important than explaining why such subjects and techniques were popular and critical successes at this time.
Writers on landscape such as Pott and Gilpin had identified such a vaporous atmosphere as a particular feature of the English landscape which distinguished it from the unvaried sunniness of the Italian campagna. Although Italian light and "air" were highly praised in foreign or imaginative landscapes, increasingly in the nineteenth century artists who were seen to affect Italianate colour or atmosphere in depictions of native scenery were criticized for departing from 'English nature.' No such corresponding complaint, to my knowledge, was ever lodged against English artists who freely adopted Dutch models. Artists were faulted for copying too closely the manner of a specific artist, but not for imposing 'Dutch nature' on an English scene. The similarity in climate between England and the Low Countries no doubt had much to do with this.

In addition the Dutch masters, especially Cuyp, had a reputation in England at this time for addressing the same set of representational demands as contemporary English artists. John Landseer, for example, praised the Cuyp's ability to create "admirable" paintings out of very simple materials ("a few cattle

48 William Gilpin, Observations Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty (London, 1786), 1:10; Pott, p. 57. Gilpin describes the effects of various types of vapours to be found in the English landscape, distinguishing between haze, mist, and fog.

49 See for example the comments on the amateur W. H. Carr's Greenwich Hospital, Star, 4 June 1807; William Havell's Cyddlan Castle, Examiner, June 1814, p. 414; and Fielding's view of Caernarvon Castle, Champion 7 February 1819. In each case the reviewer advised the artist to reject Italian or Claudian effects in favour of "nature" (except in the Champion review of Fielding, where he was urged to follow nature or his own imagination).
and a setting sun)—a practice that recalls to mind the anti-picturesque compositions of Turner and Girtin which have been previously discussed. The writer connected the Dutch artist's creative powers of transformation to Turner's, specifically in regard to the latter's Forest of Bere (exhibited Turner Gallery, 1808) which "is nothing as a subject, [but]...everything as a picture." Eight years later, a review of the newly opened Dulwich Gallery in the Annals of the Fine Arts praised a Cuyp Landscape with Cattle and Figures in much the same terms that London Chronicle did Callcott's Pier at Little Hampton. It was seen to be "full of that truth of nature just bordering on the artificial, that characterizes this master's best works, and is a proof of the superiority of the true natural tone of colouring over the gaudy exhibition style of some of its more assuming neighbours"—its neighbours being works by Francis Bourgeois and the eighteenth century French landscape and marine painter Claude-Joseph Vernet. Cuyp, then, presented a sanctioned old master model for the kind of artistic subject who, in his treatment of atmospheric effects, treded more or less successfully the fine line between nature and affectation. This borderline defines the narrow limits within which the translucent

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[John Landseer], "Mr. Turner's Gallery," Review of Publications of Art, 1808, p. 164. For additional comments on Turner's Forest of Bere, see infra, Chapter III, p. 147, n. 45.

subject can operate without becoming a mechanical imitator or a mannerist.

While critical discourse generally sanctioned contemporary efforts to compete with and adapt the techniques of masters like Cuyp and the Dutch marine painter Willem Van de Velde, other seventeenth century masters were less acceptable. Rubens, for example, provided a poor model for contemporary painters of domestic landscapes. James Ward's rustic animal scenes and landscapes frequently invoked the manner of Rubens and suffered critical and academic condemnation as a result. His **Bulls Fighting with a View of St. Donatt's Castle** (Figure 19) was rejected from the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1804 for being too closely patterned after Rubens' **A View of the Chateau de Steen, Autumn**, which had entered George Beaumont's collection earlier that year. Ward's work follows Rubens' in depicting an extensive panorama, richly varied both in the picturesque objects shown—cottages, castle, rustic figures, sheep, and meandering road—and in the patchwork of warm-toned colours, punctuated in Ward’s work by the red and white bulls in the foreground. Like

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In 1818 the critic for the *Annals of the Fine Arts* declared that he would like to see two pictures in that year's Royal Academy Exhibition, Callcott's **Mouth of the Tyne** and Turner's **The Dort Packet Boat for Rotterdam Becalmed**, placed in the same room with two or three works by the Dutch marine painter Van de Velde so that all the works could be compared ("Exhibition of the Royal Academy," *Annals of the Fine Arts*, 1818, p. 294).

Farington, *Diary*, 9 April 1804. Rubens' landscape is in the National Gallery, London.
Rubens, Ward adopts a rope-like twisted line, evidenced in both works in a tree stump in the centre, which lends a further complexity and energy to the composition.

Close imitation by an established artist of a specific old master, or old master painting had never been sanctioned by academic discourse or widely endorsed in art criticism. Nonetheless some imitations were deemed less objectionable than others—as in the case of Callcott’s critically successful Entrance to the Pool of London (R. A. 1816), which some reviewers saw as a conscious reworking of Cuyp’s Canal of Dort. Some sense of the critical discomfort with Ward’s taking up of Rubens can be traced in the comments of the critic for the Repository of Arts who, in 1809, complains that Ward’s pictures generally were "obscured by affectation...He seems to think it of more importance to paint like Rubens than to paint like nature." Hunt in the Examiner in 1817 likewise observes that Ward’s Bull’s Fighting was a close imitation of the "trailing pencil, profuse touch and gay colouring of RUBENS’S landscapes" and then goes on to ask why "does Mr. W. copy RUBENS rather than Nature?"

Compared to Cuyp’s vaporous golden hazes, Rubens’s brilliant

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The Entrance to the Pool of London is in a private collection; it is reproduced as Plate 15 in Brown, Callcott. For reviews of this work which connect it to Cuyp’s Canal of Dort see "Exhibition of the Royal Academy," Annals of the Fine Arts, 1816, p. 76; "Exhibition of the Royal Academy," Repository of Arts, 1 June 1816, p. 358.

colour and tortuous, decorative line were eye-catching, but not deemed natural enough to be suited for contemporary landscapes.

Turner said as much in his final perspective lecture, delivered between 1811 and at least 1816 to students at the Royal Academy. He notes that while the Flemish master had acquired mechanical excellence in colouring, he "disdained to hide, but threw around his tints like a bunch of flowers." Unlike Cuyp, Rubens flaunted his handicraft, debasing both the artist and the work in the process. Declaring that Rubens "could not be happy with the bare simplicity of pastoral scenery or the immutable laws of nature's light and shade," Turner goes on to observe that the figures in his Landscape with Waggon are lit in various directions. "These trifles about light," he continues, "are so perhaps in Historical compositions, but in Landscape they are inadmissible and become absurdities destroying the simplicity, the truth, the beauty of pastoral nature in whose pursuit he always appears lavish of his powers." Beyond the stress upon reproducing light effects consistent with empirical observation, Turner repeats the need to maintain an aura of simplicity when

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representing natural scenery.

From our previous examination of the writings of Alison, Reinagle's commentary on Turner's Sussex views as well as the criticism of works by Callcott, Turner, and Cuyp discussed above, we have discovered that simplicity in landscape at this time called up not only notions of modesty and naturalness antithetical to Rubensian (or picturesque) affectation and artificiality, but also a more active vision of the artist performing magical transformations upon common and unremarkable materials. To cite yet a further example, in 1808 Robert Hunt praised the execution of Callcott's *A Mill, near Llangollen* (destroyed; based on a sketch from Richard Colt Hoare): "The magic of this artist's pencil has here converted a few of the simplest materials of rural nature into a most interesting picture." Other critics and commentators, however, were less enthusiastic. The simplicity of his compositions and paucity of colour rather baffled the critic for the *Monthly Mirror* in a review of two of Callcott's earliest exhibited landscapes.
(untraced). Commenting on the artists' *Banks of a River* (R. A. 1802) he notes that "this is an accurate representation of the partial colouring of nature, but is of so abstract a kind as rather to appear a part of a picture than an entire composition." The critic then remarks that the other landscape "appears more the indulgence of a peculiar disposition, than an adherence to real objects." Unlike Alison, the critic does not celebrate this projection of individual artistic character upon the natural objects of representation; rather he sees it as an unsuccessful attempt to develop a personal style. "Nothing," he continues, "is more difficult than to form a style of distinct singularity, and nothing more dangerous; yet there is always merit in the ambition." Such a statement testifies to the immense ambivalence which existed around the issue of artistic subjectivity. An artist who self-consciously attempts to 'produce himself' (to use de Bolla's term) through a singular style of painting is not simply condemned by this writer, as he would have been by Dayes or by Reynolds. Rather he is both criticized and commended for his effort, and warned that such a project of self-representation is difficult and dangerous.

Similar criticisms, it should be recalled, were directed against artists such as Westall, Bourgeois, and Loutherbourg who


appeared to be promoting themselves rather than representing nature through the use of brilliant colour and light effects. In the opening decades of the nineteenth century, not surprisingly, some critics redirected these same criticisms at artists such as Turner, Callcott, and Girtin. But unlike these critiques, the Mirror reviewer’s assessment of Callcott’s work as "an accurate representation of the partial colouring of nature...of so abstract a kind as rather to appear a part of a picture than an entire composition" suggests sources of concern that were not posed by the work of earlier landscape painters. While earlier works might have seemed to dazzle and confuse the spectator with their scattered lights and brilliant surface displays, the newer works much more frequently were castigated for their simplicity.

For example, Girtin’s effects were declared to be "spotty" by the St. James Chronicle, 2-8 May 1800; the Morning Post, 18 June 1812, assailed Callcott’s Hampton Court Bridge (R. A. 1812) for being extremely mannered and artificial; and Turner was harshly attack by the Champion’s critic in 1816 for his artificial, gaudy colouring which were "intended to become a striking point of attraction on the walls of the Exhibition" (12 May 1816, p. 150). A more general critique along these lines was launched by the New Monthly Magazine’s critic in a review of the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1820. The writer begins by noting that like the portraitist competing for attention in the exhibition, the painter of local views "is also compelled to paint, in bright and exaggerated colours, that his piece may have some chance of attracting notice among the gaudy mass of the portraits." Like Fuseli, the writer bemoans the proliferation of imitative landscapes and the corresponding lack of imaginative landscapes. He goes on to observe that critics have directed public attention to mechanical skill, and this combined with the public’s tendency to seek pleasure in imitation leads to the popular success of works such as a hypothetical "view of Broad-St.-Giles, executed in a dashing style, a red and yellow, brown and blue, properly distributed in the foreground, and carried off secundum artem with the truth of linear perspective and proper allowance of air" ("The Exhibition of the Royal Academy," New Monthly Magazine, 1 June 1820, p. 716).
and indistinctness.

The critic for the *Repository of Arts* alludes to this type of criticism of Callcott's work in his academy review of 1809 when he writes: "The observation usually made on his pictures is that they are barren in subject, that the interest of the picture is not in proportion to the quantity of canvas occupied." Some viewers apparently were disconcerted, rather than enthralled by the sight of large areas of canvas devoted so largely to the representation of sky and water. Callcott was not the only artist to garner such criticism. In the late teens Copley Fielding had been exhibiting marine and coastal views such as *View of Hastings* (Figure 20, 1819), which presents an expanse of beach, sea and sky, dramatically lit by the rays of the setting sun. In 1819 the critic for the *Champion*, reviewing the annual exhibition of the Society of Painters in Oil and Water Colour, praises the effects represented in Fielding's sea and coast scenes, but then issues a warning: "We wish our artists, however, may not become too fond of making pictures of nothing. Expanses of skies and seas and sands, and the mere phenomenon of the elements are fit accompaniments--but they are hardly subjects

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64 For other illustrations of Callcott's work see David Blayney Brown, *A. W. Callcott*, especially Plates 3, 4, 6, and 15.
for pictures.11

The phrase 'pictures of nothing' derives from Hazlitt, who used it with regard to Turner on at least two occasions in 1815-16. In February of 1815 Hazlitt launched a similar criticism in favourably comparing two other works by Fielding, Morning and View from Rydal Woods, to the Scottish views exhibited by Thomas Hofland in the British Institution. Fielding's latter work, Hazlitt writes,

...is a fine, woody, and romantic scene, which in some degree calls off our admiration from the merit of the artist to the beauties of nature. This is a sacrifice of self-love which many of our artists do not seem willing to make. They too often chuse their subjects, not to exhibit the charms of nature, but to display their own skill in making something of the most barren subjects.

11"Exhibition of the Society of Painters in Oil and Water Colours," Champion, 9 May 1819, p. 300. For another example of Fielding's "pictures of nothing," see his Coast Scene with a Beached Boat (Yale Center for British Art), reproduced as Plate 111 in Presences of Nature. British Landscape 1780-1830 by Louis Hawes (Yale Center for British Art exhib. cat., New Haven, 1982).
We think this objection applies to Mr. Hofland's landscapes in general. The scene he selects is represented with great truth and felicity of pencil, but it is, generally speaking, one we should neither wish to look at, nor to be in. In his Loch Lomand and Stirling Castle, the effect of the atmosphere is finely given; but this is all. We wish to enter our protest against this principle of separating the imitation from the thing imitated, particularly as it is countenanced by the authority of the ablest landscape painter of the present day, of whose landscapes some one said, that 'they were pictures of nothing, and very like!'

Hazlitt's criticism, like that of the Champion critic in 1819, is not a charge of artificiality, of transforming nature into a gaudy seductress, destroying 'her' simple modesty. Rather Hofland, Fielding (according to the Champion) and Turner are judged to have abandoned any significant form of subject matter altogether---"separating the imitation from the thing imitated." Viewers are invited to admire the brilliant execution of natural effects that signify individual artistic imagination and professional prowess, rather than being drawn into a landscape imbued with native feeling and historical recollections.

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William Hazlitt, "British Institution," in C. W. 18:94-5 (orig. pub. in the Champion, February 1815). Hofland's Stirling Castle (Figure 21, c. 1815), may be the canvas to which Hazlitt refers. Compared to Ward's view of St. Donatt's Castle, with its rich abundance of colour and objects, Stirling Castle offers the viewer only a pair of mountain sheep in a foreground otherwise undistinguished, a middle ground of tonally undifferentiated trees and scrub brush, and a shimmering distance of hazy mountains and gazing lands. Even the castle which commands the hillside on the left offers little picturesque interest, with its regular rectilinear walls starkly silhouetted against the unmodulated overcast of the Scottish sky.
Seven months prior to these remarks Hazlitt had published an essay on Gainsborough, discussed earlier, in which he extolled the virtues of artistic professionalism and the exercise of a bold, masculine intellect in opposition to the mental lassitude of the effete, aristocratic amateur. However, he regarded such creative energy and professional skill as misdirected if taken to excess.

Hazlitt reiterated this point in the context of an essay, "On Imitation," published in the Examiner in 1816. He defends the practice of imitating objects in nature on the grounds that "imitation renders an object, displeasing in itself, a source of pleasure, not by repetition of the same idea, but by suggesting new ideas, by detecting new properties, and endless shades of difference..." The production of this expanding knowledge of the object is a source of pleasure in and of itself; "knowledge is pleasure as well as power," as he puts it. Turning then to the sphere of artistic practice, he considers the pleasure derived from the production and contemplation of art "which none but artists feel," due to their superior knowledge, powers of imagination, and sensibility. But this specialized power of seeing and representing objects, based upon the particular

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See infra, Chapter III, pp. 137-9, for a discussion of this passage in the essay, "On Gainsborough's Pictures," which appeared in the Champion in 1814.

language and intricacies of the artform, while bringing pleasure to the artist, threatens to isolate him. "True genius," he declares, "though it has new sources of pleasure opened to it, does not lose its sympathy with humanity." He then warns that "some artists among ourselves have carried the same principles [of technical obscurantism] to a singular excess." In a footnote to this remark he launches an attack on Turner,

the ablest landscape painter now living, whose pictures are, however, too much abstractions of aerial perspective, and representations, not of properly of the objects of nature as of the medium through which they are seen. They are the triumph of the knowledge of the artist, and of the power of the pencil over the barrenness of the subject.

After making an analogy between Turner's works and the world in its chaotic state before creation, he repeats the phrase that these are "pictures of nothing and very like." Following this attack on the landscape painter, Hazlitt declares the connoisseur and dilettante to be even more prone to this kind of pedantry, since they possess less sensibility than artists, and are "proud of their knowledge in proportion as it is secret."

I have cited this section of the essay in some detail in order to demonstrate the difference that exists between Hazlitt's

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6 Hazlitt, "On Imitation," pp. 75 and 76.
7 Hazlitt, "On Imitation," p. 76 n.
attack on artists (and connoisseurs) who are overly enthralled with technical knowledge and execution from academic attacks on imitation which reduce the artist to the status of an artisan. The danger here resides not in the banality of mechanical reproduction, but in the love of specialized knowledge. The result is an aesthetic elitism which has the same isolating effect as the most esoteric form of history painting. Ironically, those practices which modern scholars recognize as constituting "naturalism" in early nineteenth century landscape—selecting of 'common' views as subject matter, bold use of colour, and attention to natural light effects—were seen by Hazlitt and other contemporaries as threatening to devolve into a form of obscurantism which alienates rather than attracts. For within the terms of such a critique, the artistic subject is not degraded through his pandering to the vulgar multitudes via works which appeal only to their senses. Instead such displays of professional skill are seen artificially to elevate the artist, whose productions baffle the understanding of viewers, reducing them to a state of wonder which bespeaks passive admiration of a knowledge they do not possess. Although Hazlitt had no interest in promoting art as a democratized form of public edification, it is clear that he had misgivings about the power and status which "secret" (specialized) knowledge could confer upon individuals bound up with their own pleasure and self-interest.  

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72 For Hazlitt's position on the public function of art and public patronage of the arts see Barrell, The Political Theory of Painting, pp. 333-8 and infra, p. 221, n. 18.
Among the various techniques which served to emphasize the disjuncture (both physical and epistemological) between the subject position of the viewer and the landscape artist, none was more contentious than the indistinct rendering of forms—especially foreground forms. Peter de Bolla has observed that it was the need to enforce a coherence between the position of the spectator and the artist via the system of one point perspective that accounts for the publication in the eighteenth century of at least seventeen perspective treatises, all reiterating the same Albertian system of rules. This system fixes a single "point of sight" for the picture which in effect becomes a transparent window to the 'real' (even if what is regarded as real is defined by a theory of ideal forms). In the process, de Bolla notes, the viewing subject becomes identified with the position of the creative subject—the artist. This identification allows the spectator to experience subjectivity in the true Point of Sight. What is 'seen' from here is not a representation but the self mastering the real as the veil of representation is torn apart....The viewing subject is no longer subjected to representation but becomes the master of it, master of subjection, master of itself.\(^7\)\(^3\)

Such mastery implies that nothing is hidden from the spectator by the artist. Distant objects can be depicted indistinctly

\(^7\)\(^3\)De Bolla, pp. 195-6.
without doing violence to this principle, since the artist is presumed to lack the visual access to such objects from the point of sight. But a general obscurity, or indistinct rendering of foreground forms signifies knowledge withheld, retrievable only through the power of the imagination.

It was this quality of 'unknowability' that prompted Burke to consider indistinctness a source of sublimity. The experience of the sublime occurs when the mind is stimulated to exert its mental powers of imagination to the limit in order to comprehend that which is obscure and indistinct. This link between indistinctness and the power of the imagination was further confirmed by other contemporary writers such as Alexander Gerard and a remained a popularly-received notion well into the nineteenth century. William Gilpin, who, we recall, identified as singularly English the obscurity caused by the vaporous atmosphere of the domestic landscape, links the creative imagination to the indistinctly rendered forms of the landscape sketch. In the hands of a master,

when the enthusiasm of his art is upon him, he often produces from the glow of his imagination, with a few bold strokes, such wonderful effusions of genius, as the most sober, and correct productions of his pencil cannot equal.

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It will always be understood, that such sketches must be examined also by an eye learned in the art and accustomed to picturesque ideas—an eye, that can take up the half-formed images, as the master leaves them; given them a new creation; and make up all that is not expressed from its own store-house.\textsuperscript{75}

The landscape sketch remains a strictly private representation, for its indistinct, "half-formed images" require both a masterful producer and a viewer with a highly cultivated imagination, in order to assure that the image is imaginatively completed by the viewer in a way which is congruent with the artist's intent.\textsuperscript{76} In other words, only minds sufficiently schooled in how to imagine correctly, can be trusted to examine works which call for an

\textsuperscript{75}Gilpin, Three Essays, p. 62. Reynolds also connected the free exercise of the imagination with the sketch and then went on explicitly to reject indeterminacy in painting:

\begin{quote}
We cannot on this occasion, nor indeed on any other, recommend an undeterminate manner, or vague ideas of any kind, in a complete and finished picture. This notion, therefore, of leaving any thing to the imagination, opposes a very fixed and indispensable rule in our art,—that every thing shall be carefully and distinctly expressed, as if the painter knew, with correctness and precision, the exact form and character of whatever is introduced into the picture. This is what with us is called Science, and Learning; which must not be sacrificed and given up for an uncertain and doubtful beauty, which...will probably be sought for without success" (Discourse VIII, p. 164).
\end{quote}

The transparency of the artistic subject requires the appearance of a complete and publicly revealed knowledge of the object of representation. For Reynolds, indistinctness signifies not simply imagination, but a specifically private imagining incompatible with the public nature of the highest forms of painting.

\textsuperscript{76}John Barrell also argues that the indeterminacy of the sketch is appropriate only as a form of leisure for the private individual, but does not stress the need for the private viewer to have a highly controlled and cultivated taste. See his "The Private Comedy of Thomas Rowlandson," Art History, 6:4 (December 1983), pp. 423-41 (esp. pp. 429-31). He also takes up the issue of the sketch as a private artform in The Political Theory of Painting, pp. 112-6.
active exercise of the creative imagination as part of the viewing process. Such a legislation of the imagination also ensures that the subject positions of viewer and artist remain congruent in pictures which may not contain a clearly fixed "point of sight."

The kind of indeterminacy which was acceptable in a private sketch was only acceptable in a finished painting placed on public display to those who were, in the first place, willing to acknowledge and to endorse the split which exists between the knowledge of the artist and the viewer, and secondly, willing to trust that viewers imaginatively would complete such images in a manner which was privately enriching and socially benign. In fact, few writers endorsed indistinctness with the enthusiasm accorded the other devices and techniques discussed above. Turner, who, far more than any other artist, was noted (or notorious) for his obscurity, repeatedly was criticized because his foregrounds and figures were not clearly "made out." See for example exhibition reviews of Turner's early works in the London Packet, 1 May 1799, 14-16 May 1800, and the Sun, 13 May 1799 and 17 May 1802. Girtin also received his share of criticism for his indistinctness; see the Monthly Mirror's otherwise adulatory review of his Bolton Bridge (untraced), June 1801, p. 376, and the London Packet's critique of his St. Nicholas Church, 14-16 May 1798, and the Whitehall Evening Post's savage attack on his slovenliness of his Rivaux Abbey in the 31 May-1 June issue. Callcott's pictures, on the other hand, while distinguished by their simplicity, were seldom if ever criticized (or praised) on the grounds of obscurity. In fact his works were sometimes favourably compared to Turner's because their figures and foregrounds were more particularized. See for example the exhibition reviews for the Royal Academy of 1806 in the Sun on 5 May, 21 May, and 23 May of that year.
John Landseer, the engraver and publisher of the short-lived *Review of Publications of Art* was one of the very few writers consistently to identify indistinctness as a sign of professional mastery, both in Turner's art and in his own practice of engraving, and to tout its benefits for viewers. In a review of the *Landscape Scenery of Scotland*, which contains engravings Landseer made from pictures by William Scrope, Landseer puffs his own ability to render the indistinctness of the atmosphere through the process of engraving. In writing about the print of Dunstaffnage Castle he asserts that the hazy obscurity not only adds to the effect of the image, but that its adoption marks "the superior knowledge of the engraver in the theory, as much as its successful exhibition, proclaims his power in the practice, of his profession." Although the writer doesn't elaborate upon this statement, from other comments he makes in his journal, it seems likely that the theory he refers to is grounded in associationist notions of the imagination operating via the production of trains of thoughts and feelings which are connected circumstantially.

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7 For example, in discussing Turner's *Margate* (reproduced as Plate 88 in Butlin and Joll), exhibited in Turner's Gallery in 1808, Landseer remarks that the artist is a master of the philosophy of art, and then goes on to praise the mistiness of the scene, which permits the viewer to associate the greater forms of the city with Greek temples: "Mr. Turner delights to paint to the imagination: and sometimes he even apparently paints with a view to calling up distant, but still associated, trains of
Landseer repeatedly touts Turner’s capacity to conceal his hand and reveal only the "presiding mind" in throwing a hazy obscurity over the sea-pieces, forest scenes, and city views exhibited in his gallery in 1808. Although he emphasizes that such artistic feats reveal an imagination far superior to the average viewer, the spectator is not reduced to a state of complete bafflement, as other critics had insisted. Rather the viewer’s imagination is stimulated by such productions, much as Alison and Jeffrey had described in their discussion of associationism. Hence the "indistinct distance of mingled groves and edifices" of Turner’s Richmond Hill and Bridge "leaves the imagination to wander over Richmond, and finish the picture from ideas."(Landseer, "Mr. Turner’s Gallery," Review of Publications of Art, 1808, p. 166).


For example, Leigh Hunt, in his Reflector essay from 1812 on painting in England, praises Turner’s ability to invoke the sublime via an indistinctness of form which would have been deemed a defect in figure painting ["Remarks on the Past and Present State of the Arts in England," Reflector 1 (1812), p. 230]. Although Hunt did not explain this distinction between depictions of landscape and the human figure, the "natural" veiling of the atmosphere by mists and storms seems to have sanctioned such a practice, for he goes on to note that Turner’s now lost Whirlwind in the Desert of 1801 evidenced a "shadowy sublimity" which astounded and baffled the connoisseurs. Critics in general lauded Turner’s 1812 exhibition piece, Snowstorm: Hannibal and his Armies Crossing the Alps, for similar reasons; see Butlin and Joll, The Paintings of J. M. W. Turner, p. 90 for excerpts of reviews from the Examiner and Repository of Arts praising the work in turns of its obscurity and mysterious effects.
the suggestions of the painter... Comparing Turner's indistinctness with the poetical "indication, or suggestion," of Virgil, Landseer declares that "by eloquently addressing the fancy and the passions, [he] excels those painters who are exhausting their subjects, and their means of art, and annihilating the pleasures of the spectator's imagination." The writer sees no danger emerging from the fancies unleashed by such undefined representations, presumably because he assumes viewers will be guided (and thus restrained) by the "suggestions of the painter" introduced in such works. This is consonant with Landseer's determination of the comparative weakness of the viewer's creative capacities compared to that of the artistic genius.

In this respect Landseer's formulation of the public for painting differs from that of Alison and Jeffrey. As noted in Chapter III Landseer addressed himself to the needs and pleasures of a broad, literate, but not necessarily erudite public—a public, which, he remarked in 1808, would be more deeply moved by a scene of hop-pickers in a garden than an epic painting of classical gods or heroes. On the other hand Alison and Jeffrey, like Gilpin in his remarks on private sketches, were concerned

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[^2]: Landseer, "Mr. Turner's Gallery," p. 160. Richmond Hill and Bridge is reproduces as Plate 83 in Butlin and Joll.
[^4]: Landseer, "British Institution," p. 82.
with the play of the imagination in relation to highly cultivated viewers—specifically, an intelligentsia drawn from the gentry and upper middle class. Despite the commitment of Jeffrey to specialized modes of knowledge such as modern political and economic theory, he and Alison presume that their readers have a grounding in both ancient and contemporary history and literature. It is this liberal education which provides the storehouse of ideas and images to be stimulated by views and representations of natural scenery.\textsuperscript{65}

Other writers were not so sanguine about the control of viewers' fancies when presented with indistinct imagery. Foremost among these critics was Richard Payne Knight, who railed against the evils of obscurity in his political and aesthetic writings. His initial attack came in *The Progress of Civil Society* (1796) This is a didactic poem which presents a traditional Whiggish "progress" of civil society, wherein the highest value is assigned to societies organized into hierarchical ranks which "balance" one another.\textsuperscript{66} Making direct reference to Britain in a paean to its balanced constitution, Knight insists that socio-political reforms must not threaten or call into question the legitimacy of this order:

\textsuperscript{65}In addition to the analysis of Alison and Jeffrey in Chapter III, see also Jeffrey's discussion of indistinctness and Scott's poetry in "Alison on Taste," p. 28.

Let Britain's laws abuses still correct.
And from corruption's fangs her state protect;
But let not wild reforms or systems vain,
The legal influence of command restrain...
Let patronage and splendour guard the throne,
And all its dignity and influence, own;
For wealth where well secured, o'er all will reign,
And its possessor's power, supreme, maintain.\(^7\)

The references to "wild reforms" and "systems vain" situate this text within that counterrevolutionary discourse, at its height in 1796, which sought to discredit Painites and other English radicals advocating systemic political change in accord with American and French republican models.

Mindful of the political context of Knight's poetic enterprise, we turn to his remarks on indistinctness in the poem's preface where he disparages the production of poetical images which are obscure and indistinct "from an excess of what painters call breadth." Although Knight is writing here about poetry rather than painting, his remarks are highly indicative of his over-arching concerns about the need to police the limits within which the imagination of the artistic producer and consumer (viewer/reader) may operate. He warns that the young and ignorant are apt to be dazzled by that which they cannot comprehend,

\(^7\)Knight, *Progress of Civil Society*, p. 148.
but which, being darkly shown through the mysterious
glimmer of lofty and sonorous expressions, seems great
in proportion as it is incomprehensible; whence their
impressions, being excited and not limited, form
phantoms of their own, and conclude them to be the
meaning of what they are reading.\textsuperscript{59}

Unlike other attacks on the use of brilliant effects as bringing
the artist too much to mind, Knight's concern is that indistinct
imagery has the power to efface both artist and his
representation. Conjured forth in their place are the private
visions of the "young and ignorant," whose minds are not formed
and regulated by the strictures of high culture. It is apparent
here that Knight fears a form of cultural "anarchy" analogous to
a revolutionary disregard for the existing socio-political
structure.

Obscurity is also abjured as a source of the sublime in
Knight's aesthetic treatise, \textit{An Inquiry into the Principles of
Taste} (1805). But in this instance his concern is that it
furnishes no source of associated ideas and feelings, for
"obscurity is "privation," and therefore does not stimulate
expansive thinking.\textsuperscript{60} Since Knight's concern in this treatise is
with the development of cultivated taste based upon a study of
past art as well as the ancient classics, at no point does he
concern himself with the possibility of private "phantoms"

\textsuperscript{59}Knight, \textit{Progress of Civil Society}, pp. xi-xii.

\textsuperscript{60}Knight, \textit{Analytical Inquiry}, p. 361.
arising in the mind of viewers. Obscurity in this instance obstructs the stimulation of the cultivated imagination. In both texts of 1796 and 1805, then, indistinctness is attacked for impeding the production of a socialized imagination—either by promoting the private fantasies of the uneducated or by failing to nourish the culturally regulated imaginations of the educated.

Allied with Knight's concerns about the artistic regulation of the viewer's imagination is his repeated effort to control artistic genius by submitting it to the authority of the market and of the slow processes of formal artistic training. In the second decade of the century Knight was a director of the British Institution, and authored two, possibly three, of the prefaces for catalogues which the Institution published in connection with special exhibits. The first of the catalogues was published in 1813 for an exhibition of paintings by Joshua Reynolds. In the preface Knight praises Reynolds for not being "one of those aspiring geniuses—those self-selected favourites of nature, who imagine that professional eminence is a spontaneous gift of heaven." Instead we are told that the painter

toiled patiently for many years through all the initiatory drudgery of the art, gained practice by

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See pp. 192-4 of the Analytical Inquiry for Knight's discussion of the superior aesthetic capacity and pleasure accruing to the "learned beholder" compared to the ignorant, whose mind is "wholly unprovided with correct ideas." The choice of the word "correct" indicates the legislative activity involved in this formulation of a socially elevated (and elevating) taste.
undertaking whatever was offered, at the lowest price by which he could subsist; and by the gradual and spontaneous impression made by his gradual progress to excellence...gradually raised himself in public estimation.\textsuperscript{91}

Earlier we examined statements by writers who promoted a free market as an appropriate forum for the circulation of works by independent-minded English artists. Knight himself endorsed this position in \textit{The Progress of Civil Society}, where he declares that public patronage of the arts is unnecessary, for "by the public favour or neglect/ Alone is genius raised, or dullness check'd."\textsuperscript{92} In the Reynolds catalogue, on the other hand, Knight's emphasis is upon the artist's subjection to the low prices dictated by the market and to the drudgery of acquiring artistic training—a training which implicitly involves a suppression of individual "genius" to the dictates of the old master tradition which the British Institution so strongly promoted.

Within the 1796 poem and the 1813 catalogue, then, two very different characterizations of the relationship between the artistic subject and the market are presented. I would argue that these differences represent not a shift in Knight's

\textsuperscript{91}[Richard Payne Knight], preface to Catalogue of the Pictures by the Late Sir Joshua Reynolds (British Institution exhib. cat., London: Bulmer, 1813), p. 10. The attribution of the preface to Knight is given by the anonymous author of the Catalogue Raisonné (1816), p. iv.

\textsuperscript{92}Knight, \textit{The Progress of Civil Society}, p. 65.
thinking, but show rather how the production of artistic genius is a strategy which may be deployed discontinuously, even by a single individual or interest group, depending upon the particular objective. In Knight’s case, his concern that artists not receive a carte blanche in the form of support from the public coffers is in no way contradictory to his concern that native genius be constrained by the rigours of mechanical training. But in the first instance, promoting artistic autonomy becomes a means of impugning the need for public support, while in the second, the tactic is to promote the economic and ideological subjection of genius.

This point is reiterated in Knight’s preface to the Catalogue of the Exhibition of Painting from the Dutch and Flemish Schools published two years later, in 1815:

_The degree to which Knight did or did not support artists, both economically and in his writings, remains vigorously contested even now. In a review of the exhibition catalogue, The Arrogant Connoisseur: Richard Payne Knight 1751-1824 (Manchester, 1982), which deals with Knight as a collector, connoisseur, and aesthete, Alex Potts presents a strong case for concluding that Knight indeed supported a devaluation of the economic and cultural status of painters. This review (and this particular issue of Knight’s artistic support) provoked a heated exchange between Potts and Michael Clarke, one of the catalogue’s editors [the review and responses were published together in Oxford Art Journal, 5:1 (1982), pp. 70-6]. As Potts notes in his response to Clarke, the source of their disagreement rests on their political values, not simply their personal tastes. To attack or defend Knight as a privileged member of the upper class whose views on culture reinforced that privilege, is to take a position on contemporary relations of political power and cultural hegemony._
To a superficial observer, many of the great works before us may seem the result of genius without the aid of study. No opinion can be more fallacious; and to the Artist no mistake more fatal. Genius and fancy, it is true, give the magical charm to the productions of Art; but those who think that genius and fancy will supply the place of care, of attention, of and industry, mistake the course they have to pursue.94

These remarks, we should recall, occur in the context of a vigorous debate about the effect of continental masters not only as competitors in the art market with modern English paintings, but also as models for contemporary artists to emulate. The "magical charm" of genius and fancy calls to mind the descriptions of the landscapes of Turner and Callcott in the periodical press. By setting genius against industry, study, and care, Knight implies that certain contemporary artists have rejected established traditions in their training and their practice, and thus will be excluded from assuming a place in the ongoing "progress" (in the Whiggish sense of the word) of that tradition.

Between the Reynolds exhibition and that of the Dutch and Flemish masters, the British Institution mounted its show of works by Hogarth, Wilson, Gainsborough, and Zoffany. While the preface to the 1814 British Institution catalogue for the exhibit

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94 [Richard Payne Knight], preface to the Catalogue of the Exhibition of Paintings from the Dutch and Flemish Schools (British Institution exhib. cat., London: Bulmer, 1815), p. 10. For the attribution of the preface to Knight see Owen and Brown, p. 182.
remains unattributed, it seems highly likely that Knight was also its author. Not only did he write the prefaces for the years preceding and following it, but the text is consonant with his views on painting practices, evidenced by the comments on Wilson's landscapes:

Wilson will be contemplated with delight—few artists have excelled him in the tint of air, perhaps the most difficult point of attainment for the Landscape Painter; every object in his pictures keeps its place, because each is seen through its proper medium. This excellence alone gives a charm to his pencil; and with judicious application may be turned to the advantage of the British Artist.\(^3\)

To suggest that this concern for atmospheric clarity—that each object in a landscape 'keep its place'—was intimately related to the wider project of keeping native genius in its place, might appear to be making a facile and ill-considered analogy between two unrelated undertakings. However our brief perusal of texts dealing with indistinctness and with artistic genius suggest that a contemporary desire to police the individual imagination at the points of production and reception underwrote both endeavours. Thus, I would argue, it is reasonable to see a fundamental congruence between Knight's aesthetic uneasiness with indistinctness and his hostility to genius unconstrained by study.

\(^3\) Preface to the Exhibition of Paintings of Hogarth, Wilson, Gainsborough and Zoffany (British Institution exhib. cat., London, 1814), p. 10.
We noted in Chapter II that certain aspects of the critical discourse of painting which condemn dazzling surface effects and gaudy colours as unnatural, corrupt, foreign, and feminized, appear in counterrevolutionary political and social discourse. Anti-French defenders of the political status quo found such "debased" visual imagery well-suited to express what they saw as the artificiality and superficiality of radical and liberal reformist political thought. Dwelling as it did upon affectation and vulgarity, such rhetoric rarely engaged with the notions of genius and imagination which underwrite the type of landscape painting we have just been considering. In his Whiggish meditation on the gradual progress and development of civil society Payne Knight stops short of integrating a political critique of revolutionary reform with an aesthetic critique of the imagination and the reductive, undefined imagery with which it was associated (in the Alisonian as well as ordinary sense of the word). I would now like to turn to an essay which addresses the "romantic" imagination directly, and explores the political implications of the imagination gone to excess.

The essay, "On the Application of the Epithet Romantic," was written by the Baptist minister John Foster and published as part of his Essays in a Series of Letters to a Friend (1805), which went through three editions in seven months. Foster had been associated with revolutionary republicans in Ireland in the mid-
1790s, but by the early 1800s had moderated his political stance considerably, as the Essays demonstrate. Although he remained disdainful of the trappings of royal power, he maintained strong support of the traditional institutions, social hierarchies, and hegemonic system which ordered British society. In his essay Foster defines romantic in terms of the "ascendancy of imagination over judgment." This was a state which he accepts in youth as necessary in stimulating religious faith and supplying the energy needed for embarking on the affairs of life. Upon reaching maturity, however, imagination must be held in check by reason and judgment. Much of the essay dwells on the evils that arise from the excess of the imagination, which Foster describes in highly visual terms:

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Dictionary of National Biography, s. v. John Foster.


Foster, pp. 117-8.
Imagination may be indulged till it usurp an entire ascendancy over the mind...imagination will throw its colours where the intellectual faculty ought to draw its lines; imagination will accumulate metaphors where reason ought to deduce arguments; images will take the place of thoughts, and scenes of disquisitions. The whole mind may become at length something like a hemisphere of cloud-scenery, filled with an evermoving train of changing melting forms, of every colour, mingled with rainbows, meteors, and an occasional gleam of pure sunlight, all vanishing away, the mental like this natural imagery, when its hour is up, without leaving any thing behind but the wish to recover the vision."

This passage demonstrates (once again) just how closely the landscape effects which we have been analyzing—veils of colour, brilliant effects of sunlight, and the indistinct, shifting forms of clouds—were connected to the associative powers of the imagination. Foster employs these ephemeral atmospheric effects as a metaphor for the mind itself, a mind which eschews logical argument for associative imagery—"trains of changing melting forms." Unlike apologists for associationism, Foster does not identify these effects with the essential character of a site or an object. Rather they are seen to represent irrational conjurings which, beyond producing fantasies, carry over into thoughts about "the vulgar materials that constitute the actual economy of the world." Imaginative habits of mind distort conceptions of the "true" nature of these materials, rendering the mind incapable of making sound judgments about them.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Foster, p. 116.
¹⁰⁰ Foster, p. 117.
Whereas Alison and Jeffrey insist that a knowledge of history enhances the pleasures of the imagination, Foster avers that imagination disrupts the ability to assess the "economy" of the contemporary world.

Foster becomes even more specific in his concerns as he details a number of consequences of such an imagination gone to excess. First he suggests that such an imagination can so enthrall individuals of either sex that they presume they are destined for some extraordinary fate, and therefore reject social norms ("they will perhaps disdain regular hours, usual dresses, and common forms of transacting business").¹⁰¹ Such visions, then, not only fuel the interests of the private over the socialized self, but actively promote the outright rejection of those systems and practices which seek to position private individuals in the social sphere.

The dangers of such imaginative visions go beyond the production of eccentric individuals. Foster also insists that the unregulated imagination gives birth to utopian visions at variance with human nature, which he conceives to be "social, self-interested, inclined to the wrong [and] slow to improve."¹⁰² Utopian visions of a society in which there was an equality of property division and modes of living are the result of

¹⁰¹ Foster, p. 122.
¹⁰² Foster, p. 122.
imagination overpowering sober reason—that pragmatic and rational power which recognizes the "truly" greedy, indolent and ignorant character of humankind.\textsuperscript{103}

Although Foster's consideration of the effects of unconstrained imagination are set in a different context than Knight's, nonetheless both the former radical and the Foxite Whig identify these mental powers as a threat to the hegemonic process which positions individuals within the social order. If unregulated by reason or undisciplined by traditional education, the imagination feeds upon the private fantasies of the individual and in the process, weakens or subverts the bonds which tie her/him to the social. Although William Hazlitt opposed Foster and Knight in defending artistic genius and political (not cultural) democracy, we saw that the radical essayist also was disturbed at the prospect of genius 'losing its sympathy with humanity.' For him, we recall, this state of affairs ensued when the artistic subject indulged only in displays of its own secret knowledge, exemplified by landscape painters' abandonment of subject matter in favour of painterly effects and indistinct, chaotic forms. His concerns coupled with

\textsuperscript{103}Foster, p. 124. It is noteworthy that for Foster reason no longer carries with it political overtones of French and Paineite republicanism (the "false systems" of universal reason so reviled by Burke and Reynolds in the early 1790s). Such shifts in the ideological valence of seminal concepts demonstrates their historical contingency—a contingency too often ignored or effaced in broad generalizations about the "progress" of reason during the Enlightenment.
those of Knight and Foster, as well as those voiced by the anonymous art critics we examined earlier, suggest the degree to which the production of the fully autonomous artistic subject via the practice of landscape painting was regarded as powerfully compelling and (thus) in need of regulation.

As indicated in Chapters III and IV, the imaginative artistic subject of landscape drew a large degree of its power and appeal from its ability to circulate throughout a range of discourses and social formations. It could accommodate a nationalist rhetoric of manly, independent-mindedness which was pressed into the service of a broad array of ideological interests. In addition it was capable of producing works which could hold their own visually in the competitive spaces of display, while representing nature rather than promoting the artist. Such a producer of natural and "expressive" landscapes could also meet the epistemological demands of those who claimed that modern commercial society required modes of specialized knowledge which could not be satisfied by a classical education. Finally, and most particularly, this subject possessed the character and the specialized knowledge which would elevate the status of professional landscape painters themselves beyond the level of mechanical imitators or amateur dabblers.

What is striking about these political, economic, epistemological, and cultural needs and demands is that they all
call forth an increasingly atomized, privatized concept of the subject. Such a subject, however, does not remain hidden, conducting commercial and domestic affairs behind a veil of privacy, but performs his/her interiority in public. In his study of the broad transformations occurring in civil society throughout this period Jürgen Habermas emphasizes this performative aspect of the interiorized subject: "Subjectivity, as the innermost core of the private, was always already oriented to an audience." The power, and for some, the danger, of the formulation of the artistic subject as genius derives in part its ambiguous relationship to that public for which it performs.

That ambiguity rests with the fact that genius both stands for and stands above an expanding public which could no longer be regarded as confined to the erudite sector of the landed elite. We can discern this ambiguity in the promotion of professional landscape watercolourists in Ackermann’s various publications (such as the Repository and New Drawing Book of Light and Shade) which celebrates the quintessentially English character of landscape watercolours by artists such as Turner and Girtin, and yet stresses as well the magical power of such producers to dazzle a domestic public composed of men and women from the commercial and landed classes. In a somewhat similar fashion Leigh Hunt lauds the English quality of manly and active independent-mindedness that marks the works of artists such as

104 Habermas, p. 49.
Turner, while offering as evidence Turner's ability to produce works which baffle the connoisseurs. We also noted the imaginative artist's ability to signify creative productivity while enforcing an informed, but nonetheless passive pleasure in Alison's liberally-educated viewers.

Attempting to mitigate the disjunction between active productivity and passive consumption are those who stress that through the productions of artistic genius, viewers can acquire a deeper understanding and feeling for the true character of the English landscape, and thus for the true nature of the customary values that define Englishness itself. Nonetheless, in these various accounts there is no suggestion that viewers can gain for themselves the superior knowledge and enhanced sensibility possessed by the imaginative artist, since that knowledge is the special province of the professional and such a heightened sensibility is deemed an inherent trait of genius. Viewing subjects thus are alienated from their own capacity to imagine.

\[^{105}\] [Hunt], "Remarks on the... Arts in England," p. 230. Like the author of the New Drawing Book, Hunt links the practice of amateur drawing by women to the rise of male landscape watercolourists such as Girtin and Varley. Nonetheless, he relegates watercolour to an inferior position with respect to oil painting because of the latter's durability (p. 229).

\[^{106}\] This seems to be the position of Reinagle in his commentary on Turner's Sussex views as well as Francis Jeffrey, in his review of Alison's Essays. Jeffrey, recall, differentiates between the ordinary viewer's experience of natural scenery and the artist's superior, but not constitutionally different, ability to feel and represent the social sentiments that form the character of the British landscape.
and experience directly and completely (without the aid of genius) their national identity as it is inscribed upon the face of the English landscape.

Contemporary writers from across the ideological spectrum endorsed the need for the mediation of the landscape genius, and frequently described the experience of viewing a work of genius as a pacifying one. A writer in the Repository of Arts in 1814 enthusiastically praises John Varley's watercolours, A Plot of Rising Ground and Thomson's Grave declaring that they "would administer repose to a mind maddened by fury itself. The contemplation of such subjects produces a calm highly stimulative to the feelings of humanity." \(^{107}\) Robert Hunt echoes these sentiments that same year, when he quotes John Landseer who assured viewers living "in a world of trouble and inquietude" that the "sum of human happiness would be greatly increased" if everyone possessed the perceptions and tastes required to enjoy landscape painting. \(^{108}\) Thus while the artistic genius as constituted in landscape painting is regarded as active, bold, masculine, the viewer is correspondingly pacified. Even though his/her imagination is stimulated, that stimulation leads to thoughts of social harmony, not to bold innovations or new syntheses of ideas and feelings.


It is perhaps the wide acceptance of the rôle of the genius to pacify and socialize that made Turner's tendency toward indistinctness so troubling. For such a practice subverts the process of mediation, and presents instead the prospect of an artistic subject which is so autonomous that it has no longer the need or capacity for social engagement. Faced with that prospect, the viewer can either turn away in baffled admiration or anger, or, on the other hand, accept the challenge tacitly offered to engage in private imaginings unregulated by a "superior" knowledge and sensibility. In the war decades immediately following the French Revolution, but before the rise of a fully formed mass culture industry, it was still possible to believe that dire social consequences might accompany the actions of such a private, unregulated imagination.
 Simply put, this study has examined the attenuation of one form of the artistic producer and the rise to prominence of another in England, during and immediately after the Napoleonic wars. The subject position of the artist as learned gentleman and/or cosmopolitan was increasingly incapable of furnishing a viable ideal for the professional painter. We have examined a variety of historically specific factors contributing to the collapse of this model—ranging from critiques of the epistemological authority of the liberal man of letters to moral and economic critiques of the leisured gentleman’s rôle as a consumer of luxury goods. Most of these attacks came from an intelligentsia of political reformists and economic liberals allied with the educated sectors of the middle class and gentry. Such criticism of the ruling elite did not culminate in demands for a radical redistribution of property and power, but rather for a reformulation of the terms in which the cultural, social and economic authority of the propertied and monied classes was to be sustained.

The landscape genius was one outcome of this process of reformulation. Part of the appeal of this construction of the artistic subject was its versatility; it was capable of supporting, and in turn was supported by, a broad range of social interests. In examining the essay "On the Analogy between the
Growth of Individual and National Genius" we saw that a writer allied with country Tory interests could forward a notion of national genius which directly invoked the power of the land to shape the essential character, traditions and history of a people. Such a retrospective construction of native genius accorded well with the principles of associationism, particularly as propounded by Alison, which explained the aesthetic pleasure gained in contemplating representations of natural scenery through just such a process of retrospective imagining. Taken in these terms, genius is regarded as the power to produce intense and pleasurable feelings for what is already known, rather than the capacity to represent what previously had been unimaginable. In considering the writings that appeared in Blackwood's and the productions of Turner for Tory landowner John Fuller I have examined how such a formulation of native genius reinforced notions of national cohesion and traditional social relations during a period of inter-class conflict in the second decade of the century.

On the other hand, the radical Hazlitt's contempt for what he regarded as a debased aristocracy and their corrupt cultural and political institutions fuelled his support of a notion of artistic genius which was defined in terms of its disregard of institutional rules and tradition and its opposition to the indolence and self-indulgence of the leisured amateur. Not only was his notion of the professional genius qualified by industry,
masculine energy, and sensibility, but, above all, it was marked by an originality and creativity that was inherent, not learned.

Hazlitt's notion of genius conforms closely to the idea of the romantic genius (especially the poet) promoted by many modern scholars. Equally isolated from (and superior to) the corrupt ruling elite and the unlettered masses, the genius who turns his attention to the contemplation of nature is regarded by such scholars as the beleaguered victim of the dehumanization of social relations which increasingly marked commercial life in early nineteenth century England. However, in the case of the landscape painter, we have seen that the socially alienated genius could become a counterproductive force for a radical like Hazlitt. Recall that in the case of Turner, Hazlitt's endorsement of his creative power was tempered by the essayist's concern for Turner's pedantry; Hazlitt feared that in his desire to demonstrate command over a highly specialized artistic

1Raymond Williams' account of poetic genius as evidenced in the writings of Shelley, Wordsworth and Blake centres on the poet's opposition to a market economy which was hostile to the realm of the imagination and human creativity [Culture and Society 1780-1850 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983; orig. pub. 1958, pp. 30-48]. Carole Fabricant, writing of Wordsworth, presents the poet's turn to nature as embodying an "altered conception of power--no longer a power over, but rather a power through, in conjunction with, outside forces of nature and divinity" ["The Aesthetics and Politics of Landscape in the Eighteenth Century," Studies in Eighteenth Century British Art and Aesthetics, ed. Ralph Cohen, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 80]. It is not my intention to dispute these accounts, but rather to suggest that in the domain of landscape painting, genius was also marshalled in support of a market society and of social interests wielding power 'over' nature (and other people).
practice, the artist had so alienated himself from his public that his productions failed to signify to anyone but the elite few who also possessed this specialized and secret knowledge.\footnote{2}

Furthermore, the notion of the isolated genius was not antithetical to those interests which supported a capitalized market economy and the political forms which sustained it. The compatibility of genius with commercial interests is evident in a review of British watercolours which Walter Fawkes placed upon public exhibition at his London townhouse in 1819. The review, published in the pro-ministerial, pro-commercial London Chronicle, offered lavish praise for Turner’s watercolours: "The art itself is par excellence English, no continental pencil can come near the force, freedom, and nature of our professor."\footnote{3} We can by now recognize these characteristics as common signifiers of Englishness as it was posited in opposition to an anti-Gallic stereotype. But the artist’s capacity to figure a virile, independent Englishness did not preclude his separation from the culture which he represented in his work and through his artistic

\footnote{2}Hazlitt also had reservations about the importance of landscape painting as a genre. Although in a review of the British Institution in 1814, he acknowledged landscape as the leading genre within the English school, this recognition served merely as a preamble to his meditation on the failure of England to produce a successful school of history painting [William Hazlitt, "British Institution" (1814), in Collected Works, 18:10-1]. Nowhere in Hazlitt’s writings does he endorse the landscape painter as the quintessentially English artist subject.

\footnote{3}This passage was cited and discussed infra, Chapter V, pp. 228-9.
identity. For the writer followed these remarks with this observation on the isolation and moral purity of the artist:

The men whose minds are busied over the picture or the statue, must be so many men rescued and raised from the ignorance and insubordination of lower life; their enthusiasm is kindled like the vestal's urn from a source above the crimes and clouds of the world. Biography represents the great multitude of those solitary and rapt spirits, as comparatively unstained; unfitted for the vulgar intercourses of less gifted society, and living even in the midst of cities in a kind of holy and hermit contemplation.⁴

This account of the artist as a "solitary and rapt spirit" or a hermit, "rescued" from the "vulgar intercourse" of quotidian life, might seem to function as a critique of commercial society comparable to that offered by Hazlitt, the Examiner's Leigh and Robert Hunt, and other reform-minded social critics. However, by stating that "biography" has shown the artist to be placed in a relationship with society which was fixed and unchanging throughout the ages, the writer implies that the present state of those relations within commercial society appears to be no different--and more importantly, no worse--than it ever was.⁵

⁴"Mr. Fawkes' Pictures," London Chronicle, 10 April 1819, p. 347.

⁵However, the passage subtly evokes the present state of society insofar as it takes its terms and tone from public discourse around the social conflicts which had been occurring between producers and wealthy consumers in provincial cities and the capital in this period of post-war recession. The efforts of the industrial middle class and working class to gain greater political representation were frequently dismissed by their socially and economically privileged opponents as acts of "ignorance and insubordination." In 1817 the editor of the
It is noteworthy that biography has replaced history here as the authoritative source from which judgments about the status of the artist in society are to be made. Such a turn to biography is consistent with the production of a form of domestic landscape painting which relies upon the singular sensibility and intellect of the artistic individual as the means of revealing to a national public its own essential nature.

The key to the native landscape genius's ability to function at one and the same time as an autonomous subject, insulated from the vitiation of a market-oriented society, and also as a social

*London Chronicle* implied as much when he dismissed calls for Parliamentary reform as a "desire to pull down what is great and eminent and sit in judgment over those whom the order of society has invested with power and authority" ("Parliamentary Reform," *London Chronicle*, 22-3 May 1817, p. 1. Within the context of this position, the insolent and ignorance masses, not their economic and social superiors are held to be the source of the degradation of morals and intellect in the social sphere. See infra, Chapter IV for a more extensive discussion of post-war economic and political issues.

*Although writings by academic history painters about the relationship of artists to their societies include references to artists' lives, these accounts rely most heavily upon the rise to historical prominence (and inevitable fall) of the societies in question. See for example James Barry's account of art in Greece in his *Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England* (London, 1775), discussed in Barrell, *Political Theory of Painting*, pp. 165-73.*

*For the increasing importance of biography in the construction of the landscape artist as a bearer of local and/or national identity in the 1820s and succeeding decades see Adele Holcomb, "More Matter with Less Art: Romantic Attitudes toward Landscape Painting," *Art Journal* 36 (Summer 1977), pp. 303-6. Ann Bermingham has considered the function of autobiography in the context of Constable's artistic practice; see *Landscape and Ideology*, pp. 87-155.*
subject who represents the ideals of that society, is contingent upon the way in which individual autonomy is socially regulated. The elision of the artist's character—his singular capacity to feel, to recognize, and to represent the essence of the landscape—with the symbolic character of the domestic landscape as the locus of individual and national freedom, fixes the individuality of the native genius firmly within the domain of social. That is, personal autonomy is the signal feature which identifies and qualifies the landscape genius as a member of the social body.

Yet accounts in the mainstream press, such as the above-cited passage from the London Chronicle and most notably, in Ackermann's Repository of Arts, stress the fact that while the landscape genius embodies the essence of the national spirit, he is not subjected to the depredations of the social body. We recall the strong emphasis placed by these critics and other writers (such as Alison and Reinagle) upon the magical and transformative powers of the landscape genius in fashioning profoundly affecting images of colour and light from the basest and simplest materials. Such images were regarded not as mannered displays of technical mastery, but manifestations of national character represented in a language of natural signs.

"The elevated sensibility and moral purity of the landscape artist is touted in "On the Superiority of the Painter's Feelings," Repository of Arts (1816). This essay is briefly discussed in Chapter V, p. 233."
Such a transformation of common nature into native character served to lift such representations and their makers out of the realm of material production (and the domain of amateur practice)."

In the course of this quasi-alchemical process the ultimate magic trick is performed upon the body of the native genius himself: In a spectacular disappearing and reappearing act, he enters the spaces of exhibition and display within the urban marketplace and succeeds in annihilating the competition with his bravura effects; but upon closer inspection, it is discovered that he seems never to have been in the marketplace after all. For he has an alibi which places him within the locus of external nature in its customary (rather than it ideal) guise. The encounter which takes place there does not produce social disaffection, or a heightened awareness of nature as Other. On the contrary, the native genius's embrace of the natural leads

"This, of course, had long been the function of academic discourse—promoting history painting as a liberal art served to deny its economic status as luxury commodity. But history painting was largely moribund by the 1790s and domestic landscape painting widely characterized either as a mechanical practice (in Fuseli's words, "map-work") or as a surface display designed to promote the private desires of a vulgar, unschooled public. Hence, the genius's capacity to create magical landscapes of colour and light which signified native character rather than personal manner, provided the necessary means to elevate landscape painting and the landscape artist out of the "ignorance and insubordination of lower life." This transformative process is discussed in Chapters III and IV; for an example of a description of the artist as magician from the Repository see the quote from its 1812 review of Turner's Snowstorm: Hannibal Crossing the Alps, which appears at the beginning of Chapter I.
him back to an experience of his own social identity within a community marked by social empathy not economic self-interest; for it is that community of feeling alone which gives meaning to external nature. In this way genius stages his reappearance as a social actor in the purified domain of the natural. His alibi secure, he remains uncontaminated by the market, yet victorious over it. It might appear that such an alibi would wear thin over the course of nearly two centuries. However, the landscape genius, embodied above all in the public persona of Turner, continues to be promoted as the purified essence of Englishness while at the same time serving the financial interests of diverse sectors of the western economy. At a time when the detritus of commercial societies threatens the landscape on a world scale, it remains to be seen if it is possible to reconfigure the artistic and viewing subject in a way which will facilitate a reappraisal of what has for so long been a vexed and mystified relationship between land, human society, and personal freedom.

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10 Not only does Turner's "genius" continue to turn a profit for various facets of the culture industry in England, but in the fall of 1988 the Volkswagen Corporation found it in its interest to sponsor a fellowship for Turner studies, heavily promoted by full-page colour advertisements in the national press. The cost of the advertisements, which linked the name of Volkswagen to the most highly revered name in English art, very likely approached the amount of the fellowship award.
Figure 1

Benjamin West, *Cicero Discovering the Tomb of Archimedes*, R. A. 1797, o/c, 124.5 x 180.5 cm, private collection
Figure 2

Figure 3

Thomas Girtin, *Durham Castle and Cathedral*, c. 1798, watercolour, 41.8 x 55.1 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum
Figure 4

Edward Dayes, Kelso Abbey, Roxburghshire, c. 1792, watercolour, 16.5 x 21 cm, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection
Figure 5

Engraving after C. Wild, Crimson Drawing Room at Carleton House, published 1816 as Plate 14 in *Royal Residences* by W. H. Pyne
Figure 6

Julius Caesar Ibbetson, *Alum Bay: Sand Quarry*, c. 1792, oil on panel, 19 x 25.4 cm, Tate Gallery
Figure 7

Richard Westall, Storm in Harvest, R. A. 1796, oil on card, loosely mounted on canvas, 58.8 x 78 cm, Denis Lennox
Figure 8

Paul Sandby, *Carreg Cennen Castle, Carmarthenshire*, ca. 1800, bodycolour, 31 x 45.8 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum
Figure 9

Aquatint after William Gilpin, Picturesque Scene in the Lake District, published 1810
Figure 10

Thomas Girtin, *Kirkstall Abbey*, 1800, watercolour, 32 x 51.8 cm, British Museum
Figure 11

Augustus Wall Callcott, Market Day, R. A. 1807, o/c, 147.3 x 256 cm, University of Manchester, Tabley Collection
Figure 12

Augustus Wall Callcott, Cowboys, R. A. 1807, o/c, 125 x 102,
Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry
Figure 13

W. B. Cooke, engraving after J. M. W. Turner,
The Vale of Heathfield, published 1820, from Views in Sussex, British Museum
Figure 14
W. B. Cooke, engraving after J. M. W. Turner
The Vale of Ashburnham, published 1820, from Views in Sussex, British Museum
Figure 15

W. B. Cooke, engraving after J. M. W. Turner

Brightling Observatory as Seen from Rosehill Park, published 1820

from Views in Sussex, British Museum
Figure 17

Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg, *An Avalanche in the Alps*, R. A. 1804, o/c, 110 x 160 cm, Tate Gallery
Figure 18

Augustus Wall Callcott, Old Pier at Little Hampton, R. A. 1812?, o/c, 167 x 141 cm, Tate Gallery
Figure 19

James Ward, Bulls Fighting, with a View of St. Donatt’s Castle, Glamorganshire, c. 1803, oil on panel, 132 x 228 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum
Figure 20

Copley Fielding, *Sunset off Hastings*, 1819, watercolour, 39.4 x 53 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum
Figure 21

Thomas Christopher Hofland, *Stirling Castle*, c. 1815, o/c, 132 x 184 cm, Tate Gallery
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