Aesthetics of Astonishment and Contemplation in the Sublime View: Nature Tours and Early Scenic Filmmaking in Great Britain

Samantha Wilson

A Thesis

In the

Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (Film and Moving Image Studies) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

May 2016

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Samantha Wilson

Entitled: Aesthetics of Astonishment and Contemplation in the Sublime View: Nature Tours and Early Scenic Filmmaking in Great Britain

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (Film and Moving Image Studies)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final Examining Committee:

Nicola Pezolet	Chair
Simon Brown	External Examiner
Johanne Sloan	Examiner to Program
Luca Caminati	Examiner
Peter van Wyck	Examiner
Peter Rist	Thesis Supervisor

Approved by Martin Lefebvre

Graduate Program Director

2016 Rebecca Duclos

Dean of Faculty

ABSTRACT

Aesthetics of Astonishment and Contemplation in the Sublime View: Nature Tours and Early Scenic Filmmaking in Great Britain

Samantha Wilson, PhD.

Concordia University, 2016

This dissertation examines the shift between object and image in popular and philosophical attitudes towards nature by tracing the aesthetic and epistemological role of the sublime view through a series of prescriptive texts and screen technologies which became increasingly popular in Great Britain within the second half of the 19th century. The natural sublime was symptomatic of a crisis that lies at the heart of environmental aesthetics: the inability to construct and rely on a framing mechanism when making judgments about natural spaces. Each text provided a way to mediate those experiences beginning with early 18th century topographical literature, Romantic and picturesque tour guides written in the early 19th century, mid 19th century painted panoramas, and, finally, scenic filmmaking in the first two decades of the 20th century. The project uses this discursive lineage to analyze the role of these texts and technologies in reconstructing the expectations of nature appreciation, with scenic filmmaking representing the culmination of that transition. While each catered to a separate socio-economic group, they all helped mask a persistent cultural anxiety over where spectator and natural phenomena should meet.

The project proposes a shift away from previous historical models which address contemplation and astonishment as separate aesthetic models by presenting a new reading of the

18th century natural sublime. Unlike traditional forms of appreciation like beauty, which depended upon detached contemplation, the sublime was only accessible at the precarious place where immersion and detachment met. Here specific vantage points constructed an interplay between traditionally opposed spectatorial states. The aesthetic category seemed, in fact, completely counter intuitive to both the other categories valued by the period and the stability provided by the neo-classical frame, and yet this precariousness only enhanced its cultural and conceptual cache. The concept eventually initiated its own cultural industry associated with nature appreciation which placed the problem of spectatorship at the centre of its popular discourse.

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Peter Rist for the continuous support of my PhD and dissertation research, for his patience, motivation, and knowledge. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my PhD.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee: Martin Lefebvre and Luca Caminati, for their insightful comments which shaped my ideas about this project in crucial ways. I would also like to express my appreciation to the very helpful and knowledgeable archivists and staff at the British Film Institute. Without access to their large collection this project would not have been possible.

I am indebted to Philipp Keidl, JoDee Allen, Kaia Scott and Brandon Arroyo-Vazquez for their unwavering kindness, encouragement and wisdom over many years. I was exceptionally fortunate to have such noteworthy fellow graduate students surrounding me during my time in the program.

Lastly I am very grateful for the loving support of my family over the past few years. Without them I would not have been able to persevere.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Quest for the Perfect View

> If, while resting on a summer afternoon, you follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon or a branch which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of those mountains, of that branch. This image makes it easy to comprehend the social bases of the contemporary decay of the aura. It rests on two circumstances... Namely, the desire of contemporary masses to bring things "closer" spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction. Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction.
>
> Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"[1]

Charles Urban's *Picturesque North Wales* (1910) possesses many of the formal components one would expect to see when watching a scenic film: long, slowly paced panoramas of rolling hills, carriages filled with eager holiday makers traveling to the sea, and static shots of key tourist destinations along the way. However, near the middle of the film, something surprising occurs. Whilst following a carriage, the cameraman decides to turn away, and tilts the camera over the side of a small pedestrian bridge until a close up of the water rushing below is the only thing left in frame. Unlike the other series of shots which are composed at a great distance and present a clear division between fore, middle and background, this shot challenges traditional approaches to representing the landscape. Indeed, it immerses the spectator by seemingly extending the screen in depth at the same time as diverting attention away from the sides of the frame. In other

[1] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 223.

words, it perfectly mimics the sensation of vertigo felt while leaning over the side of any elevated platform. The visceral nature of this shot foregrounds the individual spectator, making them aware of the camera's constant negotiation of both the visual and spatial registers. Rather than taking the observer into a new world, the film, and many like it within the same genre, offers different approaches to experiencing the world around it by questioning the traditional aesthetic frameworks which defined these natural spaces.

In so doing the scenic genre, led by Charles Urban and Cecil Hepworth, challenges the role it has been given in previous pieces of criticism. While most recent scholarship tends to focus on the locations and individuals depicted, my investigation into these undervalued films highlights the manner in which they constructed powerful juxtapositions of different overlapping modes of address. This shift from where these films took their audience to how they moved through space during the process of their journey ushers in a more extensive discussion over the influence of the genre on the cinematic medium and its particular relevance to ongoing debates concerning early cinematic spectatorship. The attention to, and construction of, different positions of proximity and distance also signals the genre's role in a larger cultural narrative at play at the turn of the 20th century: the continuing difficulty in assessing the aesthetic role of the natural environment in an individual's life. That debate, which had recently moved from the philosophical realm to the popular one, used the problem of embodied viewpoint as a way to test out a far more contentious issue: the relation between subject and object.

This project makes a series of interventions into the field of early cinema by arguing that the pre-cinematic time period and cultural fields traditionally considered by film historians when analyzing early film and its social relevance do not accurately reflect the complexity of discourses at work in the early scenic genre. In a similar manner to previous scholarship, this

project reflects on the crucial role astonishment and contemplation had in early film aesthetics, but rather than explore the two as oppositional forces emerging in the late 19th century as proponents of the so-called modernity thesis do, my work turns instead to the British 18th century where the two were understood as dialectically related within the growing philosophical and cultural debates surrounding environmental aesthetics and the sublime. This historical definition of astonishment and detached contemplation regards the two as interrelated modes of engagement with the world, and can thus challenge the model of spectatorship usually associated with the first decade of film, namely the cinema of attractions framework. A study of this long historical through-line also highlights the important philosophical and cultural parallels between the field of early cinema and environmental aesthetics, both of which are bound up with concerns over the power and limitation of the frame.

The pairing of these two debates – the use of the frame and the subject/object dichotomy – is rooted in the very foundation of environmental aesthetics as a field of study. While the field in analytic philosophy has only been around for just over four decades, its antecedents date back to the 18th century, the same century which developed the initial conceptual parameters of aesthetic philosophy and subjectivity. Nature and the manner of its appreciation were the primary object of concern for British philosophers debating those parameters. Firsthand experiences of natural spaces constructed the possibility for new forms of pleasure that fell outside the confines of the rules of taste dictating artwork at the time. These new sensations and ancillary ideas brought the problem of cause and effect to the fore. What is the primary cause for these internal states? Are they elicited by natural phenomena or the observer's original disposition? Increasingly diverse experiences with natural spaces became fundamental to both questions,

establishing the bounds of taste and, eventually, if you were a member of the gentry, acquiring a well rounded aesthetic education.

The most prominent of these new affective states became known as the sublime. The idea was introduced into the British philosophical lexicon during the same period, first in the domain of rhetoric by Nicolas Boileau and his translation of Longinus, and then in relation to judgments of taste in reference to specific experiences of nature. Literary scholar Samuel Monk describes the 18th century sublime as the vehicle which laid the foundation for the Romantic movement in England.[2] The concept formalized and explained certain pleasurable experiences which could not be accounted for within the neo-classical system of beauty which was based on a reasoned set of objective criteria. Moving away from this model based on rationalism, theories of the sublime began by emphasizing the properties housed within natural objects, and then the interplay of internal faculties. Even at the outset, discourses surrounding the sublime prescribed specific positions in relation to natural phenomena in order to elicit the internal physiological and conceptual effects which defined the experience. This in itself was not particularly novel, given that "appropriate" viewing positions had been routinely attached to debates surrounding beauty as well. But achieving the sublime demanded something altogether unheard of up until that point, the perfect balance between two seemingly opposing modes of spectatorship: immersion and contemplation. The sublime could not be found through traditional models of framing that demanded detachment and distance; the experience was described as immediately dissipating when a subject was able to isolate and perceive a phenomenon's boundaries. The experience

[2] Samuel Holt Monk, *The Sublime; a Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-century England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1960), 5.

seemed in fact completely counter intuitive to previous view aesthetics, and yet this precariousness and instability only enhanced its cultural and conceptual value.

This dissertation takes the quest for the sublime view as its starting point, expanding outwards to consider the way the emergence of firsthand experience in the development of taste cultivated an industry of domestic nature tourism which utilized a series of new representational techniques and technologies to increase its reach. In the subsequent chapters I trace this cultural shift and the eventual return back to an emphasis on representation by examining the prescription of embodied positions beginning in philosophical and critical texts in the 18th century, followed by popular travel texts and technologies in the 19th century, and, ending with the scenic film at the turn of the 20th century. The project relies on both close textual reading and discursive analysis, examining the paratextual and extratextual material surrounding the technologies and films in order to determine how the industry perceived the role of these objects in relation to the larger tradition surrounding nature appreciation. The goals of the project are threefold: provide a more comprehensive account of how discourses related to sublime spectatorship transformed with increased popularization of mechanical and virtual forms of travel in Great Britain; analyze the ways in which the authors and inventors of these texts and technologies attempted to negotiate previous historical debates, focusing, in particular, on representation, and, finally, investigate how the scenic film was able to sustain the industry associated with nature appreciation by highlighting the parallel concerns held by it and the emerging film industry.

The reversal between firsthand experience and its representation began in the philosophical domain where the appreciation of nature, once the most important subject for debates surrounding aesthetics, became increasingly avoided and neglected, a process that was mirrored in the popular sphere, albeit at a much slower rate. Unlike other projects, which take the

sublime as their primary object, my interest is in how this model of spectatorship is framed within the larger historical discourse. The dialectic at the heart of sublime spectatorship was itself symptomatic of a palpable anxiety that existed at the core of much of the British discourse surrounding the natural environment and its appreciation. The concept provided a performative, embodied platform in which to debate the relationship of subject and object, and, experience and representation. Underlying both dichotomies was the sheer impossibility of categorizing and framing (both literally and metaphorically) the role of the natural world in aesthetic appreciation. Media like film and the panorama attempted to provide stability by negotiating the immersive and contemplative aspects of the experience. At stake here is the deeply subversive role the sublime played in historical appraisals of the natural world.

Framing the View

A view typically involves the isolation of a series of elements from the rest of the visual field and their union into "a consistent whole".[3] In order to appreciate nature a framing model is necessary, and it is the instability and often paradoxical nature of that reliance on the view which makes the relationship between environmental aesthetics and the philosophy of art so tenuous. In the former, space is understood as being composed of an infinite series of views which the subject is standing inside rather than outside. The frame becomes, as Michael Snow describes, an epistemological tool: "That's to say that out of the universal field, knowledge isolates, selects and points out unities or differences which were not previously evident. Identification, definition

[3] Samuel Taylor Coleridge refers to this isolation and union when defining the manner in which the poet's imagination constructs allegories, here quoted from Lecture III of 1818, in *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), 30. William Wordsworth would return to this definition in both his poetry and the *Guide to the Lakes* (London: Henry Frowde, 1906).

is a matter of limits, of recognition of limitations, bounds, boundaries."[4] Landscape painting depends on a frame in order to distinguish between the world of painting and the world of the observer. It also reinforces what belongs in the view and what does not. It directs our attention into the depth of the scene rather than along its perimeter.

The cinematic frame is, by contrast, a very different ontological feature. While it makes interpretation and understanding possible by establishing limits to the internal visual field, it relies on the interaction between offscreen and onscreen space to be meaningful. In other words, the parts of the world which are visually absent are still necessarily conceptually present. Critic and theorist André Bazin turned to the screen rather than cinematic frame, describing it as something in which the world "pass[ed] through" rather than being bound within. Significance is therefore "continually threatened" by what is momentarily hidden from us.[5] Film scholar Catherine Russell follows in much the same vein. Drawing from the work of Stanley Cavell, she writes that "the fixed frame represents the intentionality of phenomenological consciousness, but it equally determines the limits of the visible and knowable. The fixed frame points to the subject of perception, and also to the four sides of the frame, beyond which is the continuity of the real as defined by the discontinuity of the frame."[6] Once the frame begins to move the visible and invisible become precariously interconnected, performing the same negotiation as an individual moving through space. In this sense film presents a culmination of both the field in environmental aesthetics and the philosophy of art; constantly building and dismantling the stability and certainty built into the frame.

---

[4] Michael Snow, "Michael Snow and Bruce Elder in Conversation, 1982" in *The Collected Writings of Michael Snow* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1994), 222.
[5] André Bazin, *Jean Renoir*, ed. Francois Truffaut (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), 89.
[6] Catherine Russell, "The Inhabited View: Landscape in the Films of David Rimmer" in *Landscape and Film*, ed. Martin Lefebvre (New York: Routledge, 2006), 152.

This resistance to being easily attained and controlled by a framework remains at the forefront of contemporary field environmental aesthetics. Like the initial, historical debates, the field's problematic nature was defined by the role of immersion, especially at the time of field's revival in the late 1960s. The essay that ushered in this resurgence was R.W. Hepburn's "Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty" first published in 1966.[7] In it Hepburn attempts to account for the shift away from the appreciation of nature by analyzing the differences between this form of embodied experience and the main aesthetic models of the day, which attempted to construct a unified system for making aesthetic judgments. He states that,

> Some writers have been impressed by the fact that certain crucial features of aesthetic experience are quite unobtainable in nature – a landscape does not minutely control the spectator's response to it as does a successful work of art; it is an unframed ordinary object, in contrast to the framed, "esoteric", "illusory," or "virtual" character of the art object. And so the artifact is taken as the aesthetic object *par excellence*, and the proper focus of study.[8]

In this account objects which can be appreciated aesthetically are necessarily framed and bounded. A person experiencing a natural space remains within that space and is forced to integrate a large variety of visual detail and sensation into the overall experience. Here the detachment which is necessary in order to reach the stage of contemplation is almost impossible to achieve if both terms remain defined in their conventional manner. What is needed is a way to construct a set of terms which do not just reconsider the differences between art objects and experiences in nature but approach them in a manner which reflects the positive ways these differences can enhance and complicate what we believe to be valuable in aesthetic theory. One

---

[7] Noël Carroll, *Beyond Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2001), 368.

[8] R. W. Hepburn, "Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty," *British Analytical Philosophy*, eds. B. Williams and A. Montefiore (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul,1966), 44.

of the most important aspects of these differences, for Hepburn, is the participatory nature of the latter. This participation allows for a reflexive internal free play where the individual engages in a transformative dialectic between performing the role of actor and spectator, allowing our creativity to be "challenged, set a task; and when things go well with us, we experience a sudden expansion of imagination that can be remarkable in its own right."[9] Here the very thing which is valued about the frame, specifically its stability and determinateness, is challenged by the accompanying possibilities provided by the unpredictable and interactional perceptual nature of environmental appreciation.

Like many other philosophers within the field, Hepburn avoids deviating completely from traditional accounts of aesthetic experience. He preserves some aspects of the framework by drawing a connection between the terms of immersion and Immanuel Kant's description of the internal free play of the faculties of understanding and imagination. This free play in turn allows a contemplative space to open up from within the immersive experience. Contemplation in this case differs slightly from that encountered when looking at an art object – Hepburn describes it as "restless" and open ended, continuously working in an "investigatory mode".[10] This mode allows for the necessary detachment from the environment in order that the spectator can begin to actively consider questions of point of view, distance, perspective and context. Of course Hepburn does not rule out the possibility that the mode could lead to associations and judgments which are empirical and objective, rather than purely aesthetic in nature, but, similar to his discussion of the role of immersion, he is able to suggest ways that these forms of interpretation can enhance and contextualize our aesthetic judgments. While discussing the naturalistic position and spatial context he writes:

[9] Ibid., 46.
[10] Ibid., 47.

> This sort of experience can readily be related to the movement we were examining, the movement towards more complex and comprehensive synopses. In addition to spatial extension (or sometimes instead of it), we may aim at enriching the interpretive element, taking this not as theoretical "knowledge about" the object or scene, but as helping to determine the aesthetic impact it makes upon us.[11]

Here Hepburn demonstrates a trend in environmental aesthetics that is now at the forefront of contemporary debates: the role of empirical knowledge about the ecological environment in facilitating and constructing aesthetic judgments. In one of his last published articles Hepburn compares the two sets of problems while re-considering one of the key natural phenomena to be debated by theorists of the sublime: space. Its potential as an object of aesthetic relevance is constantly being negotiated by its relationship to the embodied observer and its larger conceptual and cultural associations. He writes,

> Space is neither a substance nor a quality of substances. And, as we have known from Kant's day, there are problems also with a relational account of space... To add to the complexity, we ourselves are spatial beings: the arm I stretch out to point to a star is itself a portion of space, the same space (even if subject to different gravitational influences). Unlike the situation with most aesthetic objects, we cannot get right outside space so as to focus on it. We speak (or some of us do) about 'aesthetic distance'. If (as I have argued myself) distance is indeed a key concept in aesthetic theory, how can we make sense of distancing ourselves from space itself! Yet, remarkably that does seem possible.[12]

Hepburn argues that the environment took a back seat to concerns over the art object in aesthetic philosophy because of this complex set of concerns. The relationship between subject and natural world made it necessary to construct a theoretical framework which could account for excesses and nuances caught outside the bounds of the artistic frame.

---

[11] Ibid., 50.
[12] R. Hepburn, "The Aesthetics of Sky and Space," *Environmental Values* 19, no. 3 (2010): 277.

More recently Arnold Berleant responded to Hepburn's concerns by proposing a framework which could be applied to both environmental aesthetics and the philosophy of art. Much like my own thesis, Berleant's aesthetic theory borrows directly from 18th century work on the natural sublime. Unlike traditional accounts concerning beauty and aesthetic taste derived from Shaftesbury and Kant which require an attitude of disinterested appreciation, the sublime was the first aesthetic category to rely on participation, or what Berleant terms "an aesthetics of engagement".[13] Disinterested appreciation was made possible by enclosure devices that could isolate and construct a sense of separation and distance. In contrast, the sublime offered a model which accounted for experiences which exceeded the powers of the framing apparatus. Berleant argues that the concept could offer a "distinctive aesthetic of nature"[14] based on "continuity", "assimilation" and the interplay of subject and landscape rather than isolation and control[15]. This model understands the subject to be a participant in lived experience rather than observer, in this sense bestowing upon both the natural world and the internal faculties an important role in constructing the ever evolving state of appreciation.

Both Berleant and Hepburn present one of the main currents in the contemporary field: accounting for the historical neglect of the subject of the environment in the larger discipline. They, like many other writers, isolate the problem of a framing mechanism as the central reason why aesthetic philosophy slowly turned away from nature appreciation and towards art objects. But while interest in the problem may have waned in the late 19th and early 20th century philosophical realm, it remained consistently relevant in many avenues of culture, especially within Great Britain.

---

[13] Arnold Berleant, "The Aesthetics of Art and Nature," in *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, eds. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 237.
[14] Ibid., 234.
[15] Ibid., 235.

The standard historical reading of the field, including the work of Hepburn and Berleant, tends to follow the German, rather than British philosophical tradition. While Great Britain would establish the earliest facets of the disinterested nature of aesthetic judgments alongside key conceptual categories in which to judge different natural objects and spaces, it was Immanuel Kant who would synthesize this material at end of the 18th century. By the mid 19th century, aesthetic philosophy had turned away from concerns over natural beauty and shifted towards the role of art objects. The neglect of environmental aesthetics was largely due to the emphasis that Hegel placed on the role of art in expressing the "Absolute Spirit" and the supposed theoretical closure offered by Kant.[16] For the next hundred years aesthetic philosophy was predominately interested in determining frameworks which could only be applied to art objects and not natural spaces.

In these conventional readings the sublime largely mirrored the trajectory of philosophical discourse within the German tradition. Kant's aesthetic theory of the sublime is the most often cited amongst contemporary philosophers and ecocritics when defining and using the concept. The sublime figured prominently in Kant's larger philosophical project. It was instrumental in illuminating the overarching power of the faculty of reason, providing the subject with the necessary tools in which to overcome the limits of perception and transcend the power of Nature. This has meant that the term "sublime" has largely been understood as detrimental to the contemporary fields making up environmental studies.

Since the renewed rise in environmental studies in the past several decades, the sublime has come to be understood as "primarily an expression of asymmetrical power relationships",

[16] Allen Carlson, "Environmental Aesthetics." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Zalta. Stanford University, 21 June 2012. Web. 31 Mar. 2014, http://plato.stanford.edu/ archives/sum2012 /entries /environmental-aesthetics/.

whether between nature and culture, subject and object or male and female[17]. This interpretation sees it as an instrument supporting an anthropocentric worldview where the "authority and autonomy of [the] subject" is continually exercised "over and against a threatening other"[18] which, in this case, is represented by the natural environment. In William Cronon's "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature" he isolates the sublime as one of the key traditions in environmental aesthetics and ecocriticism which enabled the "othering" of nature and construction of tropes like the "wild". This opposition of nature and culture places history squarely in the domain of culture, allowing nature, defined within Cronon's context as wilderness, to be an "escape" from its demands.[19] Cronon describes the central paradox at the heart of the concept thus: "wilderness embodies a dualistic vision in which the human is entirely outside of the natural"[20] yet completely in control of its definition. Wilderness therefore becomes the keeper of our "own unexamined longings and desires"[21], a concept completely at the mercy of our changing cultural needs while remaining behind a mask of naturalness. The result of this uncritical acceptance of wilderness as a by-product of the natural sublime is a contradictory one; while it remains as something separate from us it is both feared and revered, domesticated and reified.

What has gone largely unrecognized amongst academics in the discipline are the other possible historical frameworks to draw from in order to redefine the terms and debates surrounding the concept. The British critics and philosophers who emerged in the 18th century provide multiple new through lines which avoid the hierarchical relationship defined by Kant at

---

[17] Christopher Hitt, "Toward an Ecological Sublime," *New Literary History* 30, no. 3 (1999): 603.
[18] Hitt, 603.
[19] William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995), 77.
[20] Cronon, 86.
[21] Ibid., 69.

the end of the century. The subversive role the sublime played historically in British environmental aesthetics not only challenges the definition supplied by its contemporary critics but also calls for its renewed viability in the field.

Unlike in Germany, where theoretical closure was offered, shifting it from the domain of aesthetics outwards to take a place amongst metaphysical and ethical frameworks, no such resolution was attained by British philosophers. As the 18th wore into the 19th century, theorists and critics remained just as divided over the exact cause of the affective and contemplative state they placed under the umbrella of the term. This dense and chaotic discursive terrain would be further complicated with the appearance of Romanticism, where subject and object became even more deeply intertwined. It is my contention that this lack of agreement on the theoretical level was the catalyst behind the sublime's re-emergence in the form of spectatorship in the popular sphere. In this context the shift away from the firsthand experience of nature occurred because of the manner in which the discourse re-surfaced and not because the philosophical realm had decided they had reached a conclusion and moved on.

One of these debates, the exact physical position of the spectator when experiencing the sublime, represents a perfect example of the precarious nature of aesthetic judgments when related to spaces rather than traditional art objects. The discourse surrounding these new modes of sublime spectatorship was in fact an attempt to negotiate and resolve the larger concern over the lack of a sufficient framing device, a problem which remains at the heart of the field to this day.

The Emergence of the Technological Sublime

Once the quest for experiencing the natural sublime shifted from the scholars and gentry to the newly emerging middle class, external framing mechanisms began to be invented in order to create a guarantee for the would-be spectator. As the sublime reached this state of crisis by falling out of favour with aestheticians, it quickly became reappropriated in a diminished form by the popular discourse surrounding certain technologies and the modes of experience they engendered. This conceptual shift is symptomatic of the larger cultural and philosophical debate over the role of nature, representation and technology in aesthetic experiences. Both the term and ancillary concerns surrounding spectatorship moved from theoretical texts, to topographical literature and travel guides, and, with the decline of Romanticism in the mid 19th century, became sublimated into a series of screen technologies like panoramas and dioramas, finally coming to rest in the emerging film industry. Each of these acted as prescriptive devices, instructing the spectator on the manner in which aesthetic judgments about natural spaces could be formed and articulated. None performed directly as aesthetic objects but rather existed in a liminal space between the natural and artistic world. The concept met with steep competition at the first stage of this transition. With the rising popularity of the domestic tour guide, the quest for the sublime was quickly rivaled by the picturesque. Imagery depicting the latter would be difficult to dislodge in the middle class imagination. It was therefore necessary for the sublime to quickly reassert itself in a slightly different role, that of the technology of representation rather than the representation itself.

Great Britain faced many of the same technological and economic upheavals as other countries in Europe during the period. In the 18th to early 19th century those changes were predominately related to the nature of domestic travel and the makeup of urban and rural landscapes. By the mid 19th century the effects were not so much reorganizing the physical

environment as the virtual one, transforming and reconstructing the way middle and working class people imagined that world. In Jean-Louis Comolli's "Machines of the Visible" he describes a pattern in Europe that is equally applicable to Great Britain, "The second half of the 19th century lives in a sort of frenzy of the visible. It is, of course, the effect of the social multiplication of images: even wider distribution of illustrated papers, waves of prints, caricatures, etc. The effect also, however, of something of a geographical extension of the field of the visible and representable by journeys, explorations, colonizations, the whole world becomes visible at the same time that it becomes appropriatable".[22] For the first time in history domestic travel, and virtual international travel, became accessible to larger and larger subsets of the population. First with cheaper and quicker travel links as the railroads expanded, and then with a series of new technological innovations and models of spectator address. Certain technologies of representation and styles of landscape imagery proliferated throughout the country, and, eventually, became both conceptually and popularly understood as being epistemologically equivalent to the natural spaces which they reproduced. This "inversion of priority of object over image"[23] dramatically changed the parameters of our relationship with natural spaces and the role of aesthetics in mediating that relationship.

This paradigm shift may seem to preclude the continued relevance of the sublime because the concept prescribed a form of firsthand embodied experience that always remained in excess to that which could be represented visually. But the term remained at the cornerstone of this representational arm of the cultural industry, both in the form of imagery circulating and the rhetoric surrounding many of the new technologies. The word came to naturalize these forms of

[22] Jean-Louis Comolli, "Machines of the Visible", *The Cinematic Appraratus*, eds. Teresa De Lauretis and Stephen Heath (St. Martin's Press, 1980), 122-123.
[23] Nancy Armstrong, "Realism Before and After Photography: 'The Fantastical Form of a Relation among Things,'" in *A Concise Companion to Realism*, ed. Matthew Beaumont (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 105.

representation while also explicitly linking them to the ongoing problematic that the term stood in for. These media attempted to mimic firsthand experience by addressing and redefining the nature and role of the frame rather than being solely interested in the verisimilitude of the content depicted. In this sense they pressured the formal and physical limits of the frame in order to construct an experience that was as precarious and complex as the 'real' thing.

The earliest examples of what I, borrowing the term from contemporary historians Tom Gunning and David E. Ney, call the technological sublime, was the 360-degree painted panorama, emerging at the turn of the 19th century. This new form of screen entertainment not only employed both immersive and contemplative modes of address but routinely used the term "sublime" to advertise its specific form of spectacle. As Ann Friedberg describes while comparing panoptic and panoramic forms of address, this immersive technology constructed a form of pleasure predicated "in a world not present"[24]. She goes on to say, "Unlike the confinement of the panoptic system, many protocinematic devices negotiated spatial and temporal illusions. In short, all of these forms depended on the immobility of the spectator, a stasis rewarded by the imaginary mobilities that such fixity provided."[25] In the case of the painted (not moving) panorama, the spectator may not have been completely immobile, but the role of vision was definitely emphasized over and above the rest of the body. By eliminating the frame, the panorama was able to replicate properties of the participatory form of visual engagement that occurred when actually immersed in a landscape. With a sweep of the head, the eye could construct its own overlapping forms of aesthetic appreciation. Unlike many of the walking guides which were being published during the same period, the panorama valorized the

[24] Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (London: University of California Press, 1994), 28.
[25] Ibid., 37.

succession of views rather than the process of physically moving through space. This detachment of the eye from the body performs as a transitional link between firsthand experience, the guide book, and the emergence of cinema.

Friedberg describes the relationship between the two architectures of display as the "simultaneous presence" of the "notion of the unified *place* combined with a notion of *journey*"[26]. But while the panorama valorized the destination and eliminated most reference to the journey, the cinematic medium either paired the two or foregrounded the journey itself. This was most notable in the scenic and travelogue genres which slowly began to test the role of the screen in relation to the frame through the addition of formal features like camera movement, editing patterns and novel uses of proximity and distance. Cinema was able to construct a representational middle ground between guide books and early screen entertainment because it could present a series of different forms of movement, both mechanized and non-mechanized, often from a subjective point of view, juxtaposed with natural phenomena. This provided simulated access to the precarious point of sublime spectatorship where immersion and contemplation could meet.

It is in this sense that I understand the scenic genre to be embedded in the cultural industry surrounding nature appreciation. Adopting André Gaudreault's historical methodology based on the intermedial nature of early film, this dissertation approaches this segment of actuality filmmaking as symptomatic of these larger cultural debates and preoccupations rather than directly as a facet of the slowly emerging film industry. Early scenic producers advertised these films using much the same rhetoric as the panoramas, guide books and travel lectures, constructing a clear link between both sets of formal and epistemological priorities. There has

[26] Ibid.,29.

been a gap in scholarship dedicated to the role of early cinema within the wider industry and discourse. While a lot has been written on the two in relation to the United States, almost none establishes the same link in Britain without privileging the role of the sublime in the pictorial arts. This is despite the fact that the country had been at the centre of the cult of nature appreciation for at least a century prior to the period in question, and would be the last national industry to stop producing the cinematic genre.[27]

My dissertation examines both the cultural and philosophical conditions which transformed the aesthetic concept, and also uses the concept as a tool of analysis to compare and interpret the scenic genre. I will argue that the discourse which surrounded the natural sublime offers a kind of framework for its own model of spectatorship that problematizes the traditional correlation between distance, detachment and aesthetic contemplation. Of course, constructing a historical and theoretical account of sublime spectatorship which addressed the entire period of transition between the 18th and 20th century isn't possible within the constraints of a dissertation, not only because of the limitations of space and time but also because of both the volume and scarcity of certain categories of primary sources. For this reason each of the chapters takes on its own overlapping case study which builds on the work of different fields and sources of data. This interdisciplinary approach made it possible for me to address the manner in which the earliest debates transformed as they shifted between discursive spheres without neglecting the distinct historical and theoretical concerns of each period and group of people.

My case studies pair the shift of the term with the emergence of new forms of nature tourism: the Grand, Romantic, Panoramic, and Cinematic Tour. Each of these tours was tied to a

[27] One such example is a research project which occurred between 2007 and 2009 at the Tate Britain called *The Sublime Object: Nature, Art, Language*, where a large group of art historians and theoreticians came together to write a series of articles (paired with an exhibition) historicizing the sublime from the Baroque period up until today. That project was only interested in the sublime's relationship to visual art work rather than film however.

different technology of representation which used the rhetoric of the sublime to sustain its popularity. The project begins with the rise of interest in nature appreciation and the sublime in British aesthetics, and then moves on to consider its role in the formation of specific cultural practices associated with regional travel in Wales, the Lake district and the Scottish Highlands, the introduction of technologically mediated forms of representation into the realm of landscape aesthetics, and, finally, the emergence of the technological sublime in early scenics through the interplay of contemplative and immersive modes of spectatorship. That lineage is broken up into five chapters beginning with a theoretical discussion, followed by two chapters dedicated to William Wordsworth's Romantic walking tour and its contentious relationship to the panoramic tour, and ending with two chapters on early and transitional scenic films.

The first chapter introduces the philosophical concept of the sublime through its relationship to the emergence and valorization of firsthand experience linked to cultural practices like the Grand Tour. It goes on to outline its potential as a model of spectatorship through the textual analysis of a series of key critical and philosophical figures who constructed the original model of the natural sublime through prescribed states of embodied awareness. Each figure legitimized those conditions by reflecting on their relation to the neoclassical model of spectatorship and cultural practices associated with an aesthetic education. The chapter maps out the 18th century model within the context of empiricism, looking at how changes to our perceptual faculties affected the role of natural objects in creating and legitimizing specific aesthetic experiences. It traces four pairings as they became increasingly intertwined throughout the century: beauty and the sublime, proximity and distance, immersion and contemplation and fear and astonishment. The last concept rose to become the most heavily debated, representing at times both cause and effect while slowly seeping into the other pairings, transforming them from

strict dichotomies into complex dialectics. My concerns fall primarily on the conditions which elicit the shift between the two poles. These conditions include both the physical position of subject and object, and the cultural and philosophical assumptions held by the subject which framed that experience in a manner that could bridge the gap between overwhelming astonishment and contemplation. This philosophical discussion is bookended by the important role of topographical literature and personal experience in acting as a catalyst for the natural sublime. Not only did this material provide the rupture for its emergence and legitimization, but it also constructed the necessary channels which allowed for the sets of debates to transition into other cultural and socio-economic spheres.

The chapter uses a detailed textual analysis of multiple key figures in order to establish that a model of spectatorship was in fact a key component of the sublime running throughout the entire 18th century. It was both necessary to present a breadth of textual evidence in order to create a strong case for the model's continued relevance in the next century and to be able to present the variety of competing frameworks which were still very much at play at the end of the century.

The second chapter examines how the concept of the sublime transformed and was re-problematized as it made the shift into different socio-economic spheres, beginning with the predicament it posed for those wishing to represent it. This quandary rested on the role of the imagination as it attempted to make contact with the natural world. Debates ricocheted between its all out impossibility to its potential to be addressed selectively in visual form or metaphorically in language. The discussion occurred at the end of 18th and beginning of the 19th century, mirroring a debate over the manner in which to represent all natural phenomena by practitioners of the picturesque. The chapter uses both sets of debates to examine the way the

18th century model was employed by the Romantics to develop a larger poetic methodology. Rather than attempt to unpack the complex conceptual terrain of the Romantic sublime through an analysis of different Romantic figures and texts, this section isolates a single figure, William Wordsworth, and considers him in relation to the travel genre. His *Guide to the Lakes,* published in five editions, performs at the nexus between practical travel guide and Romantic doctrine. Unlike his poetry which has undergone extensive interpretive treatment, the *Guide* has only slowly been gaining attention in academic circles, whether in literature, or in more unexpected places, like cultural geography. When read through the lens of his poetic work, the guide becomes an expression of the manner in which the imagination's potential was heavily intertwined with the natural world. The concept of the sublime acted as a metaphoric stand in for the point at which language, the poetic eye, and firsthand experience met.

The chapter also uses the guide as a way to trace the development of the domestic industry surrounding nature tourism. I compare Wordsworth's guide to the tour guides written by William Gilpin and Thomas West's *A Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire.* With the publication of the latter, written at the height of the Grand Tour, came increased interest in the natural marvels which existed in England. This interest either mimicked the approach of the Grand Tour, looking for natural spaces that had the same impact as those found on the continent or, through the establishment of the picturesque, rejected previous convention and placed value directly on spaces that were more typically thought of as "English".

While both sets of guidebooks discussed interest and access to elevated views at some length, they offered contradictory perspectives on the drastic transformation occurring around travel in the early 19th century. The picturesque replicated many of the values of the guides and writing dedicated to the Grand Tour; it foregrounded destinations and static views over and

above the process of the journey itself, which was largely eliminated from the discussion. Wordsworth's guide and poetry presented a reversal of these two stages, his work used the process of moving through different spaces as a way of testing the epistemological and aesthetic limits of his internal faculties. Walking became a tool of the poetic imagination and, eventually, took on its own ideological role, addressing increasing anxiety towards industrialization and the loss of traditional forms of labour and relationships with rural landscapes.

Like the first chapter, this chapter also relies on significant textual evidence and builds on the work of several Wordsworth specialists before incorporating the Guide which, falling outside of the main Romantic canon, has been given significantly less consideration. Wordsworth's poetic work is used to flesh out his larger narrative on the natural sublime and to determine whether firsthand experience remained a priority within his larger Romantic project.

The next chapter compares Wordsworth's methodology to screen entertainment popping up in urban centers. While there were an increasing variety of visual technologies that addressed facets of the sublime problematic, in particular the juxtaposition and prescription of different points of view, across the 19th century, I only consider the painted panorama. A detailed historical tracing of each of these texts and technologies would be largely outside the scope of this project and in many ways unnecessary to the historical argument I am defending. The 360-degree panorama, rising and falling in popularity between the turn of the 19th century and late 1890s, was at the forefront of the cultural and aesthetic debate. Not only did it rely on the tension between frame and appreciation to compete with traditional landscape painting, but also used the term "sublime" in its rhetoric to strengthen its links to the places and spaces it attempt to recapture. A complex industry was built upon these two uses of the 18th century debate, one which was quickly taken up by the press and spectators alike. The painted panorama was the first

to attempt to construct a stand in for firsthand experience which could account for all of the drawbacks related to previous forms of visual representation. Unlike the magic lantern shows, travel lecturers, photography and plethora of screen entertainment that attempted to cash in on the popularity of the original technology, the panorama was fueled by the precariousness between subject and object, distance and immersion.

Following Gillen D'arcy Wood's *The Shock of the Real*, the chapter looks specifically at the role of painted panoramas in staging the model of spectatorship offered by the sublime without offering access to the same manner of contemplation. The painted panorama embedded the subject matter valued by the picturesque within a visual technology which aimed to overwhelm the eye through its mode of display, and the manner in which it privileged visual detail. This dependence upon realistic detail placed it at odds with the conventional aesthetic values of the period, begging the question as to whether the panorama invoked an aesthetic experience at all. Mirroring the work of Jonathan Crary, who looks at the relationship between the 18th and 19th century aesthetic, epistemological and technological discourse and the reconstruction and re-evaluation of the senses, it looks at the panorama as a model of perception which problematizes the modern relationship of subject and object by attempting to overcome the limits of the sensory faculties. The chapter discusses this dichotomy in relation to the panorama's architecture of display, paying specific attention to the expansion and reconstruction of the frame.

While there have been multiple monographs exploring moving and painted panoramas as both precursors to cinema and as part emerging field of media archaeology,[28] my work expands

[28] The most exhaustive of these are Bernard Comment's *The Painted Panorama* (London: Reaktion, 1999), Stephen Oettermann's *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), and Erkki Huhtamo's

out from the actual technology and its history to examine how the industry used previous debates and rhetoric surrounding the natural sublime, like the impossibility of its representation, in its promotional and press material. In order to do this I examine the remaining pamphlets which accompanied each new painting and the newspaper *The Era* over the period of its first publications in 1838 until the closure of the Leicester Square panorama in 1863. *The Era* was a weekly national newspaper that quickly began to specialise in theatrical and music hall events in London and the surrounding major urban areas. It advertised and reviewed many of the competing 360-degree painted panoramas in London until the industry began to decline. What I found by tracing and comparing the pamphlets and press coverage was a complex reversal of image and firsthand experience, leading, eventually, to what I have called the technological sublime.

The second half of the chapter explicitly deals with this reversal. It compares the spectatorial relationship constructed by the panorama with Wordsworth's claim that it invoked a kind of reversal of the requirements of the sublime, and David E Ney's description of the technological sublime. Both comparisons draw on the debates occurring at the time over the role of appearances and artificiality in the realm of epistemology and aesthetics. In Wordsworth's case the panorama privileged a kind of visual detail which denied the imagination its rightful place. The panorama externalised that which should only be accessed internally and it thus denied that which it seemed to offer: a point of view which could elevate the mind.[29] What Wood begins to gesture to in Wordsworth's poetry becomes even more explicit when approached through the dialectic of immersion and detachment. While Wordsworth describes the

---

Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles (Cambridge, MA: MiT Press, 2013).

[29] Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860* (New York, NY : Palgrave, 2001), 109.

imagination and natural world as moving through each other, shifting the 18th century debate over cause and effect, the painted panorama can only preserve a separation. Here the tenets of the picturesque and the precarious position of the spectator in the sublime are conflated in a way that denies both their full complexity. If the panorama does in fact correlate to a version of the negative pleasure associated with the sublime, that pleasure only amplifies the power of the medium itself. The medium is intertwined with nature, naturalizing its effects at the same time as it overcomes many of the limitations defined within actual picturesque and "sublime" tours. It is experienced at once as both real and constructed, creating the first shift towards the technological sublime.

The final two chapters of my dissertation engage with the early British scenic film, both as part of the cultural institution associated with nature appreciation and as a way to model the changing discourse around the natural and technological sublime. Rather than address the rhetoric around the technology itself, the chapters examine concerns over the nature of the screen and the architecture of address. In it I argue that, unlike in the case of the panorama, the scenic films made between 1895 and 1920, straddling both the early and transitional period, dealt with concerns over the precarious relationship between immersion and contemplation through their formal structures. These concerns took the problematization of display and spectatorship which was constructed by the physical structure of the painted panorama and placed them instead within the film text itself.

During my research I examined two hundred scenic films, the vast majority of which were produced in and by British companies between 1896 and 1915. I focused my attention on the pattern of shots, subject matter, and use of different framing devices. After cataloguing both the most common and interesting examples, I began to cross reference them with their entry in

the production catalogues and, if possible, any press reviews still available. The chapter employs close readings of a selection of those films in order to ascertain how the films addressed concerns over the precarious relationship between immersion and contemplation within their formal structures. The descriptions published by the production companies helped me substantiate the claim that filmmakers were aware of features of the larger debate surrounding the sublime and actively engaging with its rhetoric inside their scenic films. Unfortunately, like the other case studies, little data related to individual reception of each film has been preserved, so my argument remains, for the most part, attached to the film texts and their intended effect rather than their actual historical one.

The first of these chapters looks at the earliest incarnations of the scenic genre produced between 1896 and 1906. During these first ten years the genre slowly began to include a variety of formal components which changed the nature of the screen and frame. Here I analyze the similarities between the sublime model of spectatorship and that constructed by the shift from panorama to forward tracking shot. The chapter places these two camera movements alongside the interplay of static point of views which were used in other early scenic films. All three reconstructed the boundaries of traditional conceptions of proximity, distance and the limits of the frame, three issues which were at the heart of concerns about, and the possibility of, the appreciation of nature. Like the painted panorama the early scenic placed real locations on display. However, they were not aesthetic objects per se, but, rather, they participated within part of that discourse.

This chapter is written in dialogue with Tom Gunning and André Gaudreault's cinema of attractions model of spectatorship. Its main purpose is to compare the relationship between immersion and contemplation in the model of spectatorship constructed by the natural sublime to

the latter through the contrasting usages of the term “astonishment” and the neglected role of contemplation. This analysis will map out the ways in which many of the British scenics exceeded the parameters defined by the cinema of attraction model. The pairing of the two models of spectatorship offers a more nuanced way of interpreting the effects which many of these films produced as well as helping us understand the films in relation to their contextual lineage where contemplation and immersion were not understood as opposing forces but rather complex and continuous forms of spectatorial negotiation. The chapter begins with a historical tracing of the relationship between the panorama and scenic film as part of the travel industry, a comparison of their approaches in regards to the spectator and the different ways in which the British production houses reconstructed the ‘travel’ genre. It will then turn to a detailed conceptual discussion of the model of spectatorship which the films constructed through their formal attributes and catalogue descriptions.

The fifth and final chapter examines scenic films produced after 1906 in Great Britain. Unlike the fictional narrative which went through an extensive transformation in the late 1910s, the scenic genre remained, formally speaking, relatively stable well past the First World War. This stability is so far an undertheorized part of contemporary discussions surrounding the early period. The chapter argues that one possible reason for the lack of change was the importance of the genre’s embeddedness within the larger cultural discourse. This long view is proposed as an alternative to the so called ‘modernity thesis’ which defines cinematic address and spectatorship in relation to the late 19th century. By extending the historical narrative much further backwards, new insights about the complexity and larger cultural concerns can be drawn from the genre, as well as a much more accurate picture as to the role differing models of spectatorship had in mediating ongoing fears over the rapid industrialization of pastoral spaces in Britain.

The chapter tackles these historiographical issues through two of the leading producers of the scenic film: Cecil Hepworth and Charles Urban. Each used formal components of the earlier genres and organized them in the manner of the tour guides, highlighting specific views, popular activities and the best manner in which to travel to these locations. A selection of films by each production company will be used as case studies to examine the changes that occurred when earlier approaches which were originally appreciated for either their visceral and/or formal qualities were used as a means towards a larger narrative goal. The travelogues often acted as both virtual tours and as a way to advertise components of the real tours, like rail companies who specialized on bringing people to seaside locations. In a similar manner to the earlier scenics, these films often devoted just as much time, if not more, to the manner in which the spectator could get to the location as they did to the actual views themselves. While the earlier instances engaged with the concerns of their audience over access and experience, these films began to be more interested in the legibility of the overall sequence of events which they presented. What differentiated the two production companies was the larger overall importance they attached to the depiction of natural phenomenon. Hepworth foreground the aesthetic, while Urban the scientific potential. But even with this divergence both placed an incredible amount of value in the genre, seeing it as the establishment of a larger world view rather than solely a vehicle for tourism or spectacle. The two views were firmly entrenched in the same anxieties which haunted the earliest debates.

This historical narrative tracing the reversal of nature appreciation through the natural and technological sublime, explores the parallels between the emergence of environmental aesthetics and film studies. It is meant to gesture towards the potential role of the sublime model of spectatorship in domains that fall outside the purview of early cinema, precinematic visual

culture and environmental aesthetics. Many of the questions that concern this dissertation mirror the concerns of theorists interested in film specificity and screen studies. Immersion, absorption, detachment, and distanciation have a complex history which seems to resonate throughout film theory. As Stanley Cavell queries: "What is it that the screen gives us access to and what is it that it conceals us from? Or perhaps conceals from us?".[30] The discourses surrounding the historical sublime renegotiate these ontological concerns over the nature of the cinematic frame and screen by placing them within a larger cultural debate. Both the screen and frame become technologies of mitigation, allowing us to test out the precarious nature of our own experiences.

Within the framework of early cinema, the natural and technological sublime play an incisive role in dismantling the conventional binaries which are attached to the first decade of cinema. By reframing astonishment within this particular cultural context, the term becomes less a point of rupture, differentiating the emergence of film from what came before and after, then a point of continuity addressing the complexities of the debates surrounding nature appreciation. At the centre of the 18th century sublime is not spectacle but a conceptualization of spectacle which captures and invites a state of tranquility in the mind of the viewer. As Joseph Addison writes, "We are flung into a pleasing astonishment at such unbounded views, and feel a delightful stillness and amazement in the soul at the apprehension of them."[31] That "spectacle-spectatorship dynamic"[32] poses larger questions about the ability of affect and association to exceed specific ideological structures and elicit reflexive and participatory contemplative

---

[30] Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film,* Enlarged ed. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1979), 24.
[31] Joseph Addison, "On the Pleasures of the Imagination," in *The Spectator*, no. 412, June 23, 1712.
[32] Christine Riding, "Shipwreck, Self-preservation and the Sublime", *The Art of the Sublime*, eds. Nigel Llewellyn and Christine Riding, January 2013, 11 January 2014 , http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/christine-riding-shipwreck-self-preservation-and-the-sublime-r1133015.

engagement. My project seeks to unpack the precarious place between separation and incorporation where thought and embodied perception intersect. By interrogating the inversion of object and image which occurred historically I do not wish to reverse the hierarchy but, rather, delve into the manner in which representational technologies allow us to encounter the natural world.

Chapter 1

The Grand Tour and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature

The sublime has had a contentious relationship with the fields of environmental aesthetics and criticism in the past few decades. Usually associated with the German philosophical tradition rather than the British, the sublime has come to represent the placement of reason over the natural world where opposition is fore grounded over exchange and engagement. With that framework in place critics and theorists from a range of disciplines, including critical theory and ecocriticism, have interpreted the concept as symbolizing a hierarchical relationship between the internal and external world. In a rare piece of scholarship exploring the potential of an "ecological sublime", Christopher Hitt lamented the fact that previous critics had all but reduced the function of "the sublime encounter" to an "estrangement" from the natural world.[33] This interpretation of the sublime, cemented in Kant's philosophical work, has neglected a whole host of other philosophical accounts of the concept which came out of Great Britain during the same period. These accounts offer environmental aesthetics a very different set of conditions and questions in which to consider our epistemological and aesthetic relationship with the natural world. One of the most crucial debates to emerge from the century was that surrounding the physical placement of spectator when attempting to experience the sublime in nature. Unlike the importance Kant placed on the potential of the internal faculties to control the effects of the natural world, the British debate over embodied viewpoint was much more interested in the interdependent roles of both the external world and internal faculties.

[33] Hitt,605.

The 18th century placed great emphasis on firsthand contact with nature in order to cultivate the appropriate standard of taste. The shift was problematic because it precluded the framing devices which made previous theories of knowledge and taste consistent and stable. The introduction of the sublime into the British lexicon was symptomatic of this larger tension. The experience was inherently precarious and driven by new modes of spectatorship like immersion and engagement that had been hitherto unexplored. This chapter maps out the complex construction of the philosophical concept of the sublime over the 18th century through the key British thinkers and critics debating its role in relation to the appreciation of nature. It provides a new interpretation of that historical material by isolating those figures that emphasized the model of spectatorship necessary for experiencing the sublime, arguing that this through-line is in fact one of the most useful facets of the debate for contemporary environmental aesthetics and film studies.[34]

The chapter examines the original model as it evolved through four interrelated stages of philosophical concern: Firstly, how were these new forms of pleasure characterized by those experiencing them? Secondly, if these affective states did not arise from the same properties established by previous models of taste, what in fact caused them? Thirdly, which internal faculties were responsible for responding to these causes? And, lastly, how did the observer's

[34] There have been many collections and monographs dedicated to all facets of the sublime. Two of the most complete in relation to the British context are Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla's reader entitled *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Samuel Monk's *The Sublime; a Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-century England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1960). The theme of this project, spectatorship, has only been discussed once in relation to the same historical period; by Christine Riding in her article "Shipwreck, Self-preservation and the Sublime" in *The Art of the Sublime* eds. Nigel Llewellyn and Christine Riding, January 2013, 11 January 2014 , http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/christine-riding-shipwreck-self-preservation-and-the-sublime-r1133015.

physical location affect this shift between cause and effect? Even though the concept was discussed in relation to many different highly contradictory methodological frameworks, over the course of the century a particular through-line began to emerge. The sublime was described as the pairing of two very unlikely models of spectatorship—astonishment and contemplation. Even more incredibly, the first was quickly understood to be the catalyst for the second. The seeming inherent paradox which the sublime operated upon was necessarily precarious; it could only be experienced under very specific internal and external conditions. While many British critics and philosophers touched upon the debate within their own models of taste, this chapter only traces the figures who were at the centre of the debate over the role of proximity and distance in accessing the sublime experience in nature. They each felt it necessary to prescribe a specific model of address in order to attain and legitimize the aesthetic experience. Rather than aiding in solidifying a single conceptual framework for the term, this concern for spectatorship only increased the tension surrounding the sublime. This meant that unlike in the case of the German context the concept remained in flux for British thinkers throughout the 18th century.

The importance of this ongoing conceptual instability, stemming from an emphasis on physical placement, mediation, and framing, cannot be overstated in the British context. The sublime emerged in direct opposition to each preceding notion of proportion, setting and vantage point. While aesthetic experience demanded its own particular mediating device, the period failed to provide a suitable and consistent framework. This lack of conceptual closure would eventually allow the term to resurface outside of the philosophical sphere constructing its very own cultural industry bent on resolving the dilemma. Topographical literature, walking tours, screen entertainment and, by the turn of 20th century, moving picture shows, would all capitalize on the concept's elusiveness and popularity by each presenting their own narratives on the role

of immersion and contemplation in relation to making aesthetic judgments about natural spaces. Not only would British companies continue to make and distribute scenic films concerned with the sublime experience long after other national industries had transitioned away, but the sublime would remain the dominant metaphor for describing the point of mediation between observer and natural world. [35]

The Sublime and the Beautiful

Modern discussions of the sublime have largely emerged from disciplinary concerns outside of considerations for nature and environmental aesthetics, and have repeated a historical narrative which either conflates the rhetorical discourse with the natural one, or proposes that the taste for the wild and vast were rooted in the former. It is of course impossible to completely disentangle the two or convincingly pinpoint one singular cultural and theoretical cause for the shift, but by isolating new translations by Nicholas Boileau of Longinus' *On the Sublime* and following the rhetorical thread as it intersected with those interested in the natural world, one misses the complexity of the historical period, its relation to the 17th century, and, to a large extent, how vastly implausible many of these attitudes towards nature would have been just a century before. The 18th century was not the first period in which a British gentleman encountered the majesty of the Continent and the immensity of, for example, a mountain range. But it wasn't until that century that more than a handful of critics and thinkers found pleasure and merit in these kinds of sights.

---

[35] The pictorial aesthetic which dominated the early scenic persisted well into the 1920s. See Christine Gledhill, *Reframing British Cinema: 1918-1928 ; between Restraint and Passion* (London: Bfi Publ., 2003),57.

While the popularity of the Grand Tour did not begin until the second half of the 17th century, there were quite a few British people who made the trip to the Continent to acquire an education in taste prior to the period. The natural environment has had an important, if not paradoxical cultural role, for Britons reaching back to the 16th century (and most probably even further back) but prior to the 17th century most critics and artists made contact with the environment through textual sources, usually referring to Scripture or classical poetry, rather than by analysing it directly.[36] This circular discourse relied on and passed down specific tropes and manners of classification that usually either remained disinterested in the objects of external nature, or were interested in them primarily as analogical devices.[37]

The 18th century is understood historically as articulating the initial boundaries and properties of our modern understanding of the aesthetic judgment. That debate necessarily came about as an offshoot of the larger epistemological debates over the nature and role of the mental faculties in accessing the outside world. As Peter de Bolla writes, "it fell to this period in particular to articulate the complexities of affective experience, and it did so in the context of an emerging new understanding of the construction of the subject." [38] While the period did not define a unified theory of aesthetics, it vigorously debated the properties which defined various

---

[36] Marjorie Hope Nicolson. *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory; the Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1959), 38.

[37] As Hope argues, 17th century critics and literary figures referred to nature's small and serene features rather than the majestic and irregular ones which were the standard for the 18th century sublime. There are two overarching reasons for this, the first being that the vast majority of 17th century poets had never seen a mountain, and the second that nature was mostly of literary interest when it functioned as a material manifestation of the theological realm (either directly or indirectly by reference to the physical and psychological features held by human beings). When mountainscapes were described they performed the same role, but these passages were largely borrowed from the Romans or biblical scripture rather than referring to any specific landscape the author had encountered. The adjectives and analogies that were associated with rough and wild landscapes quickly became conventional tropes allowing the rare mention of a mountain to be quickly interpreted by the readers and critics of the period as allegorical rather than aesthetic in tone. Hope refers to this literary and cultural attitude as "mountain gloom" which would eventually be reversed into "mountain glory". See "The Literary Heritage," in *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1959), 34-71.

[38] Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla,*The Sublime: a Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 1.

forms of affective experience and their potential causes, whether out in the world or stemming from inside the mind of the subject. Nature and the manner of its appreciation were the primary objects of concern for British philosophers debating those parameters and firsthand experiences of natural spaces became fundamental to an aesthetic education. The period established the disinterested nature of aesthetic judgments alongside key conceptual categories in which to judge different natural objects and spaces, the sublime being the most hotly debated.

The majority of British contributors to the discussion of taste in the 18th century turned away from previously held conventions and authorities, and began, as Locke would put it, to "appeal to" their own "unprejudiced experience and observation"[39]. Even those who remained Platonists, like Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson, began to consider the complex relationship between our phenomenology of sensation and the emotions which often seemed immediate and causally determined. The three most important theoretical schools of thought during the century all constructed a different hierarchy between the possible efficient cause and particular object of the pleasure associated with taste. Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Thomas Reid saw the human mind and its relationship to each person's internal sense as the necessary primary mover, while Joseph Addison and Edmund Burke left that role to the representational power of the imagination and its sensory connections to the material world. Alexander Gerard and Archibald Alison shifted the debate away from the dichotomy of the intellectual and material and instead placed emphasis on the pleasure created in the mind while constructing different kinds of associations within the imagination. All three groups began to create distinct and cohesive models of taste which could account for the pleasure which occurred when coming into contact with certain material objects, avoid the conflation between sensation and emotion, and identify the faculty or

[39] John Locke, *The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke: With a General Introd. and Commentary*, comp. John W. Yolton. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 129.

faculties which were either involved or required in order to make judgments about the objects, and ideas, in question. As the century proceeded the sublime became the testing ground for many of these frameworks, either by Hutcheson, Addison, Burke, Gerard and Allison in the philosophical sphere or by the increasing number of gentlemen interested in criticism in the larger intellectual and popular sphere.

Writing on the sublime began by solely focusing upon the experiential, placing the efficient cause in a taxonomy of material forces. It eventually expanded to the complex internal realm focussing on the affective state, and, by the end of the century much of the debate became reflexive, critically examining the earlier emphasis on cause and effect.[40] In 1712 Addison published his essay "Pleasures of Imagination" where he divided taste into three categories: the great, the uncommon and the beautiful. He reserved the word "sublime" for when he discussed its rhetorical applications. The three categories refer to the "pleasures of the imagination, which arise from the actual view and survey of outward objects".[41] Addison's initial description of "the great" became the most popular amongst critics throughout the century. While identifying specific natural objects, like the "vast uncultivated desert" and "huge heaps of mountains", which could stimulate pleasure he writes "Our imagination loves to be filled with an object, or to grasp at anything that is too big for its capacity. We are flung into a pleasing astonishment at such unbounded views, and feel a delightful stillness and amazement in the soul at the apprehension of them... Such wide and undetermined prospects are as pleasing to the fancy, as the speculations of eternity or infinitude are to the understanding."[42] We see the same emphasis on the ability of the internal faculties to extend as they come into contact with natural

[40] Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla, 9.
[41] Joseph Addison, "The Spectator," in *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 62.

[42] Addison, 66.

phenomena in Joseph Priestley's writing in 1777, "The mind, as was observed before, conforming and adapting itself to the objects to which its attention is engaged, must, as it were, enlarge itself, to conceive a great object. This requires considerable *effort of the imagination*, which is also attended with a pleasing though perhaps not a distinct and explicit consciousness of the strength and extent of our own powers."[43] And by associationalists like Alexander Gerard in 1759:

> When a large object is presented, the mind expands itself to the extent of that object, and is filled with one grand sensation, which totally possessing it, composes it into a solemn sedateness, and striking it with deep silent wonder and admiration: it finds such a difficulty in spreading itself to the dimensions of its object, as enlivens and invigorates its frame: and having overcome the opposition which this occasions, it sometimes imagines itself present in every part of the scene, which it contemplates; and, from the sense of this immensity, feels a noble pride, and entertains a lofty conception of its own capacity.[44]

While each of these definitions come from a different decade and are predicated on very different frameworks, they present a good overview of what most accounts held in common. A sublime experience involved the expansion of a specific internal faculty, usually the imagination, which as it reached, and sometimes breached, its limits initiated a pleasurable emotion and ancillary ideas that reflected back upon the experience. All three of course are consistent with Longinus's original rhetorical definition: "For the true sublime naturally elevates us: uplifted

[43] Joseph Priestley, "A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism," in *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 119.

[44] Alexander Gerard, "An Essay on Taste," in *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 168.

with a sense of proud exaltation, we are filled with joy and pride, as if we had ourselves produced the very thing heard."[45]

The sublime, even more than the beautiful, necessitated an analytic of the imagination. Not only did the imagination routinely become employed directly in its conceptual definition, as reflected above, but the aesthetic experience often denied direct recourse to the faculty of reason making it necessary to identify which faculty acted as intermediary when contact was necessary. While Addison describes the imagination as the site of pleasure when experiencing the sublime, the faculty was not the same as that which was responsible for judgments of taste. The imagination was primarily representational; it gave taste its object through imagery, though, in most cases, it remained separate from the external senses. Taste was itself a product of the faculty of judgment which was responsible for discerning to what degree the object qualified as inducing an aesthetic response.

The Natural World and the Problem of Causation

Contact with the natural world was paramount to debates up until the mid-century. Addison distinguished between primary pleasure and secondary pleasures placing emphasis on the first. Primary objects of pleasure were those natural objects which could be immediately placed within sight while secondary ones appeared inside the mind of the subject in some other manner. "If we consider the works of *nature* or *art*, as they are qualified to entertain the imagination, we shall find the last very defective, in comparison of the former" he writes, "for though they may

[45] Longinus, *On the Sublime*, Trans. W.H. Fyfe, rev. Donald Russell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), sect. 7, 179.

sometimes appear as beautiful or strange, they can have nothing in them of that vastness and immensity, which afford so great an entertainment to the mind of the beholder."[46]

Addison's theory was eventually eclipsed by Edmund Burke in 1757. He devised perhaps the most often cited treatise on the sublime and the beautiful. While much of his framework derived from Addison's concept of the imagination, he placed even more importance on the relationship between the physiological properties of the subject and their affective response. Burke was most interested in the role of terror and the negative pleasure which arrives in the face of self preservation. He wrote, "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversation about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling."[47] Terror operates out of the "passions which belong to self-preservation"[48] which itself "turn[s] on pain and danger"[49]. Self-preservation is the only passion which elicits delight when oscillating between absence and presence. These passions are "delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances".[50]

While this definition seems to be motivated by internal reflection, the negative pleasure is in fact caused by external sources. But, unlike Addison's prioritization of sight over the other senses[51], and reduction of all the pleasures of taste to some sort of visual image, Burke expands the faculty of taste to include all five senses. In a series of different sections Burke describes the

---

[46] Addison, 65.
[47] Edmund Burke, "A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful," in *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 131.
[48] Burke, 131.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., 131-132.
[51] Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 411, June 21, 1712, *Gutenberg Project*, June 2014, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12030/12030-h/12030-h/SV2/Spectator2.html#section411.

ability of the imagination to retain feelings of touch, smells, sounds and tastes. He separates the imagination from direct sensory awareness by re-categorizing the two into "the primary pleasure of sense" and the "secondary pleasures of imagination". By doing this he attempts to avoid some of the conflation which resulted from the manner in which Addison divided the two modes of taste. "On the whole it appears to me, that what is called Taste, in its most general acceptation, is not a simple idea, but is partly made up of a perception of the primary pleasures of sense, of the secondary pleasures of the imagination, and the conclusions of the reasoning faculty, concerning the various relations of these, and concerning the human passions, manners and actions."[52] He goes on to write, "All this is requisite to form Taste and the ground-work of all these is the same in the human mind; for as the senses are the great originals of all our ides and consequently of all our pleasure if they are uncertain and arbitrary the whole ground-work of Taste is common to all and therefore there is a sufficient foundation for a conclusive reasoning on these matters."[53] Here, even though Taste is described as a function of all three faculties, imagination and sense are privileged. In fact, he goes on to point out that "judgment is for the greater part employed in throwing stumbling blocks in the way of the imagination, in dissipating the scenes of its enchantment, and in tying us down to the disagreeable yoke of our reason"[54]. And, in many cases when the sublime arises out of ideas rather than contact with material objects, those ideas are produced and retained by the representational power of the imagination rather than the faculty of understanding.[55]

The senses not only provide the basis for an overall standard of taste, they also play a very special role in causing a direct, or "primary", sublime experience. While describing the way

[52] Edmund Burke. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. ed. Adam Phillips. (Oxford England: Oxford UP, 1990),22.
[53] Burke, Oxford Edition, 22.
[54] Ibid., 24.
[55] Ibid., 62.

visual objects which are not perceived or associated with danger can still produce "a passion like terror", as in the case of great dimensions, he isolates the physical properties of the eye as the initial point of contact. He writes,

> though all the light reflected from a large body should strike the eye in one instant; yet we must suppose that the body itself is formed of a vast number of distinct points every one of which, or the ray from every one, makes an impression on the retina. So that, though the image of one point should cause but a small tension of this membrane another, and another and another stroke, must in their progress cause a very great one, until it arrives at last to the highest degree; and the whole capacity of the eye, vibrating in all its parts must approach near to the nature of what causes pain and consequently must produce an idea of that sublime.[56]

Instead of using terms like expansion, Burke turns to "tension" and places emphasis on it occurring at the ocular rather than internal level. The natural sublime creates significant problems in distinguishing between subject and object in this respect. The tension refers back to the original definition posed by Burke where the mind is "filled with its object" to the point where the self can either be annihilated, or, when delight is created, turn back upon itself in an induced state of both internal self-preservation and self-consciousness. This secondary stage re-instills the position of the subject, though it is not clear as to which faculty is primarily responsible for this shift. The annihilation of self occurs in the secondary pleasures of the imagination when contemplating the power and omnipresence of the divine. Rather than expand, "we shrink into the minuteness of our own nature" and, being unable to divide the terror from the delight, loose our imaginative abilities.[57]

From Cause and Effect to Proximity and Distance

[56] Ibid., 124.
[57] Burke, Cambridge Collection, 139.

Whether emphasizing primary or secondary causes, the relationship between cause and effect was at the centre of every framework for discussing the sublime introduced within the century. As we have seen, the position of the spectator had a fundamental effect on the requirements of the two. A balance between proximity and distance dictated the possibility of the sublime experience because it offered the spectator both an immediate embodied response and contemplative space. These two experiential modes are key to the "astonishment" which dictated both the 18th and 19th century sublime.

The shift towards an aesthetic framework and standard of taste which validated certain experiences in nature necessitated a spectatorial mode of address. If in fact certain natural objects and landscapes could elicit pleasure which was not dictated by classical rules of beauty then a standard of discovery was in order. The discourse of the sublime addressed this issue even in its initial stages. In Addison's original formulation he develops his conceptual framework around objects and landscapes which present the Great. These landscapes mirror those which he appreciated and was overwhelmed by on his own Grand Tour at the turn of the century. He likens this pleasure of the imagination to the experience of the understanding when it contemplates freedom and infinity. Experiencing the unbounded, the vast, and the Great precludes a specific distance and framing mechanism in order to be attainable. In a letter written during his trip to Italy, he describes Ripaille near Lake Geneva as follows:

> They have a large forest cut into walks, that are extremely thick and gloomy, and very suitable to the genius of the inhabitants. There are vistas upon the lake, at one side of the walks you have a near prospect of the Alps, which are broken into so many

> steps and precipices, that they fill the mind with an agreeable kind of horror, and form one of the most irregular, misshapen scenes in the world.[58]

This same distance and contemplative space is referred to again in *The Spectator* when describing the role of the secondary pleasure of the imagination; "It is for the same reason that we are delighted with the reflecting upon dangers that are past, or in looking on a precipice at a distance, which would fill us with a different kind of horror if we saw it hanging over our heads."[59] When an observer remains too near to certain objects they tend to press "too close upon [the observer's] senses" and, in turn, deny the opportunity of the viewer to "reflect" back on themselves.[60] Terror may not make up an essential component of Addison's conceptual framework, but it is certainly gestured towards when discussing the relationship between distance and proximity, and, pain and pleasure.

While Burke may have been the first to focus primarily on terror (and its associations to power), the link between pain and pleasure, and, spectatorial engagement, emerged far earlier in the century. A similar account is suggested by John Bailie three decades after Addison and one prior to Burke. In "An Essay on the Sublime" Bailie argues that the expansion which occurs internally is immediate, as soon as the object of the sublime presents itself "we are affected by it."[61] This immediacy is to a certain degree universal because it is dependent on the senses rather than a particular internal faculty which would need to be cultivated. He writes, "Few are so insensible, as not to be struck even at first view with what is truly sublime..."[62] He goes on to say that the "object can only be justly called the sublime, which in some degree disposes the mind to

---

[58] Joseph Addison,"Remarks on Several Parts of Italy Ect," in *The Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Addison*, vol. 4. (Oxford: D.A. Talboys, 1830), 210.
[59] Addison, 68.
[60] Ibid.
[61] John Bailie, "An Essay on the Sublime," in *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 87.
[62] Bailie, 88.

this enlargement of itself, and gives her a lofty conception of her own powers."[63] That "enlargement" of self is dependant at first on the senses and the access they give to the material world; "when a flood of light bursts in, and the vast heavens are on every side widely extended to the eye, it is then the soul enlarges, and would stretch herself out to the immense expanse... for whatever the essence of the soul may be, it is the reflections arising from sensations only which makes her acquainted with herself, and know her faculties. Vast objects occasion vast sensations, vast sensations give the mind a higher idea of her own powers..."[64] Astonishment is described here as a twofold process, beginning with our immediate awareness of the world and then ourselves.

The vastness of the object or scene is best able to offer astonishment when it is uniform or composed of "one large and grand idea" compelling a "complete prospect".[65] This means that even if the senses cannot access the complete object, the imagination can extrapolate out and attempt to expand to the outer reaches, as in the case of the ocean or mountain. This uniformity and immediacy create a model of astonishment which "rather composes, than agitates the mind"[66] and constructs a "solemn sedateness"[67] that is contrasted to both the Pathetic and fear. Bailie's description of the affective response is very similar to Addison who imagines' it as "a delightful stillness"[68]. This form of astonishment seems almost contradictory. Rather than becoming overwhelmed by the combination of visceral and internal expansion, pleasure arises at the same time as a contemplative space opens up. This stillness operates on the same two levels as that which could completely overwhelm; the subject ceases moving through the space and

[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 88-89.
[65] Ibid., 89.
[66] Ibid., 90.
[67] Ibid., 97.
[68] Addison, 62.

remains physically transfixed at the same time as the mind ceases moving between different sets of ideas and just begins to consider what is directly in front of it.

The first of these two levels could also be used to describe the physical reaction to immense fear. The difference between fear and the sublime is a matter of physical vantage point, and, because of the precarious nature of that position, the two often find themselves intermingling. Bailie uses the example of a storm, stating that if "a person is actually in one" the "dread may be so heightened... as entirely to destroy the sublime".[69] While the "sublime dilates and elevates the soul, fear sinks and contracts it; yet both are felt upon viewing what is great and awful."[70] In this case astonishment is dependent on which response is stronger. That often comes down to which senses are directly affected. At the end of the essay he states that two of the five senses are responsible for the experience of the sublime: sight and sound. Taste, smell or touch are each unable to grasp the "great"[71]. In this case Bailie is primarily interested in their representational potential: Can a taste ever present the imagination with properties which could fall within the quality of the Great? What remains unstated is that the two he chose to isolate allow for a detached form of contact which could be attained from different distances while the other three necessitate direct physical contact. The intermingling of pain and pleasure, and the manner in which the senses are engaged presents the precarious nature of the sublime moment. The object which affects the mind must be close enough to be singled out from the rest of the landscape and create a single and uniform impression on the mind but not so close to actually agitate and register as fear. So while there may be many positions which can induce an

[69] Bailie, 96-97.
[70] Ibid., 97.
[71] Ibid., 100.

experience of beauty and the picturesque, there are really only a few variables which can create the immediacy necessary to experience the purely or primarily sublime.

Burke expresses the same kind of difficulties in defining the possibility and limits to sublime engagement. His description of the vantage point is easily the most cited throughout the century. He writes,

> In all these cases, if the pain and terror are so modified as not to be actually noxious; if the pain is not carried to violence, and the terror is not conversant about the present destruction of the person, as these emotions clear the parts, whether fine, or gross, of a dangerous and troublesome pleasure, but a sort of delightful horror, a sort of tranquility tinged with terror; which as it belongs to self-preservation is one of the strongest of all the passions. Its object is the sublime.[72]

The effect of that object is, for Burke, astonishment which is "that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force."[73] Here again position allows for the essential combination of terror and safety which constructs the delight associated with self-preservation. Like Bailie, astonishment involves a form of immediacy and slowing down, but in this case thought (and physical motion) is temporally suspended as the imagination of the subject allows itself to be penetrated by the object. That contact seems to prevent any mediation by reason making the contemplation in question only a secondary response. Astonishment begins very much like that created by sheer terror, but because the subject is far enough away to be aware of his own safety his mind is able to allow itself to expand and

[72] Burke, Oxford Edition, 123.
[73] Burke, Cambridge Collection, 132.

contemplate that expansion both through the object in question and in relation to the interplay between sensation, imagination and reason.

While Burke and Bailie refer to the psychological and physiological attributes linking proximity and distance, others, like Gerard, described the problem using more typical aesthetic rhetoric. When Gerard refers to the expansion which causes the pleasurable sensation associated with astonishment he reasserts the role of the frame. Returning to the previous definition I quoted at length, Gerard refers to a "spreading" of one's imagination across the depth and breadth of the natural phenomena which in turn "enlivens and invigorates" the internal frame established by the imagination in the first place. [74] Here the aesthetic term comes to stand in for the internal limitations imposed on the imagination by the aspects of the senses and embodied experience. As the mind attempts to take in the immensity or vastness of a particular feature it strains itself to overcome multiple visual and epistemological obstacles, this tension and eventual recovery constructs both stages of astonishment and contemplation. Gerard seems to create a clever overlap between theoretical and popular discourses, using the new taste for features like mountainscapes which overwhelmed traditional framing mechanisms to explore the internal properties of the observer's mind.

A Form of Astonishment which can elicit Contemplation

In the second half of the 18th century many critics responded to the question over the physiological and experiential response of astonishment. Did astonishment lead to stillness, suspension, agitation or some combination of all three? If the mind of the spectator was suspended all together within the sublime moment what caused ideas to begin to resurface?

[74] Gerard, 168.

Could the mind be arrested to the point where it would be unable to regain its ability for introspection until the spectator had physically moved on? What would that mean for critics who were attempting to study their own experiences in order to understand the nature of cause and effect?

James Usher tackled these issues in his *Clio; or a Discourse on Taste* published in 1769. His description of astonishment shifts between suspension and complete absorption before considering how the mind is able to regain its composure and strength. He begins by stating that the sublime " takes possession of our attention, and of all our faculties, and absorbs them in astonishment... we feel ourselves alarmed, our motions are suspended, and we remain for some time until the emotion wears off, wrapped in silence and inquisitive horror."[75] Although the sublime invokes a certain degree of terror, in its "presence" the spectator "seems to be raised out of a trance; [his soul] assumes an unknown grandeur; it is seized with a new appetite, that in a moment effaces its former little prospects and desires".[76] Astonishment causes the mind to "dilate" and that expansion creates a "new appetite" fueled by transgressing limits that in everyday circumstances remain unconsidered. Again, like in Burke, suspension and absorption construct a paradoxical effect and that effect is responsible for the pleasure that arises in the subject. Usher describes the physical position of his subject when engaged in a sublime moment in considerable detail:

> Observe this mountain that rises so high on the left, if we had been farther removed from it, you might see behind it other mountains rising in obscurity, your imagination labours to travel over them, and the inhabitants seem to reside in a superior world. But here you have a different prospect, the next mountain covers all the rest from your view,

[75] James Usher, "Clio: or, a Discourse on Taste, " in *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory, eds. Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 147.
[76] Usher, 147.

> and by its nearest approach, presents distinctly to your eye objects of new admiration. The rocks on its sides meet the clouds in vast irregularity; the pensive eye traces the rugged precipice down to the bottom, and surveys there the mighty ruins that time has mouldered and tumbled below. It is easy in this instance to discover that we are terrified and silenced into awe, at the *vestiges* we see of immense power; and the more manifest are the appearances of disorder, and the neglect of contrivance, the more plainly we feel the boundless might these rude monuments are owing to. But beside this silent fear, we feel our curiosity roused from its deepest springs in the soul; and while we tremble, we are seized with an exquisite delight, that attends on sublime objects only.[77]

Rather than the vast open landscapes which open up in front of the spectator from a high vantage point like Addison's favourite views, Usher explores those places where the eye moves vertically, up towards the heavens and down to the earth below. This spectator is in many ways closed in by his proximity to the mountainscape. By isolating him and eliciting a direct and immediate visceral sensation of awe drawn in part from terror, the spectator is unable to allow his mind to wander. This description sounds very much like that expressed by the early Alpine travelers in the century which preceded it. It connects "disorder" and "neglect" of direct purpose to a power which is beyond our comprehension.[78]

Most critics and philosophers either fell on the side of stillness or complete suspension when discussing the role of astonishment in relation to physical vantage point. The possibility of internal cessation caused some critics, like Lord Kames, to focus on the role of contemplation as a way of minimizing the effects of astonishment. Kames argued that some objects and associational ideas could cause the mind to plummet when the elevation and expansion which

---

[77] Ibid., 148-149.

[78] Three of the most well known travelers and writers of the 17th century, Thomas Coryat, James Howell, and John Evelyn, all confessed to being afraid as they passed over the mountain range. Howell described the Alps as "high and hideous" and, while comparing the Welsh mountains to them , wrote "they are but Pigmies compar'd to Giants, but Blisters to Imposthumes, or Pimples to Warts" (*Epistolae Ho-Elianae: The Familiar Letters (*London, 1890)), 95. Mountains were imperfections to these travelers, confusing distortions on an otherwise well proportioned and pleasing piece of countryside. See Hope,69.

would be necessary to hold the object within one's mind was deemed impossible. For Kames this meant that the spectator could only approach and encounter an object in a certain manner, making the possibility of experiencing the sublime even more precarious; "the strongest emotion of grandeur, is raised by an object that can be taken in at one view; if so immense as not to be comprehended but in parts, it tends rather to distract than satisfy the mind: in like manner, the strongest emotion produced by elevation, is where the object is seen distinctly; a greater elevation lessens in appearance the object, till it vanishes out of sight with its pleasant emotions."[79] When the object is seen from that specific point of view, properties directly allied with beauty, like proportion, regularity and order, are not perceptible through the senses or by the imagination, but a pleasurable emotion is felt none the less.[80] That means that a shift in position, rather than change in object, dramatically alters the properties necessary for specific aesthetic experiences. Unlike many of the other philosophers who valued the interplay between proximity and distance, Kames was able to negotiate a balance between previously held conventions of taste and that of the contradictory nature of the sublime by highlighting the role of distance. The position of the observer always remained detached and able to frame the landscape before him in a certain manner. This natural sublime harkens back to Addison's notion of the Great. It values contemplation over the role of astonishment and warns of the dangers of reaching too far past the everyday uses of the imagination.

A Return to Travel Writing

By the end of the century travelers to the Continent were keen to experience the sublime effects that had been described by critics and philosophers. Poet Helen Maria Williams dedicated much

[79] Henry Home, Lord Kames, "Elements of Criticism," in *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 227.
[80] Ibid., 225.

of her own Grand Tour to testing what she had only previously read. In *A Tour in Switzerland,* published in 1798, she explores both her anticipation over experiencing the majesty of the Alps and the relationship between that anticipation and what she came to see once actually there. Rather than being surprised by her experience, like those who traveled at the beginning of the century, she had grown up immersed within the promise of the 18th century sublime. She wrote, " how often had the idea of those stupendous mountains filled my heart with enthusiastic awe!- so long, so eagerly, had I desired to contemplate that scene of wonders, that I was unable to trace when first the wish was awakened in my bosom- it seemed from childhood to have made a part of my existence".[81] That cultural experience had made her acutely aware of the importance of choosing an appropriate vantage point, something which she describes extensively in her book. Her trip to the Alps involved a series of different visceral and contemplative positions as she attempted to get as close to different sublime objects and vistas as possible. The first of these views did not leave her disappointed:

> When we reached the summit of the hill which leads to the fall of the Rhine, we alighted from the carriage, and walked down the steep bank, whence I saw the river turbulently over its bed of rocks, and heard the noise of the torrent, towards which we were descending, increasing as we drew near. My heart swelled with expectation- our path, as if formed to give the scene its full effect, concealed for some time the river from our view; till we reached a wooden balcony, projecting on the edge of the water, and whence, just sheltered from the torrent, it bursts in all its overwhelming wonders on the astonished sight. That stupendous cataract, rushing with wild impetuosity over those broken, unequal rocks, which, lifting up their sharp points amidst its sea of foam, disturb its headlong course,

[81]Helen Maria Williams, "A Tour in Switzerland," in *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 303.

> multiply its falls, and make the afflicted waters roar... never, never can I forget the sensations of that moment![82]

There are two things worth noting in this excerpt. The first is the manner in which she emphasizes sound in order to address the complexity of her feeling of overwhelming astonishment. She hears the thunder of the waterfall well before she can see it. This seems to prepare her and guide her expectations and anticipation as she draws closer. The second interesting aspect is the way contact is made possible through the use of a small bridge. This allows her to stand right underneath and look directly up without putting her in much physical danger. The bridge offers tourists the opportunity to sense the precarious interplay which many of the thinkers interested in the sublime had described. It becomes a symbolic tool of encounter, changing the physical and intellectual limits of the environment.

This outward experience created an internal effect which brought the accounts offered by Burke, Usher and Kames to their ultimate conclusion. While feeling as if her "heart were bursting with emotions too strong to be sustained"[83] she described "a sort of annihilation of self"[84] where her imagination is suspended and memory of those "impression[s] erased"[85]. She is no longer aware of herself or of the time that passes as she stands on the balcony transfixed. A little further on in her tour she compares this sensation of astonishment and absorption to the experience of those people who made their livelihood in different sheltered areas around the sides of the waterfalls. She describes herself as a spectator who, having not become accustomed to the sound of the water pounding on the rocks around her, is able to contemplate the relationship of man to nature. "Sheltered within this little nook, and accustomed to the

[82] Williams, 304.
[83] Ibid., 304.
[84] Ibid., 304.
[85] Ibid., 304.

neighbourhood of the torrent," she writes, " the boatman unloads his merchandise, and the artisan pursues his toil, regardless of the falling river, and inattentive to those thundering sounds which seem calculated to suspend all human activity in solemn and awful astonishment while the imagination of the spectator is struck with the comparative littleness of fleeting man, busy with his trivial occupations, contrasted with the view of nature in her vast, eternal, uncontrollable grandeur..."[86] Unlike other theorists' who described the annihilation of self only in relation to the divine, Williams much more readily applied it to the power of Nature, giving the material world the same transcendent properties which were increasingly appearing in British poetry.

By tracing the key threads of the debate over the natural sublime across the century the precarious nature of the British incarnation becomes apparent. The placement and movement of the subject was one of the most heavily debated in the British tradition, its key importance to the concept was repeatedly emphasized by philosophers and critics. But by the end of the 18th century British philosophers and critics had gotten no closer to agreeing upon either the causal link between subject, natural phenomena and affective response, or the role of proximity and distance in orchestrating the aesthetic state. Even while their methodological and theoretical frameworks differed substantially, as we have seen, a pattern did emerge over the century surrounding the concept of astonishment. The internal state became the catalyst for what was understood traditionally as its antithesis, contemplation.

The novelty of the sublime experience necessitated a new understanding of both states which breached their previously established frameworks. The term 'sublime' attempted to make sense of and legitimize the experience by constructing a new dialectic. It was, in this sense, emblematic of the metaphoric process, conceptualizing an experience which exceeded the

[86] Ibid., 304.

bounds of previous literal and figurative meaning in order to allow the subject to negotiate the world around them in a coherent manner. Alongside this interpretive process the term also took on a greater symbolic role in the cultural realm. Contemporary literary theorist Thomas Weiskel understood the sublime (in both its rhetorical and natural incarnations) to be a historical expression, masking the tensions and anxiety which were symptomatic of the loss of traditional spiritual and ontological frameworks which had previously defined the relationship between subject and object. But, unlike the German tradition which attained theoretical closure by the end of the century by providing a new causal framework connecting inner and outer world through the power of Reason, in Britain one tension was masked by another. It remained deeply intertwined with the natural world, focusing on the precariousness of embodied spectatorship.

The complexity of the British discourse was its most important strength, offering the preceding century multiple tangents to continue to explore. One of the most important and wide reaching of these tangents were questions surrounding the possibility of a framing mechanism. The sublime was sought after because of its very elusiveness, because it demanded a point of view that was completely novel for the period; somewhere between previous models of aesthetic pleasure, where proximity and distance touched. Unlike the visceral and contemplative effect, which evaporated immediately upon consideration, models of physical address could, and were, prescribed. They became the subject of their own critical discourse, and, by the 1790s, cultural industry. The scenic film genre would eventually emerge as a leading method, providing a pattern of spectatorship that could be emulated in the real world. It negotiated the precarious dialectic of immersion and detachment constructing the illusion of stability that is the cornerstone of any framing mechanism.

These discussions and texts were not only symptomatic of the larger philosophical debate surrounding the relationship of subject and object, but also gestured to the important role of the domain in which this larger theoretical discussion was occurring. Firsthand experience of natural spaces always exceeds the rigid framework observers apply to it. The natural sublime was not only a product of the natural world's emerging importance in aesthetics, theology, and epistemology, but a metaphor for its problematic role in relation to each of these fields. This is where the debate over subject and object needed to happen because this is where its relationship was the most problematic.

Chapter 2

Wordsworth and the Emergence of the Walking Tour

Unlike in the German tradition which placed man in opposition to nature, as the British sublime slipped into the 19th century, it became even more closely defined by access to natural spaces and concerns over the manner in which to represent them. This discourse shared quite a few similarities with the classical debates over the relationship of film to representation and meaning production. In both cases language was deemed the only medium which could shift its audience from the literal and particular into the realm of figurative association. Those theorizing the sublime experience argued that it could only be communicated indirectly through metaphor and metaphor could only be represented through language. Early film theorists often made similar claims about the insufficiency or inappropriate nature of attempting to communicate figurative meaning through the film image, arguing, as Siegfried Kracauer did, that film was an essentially realist medium which placed particular objects in front of its audience.[87] For the growing industry surrounding domestic nature tourism the question of suitable forms of representation was key to successfully enticing would-be travelers out of their homes and adequately preparing them for the complex aesthetic experiences that awaited them outside.

The period was marked by two opposing aesthetic camps, those critics who championed the picturesque qualities of nature and extolled the values of painting and those philosophers and poets who turned to language instead in a continued quest to experience and understand the natural sublime. While the picturesque and Romanticism constructed fundamentally different methodologies, they shared two significant attributes: the importance of the imagination in

[87] Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film; the Redemption of Physical Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 208. Trevor Whittock explores the possibility of metaphors on screen in his monograph *Metaphor and Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

addressing firsthand experience with nature and the necessity of travel guides which would educate nature tourists prior to said contact. These guides would perform as intermediaries, placing travelers in the precise locations in which different aesthetic experiences could be felt, the same role I will argue the scenic film genre would have in the next century.

This chapter traces these two interrelated debates through one of the Romantic sublime's central figures, William Wordsworth. Rather than examining his contributions to the concept directly, a theme that has been discussed at great length by literary theorists and historians, I will be looking at the links between his poetry and prose, with special attention paid towards his walking guide of the Lake District, written in a series of editions over the early and mid 19th century. The *Guide to the Lakes* marks Wordsworth's role in a much larger cultural and ideological shift; from destination oriented travel, associated with the Grand and picturesque tour, and concerned with collecting particular views, to travel which was valued for its own sake as a means of developing the imagination. The rise of the latter, in the form of walking tours occurring domestically across Great Britain, both highlighted and problematized the role of the internal faculty and choice of medium in which to describe and discuss the process of its development. How to move through a landscape continued to become even more hotly contended than which landscape to move through. Walking also had another possibly unintended effect on the discourses surrounding nature appreciation and the sublime, rather than promising a more reliable method in which to capture the aesthetic experience, it only added a further set of conditions onto the already heavily entangled framework. By dismantling the necessity of the frame and view, the relationship between distance and immersion became as precarious as ever.

Firstly, the chapter traces the philosophical debate surrounding the two competing forms of representation. Beginning with some of the key figures in the 18th century discussion over the

role and definition of the natural sublime, it compares this historic concern over the impossibility of the sublime's representation with the rise of the faculty of the imagination and the proponents who favoured the potential of its painterly and poetic representation. It then turns to the guide books and tours that these competing groups produced with close readings of work by William Gilpin, Thomas West, and William Wordsworth. The latter becomes the focus of the remaining chapter. Wordsworth's practical work on the Romantic sublime becomes one of the catalysts for the emergence of the walking tour which, while having a complex and paradoxical role in the cultural imaginary, was catapulted to the forefront of the industry.

Representing the Natural Sublime

The role of representation and the question of medium were directly linked to the elevation of the Romantic imagination at the turn of the 19th century. But the subject of suitability did not begin there. It also had a very prominent role in the formation of aesthetics and taste in the previous century. Almost every philosopher and critic who constructed a theory of the natural sublime prescribed a manner in which the experience could and should be expressed to others. These arguments were almost always couched in hesitation, each acutely aware of the paradoxical nature of hierarchizing modes of representation for an experience which overwhelmed the very faculty which was meant to guide the communicative and creative process. How can you represent that which is defined by an internal state? In the same vein as Lessing's *Laocoon*, Burke argued that the written word was superior to the iconic image in exploring the power of the imagination. For theorists conceptualizing the natural sublime like Edmund Burke, any medium which necessarily imposed clear boundaries and imagery could never aspire to represent the affective and conceptual responses at work in the original sublime experience : "But let it be considered that hardly anything can strike the mind with its greatness, which does not make

some sort of approach towards infinity; which nothing can do whilst we are able to perceive its bounds; but to see an object distinctly, and to perceive its bounds, is one and the same thing."[88] Burke also associates distinctness with clarity. Returning to his original definition of the sublime, he argues that obscurity is necessary in order for terror to be felt. He goes on to write, in opposition to Locke, that

> it is one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it *affecting* to the imagination. If I make a drawing of a palace, or a temple, or a landscape, I present a very clear idea of those objects; but then (allowing for the effect of imitation which is something) my picture can at most affect only as the palace, temple, or landscape would have affected in the reality. On the other hand, the most lively and spirited verbal description I can give, raises a very obscure and imperfect *idea* of such objects; but then it is in my power to raise a stronger *emotion* by the description than I could do by the best painting. This experience constantly evinces. The proper manner of conveying the *affections* of the mind from one to another, is by words; there is a great insufficiency in all other methods of communication...[89]

Both sections express slightly different problems in relation to the role of representation. In the first he isolates the impossibility of depicting the external phenomena and in the second he argues that even if one could create a realistic image of the external phenomena it would not be able to affect the imagination in the same manner as that defined by the sublime experience. Both claims gesture towards the limits of painting as a realistic and bounded representational art form. Effectively the sublime experience can only be communicated indirectly through metaphor and metaphor can only be represented through language. Words are able to influence the passions without conveying clear ideas. Language is therefore able to rouse the imagination

[88] Burke, Cambridge Collection, 136.
[89] Ibid ., 134.

creating pleasure while still resisting the pull of the other faculties which would quickly compare and categorize the idea if it were expressed in another manner.

Language, for Burke, has a distinctly complicated relationship to the natural world. Words construct combinations which "give new life and force to the simple object."[90] But while they may transform the physical world, in the hierarchy of sublimity, they often remain secondary to the ultimate powers of nature, creating tenuous links.[91]

For many 18th century theorists the link running between language, ideas and affective response corresponded to a larger concern over the manner in which objects and ideas which did not have the appropriate sublime attributes could none the less elicit variations on the sublime response. For associationalists like Hartley and Gerard, it wasn't so much a case of language taking on a general state of obscurity in relation to a subject, but the manner in which individual ideas could be linked back to the original natural definitions of the sublime through experience. Gerard summed up the mental operation quite succinctly, writing

> But in order to comprehend the whole extent of the sublime, it is proper to take notice that objects, which do not themselves possess that quality, may nevertheless acquire it, by association with such as do. It is the nature of association to unite different ideas so closely, that they become in a manner one. In that situation, the qualities of one part are naturally attributed to the whole, or the other part. At least association renders the transition of the mind from one idea to another so quick and easy, that we contemplate both with the same disposition, and are therefore similarly affected by both... Hence words and phrases are denominated lofty and majestic. Sublimity of style arises, not so much from the sound of the words, though that doubtless may have some influence, as from the nature of the ideas, which we are

[90] Ibid. , 141.
[91] In some rare cases language can rise to the representational level of the phenomenal world, affecting us sometimes even more strongly. See Burke, 142.

> accustomed to annex to them, and the character of the persons, among whom they are in most common use.[92]

Gerard goes on to argue that the fine arts possess many of the same powers as the written word. In contradiction to Burke he states that

> the fine arts present the most numerous examples of grandeur produced by association. In all of them, the sublime is attained, chiefly by the artist's exciting *ideas* of sublime objects; and in such as are mimical, this quality is chiefly owing to our being led by the exactness of the imitation to form *ideas* and conceive images of sublime originals. Thought is less intense energy than sense: yet ideas especially when lively never fail to be contemplated with some degree of the same emotion, which attends their original *sensation*; and often yield almost equal pleasure to the reflex senses, when impressed upon the mind by a skillful imitation.[93]

Even with the stark differences between a painted representation and the thing itself, the visual arts are still able to elicit the original sensation if they are close enough in likeness to be associated with the original idea. This means that, unlike in the primary definition of the sublime, sensation occurs after contemplation, even if the latter occurs momentarily. Here, as de Bolla has intimated, a remarkable shift begins to occur where the perceiving subject becomes a participating subject, "capable of conferring qualities to experience of the outer world."[94]

By the end of the 18th century the debate between language and image had re-emerged as cornerstones of the picturesque and Romantic movements. While the picturesque valued the art of painting and the Romantics poetic language, both groups of thought were established based on the elevation of the imagination. The practical and theoretical potential of the picturesque movement came to the fore after the publication of William Gilpin's *Observations on the River*

---

[92] Gerard, 170.
[93] Ibid ., 171.
[94] Ashfield and De Bolla, 160.

Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales, etc. Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; made in the Summer of the Year 1770 in 1782 as an offshoot and critique of the 18th century discourse associated with the sublime and beautiful. De Bolla describes the movement as an "aesthetics of reaction and fantasy based in an entirely different social and class milieu from the elite patrician culture of the earlier debate."[95] He goes on to write that "the picturesque developed an alternative address to the landscape in its embrace of fantasmic models of perception" which relished in the "friction" which was created when real landscapes met ideal ones. [96] This friction was emblematic of the complex and often circular relationship that nature had with its own representation.

In a letter addressed to Sir Joshua Reynolds, Gilpin defines the picturesque as denoting "such objects, as are proper subjects for painting"[97]. In contrasting the category of taste with beauty, Gilpin makes it clear to his reader that his purpose is not to depose natural beauty, but rather to articulate the visual properties which attract the eye of painter, which had gone previously undervalued. The painter's eye becomes the picturesque eye, conferring the cultural title of the artist onto every domestic traveler, and, at the same time, redefining the original role of the artist: "To this it is enough, that the province of the picturesque eye is to *survey nature*; not to *anatomize matter*. It throws its glances around in the broad-case stile. It comprehends an extensive tract at each sweep. It examines *parts*, but never descends to *particles*."[98] Rather than cite a direct causal relationship between nature, picturesque properties and the art of painting, he,

[95] Ashfield and De Bolla, 15.
[96] Ibid ., 15.
[97] William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty, on Picturesque Travel, and on Sketching Landscape: With a Poem on Landscape Painting: To These Are Now Added, Two Essays Giving an Account of the Principles and Mode in Which the Author Executed His Own Drawings*, 3rd ed. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1808), 36.
[98] Ibid ., 26.

like the Romantic poets, turns to the imagination, constructing its power in distinctly picturesque terms:

> There is still another amusement arising from the correct knowledge of objects; and that is the power of creating, and representing *scenes of fancy*; which is still more a work of creation, than copying nature. The imagination becomes a camera obscura, only with this difference, that the camera represents objects as they really are: while the imagination, impressed with the most beautiful scenes, and chastened by rules of art, forms its pictures, not only from the most admirable parts of nature; but in the best taste.[99]

The imagination is the faculty which is employed in order to enhance a scene which may not perfectly suit painterly replication on its own, the faculty " can plant hills; can form rivers, and lakes in vallies; can build castles, and abbeys; and if it find no other amusement, can dilate itself in vast ideas of space."[100] Unlike the sublime which often dissipates upon repeated viewing, the picturesque eye only increases its pleasure with repetition. The more experience the eye has in surveying a particular scene or natural object the more amusement is created while sketching it. Gilpin writes that "the spiry pinnacles of the mountain, and the castle-like arrangement of the rock, give no peculiar pleasure to the picturesque eye. It is fond of the simplicity of nature; and sees most beauty in her most *usual forms*."[101]

At times Gilpin fails to preserve the division between the two categories, and in his enthusiasm for the subject, lapses into the territory of rhetoric usually reserved for the sublime:

> But it is not from this scientific employment, that we derive our chief pleasure. We are most delighted, when some grand scene, tho perhaps of incorrect composition, rising before the eye, strikes us beyond the power of thought—when *the vox fausibus haeret*;

[99] Ibid ., 52.
[100] Ibid ., 56.
[101] Gilpin, 43.

> and every mental operation is suspended. In this pause of intellect; this *deliquium* of the soul, an enthusiastic sensation of pleasure overspreads it, previous to any examination by the rules of art. The general idea of the scene makes an impression, before any appeal is made to the judgment. We rather *feel*, than *survey* it.[102]

But as quickly as he begins to link the two, he reaffirms the role and properties of the picturesque, first by comparing this astonishment to artificial objects and then tying it back and down to pleasure derived from its representation and the careful additions made by the picturesque imagination. He adds that while a painting cannot inspire the same pleasure as the real scene, it does open up a new contemplative spectatorial space which "allow['s] the eye to criticize at leisure"[103] re-establishing the mode of surveillance that had been lost in his previous conflation.

The English Romantics took a scathing view of the picturesque and its allegiance towards landscape painting.[104] Both Coleridge and Wordsworth understood the hierarchy in terms of a kind of aesthetic and cultural evolution where poetry offered a new, higher level of symbolic power and understanding. Painting was largely antagonistic to the conceptual goals of poetics, threatening to reduce the imagination to a slave of the "despotic" eye[105]. Wordsworth's poetic imagination is constantly negotiating the divide between subject and object, which becomes in the words of Coleridge, a "middle state of mind… hovering between images" and inner and outer states of being.[106] Coleridge defines the imagination in contrast to the understanding, writing, "As soon as it is fixed on one image it becomes understanding; but while it is unfixed and

---

[102] Ibid ., 49-50.
[103] Ibid ., 50.
[104] Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860* (New York, NY : Palgrave, 2001), 116.
[105] Wood,116, where he refers to *The Prelude*, XII, line 129, in which Wordsworth describes the "bodily eye" as "The most despotic of our senses".
[106] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Lecture on Romeo and Juliet" reprinted in *Imagination in Coleridge*, ed. John Spencer Hill (Macmillan, 1978), 81.

wavering between them, attaching itself permanently to none, it is imagination."[107] Unlike Gilpin's imagination, which eventually supersedes the sensible world by reconstructing it, Wordsworth's always maintains an ebb and flow. As James McKusick observes, this ebb and flow places the valorization of individual self-consciousness, or what Keats referred to as the "Wordsworthian or egotistical sublime", in an often paradoxical relationship with Nature and empirical knowledge.[108] The Romantic sublime stood as a metaphor for the point at which the mind and nature met within a moment of transcendence. Firsthand experience with Nature was the necessary first stage of the sublime experience which was then synthesized and consolidated by the poetic imagination before returning once again to Nature.[109]

The concept of the Romantic sublime encompassed many of the same concerns which were debated in the 18th century like, how do subject and object meet? But unlike the previous debate where subject and object always remained distinct entities, both did not just encounter one another, but became heavily intertwined. Wordsworth 's sublime acted in much the same way as his use of spatial metaphors, mental states became defined in terms of physical states of place, "creeping" from the inner to the outer world.[110] The sublime became the figurative cog between the imagination and Nature offering the possibility of internal reflexivity.[111]In a manner

---

[107] Coleridge, 81.

[108] James C. McKusick, *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 25, wherein he quotes Keats' letter to Richard Woodhouse on October 27 1818.

[109] Nature is often prescribed with many of the same properties as the imagination. In *The Prelude* (1805), XIII, p. 460, lines 57-67 he describes Nature as "A deep and gloomy breathing-place, through which/ Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams/ Innumerable, roaring with one voice./ The universal spectacle throughout/ Was shaped for admiration and delight,/ Grand it itself alone, but in that breach/ Through which the homeless voice of waters rose/ That dark deep thoroughfare, had Nature lodged/ The soul, the imagination of the whole./The perfect image of a mighty mind/ Of one that feeds upon infinity ."

[110] Donald Wesling, *Wordsworth and the Adequacy of Landscape* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), 18. His use of the word "creeping" refers to *The Prelude*(1805) III, line 114.

[111] In his monograph *Wordsworth and the Sublime* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), Albert Wlecke describes the sublime as a "special form of self-consciousness" (pp.8). Beginning from Wordsworth's use of the phrase "sense sublime" in "Tintern Abbey" where he writes "...And I have felt/A presence that disturbs me with the joy/ Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime/ Of something far more deeply interfused," (lines 93-96),Wlecke defines

reminiscent of the 18th century discourse, the mind expands as it comes into contact with the phenomenal world, but the sublime state of awareness often demands a form of extension which pushes well beyond that which it can handle, from the world back into itself. Distance, whether temporal or spatial, only provides partial resolution. Unlike in the Kantian variation, neither inner nor outer state prevails.

Outside of his poetic work, Wordsworth elaborated upon the sublime's aesthetic role in both his essays and guide book. One of the key texts in that regard is his unfinished essay "The Sublime and the Beautiful" potentially written as early as1806.[112] The text is very similar in style and range to the 18th century model, and tends to define the sublime in the same manner as Burke, comparing the effects of terror and proximity to more purely aesthetic aspects, such as boundaries and visual lines;

> If these objects be so distance that, while we look at them, they are only thought of as the crown of a comprehensive Landscape; if our minds be not perverted by false theories, unless those mountains be seen under some accidents of nature, we shall receive from them a grand impression, and nothing more. But if they be looked at from a point which has brought us so near that the mountain is almost the sole object before our eyes, yet not so near but that the whole is visible, we shall be impressed with a sensation of sublimity.[113]

This sensation is made up of "three component parts": form, duration and power.[114] As in his poetic works, he defines the sublime as an "intense unity" which "suspends the comparing power

---

the sublime experience as something which allows the faculty the ability to move through spatial and temporal limits in a manner which opens up the possibility of reflexivity.

[112] Benjamin Kim, "Generating a National Sublime: Wordsworth's 'The River Duddon' and 'The Guide to the Lakes'" in *Studies in Romanticism* 45, no. 1 (2006): 51-52.

[113] William Wordsworth, "The Sublime and the Beautiful," in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 351.

[114] Wordsworth, "The Sublime", 351.

of the mind" and becomes unable to contemplate the division of parts.[115] If we are placed so close to the object to actually experience fear this unity becomes impossible, and we are forced to consider ourselves as separate from the object. Resistance and participation construct a pleasurable interplay which, rather than describing as interpenetrating, Wordsworth likens to parallel lines which are unified in their trajectory but never merge to become exactly one. Wordsworth's essay on the sublime exhibits the same two tensions as the 18th century discourse, the first between proximity and distance, and the second between subject and object. The essay also continues to fuel the debate over the role of the observer, gesturing to the larger cultural shift in the institution of nature appreciation.

Both the picturesque and Romanticism fueled cultural and philosophical debates over the role of the observer, gesturing to the larger cultural shift in the institution of nature appreciation. Romanticism, rising and falling loosely between the mid 1770s and mid 1840s marked a large transitional period in travel and tourism; the decline of the Grand Tour, and, the advent of rail travel across Great Britain. [116]With the latter came the beginnings of mass middle class domestic tourism. Even prior, services needed to make travel practical like better road conditions, inns and carriage designs, were increasingly being introduced.[117] With these changes emerged a new term for those individuals leaving home and taking in the sites; the tourist.[118] Attitudes towards nature in the philosophical and critical sphere quickly re-emerged in the popular middle class arena, and with its valorization came an influx of people participating in tours at the end of the 18th century.

The Rise of the Walking Tour

---

[115] Ibid ., 353-354.
[116] Amanda Gilroy, "Introduction," in *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel, 1775-1844* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 2.
[117] Elizabeth Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics*, 1716-1818 (Cambridge, 1995), 90.
[118] John Dussinger, "Hester Piozzi, Italy, and the Johnsonian Aether," in *South Central Review* 9, no.4 (Winter 1992), 49.

The value of walking surfaced in parallel to the rise of nature appreciation amongst the middle classes in Britain. Prior to the mid 18th century the idea of travel was associated with hardship rather than pleasure and education, walking in particular was attached to a specific socio-economic group and related closely to work rather than leisure. Those who could not afford horses or animal drawn vehicles walked, those who had no fixed community or place of shelter walked: vagrants, labourers, and criminals. Because of the risk and physical exertion needed to complete a journey of any distance, whether on horse, in carriage, or on foot, "true travel" was defined by the importance of the destination rather than the process itself. Literary historian Anne Wallace describes it as a travel "undertaken by a very limited class of people to a prescribed (although, by Nugent's time, a fairly extensive) set of places... this destination-oriented travel, ideally excludes the process of travel the travail of moving from place to place, and its advocates and practitioners seek to make that process as nearly transparent and unnoticeable as possible."[119]

Two historical factors greatly transformed the role of travel and the properties associated with walking in particular: the revolution in mechanised transport and enclosure reforms. Between the mid 18th and early 19th century a whole edition of new forms of travel were introduced and standardized across the country including forms of mass transport likes coaches and trains. By the mid 1830s almost ten million coach journeys were being made per year, a number to be rivalled only by train journeys which would reach almost thirty million a decade later, and increase exponentially by the late 19th century.[120] For Wallace this shifted perception of walking in two ways: "First, it altered the socio-economic content of walking by making fast,

[119] Anne D Wallace, *Walking, Literature, and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 39.
[120] Philip Bagwell, *The Transport Revolution from 1700* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1974), 43.

cheap travel available to the labouring classes, thus increasing the attractiveness of travel in general and removing walking's long-standing implication of necessity and so of poverty and vagrancy."[121] Secondly, new modes of transport drastically transformed and diversified the "perceptual framework" available to passengers while actually traveling, placing a new emphasis on the process over the destination.[122] Both shifts reemphasized the role of leisure and the importance of choice in travel gesturing towards the expansion of domestic nature tourism and the eventual introduction of walking tours.

Enclosure laws had a slightly more complex and paradoxical role in reconceptualising walking as a leisure activity. Between 1604 and 1916 a fifth of England's total land was targeted by Enclosure bills, transforming traditional boundaries, pushing agricultural labourers out of rural areas and into the towns for work. As members of the working classes moved into urban areas, members of the middle class were using their increasing amount of leisure time to get out.

The shift from public to private land drastically increased the economic decline of the freeholding farmer and rural labourer, and transformed traditional modes of passage through local communities and regions. Walking was able to provide a way of renegotiating movement and access. While many public footpaths were being closed or altered, English common law dictated that public use was in fact able to construct public right of way, meaning that walking was able to not only preserve older forms of travel but dictate new ones. "Thus enclosure, like the transport revolution, directed attention toward process and change; and as the transport revolution altered the socio-economic content of walking in such a way that walking, with its particularly accessible process, would be regarded as a mode of travel, so enclosure revealed

[121] Wallace, 10.
[122] Ibid ., 10.

walking as an instrument of reappropriation of common lands and perspectives that simultaneously stabilized old local forms and opened those forms to extra-local use and interpretation."[123]

Tourists were provided with direction from the increasing number of guide books published from the mid 18th century on. But the shift towards the walking tour emerged slowly, the first of these domestic guide books remained offshoots of the writing done while on a Grand Tour, emulating the quest for perfect views rather than discussing the role or mode of the journey. There had been books written prior dedicated to the gentleman on tour on the Continent, but very few were interested in expanding their audience and discussing the merits of the scenes available domestically. The early stages of the picturesque went hand in hand with this geographical shift. The vast majority of this new topographical literature was dedicated to the Lake District. The region was possibly the easiest entry point for exploration because it displayed many of the qualities which were revered on the Continent alongside the peculiar aspects which would become the tenets of the picturesque: "the pastoral and rural landscape, exhibited in all their stiles, the soft, the rude, the romantic, and the sublime; and of which perhaps like instances can no where be found assembled in so small a tract of country."[124] While Thomas Gray may have been one of the first to tour portions of the area and document his trip in 1767, quickly after its publication came Thomas West, whose guide was first published in 1778 and Gilpin in 1782, along with a whole host of others. Literary critic Jonathan Wordsworth cites Gray's tour as the one that initially brought the first visitors and artists to the area, Gilpin's as the

[123] Ibid ., 67.
[124] Thomas West, *A Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire: 1784* (Oxford: Woodstock, 1989), 1-2.

one which " told his readers how to see" the area, and, West's as the one which told them "what to see, and where to go to do it"[125].

The last was published in seven editions by the end of the century. West was responsible for the formulation of "stations" which were usually naturally built points in which a tourist could best take in the view. He directed his reader to a series of these around each of the major lakes in the district. Many of these points of view were elevated, allowing the observer access to a series of complete picturesque scenes that could be contemplated. West's guide was meant to direct the "contemplative and fanciful traveler" but he was quick to state that the guide is in no way a direct stand in for the real experience, it could never "prevent the agreeable surprise that attends the first sight of scenes that surpass all description".[126]

West describes each station with an incredible amount of detail, from the overall layout of the scene from right to left, to the layers constructed in depth from foreground to background, pausing every once in a while to situate features of the view in the larger geographical area. The first station at Lake Windermere is broken down over a series of pages, many of which he dedicates to the series of mountains visible from the elevated point. In one instance he writes of a mountain as "retiring inward, makes a semicircular bay, surrounded with a few acres of the most elegant verdure, flopping upward from the water's edge, graced with a cottage, in the finest point of view. Above it, the mountain rises in an agreeable wildness, variegated with featered trees, and silver-grey rocks."[127] He describes the lake as a "glorious sheet of water [which] expands itself to the right and left, in curves bearing from the eye; bounded on the west by the

[125] Jonathan Wordsworth, "Introduction," in *A Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire: 1784* (Oxford: Woodstock, 1989), 2.
[126] West, 3.
[127] Ibid ., 56.

continuation of the mountain were you stand…"[128] He also made sure that near the first station was a flat area in which an artist could set up his sketching material and begin to reproduce the view. While visiting each station he also recommended that the tourist carry a telescope in order to view "the fronts and summits of inaccessible rocks, and the distance country, from the tops of the high mountains"[129]. This meant that while he prescribed points of elevation and overviews to the observer, he was also interested in pointing out specific topographical detail, that is as long as the tourist preserved their position of detachment from the scene itself.

This emphasis on detachment, elevation and distance was at the heart of the picturesque, whose quintessential traveler pursued their object like a hunter, never completely satisfied until each possible scene had been tracked down: "And shall we suppose it greater pleasure to the sportsman to pursue a trivial animal, than it is to the man of taste to pursue the beauties of nature? To follow her through all her recesses? To obtain a sudden glance, as she flits past him in some airy shape? To trace her through the mazes of the cover? To wind after her along the vale? Or along the reaches of the river." Gilpin continues, writing, "After the pursuit we are gratified with the *attainment* of the object. Our amusement, on this head, arises from the employment of the mind in examining the beautiful scenes we have found."[130] The picturesque traveler always remains detached from the scene, separating itself from its prey. Even while faithfully following Gilpin's and West's precise directions, they imagine themselves on an adventure, the first to explore the area where "the mind is kept constantly in an agreeable suspense."[131]

Wordsworth wrote his guide as a corrective to these picturesque ones. While, as the remainder of this chapter will argue, both, at times, prescribed the same points of view,

[128] Ibid ., 57.
[129] Ibid ., 11.
[130] Gilpin, 48.
[131] Ibid ., 47.

especially those positions which allowed for a certain amount of elevation, they diverged in epistemological methodology and audience. For his own part, Wordsworth had a lot of experience with those earlier picturesque texts, he read West in grammar school and took one of Gilpin's guides on his tour of the Wye. The latter eventually became the inspiration for *Tintern Abbey*.[132] An older Wordsworth would have a very different attitude towards the gaining popularity of domestic tourism. In "The Brothers" included in the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, he writes

These Tourists, Heaven preserve us! needs must live
A profitable life: some glance along,
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as the summer lasted: some, as wise,
Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,
Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn…[133]

Here are the tell tale signs of the picturesque traveler, constantly moving from scene to scene, sketchpad in hand, more concerned for the immediate visual pleasures than those cultivated in the imagination. But even with this disdain for the casual middle class tourist, a decade after, in need of ways to improve his finances, Wordsworth attempted his own guide.[134]

Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes*

[132] Jonathan Wordsworth, "Introduction", 1.
[133] William Wordsworth, "The Brothers, A Pastoral Poem," in *Lyrical Ballads 1798 and 1800*, eds. Dahlia Porter and Michael Gamer (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2008), p.301, lines 1-10.
[134] "Tintern Abbey, Tourism and Romantic Landscape: William Wordsworth from Guide to the Lakes," in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (2010).

Published in five editions from 1810 to 1835, Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* was written using both poetry and prose (the poetry being both embedded in the main topographical text and in a series of passages from other writers inserted on their own). Wordsworth's guide did include a short section with directions on suitable walks, the distances between places of interest and the best natural or built stations in order to be able to access and admire specific views. But, unlike the traditional guides which were purely and exhaustively descriptive , Wordsworth's guide was written from the point of view of a long time inhabitant. It reflected the goals he had set for his poetry which each aimed "to direct the attention to some moral sentiment, or to some general effectiveness, or law of thought, or of our intellectual constitution."[135] The guide functions as a corollary to his poetic and theoretical work on the sublime, providing practical steps in which to achieve the perfect balance of proximity and distance. It was also written as a template for future tour guides. In a letter to Lady Beaumont written in 1810, he exclaims, "What I wished to accomplish was to give a model of the manner in which topographical descriptions ought to be executed, in order to their being either useful or intelligible, by evolving truly and distinctly one appearance from another. In this I think I have not wholly failed."[136] As Earnest De Selincourt suggests in his introduction to the 1835 edition, most of the previous guides were written by men who experienced the landscape for the first time on tour; "… in spite of all their enthusiasm, [they] remain outside their subject."[137] While describing the stylistic differences between Wordsworth and the most popular topographical writers of his day, he states of the latter, that

---

[135] William Wordsworth, "Letter to Lady Beaumont, 21 May 1807," in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years*, ed. E de Selincourt, 8 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), II, 148.
[136] William Wordsworth, "Letter to Lady Beaumont, May 16 1810," in *The Letter of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years*, ed. E de Selincourt, 8 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), II, 404.
[137] Ernest de Selincourt, "Introduction," in *Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes with an Introduction, Appendices, and Notes Textual and Illustrative*.(London: Henry Frowde, 1906),xii.

> To call them tourists, bent upon recording a holiday experience, and attracted to the country by reason of its novelty, is a hard saying, but incontrovertible. What wonder then that they saw but its more obvious features and at times misinterpreted even the little that they saw, that when they were accurate they were dull and uninspired, that when they were enthusiastic they tended to become absurd? What wonder that they could not capture the secret of nature's beauty and significance, and remained untouched by those subtler influences which are the silent reward of a life dedicated to her love?[138]

Unlike these men, Wordsworth, an inhabitant of the area, had steeped in that love, and would use that experience hand in hand with his poetic eye to educate his reader.

The *Guide to the Lakes* foregrounded the relationship of the observer to the natural world with the direct aim of cultivating his or her mind. Wordsworth opened the 1835 edition by writing, "In preparing this manual, it was the author's principal wish to furnish a guide or companion for the minds of persons of taste, and feeling for landscape, who might be inclined to explore the District of the Lakes with that degree of attention to which its beauty may fairly lay claim."[139] Writing in the style of the tour guide would allow Wordsworth to "cultivate" the imagination of the reader by creating " habits of more exact and considerate observation"[140] than could be attained by a traveler on his own. He welcomed readers who were both new to the area or had experienced its charms before, believing that the guide would, in the case of the latter, " assist in giving to his recollections a more orderly arrangement than his own opportunities of observing may have permitted him to make" and, in the case of the former, it would direct " his

[138] Selincourt, xvi.
[139] William Wordsworth, *Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes with an Introduction, Appendices, and Notes Textual and Illustrative*, 5th ed. (London: Henry Frowde, 1906), 1.
[140] Wordsworth, *Guide*, 22.

attention at once to distinctions in things which, without some previous aid, a length of time only could enable him to discover."[141]

As in his poetry, he repeatedly emphasized the role of Nature in directing and cultivating the imagination of the poet and the eye of the artist, often pointing out the inadequacy of representation in comparison to the appreciation of the real thing. Nearing the end of the guide he wrote that "though our scenes are better suited to painting than those of the Alps, I should be sorry to contemplate either country in reference to that art, further than as its fitness or unfitness for the pencil renders it more or less pleasing to the eye of the spectator, who has learned to observe and feel, chiefly from Nature herself."[142] As this statement suggests, Wordsworth continuously used the guide to argue against the suitability of the art of painting when it came to communicating the effects of Nature. In one passage which describes the power of climatic forces on the visual field he writes, "Akin to these fleecy clouds resting upon the hill-tops; they are not easily managed in picture, with their accompaniments of blue ski; but how glorious are they in Nature! How pregnant with the imagination for the poet!"[143]

While much of his description involved criteria like proportion, compositional unity and irregularity which were also heralded in the picturesque tradition, outside of his introductory chapter on possible routes to take, his methodology focused primarily on both the natural and historical causes underlying the visual effects rather than the effects themselves. Wordsworth aligned the sublime to those original geological forces and beauty to the subsequent effects that they produced, writing, "sublimity is the result of Nature's first great dealings with the superficies of the earth; but the general tendency of her subsequent operations is towards the

[141] Ibid ., 22.
[142] Ibid ., 104.
[143] Ibid ., 46.

production of beauty;" and borrowing Coleridge's definition added, "by a multiplicity of symmetrical parts uniting in a consistent whole."[144] Its appreciation was dependant on at least a cursory knowledge of the forces which had led to the formation of those natural phenomena, like waterfalls, lakes, and mountains, which elicited its internal effects.

Much of the guide is dedicated to defending and disassociating the sublimity of the Lake District from the prototypical landscape of the sublime in the Alps. In both cases, the sublime effects of mountainscapes are related to the power of the elements and their ability to construct a sense of duration and permanence. While the mountains of the district are, due to their size and associated weather patterns, unable to elicit the same feelings of "havoc, and ruin, and desolation, and encroachment", "this deficiency proceeds a sense of stability and permanence that is, to many minds more graceful..."[145] He refers to the sublimity of the district as "tranquil" due to this sense of permanence, contrasting it with "the depressing sensation that the whole [of the Alps] are in a rapid process of dissolution; and, were it not that the destructive agency must abate as the heights diminish, would, in time to come, be levelled with the plains."[146] This tranquility is largely due, then, to the calmer and softer atmospheric effects which he describes as "creative, and magnifying", allowing for a "sense of sublimity [which] depends more upon form and relation of objects to each other than upon their actual magnitude..."[147]

Defining sets of properties which distinguish between different hills and mountains, and, lakes, oceans, and rivers, has a deeper importance over and above the need to defend the aesthetic qualities of the district. Each natural phenomenon has its own metaphoric relationship with the poet's imagination. It allows the poet's power of perception to expand in different

[144] Ibid ., 35.
[145] Ibid ., 99.
[146] Ibid ., 99.
[147] Ibid ., 102.

potential directions "mirroring" the dimensions and formal articulations of the specific geological structure or body of water.[148]While a river directs the eye along a meandering path both towards the horizon and along the edges of the visual frame, lakes and oceans extend attention in all directions. Each illustrates different conceptions of inner and outer world, and patterns of poetic labour.

In both the case of the lakes and the mountains of the area, sublimity is necessarily refined and complicated by being juxtaposed with qualities normally associated with beauty and the picturesque. This contrast between tranquility and grandeur would be largely counterintuitive if not for Wordsworth's constant reference to the importance of duration and underlying geological forces in our appraisal of the scene and our sense of awe. This constant juxtaposition of proportion, irregularity, and grandeur is a necessary by-product of his larger emphasis on moving through spaces and places, rather than locating the perfect stations in order to survey them from a stationary position.

Within the various walking tours that he described, Wordsworth intertwined elevated vantage points which allowed access to "perfect pictures"[149] and the small topographical details that appeared along the way, asking his reader to experience the space at different levels of height and proximity. Like the previous guide books, he often provides descriptive detail from elevated positions. Wordsworth introduces the area as a whole, through an imaginary point of survey, located between the mountains Great Gavel and Scawfell, perched on top of a cloud "not more than half a mile's distance from the summit of each"[150]. From this "station" he is able to situate each of his walking excursions geographically. While this elevated point becomes a

[148] Kim, 70.
[149] Wordsworth, *Guide,* 100.
[150] Ibid ., 22.

necessary topographic tool for the rest of the sections dedicated to the traveler, he usually uses the device as an aesthetic tool, often turning to poetry to describe the view, as in the case of the elevated side of Lake Blea Tarn. In one instance he describes the power of the view with much the same excitement as West stating that "scenes that formerly may have been compared to an inexhaustible volume, are now spread before the eye in a single sheet, --magnificent indeed, but seemingly perused in a moment!"[151] But, unlike previous guides, these elevated and bird's-eye views are nowhere near as frequent. They occur alongside details related to the walk itself, ways of enjoying moving through the district, and little known spots to find yourself in along the way. He recommends that Windermere should be experienced "from both its shores and its surface" following streams and rivers out into small fields and ascending and descending into coves.[152] Further along in the guide he expands this statement to include the area as a whole; "It is a great advantage to a traveller or resident, that these numerous lanes and paths, if he be a zealous admirer of Nature, will lead him on into all the recesses of the country, so that the hidden treasures of its landscapes may, by an ever-ready guide, be laid open to his eyes."[153]Whether Wordsworth is pointing towards large vistas or small spaces, it is their relationship to the whole which is valued rather the mere act of gazing upon them. The main role of the cultivated traveler seems to be to understand "their bearings and relations to each other"[154].

These relations between whole and parts are dependent on both the traveler's power of observation, previous knowledge, and, how they move through the space. In fact, it seems for Wordsworth that how to look is more important to complex aesthetic appreciation than where to look. The most overt expression of this process is highlighted in his description of the proper

[151] Ibid ., 19.
[152] Ibid ., 5.
[153] Ibid ., 64.
[154] Ibid ., 21

order in which to experience certain mountain settings so as to properly appreciate their sublimity and beauty:

> As to the order in which objects are best seen- a lake being composed of water flowing from higher grounds, and expanding itself till its receptacle is filled to the brim, - it follows, that from its outlet, especially if the lake be in a mountainous country; for, by this way of approach, the traveler faces the grander features of the scene, and is gradually conducted into its most sublime recesses. Now, every one knows that from amenity and beauty the transition to sublimity is easy and favourable, but the reverse is not so; for, after the faculties have been elevated, they are indisposed to humbler excitement.[155]

Aesthetic experience is not so much a matter of finding appropriate phenomena but the result of the interaction between inner and outer world constructed out of embodied engagement. The complexity of that affective response greatly depends on a preconditioned mind which is in part a product of specific movements through space. Without any one of these criteria a spectator either misses certain aspects of the experience or dwells on individual components of the visual scene without being able to shift into the conceptual realm and consider the experience as a unified whole.

The precariousness of this mode of aesthetic awareness returns when he is defining the merits of the lakes found in the area. When discussing the actually physical position that an observer must take in order to appreciate them he states that the "form of the lake is most perfect...when being looked at from any given point where the whole may be seen at once, the width of it bears such proportion to the length, that, however the outline may be diversified by far-receding bays, it never assumes the shape of a river..."[156] That view is only able to convey the

[155] Ibid ., 97.
[156] Ibid ., 32.

appropriate feeling when approached from the ground level rather than from an elevated vantage point because a ground approach allows for the possibility of visual barriers which can construct a frame around the lake; "...when the view of the whole is obstructed by those barriers which determine the windings, and the spectator is confined to one reach, the appropriate feeling is revived; and one lake may this in succession present to the eye the essential characteristic of many."[157] This frame will direct attention across its surface rather than along the sides where it may connect to other bodies of water. This means that while the majority of the lake is visible, all of its edges are not. Portions of water will always fall just outside of the view creating the same precarious balance between proximity and distance as found in the 18th century discourse. But rather than being placed so close to the object so as to elicit a state of mediated terror and awe like in Burke's account, the sensation of grandeur exhibited by the lakes found in the north of England is constructed through a slightly more detached position creating the sense of tranquil sublimity. It shares many similarities to Joseph Addison's early description of the sublime where the spectator is "flung into a pleasing astonishment at such unbounded views, and feel a delightful stillness and amazement in the soul at the apprehension of them."[158]

Wordsworth uses the phrase "pleasing astonishment" near the end of the guide when describing a castle reflected in the calm surface of the lake which he mistook for the actual building because of the "body of vapour"[159] which concealed its true location and clear edges. What is interesting in both the case of the grandeur exhibited by the lakes in the district, and Wordsworth's personal confusion near the edge of Ullswater, is the necessity of framing and concealment devices in order to capture the specific type of pleasure which he argues is inherent

[157] Ibid ., 33.
[158] Joseph Addison, "On the Pleasures of the Imagination.," *Spectator* 412 (23 June 1712): 134.
[159] Wordsworth, *Guide,* 108.

to the area. Paradoxically, these modes of framing construct the possibility of an "unbounded view" out of a view that is essentially bounded. The first section of the guide seems to be primarily motivated by the potential of movement to construct different combinations of aesthetic pleasure .This pattern of embodied immersion is capable of eliciting an internal contemplative response in the imagination where the relation of objects to one another, and to the view, as a whole, could be compared.

The guide is not solely made up of description and information directed towards the traveler. The last four editions also include a large set of sections dedicated to a historical overview of the area and advice for a would-be settler interested in building in the region. Both of these sections are written in the tone of a manifesto, and, in direct contradiction with the first half of the guide, are extremely critical of the effects of tourists and new settlers to the area. Those transformations were precipitated by an increased interest in ornamental gardening and guides written first by Dr. Brown and then by Gray; "...Travellers, instead of confining their observation to Towns, Manufactories, or Mines, began (a thing till then unheard of) to wander over the island in search of sequestered spots, distinguished as they might accidently have learned, for the sublimity or beauty of the forms of Nature there to be seen."[160] Many of these travelers who "flocked hither from all parts of England" became so enchanted that they decided to move permanently to the area. The environment itself became, as Wordsworth puts it, "instantly defaced by the intrusion."[161] Those defacements came in the form of "discordant objects, disturbing that peaceful harmony of form and colour which had been through a long lapse of ages most happily preserved."[162] Wordsworth's response to this influx of outsiders was

[160] Ibid ., 69.
[161] Ibid ., 70.
[162] Ibid ., 72.

to caution against any such intrusions, imploring settlers to "call to mind the processes of Nature"[163] and "study what already exists"[164], before they begin to travel and build in the area.

But while possible settlers to the district were predominately upper middle class, many of his fears and outrage was directed towards the working class tourists who were increasingly gaining access to cheap modes of transit to the area.[165] In a letter penned to the editor of the Morning Post, Wordsworth warned of unleashing crowds of visitors by extending rail lines in the area directly up beside particular sites and natural vistas which had been made repeatedly praised in picturesque literature and guides. He uses the historical introduction of the natural sublime into the realm of taste in order to describe the complex education needed in order to be able to truly appreciate the district:

> ...a vivid perception of romantic scenery is neither inherent in mankind, nor a necessary consequence of even a comprehensive education. It is benignly ordained that green fields, clear blue skies, running streams of pure water, rich groves and woods, orchards, and all the ordinary varieties of rural nature, should find an easy way to the affections of all men... But a taste beyond this, however desirable it may be that every one should possess it, is not to be implanted at once; it must be gradually developed both in nations and individuals.[166]

Accessibility does not, therefore, equate directly to an aesthetic education, rather that education must begin prior to direct experience, especially for those who have grown up without any childhood exposure. He recommends that "artisans", "labourers" and "the humbler classes of shopkeepers" should begin this exposure in their own communities, taking time on Sundays, as they would to attend worship, to make small excursions across fields and forests near their

[163] Ibid ., 72.
[164] Ibid ., 73.
[165] Here Wordsworth is more critical of increased tourism rather than the fact that these tourists would be working class.
[166] Ibid ., 151.

homes.[167] In order to make such walking outings possible, Wordsworth implores manufacturers to consider consenting to legislation which would limit working hours without decreasing pay substantially. Traveling through the Lake District should be reserved as the final quest for the domestic tourist, remaining the pinnacle for an individual's aesthetic and moral education. Wordsworth argues that because the area was attributed with the sublimest properties and arguably a "temple of Nature"[168], the government was obliged to protect and keep it as a "sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy."[169]

In his letters to the Post, Wordsworth explicitly develops a larger argument that runs implicitly through the guide and much of his poetry; the important perceptual role of walking as mode of travel over new technological options such as the coach or train. As Wallace argues in her monograph tracing the role of walking in English culture, Wordsworth's writing presented the most elaborate defence and reconceptualization of the practice to date. After the initial publication of Wordsworth's poetic writing, "pedestrian tours" began to gain and expand in popularity. The late 18th century saw a large increase in the publication and circulation of guides which actually directly referred to walking as mode of travel rather than just describing individual views and stations. These texts began to apply a new set of properties to walking, shifting its class distinction from working to middle class all the while preserving some of its prior cultural associations. Wallace pinpoints Wordsworth as the central figure in this textual transformation, tracing what she terms "peripatetic ideology" through his excursion poetry. She argues that walking played a fundamental role in Wordsworth's conception of poetic labour,

[167] Ibid ., 152.
[168] Ibid ., 162.
[169] Ibid ., 92.

where it allowed the author to reconnect to the pre-enclosure landscape by filling the role of the farmer and cultivator with that of the "localizing yet traveling action of walking"[170]. The mode of travel was singled out from the other mechanized options as a form of cultivation that allowed someone to be "both placed and moving, stable and changing" inside their local landscape.[171]

For Wordsworth and the numerous other authors who followed him, excursive walking, poetry-making, and farming became understood as "interchangeable labours"[172]completely effacing any socio-economic distinctions between the three. Unlike what Wallace calls "true travel", referring to both Grand and picturesque tours, the peripatetic emerged directly from the georgic providing an intimate relationship with a landscape by travelling through it at a natural and continuous pace. While the former situated itself in the validation of specific destinations which could be isolated and addressed as single views or pictures, excursive walking did away with the necessity of the frame, and, along with it, the cultural barriers which divided aesthetic experiences attributed to being away from moral and epistemological frameworks located at home. Those who partook in both the picturesque and Grand tour were interested only in developing their level of taste, topographical literature relating to both tours strongly discouraged ties with new communities for fear that new customs could be transplanted back home. Wordsworth's excursive walking illuminated the importance of the process in both constructing and disrupting this stationary form of contemplation and dichotomy of home and abroad. Walking became the representative mode of journey-as process through Wordsworth's poetry and prose, which also came to develop an eventually interchangeable theme: life as journey.

[170] Wallace, 68.
[171] Ibid ., 68.
[172] Ibid ., 106.

In this re-reading of Wordsworth's *The Excursion,* pedestrian travel becomes both the vehicle which allows for poetic labour and its metaphoric stand-in. Wallace argues that the natural objects described in the poem "are presented successively, as contiguous parts of a limited but moving view".[173] The continuity of the action constructs a "traceable path of perceptions and so of memories from destination to destination; a sense of limited perspective requiring continued movement, continued process, continued expansion."[174] Here Wallace develops a similar argument as is found in the debate over the role of Nature in Wordsworth's conception of the sublime, that both the actions of the characters and the style of writing "mimics the pedestrian perspective"[175] giving the appearance that the work is a direct product of moving through the landscape rather than the other way around .

Wordsworth makes a similar claim in favour of the pedestrian perspective when condemning the extension of the Kendal and Windermere railway. Rather than transport individuals directly to their final destinations why not implore those traveling from urban areas to walk across the fields and footpaths? He repeatedly compares walking styles which complement his own methodology and practice to mechanized modes of travel. While describing his recent return trip to the Alps he writes, "instead of travellers proceeding, with leisure to observe and feel, were pilgrims of fashion hurried along in their carriages, not a few of them perhaps discussing the merits of 'the last new Novel', or poring over their Guide-books, or fast asleep."[176] The slow but continuous process of aesthetic exposure which was necessary for appreciation of the District, and in fact the sublime itself, could only come about through walking, where landscapes were considered in overlapping sequences and individual details

[173] Ibid ., 89.
[174] Ibid ., 74.
[175] Ibid ., 89.
[176] Wordsworth, *Guide,* 164.

rather than static views. As he argues in the *Guide*, the manner in which a tourist chooses to move through space constructs his ability to perceive and internalize it properly.

The pedestrian perspective amplified the precariousness already embedded in the previous quest for the perfect view. If finding the appropriate place in which to stand in front of particular natural phenomena wasn't difficult enough, considering that possibility within the framework of a continuous, ever-evolving landscape seems almost impossible. For this reason peripatetic literature often referred to the benefits of patterned routes and limited, though moving, viewpoints. These were very often locally inspired rather than attached to far off views and monuments. In Wordsworth's case these journeys were marked by a circular sequence of leaving and returning back again. In the guide Wordsworth describes elevated views alongside intimate footpaths where the latter offer a series of different forms of education. Not only do these footpaths train the observer to appreciate the view but they become rewards in and of themselves[177] which eventually transform the pedestrian's perspective of home. In this sense walking is far more than a purely aesthetic process but, as an essential part of poetic production, it can provide both moral and psychological revelations about oneself and ones community. Walking takes a person out into nature and also brings him home. So, unlike the traditional idea of travel, the excursive walking that Wordsworth prescribes does not support a strict dichotomy of either home and abroad or journey and destination. Like the family walks he suggests for after worship on Sundays, walking becomes the manner in which we engage with every landscape, using the term "dwell" in the *Prelude* rather than travel.[178] Deliberate walking for its own sake, which allows its participants to re engage with their local environments, is equated with stability;

[177] Wallace, 170.
[178] Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805), I, p. 30, line 35.

"wandering becomes not a relaxation of body and mind, a withdrawal from community ...but a deliberate, directed labour undertaken to make self and home."[179]

Ideologically, walking provided a way to preserve a direct link with the idealized, pastoral landscape of the pre-enclosure era. It offered a way for upper middle class tourists to combat the increasing infringements of industrialization and mechanization which were also largely to blame for the decline of traditional agricultural practices. [180]It became the tie that bound the past, present and future. Alongside guides directing walking tours, critical and theoretical texts applying many of Wordsworth's practical and ideological components rose in popularity in the mid- 19th century. Like the Grand and picturesque tours before it, the walking tour became "a sign not only of deliberate making of self but, to a certain extent, of the freedom from other labours, the leisure, in which to do so."[181] These texts quickly projected the act of walking all the way back through the cultural history of Great Britain, embedding it into the myths of key literary figures like Shakespeare and Jonathan Swift.[182] Walking, as cultural ideology and piece of national identity became a "timeless authorial activity"[183], quickly assuaging rising fears about what the new modern Britain would in fact be. The practice was taken up by Gentry and royalty; Victoria and Albert sent their son, the Prince of Wales, on multiple different domestic and continental walking tours in the 1850s hoping to further develop his more classically academic and culture pursuits.[184] Over the period a number of protective measures were passed, along with the creation of community groups and societies, including the

[179] Wallace, 122.
[180] Ibid ., 149.
[181] Ibid ., 170.
[182] Ibid ., 197.
[183] Ibid ., 173.
[184] Ibid ., 168.

Footpaths Preservation Society, all with the single aim of improving and extending accessibility to footpaths and open countryside across the country.

Unlike Wordsworth who carefully traced the history of nature appreciation, the discourse surrounding the cultural industry embraced the walking tour as its natural central cog. But the practice didn't slow the expansion of other modes of travel which were much easier for the industry to commodify. Rather it took on different roles depending on the socio-economic circumstance of the participant; families could take to rambling for their holiday after traveling from an urban centre on the train, or individuals could tour locally as part of a weekly or perhaps even daily routine. Walking, as an ideology, became a central tenant of the national identity, allowing pastoral roots to intermesh with the industrialized future, while also providing a manner in which to disperse the lingering anxiety produced by the encroachment of the latter.

A more nuanced reading of Wordsworth's guide in relation to the emerging industry surrounding domestic nature appreciation and the sublime allows us to understand the competing aesthetic and epistemological frameworks at play during the early 19th century which would go on to be debated well into the next century. Alongside the picturesque's emphasis on detachment, distance, and the stability of the contemplative frame emphasized by previously idealized and disconnected landscapes, Wordsworth presented a subversive mode of spectatorship drawn from the 18th century's vision of the natural sublime. Rather than relying on a framing mechanism to establish aesthetic judgment, Wordsworth's emphasis on continuous, immersive movement constantly threatened to rearrange the relationship of parts to whole presented to the would-be tourist. Excursive walking and the Romantic sublime went hand in hand, they were the practical and theoretical points at which the imagination and nature could begin to converge providing the potential for the emergence of the poetic eye. While the natural

sublime acted as a catalyst for nature appreciation, and eventually, the walking tour, the continuous process of moving through space also transformed the sublime into an experience which could, at times, be explored in language, linking astonishment with contemplation. But, although the natural sublime was debated and prescribed in more domains than ever before, it remained elusive, hiding in the liminal spaces between contemplation and immersion, memory and experience.

These debates over how to experience and then represent the sublime would have a fundamental effect on the scenic film genre which would emerge by the beginning of the next century. The proponents of the picturesque and Romantic movements were both fascinated by the role of the frame in both embodied and detached forms of experience. Each drew on concerns over the role of representation in relation to firsthand experience which would be central to popular 19th and 20th century screen entertainment like the painted panorama and cinema. In order to determine the role of each representational medium one had to establish what exactly was at stake, and for whom. What was so important about contact with nature in the first place? Did immersion and detachment construct their own competing value systems or could they be reconciled through different methods of representation? If one could not represent a sublime experience what could be offered instead? For Wordsworth, the guide book may not have been capable of providing the experience itself but it did have the potential to direct its reader to places in the real world where immersion and contemplation were intertwined. It equipped its reader with the appropriate state of mind before venturing out and became one of the first texts to popularize the notion of astonishment amongst the burgeoning middle class.

Chapter 3

The Panoramic Tour and the Emergence of the Technological Sublime

At around the same time as Wordsworth's first foray into the tour guide genre, Robert Barker, a self taught draftsman, was beginning to design his first panorama, a half circle which displayed the view from the top of Edinburgh's Calton Hill. Once patented in 1787, the representational medium would transform the parameters of nature appreciation and push the epistemological values of the picturesque guide book to its absolute limits, eventually initiating one of the first historical stages in the reversal of hierarchy between firsthand experience and its representation.

This chapter maps out the two processes that constructed the necessary requirements for the transformation of the natural sublime into its antithesis, the "technological sublime", a trend which would continue with the invention and institutionalization of photography and the cinema. The first of these processes I associate with the invention and construction of the panorama itself. The new medium set out to resolve the problem that I have been arguing stood at the very heart of environmental aesthetics as it related to the philosophy of art; the sheer inability to capture and represent the complexity and immersive aspects of the natural view. It did so by transforming the traditional rules of perspective and placing accuracy and detail above artistic interpretation and expression.

The second process at play historically was rhetorical in nature. The industry invested much of its energy imbedding itself within the previous set of debates surrounding the natural sublime. Not only did it use its own promotional material to substantiate the claim that it was a suitable replacement for firsthand experience and knowledge, but it also encouraged press reviews which made the same comparisons. Newspapers like *The Era*, a weekly national paper

that specialised in theatrical and music hall events in London, continuously turned to the language and debates surrounding the natural sublime in order to reinforce the power and novelty of the new screen medium. I will look specifically at the industry and popular discourse surrounding Barker's original built panorama in Leicester Square which would be passed down to his son and then eventually owned by Robert Burford until his death in 1861. Both the discursive and physical features of the painted panorama aimed at supplanting the prescriptive role of earlier travel guides and challenged previous aesthetic conventions separating the roles of immersion and contemplation.

Wordsworth refers to the painted panorama while visiting London in Book Seven of *The Prelude*, writing,

> And, next to these, those mimic sights that ape
> The absolute presence of reality
> Expressing as in mirror sea and land,
> And what earth is, and what she hath to show –I
> do not here allude to subtlest craft,
> By means refined attaining purest ends,
> But imitations fondly made in plain
> Confession of man's weakness and his loves.
> Whether the painter –fashioning a work
> To Nature's circumambient scenery,
> And with his greedy pencil taking in
> A whole horizon on all sides –with power
> Like that of angels or commissioned spirits,
> Plant us upon some lofty pinnacle
> Or in a ship on water, with a world Of life and lifelike mockery to east,
> To west, beneath, behind us, and before,
> Or more mechanic artist represent

> By scale exact, in model, wood or clay,
> From shading colours also borrowing help,
> Some miniature of famous spots and things,
> Domestic, or the boast of foreign reams:
> The Firth of Forth, and Edinburgh, thrones
> On crags, fit empress of that mountain land;
> St Peter's Church; or, more aspiring aim,
> In microscopic vision, Rome itself;
> Or else, perhaps, some rural haunt, the falls
> Of Tivoh, and dim Fescati's bowers,
> And high upon the steep that mouldering fane,
> The temple of the Sibyl –every tree
> Through all the landscape, tuft, stone, scratch minute,
> And every cottage, lurking in the rocks – All
> that the traveller see when he is there.[185]

Wordsworth traveled to London multiple times between 1791 and 1802[186], coincidently the same period of time in which Barker put his first full painted panoramas on display in London. While the seventh book of *The Prelude* describes his memory of events from 1791, like the other sections of the text, periods of time often blend together and overlap.[187] For this reason there has been much debate over the exact show Wordsworth is referring to in this critique, Philip Shaw argues that it is most likely Barker's "London from the Roof of Albian Mills" which went on display in June of 1791[188], Gillen D'Arcy Wood suggests it could be the panorama of Rome from 1802-03, and Jonathan Wordsworth states that he could be describing Thomas Girtin's 270

[185] Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, VII, p. 238, lines 248-80.
[186] Philip Shaw, "'Mimic sights': a note on panorama and other indoor displays in Book 7 of 'The Prelude.' (by Wordsworth)", in *Notes and Queries* 40, no.4 (Dec. 1993): 462.
[187] Shaw, 462.
[188] Ibid ., 462.

degree picture of London from 1802[189]. But rather than refer directly to only one exhibition, Shaw also suggests that the passage could be an amalgamation of multiple different views on display over his many visits to the capitol. In it Wordsworth refers to some of the most famous examples by Robert Barker and his many competitors who popped up almost immediately after the first patented display became a success. No matter which view Wordsworth actually visited, this passage is a telling critique, pitting Wordsworth's imaginative eye against the powerful visual technology.

As Stephen Oettermann argues in *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium*, this new way of displaying and accessing landscape existed squarely at the center of the apparatus which made up the tourist industry in England, demonstrating the circularity which was necessary to expand the industry to a mass audience. Oettermann describes that lineage as beginning with the needs of those travelling on a Grand Tour to take home a souvenir, through the miniature panoramic drawings which accompanied picturesque guide books and beginning again with the souvenir pamphlets that visitors to the panoramas took away with them.[190] This pattern of firsthand experience and memory relied on the formal representational properties associated with the panorama in order to first establish that a person had gone abroad, then to organize their expectations prior to leaving, and finally, for those unable to travel, as a means of sharing in the same cultural practice. Panoramas were repeatedly referred to as visually equivalent to the sites which they represented. The *Times* described one of the first built rotundas as appearing "as large and in every respect the same as reality."[191] The painted panorama's popularity was based on its

[189] Wood, 112.
[190] Stephen Oettermann, *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium*, trans. Deborah Schneider (New York: Urzone, 1997), 60.
[191] *The Times* (London), as quoted in Hubert J Pragnell, *The London Panoramas of Robert Barker and Thomas Girtin, circa 1800* (London: Topographical Society, 1968), 12.

claim to provide access to the same experiences which could be had on Grand and picturesque tours creating the possibility of a traveler's education without the expense, time, and difficulty necessary for actual travel. As Bernard Comment writes, while traveling across the country was becoming more common in the early 19th century, "it remained the exclusive domain of a privileged class and an elite of artists and writers, soldiers and officers. This was why the panorama and diorama filled the gap so efficiently, meeting a growing need to escape, before the means to actually do so had become available."[192] That process, beginning with establishing its relationship with the visible world, and, eventually, surpassing and replacing that reality, where the "simulation [was] carried to a degree of completeness in which the image was valued over reality"[193], occurred on many different cultural and conceptual fronts and through multiple phases.

At the time of its patent, the painted panorama went through a complex stage of both articulating and disarticulating its relationship to other visual media. There was much early debate as to whether the panorama was an extension and improvement on the traditional painting or whether it was an altogether separate entity operating on its own separate goals. Defined in the 1881 *Dictionary of Building Terms* as "a building in which a painting referred to as a *panorama* is exhibited, that is to say painted on the inside wall of a rotunda, covered by a cupola or cone-shaped roof" where the painting itself is a "faithful reproduction of what a place looks like when viewed from all angles and from as far as the eye can see", the panorama was unlike any aesthetic object which had been imagined before. It found its niche outside of the academic art market and created its own system of circulation and exhibition amongst other forms of middlebrow visual entertainment. The latter were in fact having a huge amount of success during

[192] Bernard Comment, *The Painted Panorama* (London: Reaktion, 1999), 132.
[193] Comment, 133.

the same period in which the established art institutions were beginning to stagnate and decline.[194]

While the panorama would map out its very own industry, it had a much humbler beginning. Barker wanted to be able to replicate exactly what he saw as he looked down and around from his favourite elevated station on Calton Hill in Edinburgh. Traditional academic paintings could only represent one particular view, once the artist turned his head the rules of perspective, specifically that established by the rule of forty five degrees, broke down and he was unable to replicate objects in their appropriate scale in relation to the whole. In order to eliminate the frame, and with it the fixed point of view, Barker had to invent his own system of perspective. The painted panorama therefore did more than merely replicate a view but also allowed the urban spectator the chance to play the role of the nature observer. No longer were they confined to the elements provided to them by the traditional landscape painting, they could move through the space, take in multiple views, and decide for themselves which elements should be combined and considered as a whole, and which to leave aside.

In Barker's original patent he called his invention "La Nature à Coup d'Oeil" stating that its purpose was to display "Views of Nature at large by Oil Painting, Fresco, Water Colors, Crayons, or any other Mode of Painting of Drawing"[195]. The term "panorama" was first used four years later in an ad in *The Oracle* referring to the panorama of London as appearing "the same as Nature in extent and every other particular."[196] This rhetoric, constructing a direct link between the representation and reality, divided those in the academic art establishment. While

---

[194] Wood, 100.
[195] "Apparatus for Exhibiting Pictures," British Patent no. 1612, granted June 19, 1787. Facsimile in Lauren Mannoni, Donata Pesenti Campagnoni, and David Robinson, *Light and Movement : Incunabula of the Motion Picture 1420-1896* (Gemona:La Cineteca del Fruli/ Le Gionarte del Cinema Muto, 1995), 157-158.
[196] *Oracle* (London) no. 624, May 28 1791, as quoted in Erkki Huhtamo, *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 1.

popular press like *The Oracle* would run advertisements and reviews which argued that the panorama was "the greatest improvement of the art of Painting that has ever yet been discovered"[197], established artists like John Constable would write, upon visiting, that Barker

> has taken his view favourably, and it is executed with the greatest care and fidelity. This style of painting suits his idea of the art itself and his defects are not so apparent in it –that is great principles are neither expected nor looked for in this mode of describing nature. He views Nature minutely and *cunningly* , but with no greatness of breadth. The defects of the picture at present are a profusion of high lights, and too great a number of abrupt patches of shadow. But it is not to be considered as a whole.[198]

Here Constable refers to the division between art and the panorama as a reliance on either detail or overall composition. Like Wordsworth, he returns to the problem of selection arguing that Barker is not interested in mediating the view he sees through an eye to its aesthetic power but, is instead interested in "fidelity" alone. While Constable remained critical of the practice, other figures would soften to its effects. Sir Jonathan Reynolds was highly sceptical when first introduced to the technology by Barker during its planning stages, but, upon actually seeing a completed one, he changed his mind, arguing that a visit to the panorama offered artist and average observer alike a chance "to witness the powerful effects of nature"[199]. In each case, the painted panorama became divided away from traditional academic paintings. Whether elevated above or derisively assumed below, it was considered something entirely different than what had come before; no longer a mere representation but a powerful illusion.

Nature Tourism and the Painted Panorama

---

[197] *Oracle* (London) no. 624, May 28 1791.
[198] John Constable, *John Constable's Correspondence*, ed. R.B. Beckett, II (Suffolk Records Society, VI, 1964), 34, quoted in Richard D Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1978), 137.
[199] As quoted by William Pyne, *Wine and Walnuts; or, After Dinner Chit- Chat*, 2nd ed (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1824), 281-282.

The panorama industry utilized many different devices in order to elicit a direct association between their paintings and nature tourism in the mind of their clientele. The most important of these were the pamphlets and guides which were circulated with each new scene. These pamphlets provided the same kind of information as the picturesque tour guides; short introductions to the history and topography of the area; the important regions and buildings to visit; and detailed description of the built objects and natural phenomena on display in the panorama itself. The pamphlet acted as a textual link between the actual location and painting, constructing a paradoxical effect which both encouraged tourism to the area and stood as evidence of the accuracy of the painting further establishing the role of the panorama as stand in for real travel. Every pamphlet (and most advertisements) highlighted the exact point at which the original observer had stood in order to complete the first sketches. They also gave the date or time of year and the name of the person who had made the original sketches. In many of these guides testimonials were provided from persons of note who had actually been to the same locations verifying the complete accuracy of the painting. [200]

The choice of the point of view was often as important as its claim of accuracy. In Henry Aston Barker's panorama (son of Robert Barker) of the coronation of George the Fourth in 1823 he began by situating the would-be observer, " [i]n order to form a correct idea of this Panorama, it is necessary for the Spectators to imagine themselves placed in the Central Pavilion, an extensive range of galleries, erected in the Garden of Parliament Square, from whence the View was taken." He then provided his rationale for choosing that point of view; "This point was the most favourable that could be selected, as it embraced nearly the whole of the Platform on which

[200] Many of these testimonials were elicited from military figures who would also help produce the original sketches. Two of the most notable examples were Lieutenant Beechey, who accompanied the polar exhibition in 1818 where Barker's panorama of Spitzbergen was first sketched, and Captain George J. White of the 31st Regiment, who assisted in Burford's 1847 panorama of the Himalaya Mountains.

the procession moved; and, a great portion of it turning round the Central Pavilion, an opportunity offered of giving a near view of the most interesting part of that splendid pageant, combined with the surrounding buildings and galleries, faithfully copied in all their ornamental variety."[201] But while accuracy was valued above all else, the painter would omit objects and shift the scale of the fore, middle, and background, in order to produce "the most desirable angle"[202]. These 'minor' changes were often described in the pamphlets themselves, establishing the idea that providing the best possible view could in some cases be more important than absolute fidelity to the land or cityscape.

Like the picturesque guide and Wordsworth's Romantic one, every pamphlet was couched in the aesthetic language of the period, often turning to passages of poetry in order to describe both the power of the location and the effect of the panoramic view. But even though the pamphlets often relied on the likes of Lord Byron to sell the majesty of their views, the Barkers and, later, Robert Burford, often compared the painted panorama to language, arguing that the former was far better equipped to replicate the beauty and sublimity of nature. While in the 1843 panorama of the Rhine, poetry is compared favourably, described as the only medium in which "the delightful prospects [the Rhine] presents can, with any degree of justice, be portrayed"[203], in almost every view which could be described as 'sublime' language becomes inadequate in the face of majestic proportions. In the 1847 pamphlet dedicated to the panorama of the Himalaya Mountains, where the 31st British regiment was stationed at the time, the writer exclaims that "[t]he mountain from which the present panorama is taken, from its height and situation, commands a most comprehensive view of this vast and fearfully imposing scene – a

[201] Henry Aston Barker, *Coronation of His Majesty George the Fourth* (London, 1823), 3.
[202] Barker, *Coronation*, 3.
[203] Robert Burford, *Panorama of the Rhine* (London: 1843), 2.

scene that defies language to convey an adequate idea of so grand its colossal proportions, so sublime and glorious its general effect."[204] Robert Burford's *View of the Falls of Niagara* goes even further, associating the sublime of nature with both the elevated and large scale view of the panorama:

> ...travelers speak of them in terms of admiration and delight, and acknowledge that they surpass in sublimity every description which the power of language can afford; a Panorama alone offers a scale of sufficient magnitude to exhibit at one view (which is indispensable) the various parts of this wonderful scene, and to convey an adequate idea of the matchless extent, prodigious power, and awful appearance of this stupendous phenomenon of nature...[205]

The pamphlet goes on to add though, that the Falls must be experienced in person in order to truly feel its sublime effects, writing, " the scene itself must be visited, to comprehend the feeling it produces... it strikes the soul a sense of majestic grandeur, which loss of life or intellect can alone obliterate."[206] It also adds, by way of a footnote, a quote by British Navy officer and travel writer Captain Basil Hall who authenticates the painting and notes, "[a]ll parts of the Niagara are on a scale which baffles any attempt of the imagination, and it were ridiculous therefore to think of describing by the ordinary means of description, I mean analogy, and direct comparison, with things which are more accessible, fail entirely in the case of that amazing cataract... yet a great deal, I am certain, might be done by a well-treated Panorama; an artist well versed in this peculiar sort of painting, might produce a picture which would probably distance every thing else of the kind.'"[207]

---

[204] Robert Burford, *Himalaya Mountains, with the British stations of Kussowlee, Soobathoo, and Simla and a vast extent of the plains of Hindostan* (Londond: 1847), 3.
[205] Robert Burford, *View of the Falls of Niagara* (London, 1833), 4.
[206] Burford, *Falls of Niagara*, 4.
[207] Burford, *Falls of Niagara*, 3.

The panorama of Mont Blanc at Leicester Square replicates the same tone and claim but refrains from stating that the panorama could completely replicate the experience of the natural sublime. Opening with Lord Byron's description of the Alps as "The palaces of nature, whose vast walls/ Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps/And throned eternity in icy halls"[208], and expanding upon the passage with language pulled directly from Burke's famous text, the pamphlet goes on to state that

> To present a clear and intelligible image, the scene as fearfully grand and imposing, by a verbal description is impossible; the most fertile imagination, aided by the pen of a Byron, or the matchless pencil of a Claude in a painting of moderate size, must alike fail to convey an adequate impression of the reality; for nature is here almost too magnificent, and the whole is on a scale of such inconceivable vastness, that it sets at defiance any attempt to depict it with ordinary means; the Panorama alone, and that to an extent considerably beyond its visual limits, can hope to approach any thing like a fair delineation of this sublime scene, and even that, vast as it is must fall short of presenting it in all its glorious and ever varying beauty.[209]

The concept of the sublime returns again and again in promotional material and posters. While most British panoramas depicted cityscapes and battle scenes, those dedicated to landscapes more often than not portrayed typical sites of sublime tourism, often alongside picturesque scenery.[210] Other than the locations noted above, British panoramas also featured the "Sublime Views of the Lakes of Killarney", the area surrounding Stirling, Salzburg and, of course, "A Sublime and Beautiful view of Switzerland from Rigi Kulm". Each had its own description rehearsing many of the debates which had surrounded the 18th century natural sublime: Can the sublime found in nature be replicated? What are the main causal properties which elicit its

[208] Robert Burford, *Mont Blanc, The Valley of Chamounix and the Surrounding Mountains* (London, 1837), 1.
[209] Burford, *Mont Blanc*, 3-4.
[210] A few cities also carried the title of "Sublime", most notably Edinburgh.

tangled mix of pleasure and awe? In the case of the pamphlets, the properties that were found in natural phenomena were the same as those best represented by the panoramic view, leading to the question as to whether Barker had always considered his technology as a corollary to the sublime found in nature. As Comment very astutely points out, Burke himself gestured towards a very similar phenomenon when describing architecture which could possibly evoke a sense of the infinity:

> It is in this kind of artificial infinity, I believe, we ought to look for the cause why a rotund has such a noble effect. For in a rotund, whether it be a building or plantation, you can no where fix a boundary; turn which way you will, the same object still seems to continue, and the imagination has no rest.[211]

But while the pamphlets asserted the primacy of the panorama over and above traditional painting and poetry, they still maintained that in order to experience the truly sublime one would still be better off out in Nature herself. The pleasure associated with the panorama did not merit the term aesthetic, at least not based on the tenets established by both the idealized landscapes in traditional paintings, or by the Romantic poets. As an "objective" rendering of a chosen vantage point, the illusion "precluded the use of poetic licence"[212].The panorama could only hope to be as pleasing as the site itself. Its value could always by verified by a visit to the actual spot.

Unlike the pamphlets, the rhetoric surrounding the painted panorama in the press was happy to equate a visit to the panorama as exactly equivalent to a real trip. The weekly newspaper *The Era* reviewed and advertised almost every new panorama put on display by Burford at the Strand and Leicester Square locations. Like the pamphlets, the newspaper always

[211] Burke, Oxford Edition, 68, referred to in Comment, 81.
[212] Comment, 84.

began by describing where each view was actually taken from. They also repeatedly compared language to the painting,

> However glowing, however precise, however comprehensible a written description a scene may be, the reader draws his own picture from what is set down, and not two who peruse it come to the same conclusions respecting it. If a hundred artists were to sketch from the minute and natural details even of Sir Walter Scott, no two of them would produce similar results. In order to form correct portraiture we must *see* the originals, and one would imagine it impossible to form a faithful notion of any distant city without visiting it. Such, however is not the case. Mr Burford has, by a peculiar science, brought art so near to nature and reality on a large scale, that, within the circumference of a few feet, we can imagine ourselves overlooking a vast country and extensive town, while we look upon figures and objects so truthfully imitated as to make even those who are acquainted with the originals, wonder at the performance. Who shall say, after visiting the Panorama at Leicester-square, to what extent the eye, and, through that organ, the other senses may not be deceived?[213]

In the same article dedicated to the Panorama of Cairo, the author goes as far as to recommend that the visitor read up on the city before going to the Panorama and use his time there to "perfect" and "reform" what he has learned of its buildings, history, and inhabitants.[214]

This preoccupation with the power of the illusion returns in its most insistent terms again and again in 1848, just around the time that panoramic exhibitions were reaching their peak in popularity. In a review published in the April 9th issue the author states that "[t]he more you examine the more you are deceived into the belief that you are looking upon reality. The illusion is perfect. So much are the senses slaves to each other, you are entirely carried away by the deception practised upon the eye... You seem to have made a perfect acquaintance with the

[213] *The Era* (London), March 21, 1847, 12.
[214] *The Era* , 12.

place, superseding all you had previously heard of read concerning it."[215] The author goes on to equate the power of the deception with God himself, thanking Burford for "bringing thoughts of the former so forcibly" to mind.[216]

The same year marked the debut of a closely related advertising strategy in the paper. The painted panorama became a tour in and of itself. In the May 28th edition, Burford's Panorama of Paris was described with the byline "How to go to Paris for a Shilling". Underneath the author writes, "[p]eople who wish to have a glance at Paris, need not, in these revolutionary times, and particularly during this weather, go to the expense of travelling thither."[217]A trip to the panorama offers all the important sites "seen at one view"[218] with the accompaniment of a guide-book by way of pamphlet and even a guide[219], who, if you wish, will answer any questions and point out important spots as you make your way around the rotunda. This strategy is employed for multiple different cityscapes in *The Era*. In "A Trip to Vienna or to India for a Shilling", the role of the imagination and senses are reversed from their previous Romantic conceptualization. Returning to the problem of reproducing a view through language alone the author argues that

> The imagination then requires its natural guide and instructor, the organ of sight, in order to come to anything like right conclusions as to form, size, and colour; and it is to the painter we must look for that assistance which shall enable us to avoid dales impressions as to scenes and objects which are not actually within sight... Generally speaking, a painting, drawing, sketch, or portrait, is but the morsel of a whole, giving a mere idea to the beholder, and leaving his imagination (always ready to run riot) to complete the task. Such productions, exquisite as works of art, tell us but little truth... Now, Mr. Burford, whose name is justly

[215] *The Era* (London), April 09, 1848, 12.
[216] *The Era* , 12.
[217] *The Era* (London), May 28, 1848, 9.
[218] *The Era*, 9.
[219] *The Era* (London), April 09, 1848, 12.

> celebrated as an artist, has done more than any other man whom we could name in his profession. He has placed before the spectator representations so faithful, pictures so perfect, that the minds of those who gaze upon his works have not been allowed to fall into error concerning the originals. His are no creations, they are *fac similes*...[220]

In a return to a mechanical form of empiricism, the author distrusts the power of the individual imagination, emphasizing the role of sight in acquiring knowledge and discerning truth about the world. This form of documentary evidence strongly outweighs the panorama's potential for aesthetic greatness. Even when *The Era* turns to the language of the imagination, like in the case of a review of *A View of Bernese Alps*, where the author describes the panorama as not only beautiful but sublime, filling "the imagination with grandeur of the mountain scenery", it quickly asserts the primacy of a certain kind of knowledge and "intellectual gratification", placing the panorama above other prior representational media in delivering certainty that could be relied on.[221]

From Aesthetic Appreciation to Cultural Education

The panorama's educational value quickly overtook its aesthetic appeal in both the press and intellectual circles. Much of its claim to respectability amongst bourgeois patrons depended on that value. Both Dickens and Ruskin celebrated its potential to expand the minds of its audiences. The former highlighted its ability to expose new groups of people to places they would otherwise be unable to visit[222], and the latter called it "an educational institution of the highest and purest value, which ought to have been supported by the government as one of the

[220] *The Era* (London), April 09, 1848, 12.
[221] *The Era* (London), December 26, 1852, 12.
[222] Charles Dickens, "Some Account of an Extraordinary Traveller" (1850), referred to in Comment, 118.

most beneficial instruments of scholarship"[223]. In its slippage between reality and representation, the panorama replaced that which it originally relied on for legitimatisation, the intellectual and aesthetic value of travel. Its educational claim rested squarely on its ability to reproduce each infinitesimal detail, even if many of these details would go unnoticed by the casual observer. The sketch artist would use multiple different devices like telescopes, and, eventually, photography, to make sure that those individual details, like the subtle differences in roofs, plants and clothing, would be reproduced later in the panoramic painting. Robert Barker's first full 360 degree panorama of London included builders working on the road and a woman looking out of her window.[224] When Thomas Hornor completed his sketches for what would become the London Panorama housed in the Coloseum, he constructed his own apparatus to facilitate his survey "by which the most distant and intricate scenery may be delineated with mathematical accuracy"[225]. Detail, therefore, was not added because it was essential to reproducing the view from each vantage point, most facets were not apparent to the naked eye. Rather detail was necessary because it had become synonymous with the acquisition of knowledge itself. Each panorama was judged on the basis of its success in this area, rather than on traditional notions of composition and framing. As Comment writes, "[t]he panorama therefore had no composition other than that *implied* by the chosen vantage-point. It formed an almost encyclopaedic document of nature and abandoned itself to recording all the multifarious details of reality. It neither knew how to, nor did it want to select."[226]In this sense it embodied only half of the values espoused by the picturesque movement, detail for details sake, rather than as interconnected properties of one single whole.

---

[223] John Ruskin, *Praeterita* (Oxford, 1989), quoted in Comment, 118.
[224] Altick, 132.
[225] Thomas Hornor, quoted in Altick, 141.
[226] Comment, 86.

The painted panorama also contradicted Burke's architectural description at the same time as gesturing to the description's physical impossibility. Instead of displaying one object which "appear[s] to continue" the panorama surrounds its viewer in many tiny ones, placing him in a completely different physical position in relation to each object than that prescribed by Burke's, and almost every other 18th century theorist's, sublime. But while the position constructed may have been at odds with that prescribed, its problematization of spectatorial space was very much in keeping with the same concerns. Elevation and vantage point were heralded in both panoramic literature and press material. The dialectic of distance and proximity within the enclosed space were really the properties at work in constructing its illusory effect.

Proximity and Distance

Distance, as we have seen, has always had a prominent role in aesthetic appreciation, especially in the case of neo-classical attitudes towards beauty. It was also dictated by the rules of perspective since their first conceptualization during the Renaissance.[227] A certain distance was necessary for both the artist reproducing the scene and the spectator gazing at its reproduction. That position not only allowed the artist to take in the scene or view as a whole, but placed the viewer at the perfect spot in which to take in the complete view through the vanishing point and avoid seeing the signs of its artificiality, like the brush strokes. Distance therefore guaranteed both the appropriate model of appreciation and mimetic effect. Alberti described its importance in relation to his own theory of linear perspective, writing, "[t]he artists themselves prove that this is so when they distance themselves from what they are painting and, guided by nature,

[227] Ibid., 110.

position themselves further away so that they can find the spot from which... they can see everything more clearly." [228]

Predetermined distance was even more essential for the painted panorama. By eliminating the frame, which acted as an orientational guide for the traditional landscape painting, the spectator could move around the space freely without any structuring device. This was a problem not only because it meant they could approach the painting and fixate on its materiality, but that the horizon line, which organized the view for the original painter, would fail to be located at the appropriate height. In Barker's original patent he discussed the importance of this predetermined distance in order to preserve the illusion. "There must be an enclosure with the said circular building or framing, which shall prevent an observer going too near the drawing or painting, so as it may, from all parts it can be viewed, have its proper effect."[229] While the panorama allows for multiple different vantage-points, each of these can only be experienced properly when the viewer is standing still at the appropriate distance, and, like the original painter, turning his or her head from side to side. Every vantage point included an infinite number of complete pictures which were brought together and compared by a viewer just by pivoting on a single central spot.[230]This distance was constructed and preserved by the platform itself, often designed to look exactly like the spot where the painter had stood. That platform was usually extended into the painting in its foreground to create a seamless transition, as if the viewer were really standing on the mountain top or roof. The spectator was, to borrow Allison Griffiths' term, part of a re-enactment, not just revisiting a location or historical event as

[228] Alberti, *De Pictura*, quoted in Comment, 110.
[229] Robert Barker, "Apparatus for Exhibiting Pictures," quoted in Comment, 112.
[230] Comment, 112.

Griffiths argues[231], but quite literally taking on the role of the sketch artist or painter, observing the scene in the manner in which he observed it.

Comment argues that the panorama was the first "mimetic representation" to assign a "predetermined distance from which they should not stray."[232] But this predetermined distance was often breached by the spectators who were not just interested in looking out towards the distance, but also at the minute details visible in the foreground and middle ground. As Barbara Novak points out by way of the shift towards large scale landscape painting in America, patrons used optical devices like opera glasses in order to examine individual objects which the panoramist had so painstakingly included. Like the sensation of moving ones head slowly from side to side in order to appreciate the overall view, peering through telescopes and other devices "involved a gradual revelation, segment by segment"[233] creating an experience which "could be simultaneously intimate and distant" occurring when "intimidated by size, we are drawn closer, by a curious tropism, to engage detail or be enveloped by atmosphere."[234]

Here in this "near-far paradigm"[235] the spectator is constantly engaged in a process of isolating and composing, examining the foreground and experiencing the atmospheric effects and scale of the background. This dialectic of distance and proximity closely mirrors the tension between detachment and immersion. By employing an elevated position, with a bird's eye view of the 360 degree landscape, the spectator is positioned outside of the space. This prospect view is paradoxically only made possible because the entire visual experience is enclosed within the

---

[231] Alison Griffiths, *Shivers down Your Spine: Cinema, Museums, and the Immersive View* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 42.
[232] Comment, 112. Comment continues on to add "frontal" to his description of "mimetic representation" in order to avoid including frescoed ceilings in his historical tracing.
[233] Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825-1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 26.
[234] Novak, 27.
[235] Comment,112.

dome. In this sense the spectator is trapped in the role of surveyor, atop Gilpin or West's perfect station. It was "an enclosed area open to a representation free of all worldly restrictions"[236] which "gave individuals the happy feeling that the world was organized around and by them, yet this was a world from which they were also separated and protected, for they were seeing it from a distance."[237]

This paradoxical experience re-enacted both a wide spread dream and historical reality. It fulfilled the wish of many urban dwellers to regain "control of [the] sprawling collective space"[238] which surrounded them. Comment argues that this explains why visiting panoramas which displayed the same towns in which they were located was so popular, the longevity of London panoramas at Leicester Square and the Coloseum being case in point.[239]But the panoramas also replayed another set of roles, this time in relation to nature appreciation and tourism. If the enclosure acts forced large numbers of people into the cities, the panoramas provided access back to rural spaces, albeit in this highly contrived form. Of course the most obvious example of the ideological role of painted panoramas in relation to these larger economic and social changes occurred at the level of imagery depicted. A large number of panoramas depicted recent military victories, new colonies and idealized pastoral spaces. These masked increasing political tensions in rural areas and urban living conditions by presenting a unifying patriotic narrative which erased any evidence that these spaces were in fact contested. Even cityscapes became idealized "hybrid urban-pastoral" [240]spaces, where houses and buildings would populate the foreground and then slowly be replaced by individual landscape features until only softly focused hills, forests, and mountains were left appearing in the background.

[236] Ibid., 8.
[237] Ibid., 19.
[238] Ibid., 8.
[239] Ibid., 8.
[240] Wood, 101.

Natural features were added directly inside cityscapes, and, in many cases, the surrounding countryside almost appeared to take over.[241] In a complete reversal of what was actually occurring inside urban areas, at the panorama, as Walter Benjamin later observed, "the city dilates to become landscape."[242]

If the scene represented filled a void constructed by the continued rise of enclosure reforms, the dialectic of immersion and detachment found in the actual structure elicited the reverse reaction. It, as Oettermann claims, "appears as the embodiment" of the English socio-economic phenomenon.[243] Enclosure became its own model of experience and spectatorship; "[t]he construction of the panorama –which presented the land surrounding the observer as untouched because it was untouchable –represented the act of enclosure and idealized it as the same time."[244] As a patron wrote, "[y]ou have the whole before you, so fine and so near that you want to reach out and touch it... but must refrain."[245]

This architecture of display played an important ideological role in diverting attention away from the daily experiences of the average citizen. The working and middle classes were given the chance to play leisure tourist for the day. As each patron of the panorama became a picturesque traveler, collecting pleasurable vantage points, they became further detached from the environment itself. Empowerment and liberation could only be constructed at the panorama when the patron was detached from the world itself, when immersion was collapsed into surveillance. Reference, whether explicit or implicit, to this new physical and ideological

---

[241] Comment, 137.
[242] Walter Benjamin, *Reflections,* ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 150.
[243] Oettermann, 45.
[244] Ibid., 45.
[245] *Priviligierte wochentliche gemeinnutzige Nachrichten won und fur Hamburg*, September 25, 1799, translated and quoted in Oettermann, 45.

relationship can be found throughout descriptions written by those visiting the painted panoramas.[246]

By attempting to eliminate the frame and construct a visual environment that was completely immersive, the panorama was responding to the original sublime problematic: How does an individual go about making aesthetic judgments about natural spaces? Unlike the traditional landscape painting which relied on the relationship between its frame and composition to bring the gaze of the viewer into the scene and "nullify the outside-the field...of the representation"[247], the panorama had to suppress any details or "comparative element[s]" inside the exhibition space which could detract from the " 'the impression of really being there'"[248]. By providing a precise replica of the complete scene in question patrons felt as if they could compare and judge different components as if they were really there. And yet in reality the image set before them was just as contrived as a traditional painting, it only offered the illusion of visual freedom. The free play offered in Burk's architectural metaphor, where the imagination is never allowed to rest as it skips around the continuous, enveloping, surface, was, in fact, heavily controlled. The image was constructed with several visual markers which drew the eye outwards through the detail composed around the horizon line.[249]Instead of releasing the gaze, the technology bound it to itself, creating a further tension between the sensation of enclosure and liberation described by Novak, and in Comment's "near-far" paradigm.[250]

---

[246] Oettermann, 45.
[247] Comment, 100.
[248] Ibid.,101.
[249] Oettermann, 21.
[250] Comment refers to this inability to visually escape through J.A. Eberhardt description of his personal experience when visiting full 360 degree panoramas. In Eberhardt's *Handbuch der Aesthetik* published in 1807 he writes "Neither the knowledge that I am nowhere near the vantage-point, nor the daylight, nor the contrast with my immediate environment can rouse me from this ghastly dream, from which I have to wrench myself against my will. One can in this way put an end to the illusion the moment it becomes unpleasant; but the technique is not available to all spectators of the panorama." This passage is quoted by Comment on page 97.

The "Anti-Sublime"

While the painted panorama often relied on scenes which were picturesque in nature in order to rival that area of the expanding domestic industry, many facets of the cultural practice directly referred to debates surrounding the natural sublime, including, as we have seen, the popular and industry discourse, and architecture of display. Wordsworth's criticism of the representational practice followed in part from all three of these avenues, arguing that this form of entertainment was actually antithetical to the concept's original framework. In Wood's *The Shock of the Real, Romanticism and Visual Culture 1760-1860*, he argues that what Wordsworth is in fact gesturing towards in his poetic observations of the London panoramas was a kind of reversal of the requirements of the Romantic sublime. Wood's monograph examines the attitude of the British Romantic poets to new forms of visual technology which replicated reality and the role of artificiality and simulation in knowledge formation. In the case of the panorama, Wordsworth remarked over the amount of detail which had no aesthetic purpose "beyond the effect of similitude".[251] This "reality effect" or what Wood goes on to call spectacular realism, was, by the Romantics' standards, an affront to the division between art and nature. When the deception that these forms of visual entertainment played was eventually broken apart, all the spectator was left with was shock and disenchantment.[252] This "shock" was completely unlike the astonishment referred to in the discourse surrounding the natural sublime. The former becomes a historical marker revealing the epistemological and phenomenological effects of modernity on the individual. It is the shock Walter Benjamin refers to as the "sight of immediate reality"[253] which reaches its peak with cinema but has its roots in the budding 19th century entertainment industry.

[251] Wood, 3.
[252] Ibid., 4.
[253] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 233.

Wood argues that "[t]he panorama indeed succeeded in usurping Wordsworth's poetics of the natural sublime, employing a uniquely modern intersection of landscape art, commercialism, and visual technology to redefine popular understanding of landscape itself."[254]

Wordsworth's disdain for the panorama is a product of the much larger debate between models of representation and the role of the copy or facsimile. In Coleridge's 1818 lectures on aesthetics held at the London Philosophical Society, he stated that "Simulations of nature" are both "loathsome" and "disgusting"[255]. While art deals in imitation, a copy is interested in sharing in the identity of its referent, of achieving the impossible and therefore relying on different levels of illusion. Coleridge argued that "A good portrait is a Work of Art—while a real *Copy*, a Fac Simile, ends in shocking us." That shock is a direct product of the impossibility and contradiction inherent to a copy. The closer a copy comes to replicating every detail of the thing it attempts to duplicate, the more disenchantment the viewer feels when he realises that he is only viewing a copy. Coleridge writes, "Not finding the motion and the life which we expected, we are shocked as by a falsehood, every circumstance of detail, which before induced us to be interested, making the distance from truth more palpable".[256] This division between art and copy is a reiteration of the values both Coleridge and Wordsworth associated with the poet's imagination and its role in modifying and expanding upon the information provided by the senses. The panorama's reliance on the senses and exact verisimilitude excluded the imagination from its previous position as moderator. In it the combination of elevation, detail, and instantaneous viewability constructed the first stage of the shock effect described by

[254] Wood, 111.
[255] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Lecture 13 (On Poesy or Art)," in *The Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. H.N. Coleridge (London: William Pickering, 1836; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1967), 1:220-21.
[256] Coleridge, 1:220-21.

Coleridge.[257] For Wordsworth this amalgamation was even more damaging to the uncultivated mind because it collapsed properties which he valued, specifically elevation, into those he did not. As we have already seen, elevation was an important component to both metaphoric and real experiences of environments. From Tintern Abbey, to the summit of Snowdon, and his imaginary station suspended amongst the clouds, the view made possible from an elevated position came to stand in for the poetic imagination and larger Romantic methodology. At the end of *The Prelude* Wordsworth goes as far as to describe the whole autobiographical process as emblematic of the "prospect" view:

> Anon I rose
> As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretched
> Vast prospect of the world which I had been
> And was; and hence this song[258]

Spatial distance becomes one with temporal distance, as his mind expands backwards through his memories. As Wood describes, this rhetorical device was at the heart of the prospect poem tradition which is replicated in part in almost every one of Wordsworth's experiences with the sublime.[259] This elevated position re-emerges in a commodified form in the panorama where, instead of symbolizing an internal state, its assemblage of visual details externalizes the experience and denies the spectator the ability to reflect on their own imaginative relationship with the landscape. Wood writes, "There is no escape from the "profanity" of form and image to a more "elevated mood" inspired by actual nature. For Wordsworth, the paradox of the panorama's reality effect is that the virtual landscape affords precisely the opposite of the comforts of actual nature. What is restorative or revelatory on Mt. Snowdon is an oppressive

[257] Wood, 103.
[258] Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, XI, lines 377-380.
[259] Wood, 108-109.

burden on the spirit in Leicester Square or the Strand."[260]The panorama did not offer its mass audience a way to enter the image because it had no determinable scale or single axis of perspective to engage with. It also did not allow the audience a way to detach from the image and step away.[261] But despite the power of its ability to capture and immerse each spectator in a view, that view always remained an effect or simulation of the real. For Wordsworth, the qualities which made it so popular with bourgeois audiences turned the experience into the anti-sublime[262] because, while it modeled the appropriate sublime topography, it denied its audience access to the Romantic sublime experience and redirected public taste towards "its visual reproduction as a spectacular form of entertainment."[263] Rather than constructing an interplay of astonishment and contemplation, the "exteriorized" image, as Wood concludes, "permits only what Benjamin has called a "'distracted' form of visual comprehension."[264]

The panorama externalised that which should only be accessed internally, it denied that which it seemed to offer: a point of view which could elevate the mind. What Wood begins to highlight in Wordsworth's poetry becomes even more explicit when approached through the dialectic of immersion and detachment. While Wordsworth describes the imagination and natural world as moving through each other, shifting the 18th century debate over cause and effect, the painted panorama could only preserve a separation. Here the tenets of the picturesque and the precarious position of the spectator in the sublime are conflated in a way that denies the full complexity of either one. While the scale and all-encompassing effect of the representation do facilitate access to the second stage, there are many ways in which the spectator's gaze is directed and organized in a manner which displaces, or at least minimizes, the ancillary effects of

[260] Ibid., 109.
[261]Ibid., 109.
[262] Ibid., 110.
[263] Ibid., 111.
[264] Ibid., 115.

immersion. The mechanical system of perspective, invented by Barker, takes the subject out of the space at the same time as imprisoning them in it visually. This contradiction, paired with the subject matter which was usually chosen (cityscapes, battle re-enactments, vacation spots and oceanscapes) attempted to move the subject into the third stage of contemplation but did so in a manner that directly structured the limits of the aesthetic and conceptual experience which it provoked. If the panorama does in fact correlate to a version of the negative pleasure associated with the sublime, that pleasure only amplifies the power of the medium itself.

The Technological Sublime

This shift in the role of representational media, from prescriptive tool to the elicitor of both phases of the sublime, can be read as the first historical stage in the discursive movement away from nature as primary object of sublime aesthetic pleasure. What the panorama introduced to its critics and clientele was a new form of spectatorial address best articulated as an initial precursor to the technological sublime. This concept has been applied by contemporary historians and media theorists in two slightly different ways. While the latter tend to associate the technological sublime with technologies which elicit overwhelming effects and crises of human rationality, like the atomic bomb, the former use the term retroactively to represent a series of technologies and ideologies which reconstructed and utilized the rhetoric of the sublime to legitimize their role in society. It is my contention that the painted panorama falls within this second category (though clearly some overlap occurs between the two usages). Media historian David E Nye, author of the *American Technological Sublime,* takes the term from Leo Marx's earlier work *The Machine in the Garden*.[265] Nye applies it to objects and institutionalized technologies which

[265] David E Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1994). He also refers to definitions provided by Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America from the Revolution to the Civil War* (Harcourt, Bruce,

either triumphed over nature through their physical power or their ability to overcome spatial and temporal limits, these include bridges, damns, railroads and the telegraph. Here, as in the case of the panorama, their ability to overcome and control is foregrounded in both the second and third stages of the sublime, based on manner in which they elicit astonishment and contemplation.

The way each of these technologies provided access to the last contemplative phase is indicative of Kant's theorization of the sublime rather than the framework and discourse which took place in Great Britain. In Britain the roles of each phase and the way they correlated to natural phenomena, ideas, and mental faculties was never directly resolved. As the 18th century philosophers gave way to the 19th century Romantics, the division between self and natural world was as precarious as ever. This was not the case in the other leading country to be enthralled with the concept. When Immanuel Kant published his *Critique of Judgment* in the late 18th century he had already resolved the debate, placing the concept at the heart of his larger philosophical project. While he emphasizes many of the same affective attributes and role of nature in the first two phases of the aesthetic experience, Kant rectifies the disequilibrium between self and world by isolating the power of reason over and above both nature and the imagination of the perceiving subject. The "pre-eminence" of the faculty of Reason provided the subject with the necessary tools in which to overcome the limits of perception, transcending the power of Nature, and eliciting the pleasure necessary in the dialectic of astonishment and contemplation.[266] Closure is marked by the "aggrandizement of the subject"[267] while the natural world "sink[s] into

---

and World, 1965), John Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values, 1776-1900* (Penguin, 1977), Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture* (Oxford University Press, 1980), Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream* (University of California Press, 1985), and John F. Sears, *Sacred Places, American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford University Press, 1989). Each of these only considers the cultural circumstances in America.

[266] Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment* (1790), trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford, 1992), 111.

[267] Christopher Hitt, "Toward an Ecological Sublime," *New Literary History* 30, no. 3 (1999): 609.

insignificance before the ideas of reason"[268]. The ideological role of this last reactive phase is replicated in the technologies and processes which fall under the framework of the technological sublime. They are quite literal material manifestations of the Kantian problematic; these technologies allow us to compare ourselves against the "omnipotence of nature" and, like reason, overcome the limits imposed on us by our sensory faculties.[269]

Nye chooses his objects of study based on three loose criteria. First the "repeated experience" of the technology produced a feeling of "awe and wonder, often tinged with terror" in members of the public.[270] Secondly, those experiences were felt on mass by the general public. And, lastly, that public tended to describe the technology using the term sublime or its rhetoric. As I have attempted to prove, the painted panorama does at least partially tick all three of these boxes. It attracted huge audiences, was embedded in all the rhetorical debates surrounding the natural sublime, and consciously evoked both astonishment and reflexive contemplation in its spectator.

When compared to one of Nye's primary examples, the railroad, the panorama shares some interesting similarities to the "politics of perception" evoked[271]. Nye describes the railroad as "conquer[ing] space and time"[272] by "liberating"[273] man from his physical limitations. He establishes this position by not just presenting evidence of how the press and industry heralded the new technology, but also by describing the novel experience of riding in the steam train itself. That included both the power of the new possibility of speed and the transformation of

[268] Kant, 105.
[269] Nye, 56.

[270] Nye, xvi.
[271] Nye, xvi.
[272] Nye, 77.
[273] Nye, 46.

perception as the natural landscape passed alongside each window. Like the panorama, the scale of the project and its ability to master an aspect of the natural sublime was placed beside its ability to introduce and validate new forms of experience through a certain mediation of firsthand contact.

Nye does not discuss the panorama, nor is he interested in other representational media, preserving firsthand experience as one of the tenants of his version of the technological sublime. He distinguishes between his set of objects by writing that they "cannot be described or grasped through descriptions or images but must be experienced directly"[274]. My project differs in a number of ways that makes the painted panorama a key defining feature in the larger transition from firsthand experiences with nature to those that were technologically mediated in Great Britain. Nye was not tracing different rhetoric or definitions associated with the sublime; rather he lengthened the time span usually associated with the concept by attributing it to new technologies in America in the 19th and 20th centuries. He used a broadly Kantian framework in order to determine his primary criteria and examined how these technologies both validated new cultural conditions while also "undermin[ing] and partially replac[ing] older" ones[275].

This reliance on a single definition of the concept was possible because his work focused directly on America. Attitudes toward the domestic landscape, the sublime, and technology differed dramatically in Great Britain during the same period. While the American public warmly welcomed larger mechanization and new technology, those in Britain were highly critical and suspicious of increased forms of industrialization.[276]The pastoral still remained a very important part of the British cultural ideology, constructing a very different form of

[274] Nye, 9.
[275] Nye, xvii.
[276] Nye refers to Ralph Waldo Emerson as going as far as celebrating the creation of "new and original" technological connections with nature, p. 61.

rhetoric. New technologies quickly found a complementary place in the American national identity, representing a continual "dramatization" of the national destiny[277] and emphasizing the value of conquering any and all limitations. The Burkean and Kantian sublime, where terror, firsthand contact and the power of an individual's internal faculties were central, quickly came to the forefront. In Great Britain we have seen a very different set of discourses surrounding the natural environment, and, therefore, the natural sublime. Here there wasn't a single definition of the sublime, or indeed astonishment. Where America chose to conquer, Great Britain attempted to recreate, placing debates about representation at center of the natural sublime. The painted panorama was the first medium to be able make the impossible possible, to attain and replicate the views that were at the heart of an aesthetic education, constructing what I would like to call the tourists' sublime.[278]

While the kinds of media and technology that were first cast with sublime rhetoric were very different, both groups had a similar effect, placing them under the umbrella of the technological sublime. The notion of the sublime, whether technological, rhetorical or applied to nature, always implies a binary of limitations, as Weiskel notes "there can be no sublime moment without the implicit, dialectical endorsement of human limitations."[279]Nye describes the movement from the natural sublime to the technological sublime as a kind of extension, where the relationship between nature and man slowly transforms into one between people. By placing the panorama within that lineage one can see the way that shift subtlety occurred. In the case of the technologies which Nye is interested in, man occurs at every stage. Manmade objects set up

[277] Nye, 76.
[278] Nye uses the concept of the "technological sublime" as an umbrella term under which he subsumes a series of other names each associated with a different form of technology (electric, industrial, consumer's etc.). The tourist's sublime has a similar connotation, falling under the technological sublime, my term refers to early representational screen media which attempted to replicate the awe felt on tour.
[279] Weiskel 44.

the tension at the same time as they resolve it. One example which Nye describes in detail is the scale of the Golden Gate Bridge. The bridge exemplifies our own physical limitations as well as our ability to overcome those limitations individually and as a group. While, as Nye argues, the rhetoric around the technology attempts to dehistoricize and naturalize it, that rhetoric is only necessary because of the tremendous perceptual shifts that these technologies constructed and the anxiety which came along with them. In contrast, the panorama acted as a literal stand in for the natural world. The medium was so potent because it was both conflated with many of the epistemological properties attached to nature, while, at the same time placing the subject in a very different position than was available in the real world. As a writer for *The Era* noted ,"[h]e looks upon the work of man, so cunningly contrived by perspective, that optical delusion is unavoidable. His astonishment increases-he is somewhat perplexed but a willing captive..."[280] Here the subject feels overwhelmed, but attaches that visceral effect to properties occurring outside of the actual medium. The medium is intertwined with nature, naturalizing its effects at the same time as it overcomes many of the limitations defined within actual picturesque and "sublime" tours. It is experienced at once as both real and constructed, creating the first shift towards the technological sublime.

The illusion of control and closure offered at the painted panorama affirms a larger claim referred to by Martin Heidegger in his essay "The Age of the World Picture". In it he argues that "the fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture."[281] In contrast to the medieval and Greek periods of history, subjectivity and objectivity become pervasive norms which, through their interaction, constructed and redefined the possibilities of knowledge

[280] *The Era* (London), April 9 1848, 12.
[281] Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," in *The Question concerning Technology, and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 133.

and the role of metaphysics. In order to learn about the world, it must become a stable object in which expectations and laws can be applied. The world is organized and articulated by and for the subject, "conceived and grasped as picture"[282] which represents the world as a whole or complete system.

By the late 18th century pictorial and linguistic forms of representation had become prescriptive tools which aided in the negotiation of firsthand experience. They remained secondary in their role as knowledge producers. Even with the rise of the Romantic subject, language remained deeply intertwined with the process of embodied experience. It wasn't until Barker Sr. was interested in exploring the boundaries of visual perspective that representation began to slowly take precedence in the minds of the spectators. Mathematics took on an increasingly important role in that shift, as exact similitude overcame traditional aesthetic values. Heidegger gestures to this same lineage in his discussion. Our exploration of the world, and its synthesis into knowledge, occurs when that experience can be verified by our own preconceived frameworks; we relate to the world through its representation and not the other way around. At this last stage the painted panorama not only attempts to resolve the original problematic of spectator and world but also becomes the framework with the most value, eventually reversing the priority given to the original experience.

This displacement of firsthand experience was only partially anticipated and constructed in the theoretical and artistic sphere, as we have seen its primary instigators were those directly connected to the panoramic industry interested in capitalizing on the ongoing popularity of both foreign and domestic travel, and, nature appreciation. The model of spectatorship associated with the discourse quickly permeated from urban to rural areas. Not only did the paintings

[282] Ibid., 128.

crisscross the country after the end of their first runs in London, but the term and different versions of the experience became increasingly a part of daily life. After it was first coined in the late 18th century, the term "panorama" quickly shifted from referring to the specific representational technology to a prescriptive form of spectatorship out in the world. As we have seen, the elevated view that it stood in for was already in vogue with nature enthusiasts drawn to picturesque tours and literature. The concept added new complexity to the previous idea, merging "all embracing" with the traditional pattern of seeing. The combination became the dominant model, even if it was practically impossible to replicate without the help of both natural and manmade observation platforms, hundreds of which were added to gardens and rural areas across the country.[283] In fact, as Oettermann argues, the term began to be used retrospectively to describe many of the previous aesthetic conventions, literally restructuring prior models of appreciation.[284]

The proliferation of the word panorama in the popular discourse was paired with a different set of experiences which were beginning to be more frequent in the lives of the middle class. With the expansion in rail lines and more affordable tickets, travel took on new roles amongst larger groups of the population, moving people in and out of outlying suburbs for work or from farther afield for holidays. This increase in the frequency of travel normalized the experience of continuous, lateral landscapes[285], adding new qualities to the established definition associated with the term.

That increase in train travel had an adverse effect for the built panoramas inside London. It was one of the factors which lead to the decline of the domestic industry in the late 1850s and

[283] Oettermann, 11.
[284] Ibid., 7.
[285] Christine Gledhill, *Reframing British Cinema: 1918-1928 ; between Restraint and Passion (*London: Bfi Publ., 2003), 31.

early 1860s. The industry began the period in a wave of fanfare with the opening of the Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition in 1851. Droves of would-be spectators came into London, and when they were tired of touring the exhibition they had many other venues to choose from including over a dozen panoramas and dioramas, from Burford's tried and true rotunda in Leicester Square to the Gallery of Illustrations, or James Wyld's "Great Globe". As the decade wore on the painted panoramas had to compete with increasing numbers of other shows and leisure activities, both inside and outside of London. Many middle class families began to move farther outside of the city centre, others spent short breaks in seaside resorts like Brighton. Responding to new shorter working hours, museums and monuments began to be open more often and offer small discounts to encourage patrons. Expanding commonly held green spaces like Primrose Hill and Battersea Park also began to entice families outside.

If these forms of competition were not enough, the invention of photography set about feeding the "Victorian compulsion to explore and record"[286] in multiple new venues. As early as 1841, the newly minted *Illustrated London News* published a panoramic bird's eye photograph of London which they called, referencing Hornor's famous painting, the "Colosseum View". While it would be some time before photographs were reproduced in press material en masse, the commercial industry soon began to capture news events, foreign views, and monuments, making landscapes and cityscapes that were once only circulated through the panoramas accessible and on display in places like shop fronts. Burford and other panoramists would take advantage of the technology in the preparatory stages of their work, relying on it over sketches to guarantee exact realism.

[286] Ralph Hyde*, Panoramania! The Art and Entertainment of the 'All- Embracing' View* (London: Trefoil Publications,1988), 181.

Photography also infiltrated the entertainment industry, first in magic lantern shows, providing cheaper and smaller slides that were of course far clearer than their painted counterparts, then in the form of stereoscopic cards, constructing miniature immersive experiences that could be enjoyed without leaving the home. By the turn of the century there were a few rare cases of photography being projected onto the same surface as the painted panoramas, like in the Niagara Hall in London. In all these occurrences' photography was able to simulate some of the individual qualities associated with the panoramas: realism, immersion, travel, and current events, albeit in truncated forms. This is not to say that photography was able to compete directly with the painted panorama, press like the *Times* still argued that the latter offered the public something unrivalled by other technologies, a "completeness and truthfulness" which was not only superior to photography and engravings but to a visit to the scene itself[287]. What photography did do was diffuse some of the original power of the landscapes by circulating them more widely than ever before.

This patchwork of different technologies, venues, and exhibition practices occurred alongside the rise of the travel show, like Albert Smith's immensely popular *Ascent of Mont Blanc* in the Egyptian Hall in 1852.[288] The term "panorama" began to be associated with "a slap-dash mixture of wide-screen or moving painting, dissolving views, music, and talk."[289] These shows usually relied on bodily rather than purely visual immersive tactics, incorporating sound, motion, and elaborate props.

---

[287] *Times* (London), December 27 1861.
[288] Albert Smith's travel show also marked the peak of Alpinism in Great Britain. Rising alongside taste for the Sublime, the enthusiasm for moutainscapes and the "prospect view" circulated widely amongst new socioeconomic groups with the painted panorama before expanding throughout the entertainment industry.
[289] Altick, 506.

The death of Robert Burford in 1861, and closure of the longest running panorama in Leicester Square two years later, was marked and eulogized by many in the press as the end of the grand tradition of English panoramists.[290] Burford, who had been praised as the "greatest literal illustrator of the present age"[291], was remembered as bringing the world to London. In a review of one of the last shows, the *Athenaum* wrote:

> We English are bated by brave neighbours –who themselves live and die, morally and personally, between the Boulevards and the Palais Royal –with our insular inattention to the business of the big world beyond our shores; and we have ourselves, in that spirit of humourous self-depreciation which our brave neighbours believe to be as real in its sincerity as the confessions of Rousseau, invented in the words Parish-politics and Little Peddlington, phrases of abuse with the same moral. Yet here are we, as our public amusements show, making the very grandest of grand tours. Lucknow, New York, Canton, San Francisco, Delhi, Constantinople, and St. Petersburgh, are all as familiar, even to our children, as Paris or Rome, Brighton or Bath.[292]

A few years later the site would be taken over by a religious order. But even with the steep decline that occurred for the original painted rotundas, it wasn't the last time full panoramas would appear in the capitol. In fact a revival took place in the 1880s with the opening of at least four new 360 degree rotundas, including a painting of Niagara Falls put on display on York Street in 1883. But unlike the original "panoramania", these sites were owned and painted by companies outside of Great Britain, most commonly French or Belgian, with Brussels becoming the new centre of the industry. They, as Altick argues, also preserved the same division which had been the undoing of the original models, severing entertainment and education and

[290] Ibid., 482.
[291] *The Era* (London), March 21 1847, 12.
[292] *Athenaeum*, March 12 1859, 357.

competing directly with other leisure activities of the first rather than second variety.[293] This "age of the exhibition" would eventually give way to the "age of public museums".[294]

The panorama was not interested in the readers of Romantic poetry but in satisfying and propagating the ideology behind the picturesque gaze at the heart of the tourism industry. This debate about the merits of both media is a great example of the interplay between class, cultural politics and the conceptual realm of aesthetics in the 19th century. The panorama became emblematic of the complete reversal of the object and image, fuelled by the need of the rising middle class to participate in cultural activities that had hitherto been out of their reach. But while the representational medium, and surrounding industry, explicitly attempted to embed itself within the original sets of debate and framework surrounding the sublime, it could only replace the problematic with its own both deeply contrived and contradictory model of spectator address, leading to the initial construction of the technological sublime through what I have called the tourist's sublime. This new framework would continue to expand with the emergence of the film industry and the scenic genre.

[293] Altick, 506.
[294] Ibid.,,506.

Chapter 4

The Advent of Cinema and the Scenic Tour

Film entered this complex representational terrain on the heels of the panorama's second wave. Appearing first alongside variety acts, magic lantern shows, and in traveling fairs, the earliest "living pictures" attracted a mass working class audience who hadn't had the same opportunities to attend many of the entertainment options discussed in the previous chapter. Its popularity increased at an extremely rapid rate across Great Britain, often taking the place once reserved for panoramas and dioramas, like in London's Egyptian Hall in 1898.[295] R.W Paul displayed the first projected moving pictures to a paying audience in March 1896, and, little over a decade later, there were more than a dozen production companies situated in Great Britain, many of which were producing upwards of two hundred films a year.[296] For that first decade individual pictures and select programmes were sold and then rented directly to showmen and exhibitors. The earliest non-fiction moving pictures were overwhelmingly concerned with capturing the everyday and these single shot actuality films made up the vast majority of output by producers up until 1906. While foreign views would become more popular by the turn of the century, English producers dedicated most of their energy to domestic views and attractions.

Unlike in the case of the painted panorama, the early actuality film dealt with concerns over the precarious relationship between immersion and contemplation within its formal structure. The film industry took the problematization of display and spectatorship which was

---

[295] *The Era* describes the inclusion of Robert Paul's Theatrograph projector in its April 18th edition published in 1896. By 1909 the New Egyptian Hall which replaced the earlier building in Piccadilly hosted a 123-seat cinema and tea room.

[296] Rachael Low, in the first volume of *The History of the British Film* (New York: Routledge, 1997), states that the Warwick Trading Company was producing five to six hundred films a year by 1903 (p.25), The Charles Urban Trading Company, which opened the same year, was producing two hundred and fifty (p.17), and the Hepworth Manufacturing Company was making approximately two hundred films a year by the year 1906 (p. 22).

constructed within the physical structure of the painted panorama and shifted it inside the film text instead, pressuring the original requirements of firsthand experience. But the films did more than just place the British countryside in front of a whole new class of spectators; they actively contributed to the debate over the role of astonishment and contemplation. In some cases this contribution occurred at the level of subject matter and in other cases through the camera movement and editing patterns. Instead of trying to establish whether the visceral effects present within the early scenic film were in some ways comparable to the aesthetic experience of the sublime, this chapter is interested in how the genre can be read as replicating parts of the discourse and what role it played in the lineage of the sublime's modern iteration, the technological sublime. Understanding the scenic genre as an integral part of this ongoing debate not only redefines and complicates the meaning structures built into the aesthetics of the genre but also the manner in which an increasing reliance on the screen as an antidote to the frame attempted to resolve the relationship of subject and natural world.

The terms used to categorize early filmmaking often suffer from the same hierarchical narratives as those used to differentiate historical periods within the field; both are tied directly to the assumption that early filmmaking was only the first simplistic stepping stone on the way to eventually developing into of what we now consider the institutional model. Rachel Low, one of the first film historians' to map the British industry, uses this linear through-line to define the initial genres of actuality filmmaking as if each exemplified a stage in the larger development. She employs the term "scenic" to describe the second stage, differentiating between the first actualities which were single shot static films of interest "merely from the curiosity of seeing familiar sights reproduced on screen"[297], and those films which employed camera movement like

[297] Rachel Low, *History of British Cinema : 1896-1906*, vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 1997), 44.

pans and tracking shots. Travel films tended to occur much later, employing multiple shots made up of both camera movement and static shots. Unlike the two earlier categories, travel films were usually of interest because of their subject matter rather than as pure examples of the new medium. In contrast, I will be using the term "scenic" in a much broader sense which is closer in line with the variety of films associated with the term by the production companies at the time.[298] Rather than use the term to distinguish between purely formal shifts, I will employ it to differentiate between any film which presented a domestic natural landscape as opposed to a foreign one. By using the term in this manner I am able to examine these films in relation to the larger tourism industry in Great Britain, interpreting them as complex documents which used many different formal devices in order to re-present new points of view on traditional picturesque and sublime subject matter.[299]

This broad definition of the genre takes into account the very different trajectory that films depicting natural landscape enacted. Unlike in the case of narrative filmmaking, which exhibited a certain transitional arc in the first decade of the 1900's, scenic actualities tended to exhibit many of the same stylistic traits from approximately the beginning of the transitional era of fictional narratives up until the First World War. This stability makes it difficult to compare both groups against the same historical framework. André Gaudreault has recently developed a historical methodology based on the intermedial nature of early film which I will be adopting to

[298] In Hepworth & Co.'s catalogue from 1903 the Index of Film Subjects uses subject matter, format, and location in order to organize and classify its collection of films. Films depicting natural domestic landscapes were compiled under headings which isolated their formal qualities like those listed under "panoramas" and/or the natural phenomena depicted like "sea pictures" and "river scenery". In the 1906 catalogue the heading "country scenes" was added along with the subheading "phantom rides" under "railway scenes". The year also included the addition of multiple international locations. The Charles Urban Trading Company imbedded the same combination of static imagery, panoramas, and frontal facing phantom rides under their series of collections. These collections were generally named after the location or phenomenon depicted like " Picturesque Switzerland". Other one-off films were placed under "Miscellaneous".

[299] I will refer to Low's term as "Scenic" and my own with a lower case s or "scenic".

a certain degree. Gaudreault hypothesizes that the works produced with the kinematograph in its first two decades were invested in the cultural series' which came before them rather than with the institutional form of cinema that occurred after: "...'cinema'- as we generally understand it today- was not a late-nineteenth-century invention. The emergence of cinema, in the sense we understand the term today, dates instead from the 1910s,"[300] the year when previous models would date the emergence of the institutional mode. Prior to that shift, the technology became incorporated within a diversity of other practices and institutions. Gaudreault considers the period to be a product of "intermedial meshing": "Before the cinema ended up becoming a relatively autonomous medium, kinematography was not merely subjected to the influence of the other media and cultural spaces in vogue at the beginning of the twentieth century. It truly was at one and the same time magic lantern show, fairy play, magic act, and music hall or vaudeville act."[301] "Intermediality" refers to this preliminary, transitional stage prior to becoming a stable institution, and, also is the best way to approach the historical period. What this suggests is that in order to understand and interpret specific films made within the early period one must locate the cultural institutions (which may include multiple different forms of media, technology, and conventions) they were embedded within. British actuality filmmaking which fell under the category of scenic was a part of the larger cultural series associated with nature appreciation. These scenic films participated within and restructured the aesthetic and epistemological conventions commonly shared by these cultural practices and objects. But, because many of the conventions continued to recur, even once fictional narrative filmmaking had shifted into the "institutional mode", scenics, and other travelogues, continued to exhibit spectatorial qualities associated with the first decade of production. So the questions posed when analysing these

[300] André Gaudreault, *Film and Attraction: From Kinematography to Cinema*, trans. Tim Barnard (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2011), 4.
[301] Gaudreault., 63.

films do not so much revolve around why they changed but rather on why they didn't while the rest of the industry did. The strength of its embeddedness within the cultural series could explain why the genre remained stable for such a long period.

This chapter will look closely at the similarities between the sublime model of spectatorship and that constructed by the formal shift from panorama to forward tracking shot. It will place these two camera movements alongside the interplay of static point of views which were used in other early scenic films. All of these formal strategies reconstructed the boundaries of traditional conceptions of proximity, distance and the limits of the frame, the three issues which were at the heart of concerns about, and the possibility of, the appreciation of nature and the sublime spectator. While clearly the latter refers directly to the visual arts, once the frame began to move (or was expanded in the case of the painted panorama) it started to mimic the concerns of the nature observer and tourist: What is the best way to make visual contact with a specific space, object or landscape? What properties are pertinent to making an aesthetic judgment or having an aesthetic experience? Must they be connected visually through my sensory awareness or is their importance in relation to one another only apparent internally through associations made by my imagination?

These questions, when related back to the "early" scenic, provoke two problems about the nature of the medium and its "ontological" connection to the material which it re-presents. The first relates to a much larger concern about the epistemological differences between making direct contact with a natural space versus placing that space on display through the mediation of a specific piece of technology. As we saw with the debates between language and visual representation, this concern was at the forefront of both the popular and theoretical discourses

surrounding the sublime and representational technology during the period. It is interrelated with the second concern; the genre's relationship to aesthetics in general.

The Picturesque and the Sublime in the Static Single Shot Scenic

The early scenics placed real locations on display, they were not aesthetic objects per se, but they participated within part of that discourse. The earliest single shot, static scenics seem, at the outset, the most difficult cultural object to associate with the natural sublime. The vast majority of writing on early scenics has considered them as part of the "picturesque" in terms of subject matter, framing, and discourse, describing them as relying on distancing effects and traditional aesthetic notions of the frame. As Gerry Turvey points out, even the earliest of the British actuality films were advertised as examples of the picturesque.[302] The production houses chose and framed subject matter which not only would demonstrate the power of the medium but would also present and maximize the pictorial qualities valued by the aesthetic movement. Outside of the production literature moving images were often contrasted with art objects and, like the painted panorama, their aesthetic and educational potential shifted in relation to the audience they attracted rather than solely in relation to the images they presented. While cinema introduced a new model of representation, it existed, as Tom Gunning puts it, "outside of academic aesthetics and not yet recognized as an art form"[303]. It was exhibited and addressed as a form of mass entertainment, a spectacle which distracted rather than enlightened.

This tension between the scenic genre and the larger film industry begs a series of concerns: What does this mean for the aesthetic potential of the genre? What kind of experience

[302] Gerry Turvey, "Panoramas, Parades and the Picturesque: The Aesthetics of British Actuality Films, 1895-1901," *Film History: An International Journal* 16, no. 1 (2004): 9.
[303] Tom Gunning, "Modernity and Cinema: A Culture of Shocks and Flows," in *Cinema and Modernity*, ed. Murray Pomerance (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 299.

did they elicit in their original audience? The sublime has, as we have seen, a contentious relationship with art objects. The majority of philosophers who discussed the natural sublime argued that an art object could not produce a purely sublime experience in the mind of its spectator because the sublime exceeded the imagination's ability to represent it. How do we reconcile the requirements of the sublime with the role of the picturesque (and landscape art) in these early films? I think this depends on how the genre negotiated its relationship to the picturesque and what domain it explicitly attempted to foreground. By employing conventions associated with the picturesque early scenics played an interesting balancing act: privileging the act of display while presenting those images in a palatable way that already addressed specific audience expectations. By privileging the act of display, the scenic film allowed the audience members to feel as if they were making contact with places that they would not always be able to experience in reality, explicitly placing the genre within the lineage of the various nature tours while implicitly drawing on formal associations with landscape art. The relationship with the picturesque was perhaps thought necessary in order to sell the films in the first place. But the genre relied on concern with contact, rather than directly replicating the aesthetic values of the picturesque, to produce its effect.

This overlap between the two different structures of address isn't solely a product of the lineage of the sublime and technological sublime that I have been tracing here. Like all cultural products, early filmmaking exists at a complex nexus of multiple aesthetic and technological discourses and practices. But as Christine Gledhill and Martin Meisel argue this convergence was dominated by the same two competing value structures that we find historically in nature appreciation: pictorialism versus documentary contact. Gesturing to the importance of magic lantern shows in Great Britain, Gledhill writes, "The dominance of pictures in British

conceptions of film-making emerges from the array of pictorial practices of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century popular culture."[304] Though seemingly contradictory, these pictorial practices arose out of the "development of optical sciences and photography"[305] creating a tension and dependence between what Meisel calls "the appetite for reality" and "a requirement for signification"[306]. The presentation of reality through its documentation depended on pictorial operations in order to differentiate between which aspects should be thought of as significant for both aesthetic and scientific appreciation. In photography and filmmaking these operations included different approaches to framing and the use of close-ups. In both cases "selective articulation as opposed to the accumulation of incidental material"[307] was necessary in order to control and make sense of the excess of stimuli all around us—turning "nature into culture"[308]. Here Gledhill makes a similar claim about the role of seeing the world as picture as that which is articulated by the technological sublime. She refers to the term pictorialism not solely as an aesthetic term extending from the fine arts but also as it became linked to photojournalism, travelogues and the intertwined narrative of the picturesque. The widespread use of the term led to the merging of picture and document which she argues was a necessary development in the construction of British cultural poetics. Film represents the climax of this complex history, from direct experience, word, picture, and finally the screen. Contact oscillates between the original and these forms of representation in an attempt to solve the problem of nature appreciation.

As discussed in the second chapter, the concept of the picturesque refers to this problem of representation and significance, and to a series of natural motifs and qualities of framing and

---

[304] Gledhill, 31.
[305] Ibid., 32.
[306] Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton N.J. : Princeton UP, 1983), 12, quoted in Gledhill, 32.
[307] Gledhill, 56.
[308] Ibid., 59.

staging that quickly became conventionalized. While early British scenics often eagerly associated aspects of their work with the picturesque not all the locations chosen to be photographed were in fact picturesque. The most obvious are the multitude of films depicting waterfalls, and , the so-called 'rock and waves' films, which, when shot up-close or looking over the edge, like in the case of the R.W. Paul's *Rocky Shore* (1896) and *Rough Sea at Ramsgate* (1896), created a very different visceral effect than that valued by the picturesque.[309] In the case of the early static scenic the visceral effect was created by simulating the physiological response one would have if a person were actually face to face with the object and/or place. In a review of the latter in the *Strand Magazine* the audience was described as being prone to "start involuntarily" to avoid the spray of the sea waves.[310] Audience attitudes towards the new technology and attraction provide further evidence of the role actuality programming played in the popular imagination. After attending the 1895 actuality program on display in Derby Castle on the Isle of Man one audience member stated, "By its means the following, all working as if in life before the spectator, are shown".[311] Another, this time a reviewer for *The Era* reporting on his experience at the New Egyptian Hall, described the medium "as pictures of photography come to life – photography taken 'in the action.'"[312] This writer went on to exclaim that "the interest of Mr R.W. Paul's invention is inexhaustible, for the attraction may be revived again and again by new pictures".

Historian and theorist William Uricchio associates the static scenic shots with "liveness" or "simultaneity" which provided "an experience essentially identical to coincident profilmic

[309] This subgenre was quite popular with many of the British production companies at the turn of the century including Mitchell and Kenyon and the Warwick Trading Company, introduced most famously with Birt Acres' *Rough Sea at Dover* in 1895.
[310] "The Prince's Derby," *Strand Magazine*, August, 1896, 136.
[311] "Derby Castle,"*The Isle of Man Times and General Advertiser*, 4 June, 1895, 2.
[312] "Maskelyne and Cooke's," *The Era* (London), April 18 ,1896, 16.

reality"[313] that came directly out of concerns developed within the late 19th century discourses surrounding technology[314], many of which mirrored the tensions over the role of representation in environmental aesthetics. The films functioned as "articulated explorations of a particular location" where "intervention (of the filmmaker, of the marks of civilization) is kept to a minimum."[315] The same locations were filmed over and over again, so that while audiences were interested in accessing unique events and novel locations, the majority of the time they would come to see the same types of scenery that they had previously viewed multiple times. Uricchio writes that the technology served "as a conduit for ongoing repeatable processes"[316], audiences came to experience a certain visceral effect associated with contact with these location. As one audience member stated, "the whizzing and the whirling and twittering of nerves, and blinkings and winkings that it causes in not a few among the spectators"[317]. Repeated viewings gave them the opportunity to examine new facets of these locations at the same time as consider the manner in which the technology mediated that contact.

Over time it was in fact the articulation of point of view which was privileged over the visual appeal of the locations. Most of the locations placed on display had already been distributed and exhibited in the form of photographs and, of course, panoramas. The original novelty of these films lay in their ability to replicate motion and the 'liveness' described by Uricchio. With repeated viewings the astonishment which these films engendered quickly became paired with contemplation, as audiences began to consider their relationship to the images rather than the images themselves. The experiential overlap between reality and the

[313] William Uricchio, "Ways of Seeing: The New Vision of Early Non-Fiction Film," in *Uncharted Territory: Essays on Early Nonfiction Film*, eds. Daan Hertogs and Nico De Klerk (Amsterdam: Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1997), 130.
[314] Uricchio, 129.
[315] Ibid.,,129.
[316] Ibid., 130.
[317] "At the Palace," *Punch*, August 6, 1898, 57.

filmic world became increasingly of interest within certain high-brow press journals. A writer for *The New Review*, referred to as O. Winter, offered a critique of the artistic and epistemological differences of the new medium as early as 1896:

> Then, once more, the sound and flicker of machinery; and you see on the bare cloth a tumbling sea, with a crowd of urchins leaping and scrambling in the waves. The picture varies, but the effect is always the same – the terrifying effect of life, but of life with a difference...It is life stripped of colour and of sound. Though you are conscious of the sunshine, the picture is subdued to a uniform and baffling grey. Though the waves break upon an imagined shore. they break in a silence which doubles your shrinking from their reality.[318]

Winter compares this assessment with what he terms the "ignorant man" who

> falls back upon the ancient wonderment. "Ain't it lifelike!" he exclaims in all sincerity...Here, then, is life; life it must be because a machine knows not how to invent; but it is life which you may only contemplate through a mechanical medium, life which eludes you in your daily pilgrimage. It is wondrous, even terrific; the smallest whiff of smoke goes upward in the picture; and a house falls to the ground without an echo. It is all true, and it is all false.[319]

Though untypically nuanced for period, Winter's description of the first moving images shifts the discourse from one firmly entrenched in astonishment to a contemplative and reflexive narrative interested in the potential and pitfalls of the new technology and actuality genres.

Repeated viewing of the same landscapes and natural phenomena provoked another form of aesthetic experience: contemplative absorption. In his work on American early film, Charles

---

[318] O. Winter, "The Cinematograph," *The New Review*, May, 1896, 507-513 as quoted and compiled by Luke McKernan, *Picturegoing*, June 5, 215, http://picturegoing.com/?p=4166.
[319] Winter.

Musser defines this form of contemplation through the artistic values exhibited in the mid 18th century rather than the theoretical discourse surrounding nature appreciation beginning in the same period.[320] This reliance on the history of art appreciation seems peculiar in Musser's case because the evidence he uses often refers back to environmental aesthetics and not art practices. His definition of contemplation, borrowed from Michael Fried's discussion of Diderot, describes the second stage of the natural sublime as the mind attempts to come to terms with the astonishing state of natural phenomena;

> Diderot seems to have held that an essential object of paintings belonging to those genres was to induce in the beholder a particular psycho-physical condition, equivalent in kind and intensity to a profound experience of nature...In that state of mind and body, a wholly passive receptivity becomes a vehicle of an apprehension of the fundamental beneficence of the natural world; the subject's awareness of the passage of time and, on occasion, of his very surroundings may be abolished...[321]

This stage of sublimity is described by Musser as contemplative absorption and associated with several single shot static films made in America between 1896 and 1897. Alongside repeated viewings of the same subject matter, many films, including British ones like Birt Acres' *Rough Sea at Dover* (1896) were displayed in a loop during a single film program creating a "sustained, attentive contemplation from their audiences"[322]. In the case of these single shot static scenics astonishment, "liveness", and contemplation existed in a series of overlaps constructed by the exhibition format rather than just the formal structure and subject matter.

---

[320] Charles Musser, "A Cinema of Contemplation, A Cinema of Discernment: Spectatorship, Intertextuality, and Attractions in the 1890s," in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 161.
[321] Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and the Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1980), 130-131, quoted in Musser, 162.
[322] Musser, 163.

When edited together in later films, that "liveness" could be compared and contemplated through the juxtaposition the possible vantage points. In Cecil Hepworth's 1904 film *The Waterfalls of Wales* a series of static images are presented as bookended on both sides by short pans. The camera begins by presenting a camp site off to one side of a rocky landscape and then beginning with a long shot from quite far away, cuts closer and closer until the camera is right underneath the waterfall peering down in a tight close up at the water rushing below. This series of images performs the same negotiation as the spectator on tour, beginning with a beautifully composed image which is easily assessed in a contemplative mode and moving past the precarious place of the sublime into a position of danger. The camera problematizes the line between sublime and terror because, as Winter stated, it necessarily screens the spectator from any actual risk. This allows the intended spectator to push beyond the limit established by real bodily contact. But even on film the spectator can only get so close, if placed right up against the object he or she would be unable to grasp the vastness of the waterfall and could therefore only turn to specific features like small rock formations or water patterns, shifting the experience out of the terrain of the sublime back into that of beauty or in some cases the picturesque. By repeatedly presenting different facets of the same subject matter not only does the film foreground the act of display but also the way different levels of distance, proximity and point of view establish affective and contemplative responses.

Astonishment and Contemplation in the Cinema of Attractions

Musser's reliance on the history of art appreciation is in part due to the role contemplation plays in his larger argument dismissing Tom Gunning's interpretive model which is also constructed out of the same period of art history. That model, "the cinema of attractions", equates early cinema with one model of cinematic style and address, namely shock, distinguishing it from

previous, traditional modes of appreciation like contemplation. The model argues that films produced before approximately 1906 were valued primarily because of their ability to display rather than as a vehicle for storytelling. These attractions first came in the form of the technology and then in the way that technology could address the spectator. This model of spectatorship, established by both the gaze of the spectator and the recurring look of the subjects on screen, engendered a kind of exhibitionism that was in stark contrast to both the voyeuristic drive embedded in institutional modes of narrative absorption, and earlier models of aesthetic experience, which were characterized as contemplative, because the curiosity derived from each attraction remained only momentarily and usually was induced by a visual shock. The model emphasizes a series of reccurring formal features including the exploration of space, "brevity of film subjects", "lack of sustained temporal and narrative development", and display of novel subject matter[323].

While Musser uses the exhibition conditions of the early scenic to address the continued relevance of contemplation and discourage a singular reading of the first decade of the medium, I would like to encourage a closer examination of the dialectic constructed in both forms of address. By interpreting this genre through its embeddedness within nature appreciation rather than the history of the visual arts I am better able to consider the collision of the two. The segment of appreciation that I have been looking at does not make a strict distinction between shock and contemplation and, as has been demonstrated through the first static single shot films, even the earliest examples can be interpreted to explore both modes. That is not to say that I believe the sublime to be incompatible with the properties and values associated with the cinema of attractions, or Musser's reading of contemplation, but that it could offer a more

[323] Gunning, "Modernity and Cinema", 304.

nuanced way of interpreting the effects which many of these films produced as well as help us understand the films in relation to their contextual lineage inside the larger industry of nature appreciation.

In effect, many properties described by the sublime recur in the cinema of attractions model, especially the way these early actuality films foregrounded the vantage point by putting the idea of point of view on display.[324] Gunning argues that this structure created what he calls the "view aesthetic" and uses the term to apply to actuality films produced between 1906 and the First World War. Because actuality filmmaking repeated many of the same formal conventions well past 1906, both models share many of the same qualities leading to a kind of slippage between the two. In fact he often refers to the 'view aesthetic' as part of the cinema of attractions despite the fact that the latter originally referred to non-actuality filmmaking, because both privilege forms of attraction over narrative continuity. In the case of actuality films those attractions tended to be pre-existing "views" rather than "acts" which were artificially constructed for the camera.[325] Gunning writes that "early actuality films were structured around presenting something visually, capturing and preserving a look or vantage point."[326] He goes on to describe "the most characteristic quality of a 'view'" as the manner in which it "mimes the act of looking and observing".[327]

While there is a lot of overlap between the two models, Gunning needs both terms in order to divide possible spectatorial modes of perception. He describes the early travel films

[324] Tom Gunning, "Before documentary: early nonfiction films and the "view" aesthetic," in *Uncharted Territory: Essays on Early Nonfiction Film*, eds. Daan Hertogs and Nico De Klerk (Amsterdam: Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1997), 14.

[325] Gunning, "View Aesthetic", 14.
[326] Ibid., 14.
[327] Ibid., 15.

made within the cinema of attractions' historical period as constructing and addressing the senses of the viewer, while the films made after 1906 as, at times, gesturing towards contemplative states of aesthetic experience that fall outside the purview of the cinema of attractions. Referring to Jonathan Crary's definition of the "modern observer" he argues that both the technology and early formal devices like the pan and tracking shot aimed "at direct physiological stimulation" of a spectator "whose body plays an acknowledged role in the creation of the illusions s/he observes."[328] Gunning writes, "early travel films often participate in the aesthetics of sensation and astonishment so basic to the early cinema of attractions. The viewer is not a detached contemplative spectator but a physiologically stimulated observer."[329] In the same essay he intimates that the views which were displayed in travelogues, and the larger model of perception that they engendered, may be related to the "overwhelming force" of the Romantic sublime. What Gunning seems to be gesturing towards are the similarities between his original historical and spectatorial model and the second phase of the natural sublime.

The Rise of the Phantom Ride

The physiological effect reached its peak in the phantom ride, where, unlike in the static and panorama, the effect was kinesthetic in nature, simulating the sensation of the motion rather than direct and sustained visual contact with the objects which it traveled past. This penetration of the frame, accelerating towards the vanishing point, created the most acute form of astonishment offered to the early film spectator. One reviewer compared the effect to the shock felt watching Lumière's 1895 film *L'arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* (known in the UK as *Train Pulling into a Station*) describing the first as a "train at full speed coming directly at you, and

[328] Tom Gunning, "' The Whole World Within Reach' Travel Images without Borders," in *Virtual Voyages: Cinema and Travel*, ed. Jeffrey Ruoff (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 36.
[329] Gunning, "World within Reach", 38.

never getting there, but jumping out of the picture into outer darkness where the audience is", versus the phantom ride where " all the country round takes it into its head to follow as hard as ever it can, rocks, mountains, trees, towns, gateways, castles, rivers, landscapes, bridges, platforms, telegraph-poles, all whirling and squirling and racing against one another, as if to see which will get to the audience first, and then, suddenly … all disappear into space!! Phew! We breathe again!!"[330] In both cases the expectations of the audience seem to be evaded; both collision and complete immersion evaporate leaving the audience in a state of bewilderment.

Returning again to the history of art appreciation, Gunning discusses the effect extensively in his essay "Landscape and the Fantasy of Moving Pictures: Early Cinema's Phantom Rides" relating the phantom ride back to its phenomenological role in reconstructing our modern relationship with space. He avoids the larger representational and experiential tensions embedded in nature appreciation by only considering these film genres under the umbrella of American landscape painting and the picturesque. He compares the manner of spectatorship embedded in the early American scenics to the formal constraints and cultural goals of the idealized landscape painted by artists such as Claude Lorrain. Gunning argues that the phantom ride offers the fantasy of exploration and penetration which, rather than breaking with the picturesque, created a shift along the same trajectory. While the picturesque landscape rearranged nature "into a more balanced composition, the very tools it used in venturing into nature, the camera obscura and the Claude Glass, directly anticipated the fragmentary, 'taken directly from nature' aspects of both the photography and new models of landscape composition" like the painted panorama and scenic film.[331] Both technologies of the picturesque

[330] "At the Palace," *Punch*, August 6, 1898, 57.
[331] Tom Gunning, "Landscape and the Fantasy of Moving Pictures: Early Cinema's Phantom Rides," in *Cinema and Landscape*. eds. Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2010), 49.

were interested in the relationship between the fragment and whole, where one line of visual perspective (associated in the contemporary discourse to the "magisterial gaze" as embedded in the vanishing point) leads into a scene made of many points of view. Gunning hypothesizes that the phantom ride made the collision between both of those points possible in a way that landscape painting could only theorize. He writes that the phantom ride "seemed to undermine their traditional separation, collapsing the contemplative distance in the anticipation of collision, and heightening the physical sensations evoked in the panorama to an intense shock."[332] This penetration breaks down the distance between the spectator and world while also denying the possibility of reengaging with the landscape.

Gunning also discusses the role of the sublime within his original thesis on the phantom ride but his definition oscillates between one emerging from the painterly tradition and that supplied by Leo Marx when describing the technological sublime. This sublime follows along the ideological trajectory supplied by Kant where technology becomes a stand-in for the power of reason in confronting the infinite other: "The sublime supplied less a model for new compositions than an impulse to explore new technical options, pursuing new effects for the viewer."[333] Here Gunning seems to conflate the contemplative with the picturesque and techniques of immersion with the sublime. He only mentions the dialectic between immersion and contemplation once, calling it an inherent "confrontation" in the sublime form of landscape but leaves this claim in the realm of the painterly, using J.M.W. Turner as his case example. When he returns to the subject of the sublime at the very end, it re-emerges as the immersive technological sublime. He writes, "this new technological sublime simultaneously encounters a sense of loss, of dissolution, a phantomization of the experience of self and world. Thus the

[332] Gunning, "Landscape", 54.
[333] Ibid., 46.

dawn of cinema, rather than simply perfecting a technology for the portrayal of landscapes, also inaugurates a new representation of loss in which the *pas de deux* of spectator and landscape becomes a ghostly dance of presence and absence, sensation and distance."[334] The technological sublime in the guise of camera and train appears to offer contact with the world, breaking down the distance between the traditional contemplative art spectator by placing the observer directly inside the image, but once the observer is immersed inside he is unable to consider what it is all around him, instead he spends the film continuously trying to catch up with the landscape. The most impressive examples of this immersive style occur when the camera is placed straight in front moving along a straight segment of train tracks.

While I would agree with the main thrust of the conclusion, that the technological sublime claims to offer something which it cannot provide, what Gunning avoids is the fact that distance and immersion are not a new component brought on by the technological addition, but have always been at the heart of the philosophical debate. The pleasure associated with the sublime only occurs at the nexus of the two. The aspects which do seem to be new are symptomatic of the reversal of object and image and sublimation of the sublime into the overall structure of the picturesque. This epistemological shift directly changes the nature of the ideological and aesthetic discourse. No longer did the scenic rely on sublime natural imagery but instead presented a series of picturesque scenes. The perceptual aspects associated with the sublime became relegated to the apparatus and train, leaving even virtual contact with the landscape trailing behind. The importance of this shift, which attempted to eliminate the contemplative state of reflexivity and change the level of engagement offered to the spectator, is

[334] Ibid., 64.

only apparent when interpreted as part of this much longer historical narrative where astonishment first emerges as a participatory force attached to nature rather than technology.

While it would appear that phantom rides, in comparison to films that were constructed out of pans or static shots, would remain wholly within the domain of that second phase of astonishment, overwhelming the spectator with stimulation, even these films tended to create their own rhythmic pattern of immersion into and detachment from the landscape. The British phantom rides were, in fact, extremely varied and often deceptively simple, as I hope the following examples will demonstrate. In an earlier article Gunning suggests that a transformation in the genre occurred in later phantom rides, where the landscape and its contemplation were stressed over "the movie camera and mode of transport"[335]. This contemplative mode which addressed the view occurred in British phantom rides quite frequently, even in the case of the earliest attempts. Many camera operators did not leave the camera aimed directly forward. Instead they would use the bends and curves already built into the rail line, attach the camera on the side or eventually manually pan the camera back and forth to include a variety of lateral views. Examples of this occur in each of the major British production companies. In Paul's Animatograph Works's *Phantom Ride, Chamonix* from 1900 the tracks rarely shift into the centre of the frame, instead the mountain landscape fills three quarters while the track remains to the side. The speed of the train is slow enough that individual objects in the view can be distinguished from one another and employees fixing the rail watch comfortably while standing only a few feet away. This film also uses both sides of the rails to effectively present the contrast in natural features and space. The majority of the film displays the side of the rails looking over a large drop leading to a valley filled with conifers. In the

[335]Gunning, "View Aesthetic", 16.

middle of the film and at the very end we are presented with the opposite side of the tracks where the rocky mountain face looms over the train, instead of leading the eye out towards the distant mountain range and horizon, this side, along with the curves in the rails, boxes the observer in. But it isn't bereft of visual detail, rather the mountain slope features a thin waterfall which falls mid way down, and, at the end, a series of small trees, engineering equipment, workers, and a small cabin. By the end of the film the train begins to go over a small bridge leaving the cliff behind and opening up on to another large valley. The film is a wonderful example of not just choosing varied natural scenery, but also a segment of the rail line with curved and straight sections which can facilitate the most interesting manner in which to present and frame those views. This early film looks stylistically very similar to other scenics produced along Chamonix a decade later.[336]

Even when not placed directly in a precarious place like at the side of a mountain, early phantom rides were able to present huge variations of affective responses based on the routes they chose to exhibit. Mitchell and Kenyon often chose rail and tram lines which had both varied, yet open, natural scenery and industrial features like bridge construction and developments occurring at the outskirts of possible urban locations. In these cases the train seems at home in both places, at once a naturalized aspect of touring the landscape and a force of technological wonder. The interplay is often quite complex and, like the case of *Chamonix*, used both location and framing as a manner of switching between the two.

A Beautiful Panorama of a Railway Ride from St German to Milray, released in 1901 and shot on the Great Western Railway, opens with an extraordinary sequence that merges the two.

[336] One example of these films is Éclair's 1910 film *Phantom Ride from Chamonix to Vallorcine* which uses the scenery around the rail line as a frame for the mountainous landscape.

The camera is placed directly forward on the top of a train which is moving along the inside of single track suspension bridge. For the first few seconds the most prominent visual features are the sides of the bridge and the vertical rails directing the eye forward, but quickly what is placed at the end of the segment of tracks, prior to a tight turn to the right, comes into focus. This set of rolling hills seems to construct a visual resting point which releases the eye from the vertical penetration of space to engage with the horizontal plane that visibly extends to each side through the gaps in the bridge walls. This juxtaposition of horizontal and vertical planes creates a striking effect leading the eye to both the edges of the frame and right through the centre of the screen making the viewer acutely aware of the manner in which space is articulated. Here immersion leads to contemplation through a momentary shift in visual cues. Once the train leaves the bridge and turns it uses many of the same framing techniques as *Chamonix*, it keeps the hills and valley in the majority of the frame by placing the camera slightly to the side and choosing a curvy segment of tracks. The landscape becomes slowly inflected with signs of construction and urban development, and, once it goes over a second bridge into a town, the camera returns to its position facing directly forward and the track remains almost completely straight.

These different modes of the mobile gaze would also eventually become composed together, presumably through elaborate stoppages where the cameraman would stop rolling and move the camera to another location on the train. We can see an example of this in Hepworth's 1902 film entitled *Phantom Ride and Panorama* where different angles from the front of the train are put together, ending with one looking directly out the side. At some points the film juxtaposes a level shot looking to the side of the tracks with one where the camera is pointed down at the tracks directly in front of it. Not only does the angle of the shot prevent the viewer from accessing a vanishing point, and therefore a sensation of spatial penetration, but the shift

between the two shots increases the perception of speed. Once the camera presents a view of the landscape from the side of the train at the very end, the speed of the train begins to decrease and the spectator is given the opportunity to look at different features of the scenery. Even though the camera view remains in motion, the aesthetic is more akin to a form of contemplative pleasure rather than one of being overwhelmed by the level of immersion. This final image evokes Gunning's final description of the phantom rides which were made after 1906: "At the same time, I sense some transformation in the genre, a transfer from an earlier form which emphasized both landscape and the novelty of the mobile gaze cutting through space, to a later form which primarily stressed the unfolding landscape and directed attention away from the technology of the movie camera and mode of transport. These later phantom rides seem more contemplative, less attuned to the thrills of fast locomotives, sudden curves and looming tunnels than to the natural panorama spread before the viewer." He goes on to say that the "mobile means, once the centre of such phantom rides, is now only the vehicle for a communion with nature."[337] Here the contemplative stage is juxtaposed with the immersive directly mirroring the precarious position necessary in order to have a sublime experience. This pattern attempted to reconcile the tension between the values and epistemology of both stages of the sublime through visual material that was often picturesque rather than vast and astonishing.

Based on the examples that still remain and references made in catalogue entries, it seems that early filmmakers were not just interested in the immersive style but also the stereoscopic effect of engaging with the landscapes and cityscapes in depth. Interest in the effect is documented on both sides of Gunning's historical categories. In Hepworth's 1903 catalogue, the film *Thames Panorama- Under Chertsey Bridge* is advertised as providing appealing

[337] Gunning, "View Aesthetic", 16.

scenery, a number of "human interest" elements (such as children playing on the shore) and a "well shown" stereoscopic effect from the camera attached to a steam launch traveling along the Thames and under a bridge[338]. Three years later the catalogue describes the film *A Ride on a Toy Railway* as doing

> justice to the scenery, for it is of superb quality throughout, and gives in many places most magnificent stereoscopic effects. It shows how the railroad commands views of high mountains and rich fertile valleys; how it plunges through the densest woods, into which scarcely any light can filter, and runs round the sharpest curves by a little mountain stream. Then out into the open country again, and on into the quaint little station at Corris, near the top of the hill, and out through the village and on again to the miners' cottages beyond.[339]

The author even goes as far as to write that, " the magnificent scenery which is unfolded to them as the little engine puffs its way up the hill is unsurpassed by anything which even a native of North Wales is used to."[340] In both cases the stereoscopic effect is introduced without need for any further explanation leading to the assertion that the effect had become largely conventional quite early on. In the example from 1903 it is placed alongside elements valued by the picturesque and in the one from 1906 the scenery, and descriptive terms, were both picturesque and sublime. The entry argues that these specific views were only possible from this particular rail line relocating the problematization from man and nature to one constructed through man and machine shifting the discourse into the realm of the technological.

As Uricchio argues, the camera often confronted its audience with images that fell outside the realm of the realism offered in 19th century representations. This "super-realism"

---

[338] *Hepworth Manufacturing Company Catalogue* (London: Hepworth Manufacturing Company, 1903), 8.
[339] *Hepworth Manufacturing Company Catalogue* (London: Hepworth Manufacturing Company, 1906), 95.
[340] Ibid.

presented objects in a way that overcame the limits of the senses, either through impossible vantage points, extreme close-ups or, through speeding and slowing down the frame rate. In the context of this concern for the role that film played in the interplay between 19th century realism and 20th century modernism, Uricchio describes the popularity of the moving pan in the phantom ride in a manner which could just as easily be retraced to the early 19th century discourse around the sublime:

> The persistence of long tracking shots taken from train or boat windows into the 1920s suggest that the effect of what we might call 'perspectival compression' between foreground and background itself might have been of interest. The experience of moving through deep, three dimensional space tends to be perceived through shifts in vision from focal point to focal point. These film images, by contrast, compressed the visible range onto one plane and, especially through movement, offered a glimpse at the limits of our own vision, evoking a sense of reflexivity...[341]

Here the stereoscopic effect recalls the breakdown of both pictorial and perceptual space where the eye is denied sustained access to a focal point. The astonishment, or as Uricchio describes it, sense of wonder, is constructed out of the awareness of the difference and the comparison between the limitations which it reveals about the way we normally access space, and the limitations created by the technology. This description works with many of the same components as the one introduced by Gunning for the technological sublime but rather than compare the possibilities inherent within a breakdown of pictorial space to the limitations of its experience, Uricchio compares real experience in the world to both the technological possibilities and limitations. While the vertical penetration of space is conflated with a dialectic of mastery and

[341] Uricchio, 124.

impotence, moving through horizontal space constructs an interplay of astonishment and reflexivity.

The Train Tour

Both Gunning and Uricchio's analysis refers either explicitly or in the case of the latter, implicitly, to Wolfgang Schivelbusch's 'panoramic perception'. This form of perception is a cultural by-product of the invention of train travel. The velocity of this form of travel made perceiving the foreground impossible, taking away the space which enabled travelers to feel connected to or embedded within the space they were looking at. The traveler was "removed from that 'total space' which combined proximity and distance" leading to a kind of separation from the landscape which he was looking at.[342] "Panoramic perception, in contrast to traditional perception, no longer belonged to the same space as the perceived objects: the traveler saw the objects, landscapes, ect. *through* the apparatus which moved him through the world. That machine and the motion it created became integrated into his visual perception: thus he could only see things in motion."[343] This separation opened up another kind of contemplative space which engaged within a dialectic of visual mastery and dissolution. This mode of perception has been applied to the general act of film spectatorship by multiple different theorists and historians like Mary Ann Doane, Lauren Rabinovitz, Charles Musser, and Tom Gunning but truly comes alive in the effect produced by the traditional frontal stereoscopic phantom rides. Of course what Schivelbusch is describing is best articulated by a side facing camera, mimicking the mobile gaze of the train passenger, rather than the privileged view up on top and from the front that very few individuals would ever have experienced. What is so interesting in relation to the model of

[342] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization and Perception of Time and Space* (Berkeley: University of California, 1986), 63.

[343] Schivelbusch, 64.

the sublime spectator is the assertion that the viewer is detached from any traditional idea of proximity and distance (and for that matter immersion and contemplation). These problems of spatial awareness and analysis occur outside the train carriage rather than through the horizontal plane of window glass.

This perceptual shift was not just a product of the "annihilation of space and time" [344] associated with train travel in the early 19th century, but the "systematized" manner in which landscape transformed into "geographical space", a term he borrows from Erwin Straus[345]. Straus describes a landscape as somewhere where "we always get to one place from another place; each location is determined only by its relation to the neighboring place within the circle of visibility." By contrast, geographical space "is closed, and is therefore in its entire structure transparent. Every place in such a space is determined by its position with respect to the whole and ultimately by its relation to the null point of the coordinate system by which this space obtains its order."[346] Geographical space changed the nature of travel in relation to human scale. It organized large volumes of space reducing the perceptual distance between destinations at the same time as it diminished or outright eliminated a traveler's sensorial awareness. Visual, contextual awareness is highlighted in Straus' definition, where once a traveler appreciated scenery in a series of relational patterns, comparing elements which were connected visually in space while making aesthetic judgments, train travel relocated judgment outside the immediacy of immersive experience into the realm of extratextual sources like railway maps, timetables and advertisements. This shift occurred because, unlike other modes of travel, the train "was

[344] Ibid., 33.
[345] Ibid., 53.
[346] Erwin Straus, *The Primary World of the Senses* (New York and London, 1963), 319.

experienced as a projectile, and traveling on it, as being shot through the landscape"[347]rather than being embedded within it. The view which passengers had was transformed by both the velocity and seating arrangement, creating what Schivelbusch calls an "an evanescent landscape".[348] Because of both these factors the passenger was unable to adjust his body and create some distance between himself and the moving tableaux outside.[349] This inability constructs a seemingly contradictory perceptual state, without distance those objects in the foreground appear as a blur of colour and motion. In order to look upon individual objects a passenger has to direct his gaze towards the objects in the background which appear to be moving slower.[350] But without access to a foreground the spectator is permanently detached from the plane of sensory contact which had been key to all former manner of travel, including, quite obviously, the walking tour. Schivelbusch writes that the "foreground enabled the traveler to relate to the landscape through which he was moving. He saw himself as part of the foreground, and that perception joined him to the landscape, included him in it, regardless of all further distant views that the landscape presented."[351] The train traveller's separation turned the landscape into a pictorial space, compressing and flattening the space in a manner similar to appreciating a painterly surface rather than a three dimensional world.

The discourse around train travel and aesthetic enjoyment was often divided into two camps; those who compared it to traditional modes of travel and perception and those who began to develop criteria which highlighted aspects of the novelty of the new method. John Ruskin fell within the former group, comparing train travel to traditional forms in a manner which

[347] Schivelbusch, 54.
[348] Ibid., 55.
[349] Of course, as in the case of the early cinema audience, a traveler could, and did move around within and in between the train carriages, though this did not really offer the possibility of any additional proximity or distance in relation to the landscape due to the shape and design of the train.
[350] Schivelbusch, 56.
[351] Ibid., 63.

highlighted the loss of aesthetic pleasure and contemplative space offered by the former. He wrote,

> I say, first, to be content with as little change as possible. If the attention is awake , and the feelings in proper train, a turn of a country road, with a cottage beside it, which we have not seen before, is as much as we need for refreshment; if we hurry past it, and take two cottages at a time, it is already too much; hence to any person who has all his senses about him, a quiet walk along not more than ten or twelve miles of road a day, is the most amusing of all travelling; and all travelling becomes dull in exact proportion to its rapidity.[352]

Schivelbusch compares this passage to an American traveler's attitude towards train travel while touring England in 1853. This tourist wrote that the scenery "never appear so charming as when dashing on after a locomotive at forty miles an hour. Nothing by the way requires study, or demands mediation, and though objects immediately at hand seem tearing wildly by, yet the distant fields and scattered trees, are not so bent on eluding observation, but dwell long enough in the eye to leave their undying impression."[353] In this passage traditional forms of contemplation and contact are replaced with the new speed of the evanescent landscape which the tourist also compares to the fleeting experience of a dream.[354] It is this form of landscape which Schivelbusch associates with panoramic perception.

The panoramic that Schivelbusch describes is closer to the experience of the moving panoramas rather than the painted rotundas discussed in the previous chapter. He makes the connection by way of a Parisian journalist name Jules Claretie who, in 1865, used the term while describing the experience of train travel: "before your eyes it unrolls its infinite panorama, a vast

---

[352] John Ruskin, *The Complete Works of John Ruskin*, vol. 3 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1905), 370, quoted in Schivelbusch, 58.
[353] Mathew E. Ward, *English Items; or, Microcosmic Views of England and Englishmen* (New York, 1853), 71- 72.
[354] Ward, 71-72.

succession of charming tableaux, of novel surprises. Of a landscape it shows you only the great outlines, being an artist versed in the ways of the masters. Don't ask it for details, but for the living whole."[355]This "infinite panorama" provided the ability "to perceive the discrete, as it rolls past the window, indiscriminately."[356] This ability did not provide sustained visual access to individual objects but rather, as Dolf Sternberger suggests, "particles" making up one long surface area.[357] Schivelbusch and Sternberger both argue that this new form of perception occurred first in the form of the virtual with panoramas and dioramas and then was provided in reality by train travel. But painted panoramas provided a slightly different effect, rather than fleeting overview, they often presented enormous amount of taxonomical detail which a spectator could spend a sustained amount of time analysing. While it is true that the spectator remained detached, creating an odd separation between the three organizing planes, panoptic mastery, achieved through the elevated platform, was the driving force behind the spectator/spectacle relationship. While train travel may turn reality into a painterly surface, the painted panorama aimed towards a kind of documentary realism that was shocking and novel because it aimed to place the world on display rather than a series of visual effects. Of course in both cases the view was only possible because of the technology, one literally looked through the mediation and not at the world, but the power of that technology was only foregrounded in the case of train travel.

Proximity and Distance in the Panoramic and Photographic Perception

Rather than discussing the variations of panoramic experience, Schivelbusch and Sternberger contrast the evanescent landscape with the rising popularity of photography in the late 19th

[355] Jules Claretie, *Voyages d'un Parisien* (Paris, 1865), 4.
[356] Schivelbusch, 60-61.
[357] Ibid., 61.

century. Photography was able to give the public the very thing that was lost with industrialization, up close experience of the foreground; "Thus the intensive experience of the sensuous world, terminated by the industrial revolution, underwent a resurrection in the new institution of photography. Since immediacy, close-ups and foreground had been lost in reality, they appeared particularly attractive in the new medium."[358] Photography gave the public sustained access to detail, but unlike the painted panorama, it allowed them to get as close as they wanted to it. Historian Heinz Buddemeier addresses the concern perfectly when asking "why did the exact repetition of reality excite people more than the reality itself?" He goes on to write about the manner in which the early spectator "scrutinized" a photograph. "For instance: looking at a picture of the building across the street from one's own window, one first stated counting the roof shingles and the bricks out of which the chimney was constructed... Tiny, until then unnoticed details are stressed continuously: paving stones, scattered leaves, the shape of a branch, the traces of rain on the wall."[359] Just like in the case of the loss of Benjamin's aura, photography breaks down the distance between the masses and the specific objects around them. What it suggests is that the 'industrialization of time and space' that occurred throughout the 19th century was a process which shifted back and forth between distance and proximity, from the breakdown of the 'aura' of neoclassical values which preserved the "spatio-temporal singularity"[360] of the object, through the interplay of both spatial qualities by the nature tourists searching for their own sublime moment, to the spectator at the panorama and railway passenger, ending with the individual inspecting a photograph of their very own street, there is no direct line

[358] Ibid., 63.
[359] Heinz Buddemeier, *Panorama, Diorama, Photographie: Entstehung und Wirkung Neuer Medien im 19* (Munich, 1970), 78.
[360] Schivelbusch, 41.

between the prioritization of distance and the renewed interest of proximity, both ebb and flow in a pattern of loss, absence and renewal.

A similar pattern can be traced onto the discourse surrounding the senses. At first looked at with suspicion and placed aside while attending to the opinions of 'experts', the individual's own sensory powers became the ground for emotion and ideas., but slowly, with the mediation of multiple different representational technologies, some of the five senses became increasingly emphasized while others were devalued. Those senses that were detached and set aside like smell and touch had an integral role in the walking tour. Immersive contact with the foreground allowed for a very individual experience built on the relationship between all five senses. Schivelbusch suggests that 'panoramic perception' directed the spectator towards the visual stimuli, which was actively being "choreographed" for them by the train and route[361]. That stimuli was given objective 'credentials' while other sensations, occurring only in situations of proximity disappeared: "This loss of landscape affected all the senses. Realizing Newton's mechanics in the realm of transportation, the railroad created conditions that also 'mechanized' the traveler's perceptions. According to Newton, 'size, shape, quantity, and motion' are the only qualities that can be objectively perceived in the physical world. Indeed, those became the only qualities that the railroad traveler was able to observe in the landscape he traveled through."[362] While access and exhibition standards were incredibly varied for photography and early cinema, both also directed the attention of their clientele towards visual detail. In the case of cinema, the conditions of spectatorship became increasingly regulated, organizing the behaviour and attention of their audience forward to the screen.

[361] Ibid., 60.
[362] Ibid., 55.

This division between the perceptual values attached to photography and the qualitative shift in new forms of appreciation can be seen in the slippage between the static single shot films, the first pans which remained attached to a single anchor point and their moving counterparts. As has already been suggested, the single shot provided much the same, if not even more potent, access to detail as the photograph, and were often called "living pictures" and "animated photographs" in the early catalogues[363]. This reliance on detail incurred much the same criticism as the painted panoramas had before. Winter, reiterating Wordsworth's previous critique, targeted the cinematograph and photograph. He compared the two to firsthand experience writing,

> The brain and the eye understand not the process of the sensitive plate. They are ever composing, eliminating, and selecting, as if by an instinct. They work far more rapidly than the most elaborate mechanism. They discard one impression and take on another before the first has passed the period of its legitimate endurance. They permit no image to touch them without alteration or adaptation. The dullest eye, the deafest ear, has a personality, generally unconscious, which transforms every scene, and modifies every sound...[364]

He goes on to argue that the new technology is emblematic of the worst styles of painting: "Both the Cinematograph and the Pre-Raphaelite suffer from the same vice. The one and the other are incapable of selection; they grasp at every straw that comes in their way; they see the trivial and important, the near and the distant, with the same fecklessly impartial eye."[365] Unlike the work of the Pre-Raphaelites, impressionism "is the Cinematograph's antithesis. It never permits itself to see everything or to be perplexed by a minute survey of the irrelevant."[366] Winter's critique

[363] Turvey, 10.
[364] Winter, 510.
[365] Ibid., 511.
[366] Ibid., 512.

suggests that the aesthetic ideals at the heart of Romanticism still held an important place amongst gentlemen at the turn of the 20th century. The cinematograph could not offer anything resembling an aesthetic representation; it presented what was put in front of it, albeit in a slightly depleted form. It remained up to the viewer to make their own aesthetic experience, picking and choosing between which details to compare, marking a further departure between technological and more traditional forms of aesthetic awareness.

This lineage of the photograph to cinematograph shifted slightly with the debut and inclusion of pans, where the camera pivoted back and forth. Whereas the former foregrounded novel points of access, the pan attempted to gather multiple different points together in an overview. While the pan takes its name in part from the panorama, it doesn't completely replicate the representational technology. Rather it creates an overlap between the role of the panoramic spectator and the panorama itself, mimicking the motion of the gaze of spectator by turning and directing the attention of the viewer across the scene, connecting different segments of space together. While that motion is usually quite slow it does not offer the sustained contact created by either the static shot or the painted panorama. Because the viewer does not control the motion it often becomes difficult to identify, consider, and compare the foreground and background, the viewer is in this sense more aware of the power of the camera and its framing of his or her attention than they are while watching a static shot. These pans are in contrast to the moving camera pans which we have been discussing in relation to phantom rides where the camera no longer mimics the traditional tourist stopped to admire a vista but rather the passenger looking out from a moving vehicle, possibly on their way to a vacation site.

These different models of perception would appear side by side in evening film programs and side by side in lived experience. Train travel vastly expanded access for the upper and

middle classes, but did that access change how they behaved or what they valued once they arrived in the countryside? Train travel existed alongside more 'traditional' forms of tourism, allowing families to travel to the most popular districts and once there use an assortment of methods to move around, often following the advice of their tour books. It's very difficult to surmise what effect "panoramic perception" had once, as Schivelbusch argues, "evanescent reality had become the new reality"[367], what interplay between those two realities occurred within the imaginations of particular individuals. For the members of the working class that same dichotomy of traditional pre-industrial and modern technological experience was articulated and problematized within the film programs. The juxtaposition of immersion and detachment that is presented within many phantom rides is magnified at that higher level. Here the possibility of finding the perfect position in relation to the landscape is placed right beside its impossibility, where in that impossibility the landscape exists solely in contradiction; we are detached from it but that detachment does not offer contemplative pleasure, only overwhelming stimuli.

In 1906 the phantom ride was established as a standalone attraction. Hale's Tours of the World, owned as a part of a franchise by Charles Urban, constructed its first location in Great Britain on Oxford Street in London, becoming the first purpose built establishment for the cinema.[368] A press reporter described the experience as "the most educative of all London's picture shows"[369] comparing them favourably to the dioramas and panoramas which had previously stood in the capital. While giving a precise break down of the attraction the author is quick to point out the manner in which the tours provided an experience much closer to the real thing than was possible by previous screen entertainment. He writes,

---

[367] Schivelbusch, 64.
[368] The first "tour" was opened in Kansas City in 1905 after being conceived by George Hale in 1902. *"Hale's Tours and Scenes of the World", Motion Picture World 29, no. 3 (15 July 1916):372.*
[369] *The Rinking World & Picture Theatre News*, December 25, 1909, 14.

> Seated in a veritable Pullman car, which appears to be travelling on the ever-present metals through mountainous scenery, over bridges, across vast prairie lands, or Eastern deserts, as the case may be, the illusion is perfect. Not the slightest suspicion of cinematograph lantern rays have the quasi-travellers, for the reason that the views are thrown on the screen from a great distance behind … The conductor of the Pullman Car, who snips the tickets, lectures pleasantly all the time, though in the darkness he remains unseen. Moreover, throughout the imaginary journey, the travellers are treated to pervading sounds as well as sights. The shrill whistle of locomotive and steamboat, the fearsome syren [sic] of an ocean greyhound, the roar of falling waters or tossing sea waves, the pattering of rain, the rolling of thunder, and the shouts of people add a keen zest to the excursion.[370]

Finally the technology and screening apparatus had been perfected, creating a seamless attraction which fulfilled all the requirements of the rail tour. Hale's Tours offered conceptual closure for the technological sublime, completely overturning firsthand and virtual experience by effacing all signs of the technological apparatus.

The Technological Sublime and the Transition between Frame and Screen

If the sublime moment problematizes the interrelation of subject and object, affect and contemplation, and, proximity and distance, the technological sublime, as constructed through the film spectator, interrogates the same binaries through the screen. As Gunning suggests in "The Whole World Within Reach", each of these formal devices reconstructs the possibilities and limitations of the traditional conceptualization of the frame and follows from a lineage of technological and representational devices, like the panorama, stereoscope and postcard, which all "project the idea that there is something insufficient about the simple framed perspectival illusion... While traditionally these supplements are thought of as attempts at greater realism, it

[370] Ibid.

might be more useful to think of them as attempts to overcome the limits of the traditional picture and its frame."[371] The pan and track interrogate those limits by addressing the role of the screen in relation to the traditional frame. As we have seen in the previous chapter, when considered within the discourse surrounding the sublime, the problem of "greater realism" and linear perspective become intertwined in a debate over competing representational values when addressing the world. While the painted panorama "constructs its canvases in such a way that the limits of the picture frame seem abolished"[372], the pan surveys the limits of the screen by gesturing towards its own boundaries. By mimicking the look of the spectator it reminds the viewer of what looking essentially does, it collects and compares a certain expanse of space while cutting out and ignoring the rest. By turning from side to side, even in a 360 degree pan, the camera problematizes its own ability to present, to put on display, to establish and orient its spectator within a space. The difficulty of finding the perfect vantage point when actually on location is that no matter how one orients oneself in relation to a view, our experience is impacted and complicated by sensory details which occur outside the limits of our immediate vision, whether these are sounds, smells, physical bodily sensations, or, perhaps, past impressions of moving through the space previously. A view and its appreciation is therefore never purely a set of visual stimuli. Early film, more so than any other period, presented that complexity in the articulation of on and off screen space. The pan attempts to incorporate space in its visual totality, placing other aspects of sensory experience and context in the hands of the showman. But by attempting to present all of a view it gestures towards the parallel limitations of our own embodied awareness and the edges of the screen. The camera always in fact runs up against the edge because it can only present so much within the confines of the screen at one

[371] Gunning, "The Whole World", 34.
[372] Ibid., 34.

time. The paradoxical relationship between the screen and the frame are problematized at the same time as our own experience within space.

Here we see the way film technology and formal techniques renegotiated the relationship between the spectator and objects in space, and, therefore, renegotiated some of the original causal concerns of the theoreticians' debating the sublime in relation to aesthetic judgment. The object (or idea) which is placed in front of the subject must exceed the boundaries of both the senses and the imagination. In early accounts this is defined largely as an object exceeding the visual representational boundaries of the subject, while this account is extended to the other senses and abstract ideas, it remains a recurring metaphor illustrating both the relationship between pain and pleasure, and, primary and secondary stages of the sublime. It also, of course, rehearsed the debates over the role of the imagination in the representational arts. The screen already frames the world for the subject. It prejudges which aspects are important aesthetically and how they relate to the overall view. When addressing an object which is conventionally appreciated as sublime, like a tall waterfall or mountain, the cameraman can frame it within a picturesque context, placing it to the side of a background, like many landscape painters. When moving the camera closer to the object and allowing the object to fill the screen, the cameraman directly presents its experience within the framework of the sublime. Once that camera begins to move he addresses that framework as a problem to be resolved. This formal choice suggests that objects can only exceed the boundaries of our minds if in fact we let them.

The phantom ride posits the opposite hope for the medium; rather than expand the screen until all space can exist onscreen, the forward tracking shot extends the screen in depth, propelling the viewer through it. This form of immersion which draws the eye in, rather than out and around, presents another contradiction key to the sublime moment, contact which elicits

certain affective drives. Astonishment is not solely a product of visual, or, complete sensory excess, but also the relationship between the object and ourselves. It is our position in relation to both of these qualities which constructs either a form of astonishment which can become reflexive, or a state of fear. While the early static and panorama films used contact and "liveness" as a way to entice and thrill audiences, the audiences were never actually in any danger from the objects and scenes they saw, and the majority of audiences were perfectly aware of their detachment from the world presented to them. Early historical accounts of audiences terrified of the first screening of Lumière's *Train Pulling into a Station*, have largely been discounted as apocryphal.[373] What these phantom rides play with is the paradoxical role of the screen in relation to the world it depicts, what Stanley Cavell argues is film's function within the long philosophical debate over contact between subject and object.

In Cavell's *The World Viewed* he is concerned with both how reality is accessed automatically by the camera, and with what happens to that reality when it is projected, screened, exhibited and viewed. He begins by comparing painting to photography. While every painting could be described as a world, photography is "of the world", it projects moments of the past which are fragments of reality. In the case of photography it always makes sense to wonder what the objects in the photo obscure and what lies "beyond the frame".[374] In cinema that world is projected onto a screen which places the world before us and at the same time keeps it from us. Human agency is therefore critically absent twice, at the time of inception and, in a manner of speaking, at the time of viewing. He writes, "It screens me from the world it holds- that is,

---

[373] As Stephen Bottomore notes, while there were cases of individuals fainting during the first screenings, the majority of reactions were enthusiastic. See "The Panicking Audience?: Early Cinema and the 'train effect,'" *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 19, no. 2 (1999): 177-216.

[374] Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film,* enlarged ed. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1979), 23.

makes me invisible. And it screens that world from me-that is, screens its existence from me. That the projected world does not exist (now) is its only difference from reality."[375]

Cavell argues that the world's presence and our absence satisfies a wish born prior to the Reformation, its goal is the ability to escape subjectivity and metaphysical isolation.[376] Both painting and film struggle in a dialectic with skepticism, forced into isolation by our own subjectivity, these creative media allowed for the possibility of a phenomenological and epistemological connection with reality. But painting could only ever give material weight to our presence in the world; it is incapable of convincing us that the world already exists without us. The material basis of cinema, "a succession of automatic world projections,"[377] places that world in our presence while also withholding it from our reach.[378] Film does not reveal reality, it can't present us with something other than what is placed in front of it, it is instead a "moving image of skepticism",[379] a vehicle for the debate between philosophy and psychology. In "More of *The World Viewed*" Cavell writes, "It is a fact that here our normal senses are satisfied of reality while reality does not exist- even, alarmingly, because it does not exist, *because* viewing it is all it takes."[380] Reality seems to be placed before us, and yet what we see is not real but an apparition torn from the past, leading us to question not only the existence of the world outside of ourselves but also whether any method can possibly offer us viable proof of its existence. Each spectator therefore shifts between states of belief and doubt as they try to reconcile their relationship to the world through the projected images on screen. The limits that cinema

[375] Cavell, 24.
[376] Ibid., 21.
[377] Ibid., 72.
[378] Ibid., 118.
[379] Ibid., 188.
[380] Ibid., 189.

acknowledges, like in Schivelbusch's panoramic perception, are "its outsideness to its world, and my absence from it."[381]

Cavell's conceptualization of the screen and its role in the larger debate over skepticism in both philosophical and public discourses highlights the importance of the representational technology in reconstructing our understanding of ourselves and the outside world. The screen and projected moving image provided a counterpoint to the poetic gaze as defined by the Romantic period just over half a century prior. Cavell describes this earlier world view as a wish to "imitate not the look of nature, but its conditions, the possibilities of knowing nature at all and of locating ourselves in a world."[382] While Wordsworth understood the role of representation as emblematic of his own subjectivity, as completely intertwined with the natural world, and therefore necessary for "our conviction in reality"[383], cinema provided a way back to that reality without the necessity for subjectivity, a world that is present to us without relying on our presence to it. In the end the scenic became a tool that could address both engagement and detachment by redirecting the attention of the viewer away from the content to the manner in which the content was being framed, constructing a form of reflexivity within the overlap between the two. In this sense cinema and the genre dramatically transformed the measure of both our perceptual experience and belief, it relit the precarious state of subject and object by problematizing engagement.

Cinema had a distinct and radical role in reshaping nature appreciation in its first decade. These early scenic genres were each able to present different points of view as a series of speculations over the best manner in which to make contact with and experience different states

[381] Ibid., 146.
[382] Ibid., 113.
[383] Ibid., 22.

of aesthetic pleasure in the British landscape. The complexity of this project is only apparent when considered as a culmination of debates surrounding the natural sublime beginning over two centuries prior. This is not to say cinematic technology didn't provoke its own concerns but that these problems arose out of two much larger debates that we have seen ebb and flow throughout the 18th and 19th century: what is the best way to engage with the nature world, and, can that engagement be replicated outside of direct experience?

Chapter 5

The Scenics which Came After

As the first decade of the 20th century wore on, innumerable changes occurred in almost all areas of the cinema industry, including production, distribution, and exhibition practices. New technologies made for the possibility of much longer films, which, in turn, provided opportunities to emphasize different formal and narrative aspects and the necessity in many cases to find new strategies in which to make that material legible to the industry's growing audience. But while 1906-07 ushered in a transitional period for fictional narrative filmmaking, eventually leading to what most early film historians call the "institutional mode", scenic filmmaking in Great Britain remained, for the most part, stable, placing previous formal devices like the phantom ride and panorama side by side rather than either getting rid of them or integrating them directly into separate narrative arcs. In fact, in most cases, these scenic subgenres became the cornerstones of the multi-shot film. The longer films used these formal components and organized them like a tour guide, highlighting specific views, popular activities and the best manner in which to travel to these locations. Rather than solely juxtapose different ways of framing the landscape, they added a layer of narrative complexity with more clearly defined beginnings, middles and ends, but unlike their fictional counterparts, the scenics rarely, if ever, utilized continuity editing strategies to present their narratives. Instead sequences were still derived from individual vignettes that remained linked through geographical or thematic associations. The majority of the British industry changed at a much slower rate than their American or European neighbours. Even with immense pressure coming from both side, as

Gledhill points out, a pictorial aesthetic persisted well into the 1920s.[384] This tension between aestheticization and documentation, which emerged in the shift towards the technological sublime, was, of course most acute in the scenic genre which was able to preserve this dialectic as its dominant discourse.

Much of the debate in the field of early cinema is aimed at understanding why and how this transition in fictional narratives occurred. In contrast, very little concern seems to be directed towards the opposite situation occurring in the domain of actuality filmmaking. Why, with all the pressure to transform, was the scenic so defiant in its approach? Considering the genre as part of the much larger cultural institution of nature appreciation, which was primarily interested in resolving the precarious relationship between subject and natural world, provides us with many reasons as to why the scenic continued to replicate the same aesthetic and conceptual devices and tensions. This chapter will examine each side of this problematic through two of the most important British production companies making scenics and travelogues in the first two decades of the 20th century: the Charles Urban Production Company and the Hepworth Manufacturing Company. Each company had a very distinct formal style and vision for the role of the scenic in relation to the larger industry, the former foregrounded the educational and documentary value of the genre, and the latter foregrounded the aesthetic pleasure derived from the British landscape. While the two diverged in their overall representational goals, both companies continued to exhibit qualities which were symptomatic of the discourse surrounding the technological sublime, especially the role of the technology in mediating proximity and distance.

Shock and the Modernity Thesis

[384] Gledhill, 57.

The transition that occurred in fiction film in that first decade has been used by contemporary theorists and historians as a challenge towards what David Bordwell and Charlie Keil term the "the modernity thesis" embedded in Gunning's cinema of attraction model. Both Bordwell and Keil associate the thesis with the work of a wide range of cultural theorists like Anne Friedberg and Lauren Rabinovotz but direct their primary attack against Miriam Hansen and Gunning stating that modernity, as a set of complex sociological and technological changes, is overly prescribed as the dominant cultural force in shaping the film medium. Keil borrows a passage from Ben Singer in order to define the so-called thesis as the "unearthing or rethinking [of] cinema's emergence within the sensory environment of urban modernity, its relationship to late 19th century technologies of space and time, and its interactions with adjacent elements in the new visual culture of advance capitalism."[385] Adopting Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer's historical and conceptual position, proponents of primarily examining film through the lens of late 19th century modernity emphasize the manner in which large scale technological changes in urban environments had necessarily transformed the internal perceptual faculties of those people living inside of them. In "Some Motifs on Baudelaire", Benjamin describes the film medium as the place where "perception in the form of shocks was established as a formal principal"[386], creating a direct link between technology, production, and experience by continuing on to write that "that which determines the rhythm of production on a conveyor belt is the basis of the rhythm of reception in the film."[387] Singer defines this causal chain as the neurological conception of modernity where subjective experience was inundated with physical

[385] Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 102, quoted in Charlie Keil, " 'To Here from Modernity': Style Historiography and Transitional Cinema," in *American Cinema's Transitional: Era Audiences, Institutions, Practices*, eds. Charlie Keil and Shelley Stamp (University of California Press, 2004), 52.
[386] Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" in *Illuminations,* ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1968), 175.
[387] Benjamin, 175.

and perceptual shocks by stimuli which were both chaotic and disorientating.[388] This new model of experience, epitomized by "a fragmentary mode of existence required film exhibiting an aesthetics of fragmentation"[389] as articulated in the cinema of attractions model.

Shock becomes the defining feature of early cinema and modernity within this context. Contemporary historians and theorists often address shock in contradictory ways. It is described as a distraction, an experience which leads to a complete cessation of thought, a gateway to new forms of perception and an apparatus which mitigates the effects of modern life. Often it exists as both a symptom and utopic countermeasure to the new technological and socio-economic reality. Gunning addresses this tension, tracing Kracauer and Benjamin alongside the modernist avant-garde. While the latter often shared an idealistic outlook, embracing the "novelty of modern experience"[390], Kracauer saw film's political potential as a "response to an experience of alienation"[391] that marked modernity arguing that film "must aim radically towards a kind of distraction which exposes disintegration rather than masking it"[392]. Benjamin's own discussion of shock and the cinema is much more ambivalent. Borrowing Freud's description of the necessity of an internal shield in order to withstand the "excessive energies of the outside world"[393], Benjamin argues that these modern shocks are "cushioned by a heightened presence of mind"[394], often, as in the case with Baudelaire, associated with the creative processes. Benjamin describes film as penetrating or decreasing the strength of that shield, forcing the spectator to make direct contact with the visual stimuli. In each of these cases the shock associated with the

[388] Ben Singer, "Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and the Rise of Popular Sensationlism" in *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, eds. Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 72-73.
[389] Keil, 55.
[390] Gunning, "Cinema and Modernity", 301.
[391] Gunning, "An Aestethics of Astonisment", 128.
[392] Siegfried Kracauer, "The Cult of Distraction," *New German Critique* 40 (Winter,1987): 96.
[393] Benjamin, "Baudelaire", 161.
[394] Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", 238.

cinematic medium had the potential of being revelatory as well as causing a complete cessation of thought.

In Gunning's early work on the cinema of attractions, his definition of shock reflects this potential vacillation in much the same way as the negative pleasure associated with the astonishment of the sublime experience. Referring to Benjamin's discussion of a barrier between the modern world and subject, Gunning writes, "Shock became not only a mode of modern experience, but a strategy of a modern aesthetics of astonishment"[395]. The strategy was part of what attracted early cinema goers. They flocked to the traveling shows in order to witness the shock of these moving images, a shock which was sustained by a strange mixture of both "belief and incredulity"[396]. Gunning continues by stating that "In its double nature, its transformation of still image into moving illusion, it expresses an attitude in which astonishment and knowledge perform a vertiginous dance, and pleasure derives from the energy released by the play between shock caused by this illusion of danger and delight in its pure illusion. The jolt experienced becomes a shock of recognition."[397] In a similar vein to Uricchio's discussion of "super-realism", Gunning posits recognition and illusion as the aspects of spectatorship which account for the shock. Rather than duped into the belief that what lies before them is real, the audience is instead drawn in because they understand it to be a trick. That trick elicits the anxiety and pleasure associated with the cinema of attractions mode of address. Here Gunning seems to reassert the rhetoric of the sublime in relation to the technological apparatus.

The formal characteristics associated with shock forms the main part of Keil's criticism of the role of modernity within the cinema of attractions model. Keil's criticism is directed at

[395] Gunning, "Aesthetics of Astonishment", 128.
[396] Ibid., 119.
[397] Ibid., 129.

both that initial early period and to the transitional era. Firstly he argues that the cinema of attractions model ignores important formal qualities which do not fit inside its model of spectator address and, therefore, has a "limited capacity to explain formal change."[398] Keil describes the way proponents of the cinema of attractions model emphasize subgenres like the phantom ride while undervaluing others in attempts to articulate and catalogue the entire period as a set of spectacular thrills and diversions. He goes on to state that even if the cinema of attractions model could account for the experimentation occurring in the first decade then "why would cinema, an avatar of modernity, move away from an aesthetic so clearly indebted to modernity" when the changes which define modernity only increased during the transitional and institutional era between 1906 and the First World War?[399]

While Gunning does not in fact use the term "modernity thesis" to describe his larger historical method, he does respond to both critiques as they apply to the cinema of attractions mode of spectatorship. Gunning argues that the transition to narrative is indicative of the larger dialectical tension at the heart of late 19th century modernity: "...the new systematic organization through narrative dominance does not eliminate the anarchic energy of the cinema of attraction and modernity; rather it sublates this energy, using and transforming it."[400]Rather than ceasing to be a factor in films made after 1907, the chaotic and confrontational shocks which mark the first decade become slowly absorbed into narrative features, thus presenting modernity as a series of causes and effects. Following from his detailed analysis of the avant-garde's discourse surrounding the subject of modernity, Gunning argues that "a culture of shocks constituted the critical underside of modernity as a systematic process of rational and scientific planning... Thus,

[398] Keil, 52.
[399] Ibid., 52.
[400] Gunning, "A Culture of Shocks", 312.

a thorough account of modernity must include this systematic attempt to contain the energies released by new technologies and means of productions."[401] An emphasis on sustained narrative development represents the manner in which the industry attempted to contain and control the energy and visceral effect of the new medium. In this sense both models of spectatorship interacted with one another, often in the form of interruptions rather than complete stoppages constructing "a transformation of shock into flow."[402]

Shock takes on a new set of qualities which retroactively seems to reconstruct the form of visceral astonishment which Gunning associates with the first decade. Shock did not occur solely in opposition to the narrative structure but often occurred side by side in the same film, even, at times, in the five years just prior to the transitional period. Even with this interaction, the attraction formed the most dominant formal aspect of the medium, as defined by the descriptions in various production catalogues published between 1896 and 1906.[403] When compared with the concept of attraction, shock comes to represent both an effect of urban modernization and the necessary element in which to compete with other visual spectacles popping up throughout the period. The manner in which individuals experienced the world had changed drastically and the film medium was able to replicate that particular form of spectatorship. He writes, " Attractions trace out the visual topology of modernity: a visual environment which is fragmented and atomized; a gaze which, rather than resting on a landscape in contemplation, seems to be pushed and pulled in confusing orientations, hurried and intensified and therefore less coherent or

[401] Gunning, "A Culture of Shocks", 309.
[402] Ibid., 310.
[403] Tom Gunning, "The Whole Town's Gawking : Early Cinema and the Visual Experience of Modernity," *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 7.2 (1994), 191.

anchored."[404] Here the first decade uses attractions as ends in themselves while the second employ's them as means to a much different end.[405]

This contemporary debate over the transition to narrative in the fictive realm begs important questions in relation to the development, or lack thereof, within the scenic genre and its ties to the discourse surrounding the sublime. By interpreting these works as part of the larger institution and conceptual problematic, we can see how both interrelating branches were reconstructed in an attempt to being resolved. The shift in values that occurred between the early and mid 19th century –where image began to supersede language in a bid to impart aesthetic experience and knowledge—came to a head in the form of the scenic motion picture. As we saw in the last chapter, early scenics traded in on the massive popularity of the picturesque domestic tour at the same time as actively playing out the problem of the embodied view point as one of where subject and object could possibly meet. This shift which I described as representative of the technological sublime has many parallels to the role of the cinema of attractions as it relates to late 19th century modernity. The technological sublime straddles a similar dialectic of order and excess by mediating the precarious position of the subject in the world. That mediation developed out of the debate over the role of representation, artistic or otherwise, in environmental aesthetics, a debate which is also at the centre of the development of early cinema.

As discussed at length in the previous chapter, the early scenic utilized many common aesthetic tropes in order to attract an audience. But while often referring to its landscape imagery as beautiful, picturesque, and sublime, the films' themselves were not thought of as aesthetic

[404] Gunning, "The Whole Town's Gawking", 194.
[405] Ibid., 195.

objects in their own right, rather they were able to place their viewers in front of various pleasurable views thus allowing the films to play with the requirements of spectatorship within the larger discourse of both the representational arts and environmental aesthetics. Proponents of interpreting the earliest of these film through the larger technological changes occurring within the same period, like Gunning, see the cinema of attractions model as articulating a similar liminal space between the world and representation which would eventually become enormously important for the modernist avant-garde of the 1920s. That space was made possible because of the very nature of the new medium which was both a product of modernity and able to reflexively display its experiential transformation and effects.

Following Gunning, Vivian Sobchack argues that the astonishment felt by the early filmic audience was a product not of the transparency of the image or "lack of mediation" but "at the *reality of the image* that makes visible to us- in another mode and register that is as metaphysically inquisitive and illuminating as it is physically illusory—an *image of reality*... Through the cinematic apparatus, reality is 're-cognized'".[406] Borrowing Heidegger's thesis from "The Age of the World Picture" she goes on to write that "the thrilling shock and danger of existence we feel in astonished response, emerges, as Heidegger suggests, from 'catching sight of what comes to presence in technology, instead of merely gaping at the technological.'"[407]In Heidegger's essay he argues that the technology which lies at the foundation of the transformative nature of modernity reordered our relationship with the world by reconstructing the link between the two into the possibility of representation; "World picture does not mean a

[406] Vivian Sobchack, "'Cutting to the Quick': *Techne*, *Physis*, and *Poiesis* and the Attractions of Slow Motion" in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded* ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 340.
[407] Sobchack, 340.

picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as a picture."[408] Representational technology mediates not only our attention towards the world but the way we conceive our role in its conception. This form of address, referring to the world as representation, when displayed on screen, constructs its own tension between our bare perceptual powers and those made possible by the camera. Gunning describes this astonishment in a manner akin to Burke's negative pleasure, writing, "This vertiginous experience of the frailty of our knowledge of the world before the power of the visual illusion produced the mixture of pleasure and anxiety which the purveyors of popular art labeled sensations and thrills and on which they founded a new aesthetics of attractions."[409]

Here links to the technological sublime seem increasingly apparent. Unlike the astonishment evoked by the natural sublime in the late 18th and early 19th century which problematized the precariousness of the subject in the world, through both their physical viewpoint and internal perceptual faculties, the astonishment elicited by the technological sublime is caused, to again return and borrow from Heidegger, by "what comes to presence in technology" and our role in relation to it. The technological therefore steps in between subject and world rerouting the framework of the contemplative act and establishing a new form of rational closure, which, at the same time, is tinged with niggling self doubt.

In the case of film, it is the psychological and illusory power of indexicality which provoked astonishment and later became a comparative feature being contemplated alongside the landscape and point of view. It is the ability of the technology to, as Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr.

---

[408] Heidegger, 129.
[409] Tom Gunning, "An Aesthetics of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)Credulous Spectator." *Art and Text* 34 (Fall 1989), Rpt. in *Film Theory and Criticism*, eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 825.

described in relation to photography in 1859, "divorce form from matter"[410], while at the same time appearing to replicate the original conditions of experience, and by consequence, the possibility of aesthetic judgment. Holmes gestured to the importance of both aspects even prior to their complete technological manifestation, writing that "In fact, matter as a visible object is of no great use any longer, except as the mould on which form is shaped. Give us a few negatives of a thing worth seeing, taken from different points of view, and that is all want of it."[411]Unlike the painted panorama that was rarely found outside of large urban areas, the indexical antecedents of film circulated widely in a range of different consumer formats. While these objects lacked the spectacular and immersive qualities of the panorama, they most certainly spread its representational and touristic values.

Clearly the technological sublime has many similarities to previous conceptual approaches that have been applied to this historical period, it foregrounds the role of new technologies in reconstructing values and experiential processes and further expands on the manner in which the new medium negotiated its role between tool and art object. But while it navigates many of the same debates which have been associated with late 19th century modernity, it places the scenic in a much longer historical and theoretical narrative thread, through the period in which it first surfaced in the early 19th century and back to the cultural and technological transformations which cleared the way for the first mass leisure tours at least a century and half prior, where the concept of the sublime as it refers to specific aesthetic experiences in nature was first employed. By extending the lineage to such a degree we can see how the role of astonishment has been embedded in various forms of cultural practices which

[410] As paraphrased by Alan Trachtenberg in *Classic Essays on Photography* (New Haven, CT: Leet's Island Books, 1980), 71, referring to Oliver Wendell Holmes' statement in "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph," on page 80.
[411] Holmes, 80.

celebrated, feared and revolted against the constellation of changes and effects which we associate with early and classical modernity. Sublime astonishment, understood as a problem of spectatorship, is not solely a by-product of modernity but, paradoxically, as it relates to environmental aesthetics, also its conceptual adversary.

Cavell placed a similar emphasis on understanding modernity as a series of cultural and representational practices driven by an extended theoretical narrative, in his case skepticism. That narrative refers to the role of the theoretical debate in negotiating the perceptual link between subject and world. Here film's ability to reveal the modern condition of human perception and free us from the subjectivity which we had "impose[d] on ourselves"[412] is only feasible for a subject who had already been prepared for the possibility of its intervention. In much the same manner, the discourse surrounding the sublime equipped filmmakers and audiences for the possibilities inherent in the new technology. The exploration of space and point of view which was fundamental to the scenic's formal structure relied on the importance and popular interest of the discourse in order to be both meaningful and legible.

Returning to the multishot scenics which were produced after 1906, the concept of the technological sublime helps explain why the genre remained relatively stable, even while the lengths of films (and subsequently editing techniques) increased. As I argued in the previous chapter, the early British scenic rarely exhibited astonishment without also presenting states of contemplation. The dialectic of the two was reframed by the doubling effect constructed through the medium, the possibilities constructed by film technology were showcased side by side with the power of nature—the first displayed through form and the latter most often presented through

[412] William Rothman, "Film, Modernity, Cavell," in *Cinema and Modernity*, ed. Murray Pomerance (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 322.

content. In this sense the technology is able to be naturalized by the subject matter at the same time as reinstating a hierarchy between the two. In a similar manner to Gunning's argument over the role of modernity in the transition to narrative approaches, the technological sublime, as represented by the scenic, offered a way of constructing order out of the disorientation and fragmentation of the urban experience. Even in its earliest incarnation, the scenic provided a break from, and solution to, late 19th century modern life for working class patrons by couching the anxiety and concerns over the rapid pace of new technology and its ancillary social transformations in a much older, yet equally as contentious, debate over subject and natural world.

As film lengths slowly increased, elements like the phantom ride and extended panoramic shots were embedded in larger travel narratives. But unlike the fiction film which foregrounded the narrative, the individual views which punctuated the scenic genre remained primary and were able to encourage states of astonishment and contemplation outside the context of these narrative approaches. This model of spectatorship was used to emphasize different, and often contradictory, roles for the medium. The two leading scenic production companies, Charles Urban Trading Company and Hepworth Manufacturing Company, presented film as being either fundamentally educational or aesthetic. But even though their tactics and goals differed, both companies relied on the isolation of different forms of immersion and detachment in order to present the landscape.

Charles Urban, The Man Who Brought the World to Britain

In between 1905 and 1909 fifty percent of films produced in Britain remained non-fiction and out of that total Charles Urban's company produced half.[413] Urban, an American born salesperson and inventor, arrived in London on August 23rd, 1897, to help improve sales at Maguire & Baucus, a sales firm which imported films and equipment from both the Edison and Lumière companies. He would quickly improve and expand the business, forming the Warwick Trading Company out of the previous firm a year later. Even though the company suffered from continuous anti-American attacks from its competition, Warwick rose to the center of the British film industry. It was responsible for close to three quarters of the production and distribution of films in Britain by the turn of the century and supplied the new industry with many of its cameras and projectors.[414] By 1903 Urban would have his own company, the Charles Urban Trading Company, where he would become dedicated to creating an alternative sphere for film outside of the entertainment industry.

After retiring from the industry, Urban would describe film in relation to other technologies which began as scientific instruments or novelties then expanded to eventually take on instructive roles in society: "I saw great instructive value in the motion picture as an educational factor, just as the talking machine is now used as a dictograph and the study of language... Throughout my entire connection with the motion picture industry I have specialized in educational subjects of science, travel and topical episodes, now referred to as 'documentary' films."[415] As Luke McKernan notes in his biography examining Urban's role in the industry, "Urban's dedication to the non-fiction film ran counter to that which the market was starting to

---

[413] Luke McKernan, *Charles Urban: Pioneering the Non-fiction Film in Britain and America, 1897-1925* (Exeter, Devon: University of Exeter Press, 2013), 66.
[414] McKernan, 7.
[415] Charles Urban, A Yank in Britain: The Lost Memoirs of Charles Urban, Film Pioneer, ed. Luke McKernan (Hastings: The Projections Box, 1999), 54.

dictate"[416]in 1903. In the first Urban Trading Company catalogue, travel films took the pride of place at the very beginning. Cameras and projection equipment also had a prominent role, filling forty six of the last pages. This pairing of travel and cinematic technology repeats throughout the company's publications, from photographs of the camera operators working in different locations placed throughout the catalogues to the slogan "We Put the World Before You" featured on each cover. The camera was able to replicate the complete experience of travel, to put its audiences in contact with a whole range of sites, from exotic locations in the colonies to popular middle class leisure destinations across Great Britain.

Urban's passion for the "instructive" went well beyond merely presenting the world to the British public, he spent a good deal of time sponsoring expeditions and attempting to attract scientists and engineers to his company in order to capture the most detailed and novel moving images of the natural world. One of his most popular collections was the *Unseen World* series filmed by Francis Martin Duncan, the son of a natural scientist and keen experimenter in the "art of microphotography"[417]. In the series various animals, insects, and microorganisms were shot in close up or in extreme magnification (often through the use of a microscope) in order to present their intricate body movements, internal systems, and expressions as they fed, interacted with one another or just climbed around their environment. First aired in 1903, the series produced a similar response as the original static single shot films of the late 1890s: astonishment, disbelief, and marvel. The Daily Telegraph wrote that "Science has just added a new marvel to the marvellous powers of the Bioscope. A few years ago it was thought sufficiently wonderful to show the picture of a frog jumping. Go to the Alhambra this week and you may see upon the

[416] McKernan, 33.
[417] Ibid., 40.

screen the blood circulating in that same frog's foot."[418] Here the camera was able to extend the powers of human perception and transform the way audiences visualized the intricacies of the biological world. These unique moving images constructed an audience who were "faced with the incredible" and who needed to "rationalize what [they were] seeing."[419] The *Unseen World* was advertised side by side with many similar collections presenting exotic animals in medium close ups and medium shots. In 1910 Urban was able to re-enact the awe and enthusiasm of *Unseen World* with a collection of botanical films shot using his Kinemacolor system in collaboration with Percy Smith. Smith used stop- frame animation to display the growth and blossoming of various different species of flowers. One review of *From Bud to Blossom* described its effects as almost transcendental, mirroring many of the themes used by the Romantics while embedding them in the narrative of scientific progress: "Truly when one has thus, as it were, assisted at the birth of a flower a feeling of genuine awe came over one and the thought, too, that a child who should see these wonderful things must not only have his soul awakened to beauty but to the knowledge that science brings us close to the divine."[420]Through the power of science, the camera and audience became both integral causal forces in the growth and blossoming, and, at the same time, witnesses to the divine.

While astonishment is at work in each of these series of films, it is the contemplative act that quickly overshadows. Many of the animal collections would be recompiled and placed back into circulation year after year. It wasn't in fact their novelty that excited Urban, but rather their

[418] *The Daily Telegraph* (London), August 18, 1903, quoted in *List of Urban Film Subjects* (London: The Charles Urban Trading Company, November 1903), 89.
[419] McKernan, 43.
[420] *The New York Outlook*, quoted in *Catalogue of Kinemacolor Film Subjects: Animated Scene in their Actual Colors* (London: The Natural Color Kinematograph Company, 1912), 67.

ability to perform as documents that were a "means of imparting knowledge"[421]. In 1907 the company published a booklet entitled *The Cinematograph in Science, Education and Matters of State*. In it Urban argued that cinema could do more than just present a series of instructive facts; as a visual medium which stimulated the eye through motion, the cinematograph could help elicit "the pupil [to] teach himself"[422]. The camera's "accurate and truthful eye" produced important documents, preserving aspects of the cultural and natural world as well as constructing new approaches to spectatorship and knowledge production.[423] In the document he implores governmental bodies to actively begin to film, distribute, and save their own material as well as circulate the technology in public sectors like schools. As McKernan notes, unlike the larger industry which saw film as a spectacular medium which distracted the masses, Urban saw motion pictures as a "means to concentrate the mind".[424]

Alongside his survey of animal and plant species, the Urban Trading Company produced many different collections of British scenic films. In these cases Urban extended his goal of producing educational documents into the larger discourse over the role of point of view and framing in constructing ways of imparting knowledge. Of course the two groups of nature films relied on a similar premise, technology's ability to deliver the world to us in a form that went well beyond our physical perceptual abilities, but that underlying argument expanded in two different directions within the scenic: the first towards promoting domestic tourism and the other towards epistemological concerns. The pairing of both is addressed repeatedly in the organization of the production catalogue.

---

[421] Charles Urban, *Cinematograph in Science, Education and Matters of State* (London: The Charles Urban Trading Company, 1907), 52.
[422] Urban, *The Cinematograph*, 7.
[423] Ibid., 7.
[424] McKernan, 69.

Even though Urban didn't arrive in Britain before he was thirty, he was keen to address the nationalistic overtones of its film industry. While he may have imported quite a lot of American technology and trade, he attempted to balance this with the films that he produced himself, especially in the travel and scenic genre. A great many of them involved tours across regions of Great Britain with the larger aim of eventually filming every part of the country. Not surprisingly the same areas which were popular in guide books and leisure tours just prior were predominately featured, most notably Scotland, Wales, Devon, and Cornwall. These catalogue entries could be easily mistaken for much earlier ones prior to and just at the turn of the century; they list waterfalls, phantom rides, elevated views, ocean views, and locals waving in small town street views. But rather than organized primarily by these early subgenres, each of the images was placed in a larger series dedicated to touring a specific region. For example, in 1909 Urban listed nine films (which could also be sold in different individual sections) dedicated to Scotland, five of which ran longer than four hundred feet and involved quite a few different types of scenes. The Urban catalogues featured many ways to cross reference the same moving pictures, beginning by location and then reorganized by type of view. In the 1909 edition, the company lists over thirty five titles under "Waterfalls, Turbulent Seas and Wave Effects" ranging from fifty to eight hundred and forty five feet in length. While the majority were scenic actualities a few were also dramas which included the same effects and landscapes.

These "effects" overlapped with a larger reference list, "Railway Subjects", which were largely produced in participation with individual rail lines in Great Britain. One of these, the film *Snowdon*, could also be found in the lengthy collection of films dedicated to Wales. Shot on the Mountain Rock Railway while ascending and descending the mountain, the catalogue description refers primarily to the visceral sensation, point of view, and visual geological details rather than

to larger aesthetic or pictorial effects. The film negotiates between a frontal point of view and those shot from the side through the compartment windows. Highlights include an extreme long shot of the mountain at the opening, the "wild and rocky" summit and the edge of Llanberis Falls where "Sheer depths succeed each other, until a natural wide trough is reached, down which the water rushed into the pool below."[425]

The visceral themes suggested by the *Snowdon* description are not only typical of those addressed in the tour guides, but also the popular fascination of mountainous regions which weaves through the discourse surrounding the sublime. Like the painted panorama, the film industry presented mountain views and tours repeatedly throughout the first two decades. Here the technology and sublime subject matter could be firmly interwoven constructing a narrative that oscillated between the power of the technology and that of nature, where audiences could both be screened from the dangers and yet still experience components of the aesthetic state. One of the earliest, *The Ascent of Mont Blanc, 15,781Feet High*, was produced in 1902 by Urban when he still worked under the corporate title of Warwick. The Morning Post referred to both subjects in its review of the film and merits citing in full:

> Time was when people merely gazed at Mont Blanc's inaccessible peak. Later on its summit was scaled: but only by those who might be doubly termed members of the *haute noblease*. Since then the mountain has been dominated by commoner mortals. The last indignity of all has now befallen it in that those paths and peaks of prowess associated with so many notable Alpine pioneers have been traversed by the insatiable cinematograph, which with its usual imperturbability has set down the main scenes and incidents of an ascent of Mont Blanc. Dame Nature seems to have kindly afforded the Warwick Trading Company its hearty co-operation, for one of the cinematograph records shows the imposing circumstances of the fall of an avalanche of snow, ice, and rock

[425] *The Charles Urban Trading Company Catalogue* (London: The Charles Urban Trading Company, 1909), 163.

> which by something more than a hairsbreadth failed to overwhelm the climbers who were then being "bioscoped."[426]

The review refers to the larger craze for mountains and mountain climbing and credits the new technology for making it accessible to middle and working class audiences who had previously had to make do with still imagery in the press or on post cards. It also presents an interesting relationship between nature and the new technology, nature remains all powerful, granting the bioscope expedition access to its sublime peaks and summit. The film itself is quite astounding. While the majority of the film comprises a series of medium long shots following a group of climbers, it displays two incredible panoramas at different levels of elevation. In both cases the view is framed by the climbers themselves in the foreground looking out towards the other smaller peaks. The first of these covers almost 360 degrees creating a completely immersive view from a summit above the clouds where the camera movement is slow enough that it allows the viewer to take in the texture of clouds while also peering through to the snowy rock face underneath. Danger and pleasure seem to be severed from one another. The climbers face terrifying drops and avalanches over and over again in the climbing sequences, while the elevated view is, in contrast, tranquil, evenly paced, and, in this sense, almost detached from the realities of the actual position. Also, unlike in many other elevated panoramas, the clouds prevent the observer from accessing an extreme long view, instead the gaze seems to be floating on a dense mist which blurs recourse from midground to the background. Rather than creating a tension, the two panoramas seem to merge detachment and embodiment in a particularly ambiguous visceral and contemplative space.

---

[426] *Morning Post* (London), October 18th , 1902.

The role of technology soon began to take on a much more combative place in relation to the mountain setting. In 1904 the Warwick catalogue described a re-cut of the same material as "Mont Blanc and the Alps, conquered by the Bioscope"[427]and referred to the numerous dangers which the climbers encountered during the expedition. This emphasis returned again in 1906 where Urban advertised a film solely dedicated to "The Dangers of the Alps" through a series of stills from the production of an expedition. Eventually, like in the case of *Snowdon*, these landscapes were "conquered" with more than just the camera. An Urban supplement, published in 1907, advertised a film entitled "Motoring over the Alps" where the route of the car was foregrounded over the actual mountain range. The concept of the sublime is used throughout in relation to mode of spectatorship rather than natural subject matter: "An Almost impossible journey performed by motor through natural tunnels, past lovely cascades, and along beds of rushing, foaming torrents. Sublime scenes in higher altitudes are afforded as the motor winds along 'corkscrew' Alpine roads."[428]The description goes on to connect both of these features through their educational "usefulness"[429]. It also suggests that the film's importance as a document lies in the difficulty of its production and the uniqueness of the experience it presents since the roads used are usually closed to motorists without Government approval.

As can be seen, cinema's role as a medium of document production was interested in more than preserving aspects of the world which could be analyzed. Urban considered it as a means of capturing new experiential dimensions and views as well. Like in the earliest static single shot films, the latter was understood as valuable in its own right and worth considering at length rather than moving through once or twice.

---

[427] *Warwick Trading Company Catalogue* (London: Warwick Trading Company, 1904), 16.
[428] *The Charles Urban Trading Company Catalogue Supplement, 1907-1908* (London: The Charles Urban Trading Company,1908), 5.
[429] *Urban Supplement*, 5.

So far I have only been discussing films or collections which were organized around a single experiential feature, theme, or journey. The majority of multishot travel and scenic films presented rather elaborate tours that would include mountain imagery (though rarely actual climbing) as only one amongst many other kinds of scenes. Charles Urban's 1907 film *North Wales, England: The Land of Castles and Waterfalls* is a great example of the shift. While the first half is organized around the most popular tourist sites through an elaborate series of panoramas, the second half incorporates many of the same framing and editing techniques as Hepworth's 1904 film *The Waterfalls of Wales* discussed in the previous chapter. Hepworth's scenic presents a series of views which move closer and closer to the actual waterfall while Urban's embeds these same images in a journey narrative following a carriage of tourists on the way to the falls ending with a series of ground level close-ups of the water itself. But, while the film is tightly organized around this trip, it doesn't always privilege its fluid momentum. In a few cases the film actually shifts attention away from the tourist's trip mid shot, turning instead to specific aspects of the landscape and then catching up with the tourists in the next shot. Often this involves a pan which does not end with the tourists but continues in another direction altogether. The most interesting example of this privileging of the view over the larger organization of the film comes near the end of the film where the camera not only pans away from the moving carriage but quite self consciously tilts over the side of a small bridge and closes in on the water rushing below. Unlike the numerous picturesque long shots used to establish each location, this image and the series of close-ups at the very end create a tension between possible aesthetic experiences and gesture directly to the mediation of the camera rather than identification with tourists taking the trip.

Urban's scenic tours collected a vast number of natural phenomena and point of views. The layout of each regional collection tended to be quite similar, involving numerous films shot along rail lines, topical films depicting local industries and leisure activities, and scenic films documenting the most popular tourist sites. Scotland received quite a bit of attention over the first decade of the 20th century with a series of ever more sophisticated collections dedicated to the country. In 1906 Urban introduced the "Bonnie Scotland" series with twenty seven titles. The catalogue thanks the cooperation and assistance of the London & North Western Railway, Caledonian Railway, Highland Railway, and David MacBrayne's Steamers, describing the production as "the most comprehensive animated series of Scotland and its Beauties ever published"[430]. The series is directed towards a wide ranging audience, from "sportsman" and "student of national life and customs" to "lover of the Romantic" and "seeker after the unusual".[431] For the tourist the catalogue recommends the Scottish scenes "of picturesque beauty –sublime, awe-inspiring, wild, weird and magnificent" including "Battlefields, Castles, Mountains, Passes, Lochs and Rivers".[432] Like a moving picture encyclopedia, the series claims to reproduce "every point of the Beauty and Natural Life of Scotland, from the Border to the Far North of the Outer Hebrides" including many "revelations" about Scottish culture and environment hitherto undocumented[433].

While many of the films from the series have disappeared, one from a subsequent year still exists, though not in an entirely complete form. *In the Scottish Highlands* collects a series of landscapes of the typical Romantic variety. Like *The Land of Castles and Waterfalls* it focuses quite a lot of its time on different manner of travel and touring, but unlike the latter, the 1907

[430] *The Urbanora Catalogue* (London: The Charles Urban Trading Company, 1906), 2.
[431] *Urbanora*, 2.
[432] Ibid.
[433] Ibid.

film juxtaposes different ways of framing large spaces from these forms of transportation. With many similarities to Wordsworth's guide the film compares possible lateral positions rather than degrees of distance. The film addresses a wide variety of landscapes which are presented by way of a human figure performing the role of observer much like in the tradition of landscape painting. In this case the camera often remains perched at a distance while the figures move around in the landscape. This manner of framing complicates the way the spectator addresses the landscapes, mediating their level of attention and identification in a manner that seems almost counterintuitive to the earlier scenic which addressed the spectator directly. These figures appear in both shots where typically sublime natural objects are displayed, a waterfall and oceanscape, diffusing any sense of astonishment which could have had an effect on the viewer. In the first instance we are presented with a group of men standing on the edge of a waterfall. The visceral power of the waterfall which appeared in earlier "rocks and waves" films is mitigated by the distance and sense of detachment of the viewer constructed in large part because of the placement of the figures in the middle ground drawing attention away from the waterfall. What is especially odd about this shot is that while the majority of it is spent looking directly forward through the backs of the gentlemen, just before the cut the camera pans slightly, decentring the men and revealing more of the scenery, this is so quick that the viewer is not granted enough time to reassess the scene properly.

In the second case we are presented with the front of a boat in choppy seas. The actual shot exhibits a strong visceral impact not only because the camera is placed right behind the figures, and the boat itself takes up one side of the screen leaving room for the camera to be directed out towards the tall waves, but because the camera is moving along with the boat, tipping up and down through the water. The shot itself leaves very little room for contemplation

beyond that kinesthetic effect; rather than creating a sense of internal astonishment the viewer feels physically overwhelmed. This mode is juxtaposed with a long shot presumably from the same boat but rather than directed towards the waves, the camera looks at a set of large cliffs which the boat is passing in the background. In the case of these two shots it is the stark contrast of immersion and detachment which are foregrounded rather than the typically sublime subject matter. The calm and contemplative mode which is created in the second shot is constructed out of its difference to the first. The second shot expands the view and distances the spectator from the direct impact of the waves in the first. The catalogue gestures to this experiential uncoupling, describing the image of the rock face which towers over the viewer as sublime. Here the height and framing are isolated as eliciting the aesthetic experience while in effect it is the pairing of the two shots which addresses the larger problematic. We are first immersed in the violent sea and then turned around to take in the natural sights.

The second half of the film seems to replicate Wordsworth's discussion on ways of approaching different sized lakes, displaying two different interesting examples. The film contrasts the views of the earlier half with views of a very different body of water, where the horizon is the direct focus. The first is a sequence of shots looking from the side and front of a moving boat along the side of a river moving into a large but completely calm loch. Even while the water remains completely still offering reflections of the scene around it, the spectator can only quickly glimpse at the scene because of the brevity of each shot and the jerky sensation of the editing pattern which switches from looking to the side, to directly in front and then quickly behind. The sequence ends with a long pan beginning with a long shot directed at the centre of the loch and then slowly moving back towards the centre of the boat where a group of tourists admire the view.

This sequence is attached to another set of three shots which are each much longer. Rather than playing with different positions of address, these three, also taken from the side of a slowly moving boat, look upon a much larger body of water. Here the eye is not directed towards the shore because in this case it is so far off that it lacks almost all detail, but instead, the eye moves through the centre line towards a beam of moonlight at the far end. Each of the three shots presents the same framing, they appear to only differ based on the time they were taken, possibly a few minutes apart because of the slight variation in cloud patterns and boat position. Here the landscape is foregrounded rather than the boat or the camera. This image addresses one of the first subjects debated by theorists' of the sublime: vastness. The impact of horizontal rather than vertical space speaks to the infinite described by Addison and Usher rather than terrifying aspects of the sublime. The camera approaches the subject in pieces, as if looking for ways of capitalizing on its unique qualities as a lake rather than ocean or river. The camera takes the position of a spectator at ground level and moves through the space by continuously shifting the frame, constructing its own proportional boundaries, even while the water clearly flows over the edge. This approach was not only interested in foregrounding the vantage point and role of observer as Tom Gunning contends in his view aesthetic model, but in actively reconstructing and extending the discourse surrounding nature appreciation, questioning how object and subject meet.

Both films address different potentialities in regards to appreciation. They play with the formal rules of framing, gesturing to the importance of point of view as a vehicle for different sorts of knowledge production. This shift from collecting subject matter to collecting and comparing forms of interaction is prominent in both the films he produced and the manner in which he discussed and advertised them. While the Charles Urban Trading Company produced

an immense number of scenics during the first two decades, it quickly came under competition from an Englishman who, ironically, began his career working for Urban, before opening his own firm with a very different goal for the genre.

Cecil Hepworth and the Pictorial Aesthetic

Cecil Hepworth spent his early years completely immersed in the popular lecturer circuit. His father would tour parts of England presenting multiple different shows dedicated to scientific exploration, eventually including magic lantern displays in his presentations. Cecil learned to operate the magic lantern projector and eventually built and repaired his own simple projectors and photographic equipment. In his memoirs he described his first experiences with the film medium as occurring in July 1893, after being asked to help Birt Acres present a series of moving pictures at the wedding of the Duke of York. The first of these images to make an impact was *Rough Sea at Dover* which Hepworth described as a "great wave pushing into the mouth of a cave and breaking into clouds of spray"[434]. He didn't step behind a camera himself until 1897 when he attempted to film a portion of the Diamond Jubilee with a camera of his own making which jammed almost immediately. Prior to that he constructed and organized his own lectures out of moving image cast offs photographed by R.W Paul, lantern slides and music. One of the more popular series which he presented to small audiences across the country was called *The Storm* and featured six slides and one forty-foot film which depicted the shift in weather from calm sea to gale force waves from the entrance of a cave. Hepworth's commercial life in the industry really began once he was employed by Charles Urban at Warwick a year later. Even though he only made one film under Urban he gained immense amount of experience working with processing and projecting equipment and when he was let go branched out to Walton-on-

[434] Cecil Hepworth, *Came the Dawn; Memories of a Film Pioneer* (London: Phoenix House, 1951), 27.

Thames with his own small company processing locally produced films. Eventually when business became too slow Hepworth turned to producing his own work.

The first of Hepworth's films profited from the public's continuing fascination with the reproduction of movement itself. It wasn't until *Thames Panorama* (1899) that Hepworth began to consider his films as demonstrating any form of "scenic value"[435]. Hepworth's fascination with the scenic aspects of the phantom ride, taking a number of them in and around Devonshire, is suggestive of his larger aesthetic interest in the medium. While Hepworth did produce films which replicated and competed directly with Urban's, like his *Unclean World* series, he quickly shifted away from encyclopedic documentation to an interest in the pictorial and picturesque aspects of the medium and subject matter. That formal eye slowly developed in parallel with the longer multishot films. In *Came the Dawn* he wrote, "I did take a very considerable part in supervising all that was going on. To this, I suppose, must be attributed to the fact that all the films that came from the house of Hepworth have a certain likeness or style by which they were recognizable, in spite of the vastly different character of their subjects."[436] Unlike the films produced by Urban's company which often applied straight, sometimes jarring cuts, between shots and scenes, Hepworth would use fades in order to transition between shots in a similar manner to the dissolving magic lantern views of his father. These transitions favoured the vignette style which Hepworth repeatedly returned to:

> ...a soft vignette edge all round the picture was much more aesthetically pleasing than a hard line and unrelieved black frame... Always, all my life since, I have striven for beauty, for *pictorial* meaning and effect in every case where it is obtainable. Much

[435] Hepworth, 43.
[436] Ibid., 93.

> of my success, I am sure, is in the aesthetic pleasure conveyed but not recognized, by the beauty of the scene and generally mistaken for some unknown other quality in the film.[437]

Hepworth wasn't so much interested in transforming the landscape into a picture but rather transforming the film medium by mediating its specific qualities through those aligned with landscape painting. He aimed to immerse the viewer in the English countryside by softening the frame and edits, and using slow pans to preserve the consistency of spatial relations.

While Urban may have thought of himself as an educator, Hepworth imagined himself as a Romantic artist. A talented painter and draftsman in his own right, Hepworth used the medium as his descriptive metaphor for filmmaking. In his memoirs he compared his attitude towards editing with the mindset of an artist looking from the world to a blank canvas,

> When an artist starts to paint a picture he does not select a canvas twice the area he wants for the finished work. On the contrary he spends a very great deal of thought and attention on the arranging of the various parts of his design, the balance of masses, the shape and direction of lines, the light and shade, the contrast of colour and the whole question of composition before he puts a brush to his palette.[438]

This contention, that meaning and aesthetic value must be realized within the frame rather than between shots, went hand in hand with his other assertion, that, as an English artist and producer, he would "make English pictures with all the English countryside for background and with English atmosphere and English idiom throughout."[439] Both were at the centre of his scenic collection.

Hepworth's production company was one of the last to keep making single shot scenics, adding new titles, like the 1901 film *Breaking Waves*, to its catalogue up until 1903. The

[437] Ibid., 123.
[438] Ibid., 137.
[439] Ibid., 144.

company also did not begin to shoot abroad until the turn of the century, filming most of these early scenics in England and Wales. This choice of location and commitment to retaining the early formal style differentiated Hepworth from almost all the other British production companies. The only other company to continue to produce stand alone panoramas and phantom rides into the transitional period was Cricks and Martin[440].

Even with the stark differences between Hepworth and Urban's attitude toward the medium, they were both fascinated by the manner in which mechanical reproduction could enhance individual perception, either as part of an aesthetic or scientific process of evaluation. Even after the shift to multishot films, Hepworth continued to produce domestic scenics which almost always addressed the importance of position and point of view in relation to the landscape. Many of these films formed part of the stereo-scenic collection, a series of scenics listed between 1909 and 1923 filmed primarily by Gaston Quiribet prior to and after the First World War. The title of the collection directly referenced the stereoscope and stereoscopic cards popular in the mid 19th century which constructed the illusion of depth out of two separate flat images. By linking the technology with the pastoral and picturesque values associated with the term "scenic" Hepworth is explicitly gesturing to an interaction between a certain type of natural environment and the rise of new optical technologies. While these had emerged within the popular sphere in the early 19th century alongside the craze for the panorama, their antecedents were of course much older, emerging in the intellectual sphere with the growing scientific interest in the mechanics of vision. In our case the link between nature and technology also implies questions over the role and requirements of representation and its ability to replicate embodied and detached points of view.

---

[440] Low, 153.

One of the first stereo-scenics, *Burnham Beeches* (1909), presented this dichotomy of technologically mediated perception and aesthetic appreciation of the landscape through the phantom ride. Like all of Hepworth's other phantom rides, it wasn't the direct, frontal movement in space which was emphasized, but rather the horizontal view from the side of the train which captured natural phenomena in layers of depth. As the title implies, the film presents Burnham Beeches, a large area of ancient woodland in Buckinghamshire which had been under protection from development since the late 19th century. The area, which is crossed by a railway line, makes a fascinating subject, especially when filmed from the side of a slow moving train. The lateral view shifts intermittently between thick, impenetrable forest areas to spaces where only one or two trees have grown along the side of the rails, allowing for visual access to pools of water reflecting glints of light in the mid and background. This shift between a sensation of enclosure and openness constructs different focal points and levels of engagement. In the middle of the four minute film a new shot presents the train moving in the opposite direction amongst a set of large beech trees. Each has grown in an unusual way, creating intricate sets of shapes and shadows. At this point one seems to forget about the lateral tracking by the train and engages with each individual tree as overlapping aesthetic objects. The formal elements of the film seem to favour this shift in attention, even though the short film involves a few different shots, the transitions in between, fading in and out, construct a smooth and consistent tone that matches the exterior landscape, especially as the film ends, slowing beside a still pond. This tone and foregrounding of different levels of detail is gestured to in the film's review in Bioscope:

> The famous Burnham Beeches are admittedly one of the most picturesque spots in Great Britain, and a ride through the Beeches forms a long stereoscopic panorama. The foliage stands out bright and beautiful, and now and again small stretches of water give some curious reflective views. At one point the trees are thick and it is

> difficult to see beyond them, but it changes quickly and we see them more open, which allows a glance at the perspective scenes beyond. A moonlight view of the glade follows. This scene is carefully tinted and it gives a lovely effect of a sideways view in this leafy path.[441]

This pairing of phantom ride and natural environment occurred throughout the Hepworth catalogue in the transitional period and early 1910s. His dedication to presenting rural England was captured in a set of films in 1909 tracing the seasons: *Moonlight on the Thames*, *Autumn in the Forest* and *Frost-Bound Nature*. The Hepworth catalogue described the latter as shot "from a motor-car in the lanes of Surrey, and the quality is splendid. Nature is wonderfully picturesque in her winter garb, and the scenes that the Hepworth operators have secured are among the most beautiful we have ever seen."[442] This sensation of being immersed in and moving through the landscape and yet, as Schivelbusch's panoramic perception implies, detached from it becomes the normative mode of spectatorship. The motion of the vehicle, whether car, boat, or train, is increasingly underplayed in comparison to the aesthetic experience in nature.

This specific interest in embodiment and the juxtaposition of pacing was also foregrounded in the stereo-scenics which followed more typical narrative arcs. Quiribet's *A Day with the Gypsies* [443] takes its audience on a trip across the countryside with a family living in a caravan. The whole film is constructed out of a series of point of view shots depicting the perspective of the unseen narrator who pays one of the travelers for the chance to ride along side them. That ride, shot predominately from the side of the caravan, takes the pride of place in the film. Described in the intertitles through a quote from Kipling as revealing "belt upon belt, the

---

[441] T*he Bioscope*, no. 168 (December 30, 1909): 49.
[442] Quoted in Low, 156.
[443] The year of production is currently under dispute, while listed by the British Film Institute's catalogue as being released in 1906 it is much more probable that the film was made after the First World War due to the complexity of its formal attributes.

wooded, dim, Blue goodness of the Weald", the film is quick to connect the slow and bumpy pacing of the caravan with the most positive aspects of the pastoral walking tour. Features of the foreground are continuously hesitated over as the caravan makes its way through wooded paths, across open fields, and, by the midpoint of the film, through the center of a small village. As in *Burnham Beeches,* overhanging tree branches often provide framing devices which lead the eye through small gaps revealing features set in the midground. But, rather than glide through the landscape, *Gypsies* seems even more deeply immersed in the individual perspectives of the English landscape. The caravan provides a unique sensation, bumping up and down as its wheels run along each different natural and built surface. The film also portrays the same journey narrative as the walking tour, allowing the narrator to experience his rural community through the perspective of his fellow travellers before returning him back to where he started. *A Day with the Gypsies* is a rather unique example of the larger trend being traced here in Hepworth's scenics; the emphasis on contemplative spectatorship in new immersive contexts.

Hepworth kept producing domestic stereo-scenics up until his company was dissolved in the mid 1920s. In 1921 he produced *Up the River With Molly* and *Conway River of a Thousand Moods*. Even though one was a comical narrative about a canoe trip with Molly the family dog and the other a travel piece presenting the beauty spots of Wales, they both were filmed by Quiribet and were primarily made up of images depicting large rivers without human subjects. While the first seems to be a slightly odd fit for the stereo-scenic series, outside of the title cards which construct the narrative, the film is incredibly immersive.[444] Shot almost completely in a

[444] As Simon Brown notes, these short scenics shared many similarities with the fiction films Hepworth produced in the same period. See Simon Brown, "Narrative and Pictorialism in Post-Pioneer Hepworth Films," in *Picture Perfect: Landscape, Place and Travel in British Cinema before 1930*, eds. Lorraine Porter and Bryony Dixon (Exeter, UK: Exeter, 2007), 35.

forward facing tracking position, the film takes the viewer on a slow boat trip along a calm river covered in lily pads and long reeds. At some points the arm of the paddler appears at the edge of the frame creating a rippling effect, but the majority of the rest of the film preserves a serene floating sensation where the camera is pointed just slightly to the side in order to use plants and flowers on the shore as framing devices. This pace is shattered at one point when the boat is forced to go through a system of locks just as they are being changed. Instead of floating just above the surface, the boat slowly sinks down and faces rushing water head on. On screen the water looms large above the spectator and stays on screen for a few moments. And then, as quickly as the falls appeared around the boat, the film fades through black back to the serene scene on the other side.

Conway, River of a Thousand Moods utilizes many of the same framing techniques to encourage different levels of picturesque detail, interspersed with immersive shots of very different conditions. Like a visual tour guide, the film opens with a map of England which, through a series of dissolves, eventually turns into a map of the river. Throughout the film the map returns resituating the viewer in relation to the actual geography. In the previous film as Molly and the canoe moved along the river they often floated underneath and through small overhanging branches and foliage. The camera in *Conway* uses the same approach in order to present aspects of the much larger body of water. These individual branches protruding either in the top right or left of the frame slowly dance back and forth in the breeze creating another layer of movement reflected on top of the water. The camera often pans slowly from one natural framing to another preserving the same compositional space. This feeling of constantly peering through trees from the water's edge is juxtaposed with a very different point of view which occurs near the very beginning. In a medium long shot taken from ground level, the river is first

introduced as a set of rapids described as making a "mad rush to the sea"[445] in the intertitles. From the center of these rapids, as if balancing on a rock, the camera tilts down in order to look directly at the water surging below. As this image fades to black another title appears: "When the River enters more peaceful surroundings, it slows its impetuous course as if loath to leave such charming scenes."[446] This pattern of contemplative long shots from the edge and immersive medium shots amongst the rapids and small falls repeats for the first half of the film. Like Urban's *North Wales* the camera seems to take on two separate styles, one curious to become closer and peer over the edge and the other detached and happy to take in a scene slowly but completely. The middle of the film introduces a series of laterally facing phantom rides, moving alongside the river with thick forests and small rolling mountains in the mid and background. Three of these shots are presented before returning to the aforementioned pattern of long, sweeping panoramas of still water and medium shots of rushing torrents. These patterns of "moods" are emphasized and anthropomorphised by the intertitles through Romantic and metaphoric language. The river is at first "tired" and resting, described as presenting a "Japanese mood" and then "trying to make up for lost time" before it reaches the sea. This pairing of the formal style and characterisation of the river constructs different levels of tone and pacing, allowing the film to exceed beyond the realm of geographical or educational document into a poetic interplay of subject, language and landscape.

Both Hepworth and Urban used the medium to extend the manner in which a viewer made judgments about their domestic landscape by incorporating different forms of spectator address into their two respective approaches. This coupling of detachment and immersion became increasingly common in the scenics made in the 1910s, even as a drive for narrative

[445] *Conway, River of a Thousand Moods.* Hepworth Manufacturing Company. 1921.
[446] *Conway, River of a Thousand Moods.* Hepworth Manufacturing Company. 1921.

cohesiveness began to take hold. It is in fact this use of the view as a device which punctuated the larger travel theme, shifting attention away from being absorbed by the journey, which best characterizes the role of these shots. Even though these views initially used a form of astonishment in order to create a self-conscious break with the larger scene or sequence, Hepworth and Urban continually returned to an emphasis on the contemplative qualities instead. While Urban privileged this form of sustained, comparative gaze for its ability to construct and impart new knowledge, Hepworth followed the lead of Gilpin, using it in order to encourage a specific form of aesthetic appreciation.

Contemplation became the link between narrative absorption and visceral astonishment. It provided a third form of address which could both detach an audience from the demands of the narrative and organize the excess of visual detail in the immersive view. This model seemed to break apart the binary opposition of narrative and attraction by reemphasizing the spectrum of subtle variations of spectator attention and focus which could be at play in each shot and scene. The concept came to stand in for multiple different forms of reception linked by their reliance on a level of detachment and distance. Cultural Historian Randolph Starn formulates three modes of visual attention while interpreting the political role of Renaissance painting during the 16th century which closely mirror this transition: the glance, measured view, and scan. The glance is, at its name implies, a momentary exchange where "considerations of seeing and knowing are practically inseparable"[447]. The measured view, by contrast, "imposes a strict visual discipline in return for the image of a finite world mastered by the beholder and proportioned to the beholder's eye"[448]. The third category, the scan, seems to fall somewhere in between involving a

[447] Randolph Starn, "Seeing Culture in a Room for a Renaissance Prince," in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (University of California Press, 1989), 210.
[448] Starn, 220.

"sweeping way of seeing that picks up a pattern, distinguishes, and then pieces together the shape of a design"[449]. Here, in order to "take everything in, the viewer must go around or across the room, following" different lines and thematic links in the image.[450] Starn argues that in this case, "there is no privileged point of view, only a succession of possible viewpoints."[451] The visual exchange which occurs during the glance could be used to describe the astonishment of the early model of spectator address[452], while the other categories epitomize the two interrelated modes of the contemplation discussed in relation to Hepworth and Urban (and the painted panorama). If the static long shots emphasize the traditional conventions associated with linear perspective in order to construct a form of mastery over space, the sweeping pans and laterally facing tracking shots perform the same negotiation through the emphasis of elaborate and ever evolving visual patterns and contrasts.

When reproduced on screen, both forms of contemplation fell in line with the earliest debates surrounding environmental aesthetics rather than the models employed in relation to traditional art objects. While a framing mechanism was necessary in order to appreciate each part in relation to the whole, film could never, as Martin Lefebvre has recently argued in relation to narrative genres, become a vehicle of detached contemplation like a painting or photograph. Movement onscreen, formal features such as camera movement and editing patterns, and features which exceed the visual, necessarily temporalize space, creating a representation that is closer to everyday experience .[453] This negotiation of the temporal and spatial construct images that resist being held and considered for long periods of time and, therefore, are constantly intertwined with

[449] Ibid., 222.
[450] Ibid., 224
[451] Ibid., 224.
[452] Following from Timothy Corrigan's own categories of glance and gaze in *A Cinema without Walls: Movies and Culture after Vietnam* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991).
[453] Martin Lefebvre, "On Landscape in Narrative Film," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 20.1 (2011), 74.

the potentiality of immersion. Both contemplative modes can be problematized in the same manner onscreen as they are addressed while on tour; the meaningful closure which they wish to offer the spectator is always in danger of being ruptured by the addition of new visual features from the turn of the head or a cut to another shot. So while Hepworth and Urban valued the role of contemplative engagement above and beyond spectacular forms of entertainment, they defined it in relation to its precarious nature as a negotiation between the landscape and technology.

The British Transport Film

The complex interplay of mechanized travel, representational technology, and the rural British landscape did not disappear with the decline and closure of production companies like Hepworth and Urban, rather parallel themes continued to be explored and conventionalized in the proceeding decades. The 1930s marked a significant development for documentary filmmaking in Great Britain. During this interwar period John Grierson established the British documentary film movement at the Empire Marketing Board. Numerous government and independent bodies would go on to sponsor individual groups including the General Post Office unit, Realist Film Unit and Strand Films. While the period saw a range of divergent formal approaches and methodologies, from the experimental and modernist to the observational and journalistic, it did share a similar goal; to develop cohesive and cooperative ties between the regions and colonies which made up the United Kingdom at the time. As historians Scott Anthony and James G. Mansell describe, each "went to great lengths to represent the spatial diversity and complexity of Great Britain... In so doing, their films contributed not only to class consciousness and the emergence of social democracy, but also to how British national identity and its composites –

local, regional, and imperial –were imagined."[454] Many of the films intertwined regional landscapes with new technologies and modern processes in order to bind this spatial diversity to institutional networks. Examples include the GPO's *A Midsummer Day's Work* (1939) and *The Horsey Mail* (1938) which both present "the the modernity of the Post Office alongside the enduring traditions of the English countryside"[455]. Just a few years later another sponsored unit would emerge that would consider the exploration of this relationship as one of their primary remits.

The British Transport Film unit was created on the heels of the British documentary movement in the 1940s and 50s. These travelogues utilized the same formal approach as those scenic filmmakers of the teens and twenties, foregrounding and juxtaposing different types of views over and above the larger narrative structure. But, unlike the early examples of the genre, which associated the possibility of establishing the perfect view point with the technological apparatuses employed, the British Transport travelogues largely wove the technology directly into the landscape, masking its role behind more "traditional" forms of embodied experiences and landscape formations, constructing an uneasy tension between the concerns of the technological and natural sublime. Of course the main reason for this shift was the BTF's role as a sponsored unit.

With the nationalisation of Britain's four major privately owned railways in 1948, each of their individual film units were amalgamated to become the British Transport Film production unit under the umbrella of the British Transport Commission. In charge of the group was Edgar Anstey who had been a protégé of John Grierson in the 1930s and had previously worked on a

[454] Scott Anthony and James G. Mansell, "Introduction: The Documentary Film Movement and The Spaces of Identity," *Twentieth Century British History* 1, no. 23 (2012): 4.
[455] Ibid.,7.

series of travelogues like *Uncharted Waters* and *Eskimo Village* in 1933. The BTF unit was active until the early 80s, producing over seven hundred short films. It was sponsored by the Commission to produce films fulfilling a series of objectives: films featuring "rail problems and achievements" which could be broadcast to the general public in assorted venues, promotional films "designed to increase revenue by publicising services, routes or areas of the country", and, finally, "staff instructional films on techniques, problems, innovations" that could be shown in training schools and to staff members[456]. Those films which fell in the second category, travelogues which promoted destinations, were screened in the theatrical circuit prior to the main feature. Anstey aligned the unit to the work of Grierson, describing his role in an interview as follows:

> The opportunity offered in 1949 was to practice Grierson's creative interpretation of actuality in the area of public transport and to bring it alive on the screen....How has our response in BTF measured up? No film unit has ever used images for such a variety of purposes. Nor, I think, have such a variety of styles from cinema verité to cartoon comedy been used before by a single team in a single area. Our films have been literate and, as a rule, technically impeccable to the point some critics might say of 'glossiness'. They have been acclaimed internationally ... and achieved a record of theatrical and television showing very rare for sponsored films. [457]

The travelogues produced by the unit benefited from the resurgence of domestic tourism and leisure activities in the post-war era. Families began to return to the seaside resorts that had been popular during the interwar period like Blackpool and Scarborough. Many traveled even further to those regions which had been the mainstay of the early scenic film: Wales, Cornwall and Scotland. Alongside this revitalization of the tourist industry came increased cinema attendance

[456] As quoted in Paul Smith, "Chapter 2, Establishment of British Transport Films," *British Transport Films – The First Decade: 1919-1959*, accessed May 22, 2014, http://www.britishtransportfilms.co.uk/.
[457] Edgar Anstey, "British Transport Films roll for Twenty One years," *The Film User* (1970), as quoted in Smith, Chapter 2.

up until the point where "one third of the population were going once a week"[458]. As Paul Smith argues, this return to leisure activities constructed the perfect environment for the promotion of British Transport, including rail and bus lines. The vast majority of the public used these forms of transport in order to gain access to these holiday destinations. Anstey described this aspect of the BTF remit as directly linked to increasing revenue "by publicizing specific road and rail services." He went on to say that

> Most of these take the travelogue form and deal with areas recommended for holidays or for the shorter trip in off-peak traffic hours; others direct attention to particular kinds of places to be visited - museums, art galleries, country houses open to the public and so on; others again illustrate the possibilities of group excursions. For this category of films, too, use is made of the three available distribution channels - television, theatrical and non-theatrical. [459]

As in the panoramas a century before, it was "common practice for commercial representatives of the Commission's undertakings to attend the non-theatrical showings armed with special brochures based on the films. These compliment picture and sound with facts and figures likely to command special attention in the favourable climate of opinion created by the showing."[460] The transport travelogue became the new prescriptive guide to the British countryside, using virtual travel as a direct catalyst for the real thing.

The films themselves each had distinct aims and formal styles, even though each shared in the same overall commercial objective. Many performed as regional tourist maps, placing topographical imagery alongside detailed visual documentation of different natural and cultural features. These films, including *Away for the Day* (1952), *The West Highland Line* (1952), and

[458] Arthur Marwick, as quoted in Smith, "Chapter 3, The Remit and the Films".
[459] Anstey, as quoted in Smith, Chapter 3.
[460] Ibid.

Scottish Highlands (1953), valorized escape from urban life, pairing embodied modes of travel like walking with physical and psychological wellbeing. *West Country Journey* (1953), directed by Syd Sharples, opens with long pans of densely packed row houses placed amongst industrial buildings. The voice over describes the scene as "summer in the sweltering streets, dried crusts of stoned smoking in the sun." The only answer? "Leave it, take a holiday. Where? Oh, as far as possible, somewhere near lands end where we can enjoy the sun. Where we can cool our soles in the sea, get sand in our shoes and fresh air in lunges."[461] Like *Away for the Day*, these shots are followed by crowds of families packing in rail way cars or buses. *A Letter for Wales* (1960), directed by Tony Thomspon, presents this transition between urban and rural formally, displaying the station and city in black and white and the Welsh landscape in Technicolor. The station is repeatedly represented as the gate way to escape, adventure and relaxation, one film describing it as a "cathedral"[462] gesturing to its transformative properties. While *A Letter for Wales* (1960) and *The Heart of England* (1954) organize the individual views around the childhood memories of the narrator, others follow sets of tourists for a day, a season, or, in some cases, a full year.

These nostalgic musings and organized tours were constructed out of a series of natural, agricultural, and small town imagery, moving in intricate patterns of long and close up pans. In *The Heart of England*, directed by Michael Clarke, the long shots of gentle hills are placed alongside slow pans of tree canopies in full bloom. These pans cut closer and closer to individual branches and buds. The two sequences presented at the beginning set up the tone and pacing for the rest of the film, a catalogue of views, tropes representing the English rural experience. Even though the film rarely portrayed individuals on tour, unlike most of the other BT travelogues, the

[461] *West Country Journey,* directed by Syd Sharples (1953; United Kingdom: British Transport Films, 1987.), DVD.
[462] *A Letter for Wales*, directed by Tony Thompson (1960; United Kingdom: British Transport Films, 1987.), DVD.

narrator referred to the images as those where Shakespeare had grown up, stating that the audience would "trod where [Shakespeare had] tread"[463]. The film allowed its viewer to re-enact the artistic process, move through the same spaces and landscapes as if both the real and virtual experience could eliminate the expanse in time separating the two.

West Country Journey introduced the same framings paired with their associated embodied processes, close ups of shrubbery and rivers presented as point of view shots alongside couples taking strolls in the woods, pans across meadows composed behind groups of people looking out from tall peaks. The narrator introduces the latter by stating, "I had just concealed the countryside only to reveal it, and then we make openings, cunning windows that look onto the outspread patch work of fields."[464] This interest in views did, at times, extend past the pastoral. The film also takes its viewer by horseback to Dartmoor where the narrator's tone, music, and pacing dramatically change. Described as a "wild and savage place" where an English person can travel back to the very origins of their heritage and come "face to face again with the forces of solitude and storm"[465], the moors are presented in a series of static images looking up at rock formations, a dark cloudy sky, and silhouettes of trees straining in the wind. Just as the viewer is immersed in this apocalyptic vision, the narrator gestures to the natural details which often become lost in the larger view; "But keep your eyes curious, Dartmoor can make unexpected revelations." The observer is released from the brink of these tropes of the sublime through close ups of shrubs and flowering buds appearing in the nooks and crannies of the moor.

---

[463] *The Heart of England*, directed by Michael Clarke (1954; United Kingdom: British Transport Films, 2005.), DVD.
[464] *West Country Journey* (1953).
[465] Ibid.

Modern technology and mechanized transport took on a particular uneasy relationship alongside these pieces of landscape imagery. While the overall purpose of the unit was to promote the extensive rail network, trains and other modes of transport owned by the commission often only appeared sporadically within the travelogue collection. Some films, like *Discover Britain by Train* (1978), focused exclusively on promoting train travel as the most aesthetically pleasing manner in which to experience Britain. In the case of *Discover Britain,* directed by C. David Lochner, the modern features of the rail network were introduced alongside their link to a traditional way of seeing and moving through the countryside, albeit in a virtual form. Travel is described as akin to "sitting in your own home" where the traveler could experience the "adventure" of the journey "without risk or uncertainty"[466]. This "up to date" form of travel is compared to air travel which is dismissed as aesthetically lacking. The train delivers the prettiest views of Britain "passing by" each person's window, while a plane only presents a view of dense clouds.

The view from the inside of a carriage is a reoccurring motif in the travelogue collection. They often highlight the potential of the train to present precarious or dangerous points of view that would be impossible outside of the vehicle, like the role of the camera in the early scenic. In *A Letter to Wales* the narrator exclaims that he wished he could "be going home instead of sending letters."[467] Home is not just the landscapes that he grew up with but also his favourite train, a Victorian narrow gauge steam engine that climbs Mt Snowdon. Like the early phantom rides, the film presents much of the ride up the mountain through lateral tracking shots looking over the edge of steep cliffs to the views falling below. Unlike the former, the film also shoots

[466] *Discover Britain By Train*, directed by C. David Lochner (1978; United Kingdom: British Transport Films, 1978.), 16 mm.
[467] *A Letter for Wales (*1960).

these views from inside the carriage framed by children and couples glued to the windows in awe. At the top of the mountain stationary long shots present families taking photos of each other on the summit and comparing postcards from their previous trips.

The train as a piece of modern technology is often masked by repeated reference to its importance in relation to nature appreciation. While *Discover Britain by Train* and *A Letter to Wales* embed the form of transport inside a larger narrative of industrial progress, many other travelogues only briefly refer to the technology, allowing it to linger in the background of the landscape, becoming a visual convention of the rural pastoral rather than a marker of historical change. *The Heart of England* contains two images of mechanized travel which are both shot from outside the train or bus in a landscape view. One of these images has a steam engine slowly moving through the background, almost hidden by the tapestry of hills and trees surrounding it. Here our view of the landscape is not only constructed through the mediating frame of mechanized travel, but the train also becomes a part of these landscapes. Unlike other pieces of modern technology, like mechanized agricultural equipment which the narrator of the film describes as monstrous and opposed to the beauty of traditional rural ways of life, the train remains either implied by the narrator, and therefore visually absent, or to perfect scale with the rest of the scenery.

The British Transport Travelogues showcase not only the continued reliance on the same formal approaches as displayed within the scenics made three decades prior, but the importance of facets of technological sublime even as discourses surrounding the natural sublime had fallen out of critical and popular favor. Reviewers agreed over the largely conventional role these films played within the larger travelogue genre. One described *The Heart of England* as containing

"most of the recognised ingredients: vistas of green meadows, groups of tanned, earnest farmers, cricket on the village green, rural merrymaking and Shakespeare and the Stratford swans."[468] He goes on to refer to it as "lacking in anything fresh or exciting to what is, admittedly, a well-worn *genre*." But even with tepid reviews, the film had six hundred and sixty nine theatrical releases in the mid 50s.[469]

Like the proliferation of walking tours in the early 19th century, travelogues and scenic filmmaking continued to play an active role in constructing cultural and experiential links with the pre-industrialized landscape, performing as both prescriptive and psychological devices which provided a release for middle and working class urban audiences. But while they actively conflated forms of traditional, non mechanized travel with train travel, absorbing the latter into the picturesque landscape view, nature, and more specifically the phenomena usually associated with the sublime, remained at odds with the human element. In *Scottish Highlands* (1953), directed by Michael Orrom, desolate moors and mountain ranges are displayed as obstacles which need to be overcome or risk both physically and psychologically overwhelming the viewer. Alongside stationary medium shots of men in mid climb the narrator describes these mountaineers as "gain[ing] a living in a contest with nature" where pleasure is derived by "his aloneness with nature and his knowledge of his power over it"[470]. The viewer is rewarded at the end of the long climb by only a single view of the horizon, and yet, even then, the experience and view are described as confrontational. The mountaineer is "challenged again with peak upon

---

[468] "The Heart of England," *Monthly Film Bulletin* 21, no. 250 (November 1954): 165.

[469] Paul Smith, Chapter 3.

[470] *Scottish Highlands*, directed by Michal Orrom (1953; United Kingdom: British Transport Films, 1953.), 16mm., also known as *Highland Journey* (1957).

peak"[471]. Unlike *A Letter to Wales* where Snowdon is presented as a series of pleasurable vistas, these highland mountains are almost purely the sites of opposition and arduous labor. Both are obstacles, one resolved through the use of technology, the other without (yet, of course, delivered to us through the mediation of the camera).

The uneasy interplay between the rural British landscape, mechanized travel, and the potential of representation as the platform in which to attain a resolution between the two, replicates the original debates surrounding the technological sublime that I noted with the emergence of the painted 360 degree panorama. Not only do the narrator's comments in *The Scottish Highlands* replicate the overall tone of Kant's discussion of the sublime, placing humans in conflict with the natural world, looking into themselves for ways of mastering it, but the travelogues as a whole remain transfixed with finding the appropriate way in which to make contact with natural phenomena. Technology becomes the tool in which to bridge the gap between the two. The urban dweller increasingly sees the rural landscape through the mediation of modern technology, through the camera lens, screen and train window. Any anxiety about this feature of the cultural landscape is quelled with the dehistoricization and naturalization of these very technologies. They become stand-ins for firsthand experience, even as they remain ideologically and perceptually in excess to these pre-mechanized processes.

The technological sublime provides two parallel ways in which to mediate the excesses of firsthand experience with the natural world. The first, largely discursive, interweaving camera and screen with the power and beauty of natural phenomena, the second, formal, where different levels of point of view perform the role of isolation and selection. Both relied on the technological aspects of the medium in order to produce and control their effects. Read through

[471] *Scottish Highlands* (1953).

the larger debates associated with environmental appreciation and nature tourism it becomes clearer why the changes which occurred in the narrative domain had little effect in the scenic actuality genre. Film provided a way to test out different aesthetic requirements by replicating many of the original parameters of the experience. It prescribed different approaches to the nature tour while restaging its precarious nature. This occurred from the very outset. What did slowly shift was the value these films had in relation to the larger discourse. While still presenting a juxtaposition of immersion and detachment, emphasis was placed on contemplative closure changing the cultural value associated with domestic tourism.

Conclusion

The Re-emergence of the Sublime in Environmental Aesthetics and Ecocriticism

> I am delighted, 'tis true at the prospect of Hills and Valleys, of flowry Meads, and murmuring Streams, yet it is a delight that is consistent with Reason, a delight that creates or improves Meditation. But transporting Pleasures follow'd the sight of the Alps, and what unusual transports think you were those, that were mingled with horrours, and sometimes almost with despair? But if these Mountains were not a Creation, but form'd by universal Destruction than are these Ruines of the old Word the greatest Wonders of the New.
>
> John Dennis, *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose* (London, 1693)[472]

While the correlation of technology and the sublime in public and critical discourses has continued since the 1950s, the natural sublime has been slow to resurface within philosophical discourses and, as I have addressed in Chapter 1, has been almost completely maligned within ecocriticism and environment studies. After tracing the discourses associated with the British natural sublime between the 18th and early 20th century, it is fitting to now turn to its contemporary usage as it has re-entered the philosophical sphere. The concept has only recently, within the past decade, made a small comeback within the field of environmental aesthetics. Three of the main figures in this revival, Noël Carroll, Sandra Shapshay and Emily Brady, have all used the term as an alternative and/or complimentary approach to the leading framework proposed by Allen Carlson in the larger field. While these accounts all still struggle with disentangling the Kantian formula, they have began to re-consider many of frameworks proposed historically, placing engagement and astonishment at the forefront of their debates. Like the

[472] John Dennis, *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose* (London, 1693), as quoted in Hope, 278.

historical links that I have proposed between environmental aesthetics and representational media, this contemporary work can provide important insights into the role of the spectator that will have consequences for media that depict the natural world. It also continues to beg the same question that has run throughout this project: Why has the British 18th century model of spectatorship not played a more central role in the field up until this point?

The concluding chapter begins by outlining the key debates now facing the sublime inside the field of environmental aesthetics. It then compares these issues of framing and subjectivity to the shift between the natural, technological, and, finally, postmodern sublime before providing an example of how film, in this case the work of Chris Welsby, is complicating that through- line by attempting to construct new ways of engaging with the natural world. This conclusion is meant to gesture to the manner in which discourses surrounding the natural sublime and that of contemporary film theory have many common threads, one of which being the importance of the interplay (rather than passivity) between subject and object, and, mind and body. Here my work points both backwards and forwards to the concerns which continue to be faced by both fields.

Environmental aesthetics re-surfaced on the heels of the environmental movement which slowly grew in momentum in the United Kingdom after the Second World War. In a similar manner to environmental ethics, which necessarily spent its formative years attempting to differentiate itself from prior anthropocentric ethical frameworks, early proponents of environmental aesthetics began by attempting to negotiate the place of the natural world within the larger artistic frameworks. In the same vein as the historical discourse, contemporary approaches all demanded that new criteria for aesthetic appreciation be examined. Allen

Carlson's model quickly emerged at the forefront of the field. Carlson's framework states that the properties which we value when we appreciate nature are those that we can only isolate because they can be subsumed under specific scientific categories and laws.[473] In constructing this new model of appreciation Carlson is attempting to move away from the traditional relationship between nature and art appreciation which has either forced nature to be confined to the same aesthetic requirements as, or dependent on, previous access to art objects. The environmental model instead privileges nature as nature in its dynamic and organic form.[474] The model employs natural science in order to decipher which properties are relevant to appreciating nature: "the question of *what* to aesthetically appreciate in the natural environment is to be answered in a way analogous to the similar question about art. The difference is that in the case of the natural environment the relevant knowledge is the commonsense/ scientific knowledge which we have discovered about the environment in question."[475] Implicit here is an assumption that aesthetic appreciation "requires a way of fixing the appropriate *loci* of appreciative acts,"[476] and once the source of that knowledge is determined then nature appreciation can be appropriately experienced and defended. Of course this means that in Kantian terms, Carlson's model understands nature appreciation to fall within the realm of the impure aesthetic experience because it relies on determinate properties and objective judgments, rather than remaining in the traditional category of pure indeterminate experience.

While Carlson's model seems to leave very little room for the conceptually precarious and largely metaphoric natural sublime, several philosophers have attempted to compare the two

---

[473] Noël Carroll, "On Being Moved by Nature: Between Religion and Natural History," in *Beyond Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays.* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2001), 370.
[474] Carroll, 372.
[475] Allen Carlson, "Appreciation and the Natural Environment," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 37.3 (1979): 273.
[476] Carroll, 373.

in the past few years. In a recent article published in the *British Journal of Aesthetics*, philosopher Sandra Shapshay debates the merits of two different accounts of the sublime and their relevance to contemporary environmental aesthetics and Carlson. The first she connects to Noël Carroll's model of aesthetic appreciation and calls the "thin approach". This one follows Edmund Burke's line of reasoning and is visceral rather than intellective. She defines it as "a basic but unreflective cognitive appraisal of the situation and the resultant physiological experience of the subject's pain."[477]She contrasts this with what she calls the "thick approach" which follows from Kant's (and in some respects the late 18th century British philosophers who I outlined in Chapter 1) formulation and falls necessarily on the side of the intellect. She describes it as "an aesthetic response to vast or powerful environments or phenomena in nature that is emotional *as well as intellectual* and involves reflection upon the relationships between humanity and nature more generally."[478] This active response is "akin to (without being modelled on) the activity of interpreting a metaphor" where one is more interested in the play of ideas rather than following a logical series of "entailments".[479]

Shapshay argues that even though at first glance neither approach to the sublime seems to be applicable to Carlson's scientific cognitivism, there is an important place for the thick version, and, to a much lesser extent, the thin one, within his approach. Both versions of the sublime take nature as nature and not as a "potential work of art."[480]They do not rely on specific subjective contexts like religion and their focus is on the environment as a whole rather than specific "discreet objects isolated from their surroundings."[481]Of course this does not automatically mean

[477] Sandra Shapshay, "Contemporary Environmental Aesthetics and the Neglect of the Sublime," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 53.2 (2013):187.
[478] Ibid., 189.
[479] Ibid., 189.
[480] Ibid., 190.
[481] Ibid., 190.

that the sublime is comparable to the environmental model, just that it cannot be dismissed in the same manner as traditional approaches. Shapshay still must prove that the sublime can enhance Carlson's model and is not in tension with scientific knowledge. This involves some difficult manoeuvring because both the thick and thin experiences evade being neatly defined and categorized within the understanding. Shapshay avoids this problem by presenting the thick sublime as a necessary tool in solving a problem created by Carlson's own model, that of the relationship between spectator and environment. She writes,

> it is actually a consequence (though an unacknowledged one) of Carlson's injunction to appreciate nature as an *environment* rather than as a discrete object that invites and even sometimes demands subjective reflection in experiences of the environmental sublime. While objects obviously tend to have pretty determinate contours, natural environments have much hazier boundaries and are in need of more subjective framing. Further, and crucially, *sublime* environments tend to be vast or to contain overwhelmingly powerful forces that bring the issue of the human appreciator/framer right to the fore. Thus, especially with respect to sublime environments, the environmental focus enjoined by scientific cognitivism implicates the subject in the aesthetic experience in a manner that has gone largely unnoticed by this theory. [482]

Here, in much the same manner as my own work, Shapshay isolates the act of framing, the role of the spectator, and the manner in which he or she appreciates disinterestedly as the sublime's most valuable properties vis-a- vis contemporary environmental concerns. The sublime demonstrates a model of reflection which can explain components of nature appreciation that exceed the environmental model without changing the core properties which define it. While certain scientific knowledge will enhance and create a deeper appreciation of a specific environment, no amount of information will prevent a spectator from feeling some sense of awe

[482] Ibid., 193.

because this response is a result of the relationship between environment and subject that is necessarily implicated when engaging in empirical judgments. But by subsuming properties of the sublime under the environmental model Shapshay reopens a larger debate: What prompts appreciation in the first place? Shapshay seems to be proposing a three stage model where appreciation is initiated by emotional arousal, sustained by scientific awareness and then deepened by the reflective interplay of the sublime, but there is still a larger debate about the causal relation and order of the stages and whether each is necessary to every case of nature appreciation.

Brady uses a slightly different reading of Kant in order to develop her own position on the contemporary role of the sublime in aesthetic appreciation. Rather than construct an account drawn in relation to scientific cognitivism, she puts forward a non-cognitivist perspective via Kant's discussion of the imagination rather than reason: "Shapshay interprets both Kant's and Schopenhauer's views of the sublime as having cognitive or intellective components, whereas I have interpreted the more reflective aspects in terms of aesthetic feel or aesthetic apprehension – a feeling for our freedom, for instance, rather than a cognitive recognition of that or the acquisition of some new belief within the aesthetic experience."[483] Brady recognizes the crucial role of the second stage of the sublime and interprets the third, where introspection leads to an equilibrium between inner and outer world, as centered around the faculty of the imagination. She writes, "Most commentators simply leave the role of imagination at that: it fails. But, as I argued... imagination functions in vital ways in that experience of failure. It is expanded and opened out in an attempt to take in the apparently infinite, yet that activity in itself reveals a

[483] Emily Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Nature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013) ,189.

distinctive way imagination operates in the aesthetic response."[484] By developing an interpretation of Kant that explores the imagination, Brady is attempting to avoid the criticisms of ecocritics who argue that Kant's sublime largely fosters an anthropocentric ideology in relation to nature. As I discussed in Chapter 3, the closure which Kant provided placed the power of reason over Nature and used this reversal to introduce the hierarchy of moral judgment. Brady presents the rather paradoxical nature of Kant's argument in order to use it to support the protection of natural phenomena: "... rather than reducing sublime appreciation to an awareness of our moral vocation, we cannot overlook Kant's insistence that judgments of the sublime fall squarely within the aesthetic domain or its implication that natural objects, as items of disinterested aesthetic judgment, cannot serve as mere triggers to grasping human sublimity. High mountains, thunderclouds and lightning, vast deserts, and starry skies are also appreciated for themselves."[485] This reliance on the disinterested nature of the sublime sits, like Shapshay's own account, uneasily beside Brady's reflexive use of the term. Can an object which elicits disinterested pleasure also be relational? Brady turns to Hepburn to continue to outline her position on the concept. Here she draws from the same sections which first interested me, namely Hepburn's description of the observer's embeddedness within the landscape. "Applied to the sublime," she writes, "the self becomes mere ingredient in the landscape, feeling insignificant, overwhelmed, and humbled by nature."[486] This "existential element of the sublime"[487] seems to run in direct opposition to her emphasis on the aesthetic role of the sublime over and above Kant's moral philosophy. Can nature be both distinct and intertwined with the subject's position?

---

[484] Brady, 193
[485] Ibid., 195.
[486] Ibid., 199.
[487] Ibid., 199.

This push and pull between the field of environmental aesthetics and the larger discipline of philosophy of art remains tied to the problem of embodiment, either as it relates to the direction of attention and perceptual awareness or to the overlap of different categories of knowledge. A similar problematic related to the longstanding dichotomy of subject and object has plagued the sublime in the domain of cultural studies and ecocriticism. William Cronon has succinctly summarized the problem thusly:

> To the extent that we celebrate wilderness as the measure with which we judge civilization, we reproduce the dualism that sets humanity and nature at opposite poles. We thereby leave ourselves little hope of discovering what an ethical, sustainable, honorable human place in nature might actually look like. Worse: to the extent that we live in an urban-industrial civilization but at the same time pretend to ourselves that our real home is in the wilderness, to just that extent we give ourselves permission to evade responsibility for the lives we actually lead.[488]

Cronon's solution involves a critical reweighing of the properties we associate with wilderness, isolating the reasons why we continue to privilege the concept. "Our challenge is to stop thinking of such things according to set of bipolar moral scales in which the human and the nonhuman, the unnatural and the natural, the fallen and the unfallen, serve as our conceptual map for understanding and valuing the world...In particular, we need to discover a common middle ground in which all of these things, from the city to the wilderness, can somehow be encompassed in the word "home." Home, after all, is the place where finally we make our living." [489]This reframing of the term as part of a continuum, where the non-human other exists out there as well as in our own backyards, attempts to pry the importance of wonder in aesthetic and ethical judgments from the combative properties he associates with the Kantian and

[488] Ibid., 79.
[489] Ibid., 85.

Romantic sublime. Wonder "remind[s] us of the world we did not make" allowing for the possibility of humility. This seems to be the same inclination as those proponents of the sublime in the field of environmental aesthetics: dissolve the dichotomy while preserving some emphasis on the potentiality of the natural other.

Like Hitt, whose work I briefly referred to in Chapter 3, all of these contemporary theorists and philosophers tackle the subject by either eliminating Kant's conceptualization of the third stage or replacing key components like reason with different forms of reflexivity, internal faculties or knowledge structures. What resonates amongst all these contemporary discussions is the important role our interpretation of previous intellectual movements and texts has in determining the aims of the modern environmental movement. As long as environmental aesthetics remains tied to the historical narrative associated with the philosophy of art it limits itself to the frameworks which it can apply to environmental appreciation.

With this growing attention toward the "humbling fear"[490] of the second stage, and the paradoxical role of the self, comes larger questions as to why environmental aesthetics and ecocriticism spends so little time examining the other historical debates surrounding the subject. As we have seen, this complex entanglement of self in nature was directly at stake in the British context. In this case the sublime became symptomatic of the larger debate rather than a fixed solution. By examining the theoretical and cultural lineage formulated by British philosophers and theorists writing prior to Kant a new perspective on the concept arises. Even while many parts of that discourse were synthesized in Kant's model, important components and questions about the role of embodied experience and astonishment do not make an appearance. These concerns over the precariousness of nature appreciation fly in contradiction to the conventions surrounding taste and judgment already established. As Arnold Berleant argues, the role of

[490] Ibid., 606.

disinterestedness and contemplative distance only limit the discourses surrounding environmental aesthetics. The sublime spectator was able to complicate and problematize a field which had become stagnate by introducing the subject of immersion and the futility of the frame. Here the point is not so much about how balance is recovered between the world and the self but rather what the astonishment and humility of the second stage says about our preconceptions of that balance. Following Cronon and Hitt, Berleant also recognizes the importance of the second stage in any contemporary understanding of the sublime. That stage perfectly embodies one of the most important aspects of the aesthetic appreciation of nature which has exceeded the frameworks proposed by the field, "the capacity of the natural world to act on so monumental a scale as to exceed our powers of framing and control, and to produce in their place a sense of overwhelming magnitude and awe."[491] This implies that something qualitatively different happens when encountering some natural phenomena, the character of which Berleant describes as "times of sensory acuteness, of a perceptual unity of nature and human, of a congruity of awareness, understanding, and involvement mixed with awe and humility, in which the focus is on the immediacy and directness of the occasion of experience. Perceiving environment from within, as it were, looking not *at* it but *in* it"[492], in short performing as an "aesthetics of engagement"[493]. In a similar vein to both the 18th and 19th century debates, nature is not solely constructed by the viewer, nor is it singly responsible for our response to it, rather both exceed each other becoming just as precariously intertwined as the exact spot a tourist would have to find themselves in in order to experience the sublime.

[491] Arnold Berleant, "The Aesthetics of Art and Nature," in *Landscape, Natural Beauty, and the Arts*, eds. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 234.
[492] Berleant, 236.
[493] Ibid., 237.

The concept addressed its own paradoxical nature by building a domestic tourism industry that would eventually perform as its own marker of national heritage. That industry tested out the requirements of appreciation in increasingly diverse domains, through representational mediums and technologies, and mechanized and non-mechanized forms of travel. These two categories often either overlapped or ran in parallel, promoting the values and perceptual properties of the other. Both prescriptive modes acted as a way of diffusing the two interrelated forms of anxiety; the massive economic and social upheaval caused by industrialization and the increasingly indeterminate relationship that that upheaval produced with regards to the natural landscape. The turn of the 19th century brought seemingly opposing solutions for the would-be sublime spectator, depending of course on your socioeconomic position, you could find yourself either moving through the domestic landscape on foot with a book of poetry and tour guide in hand or across the platform of the panorama armed with a map and promotional pamphlet. By the mid century urban dwellers chose to do both, hopping on a train in between. While the Romantic sublime had largely dissipated, its related problematic had not, not only was firsthand contact with rural landscapes increasingly in vogue but the quest for their perfect viewpoint remained the cornerstone of the domestic tourism industry. The weaving of rhetoric associated with different immersive and contemplative embodied positions and movement slowly shifted away from the natural world to the technologies which equipped us to experience it.

The first of these tackled the same concern which the natural sublime had attempted to reconcile: How do we make aesthetic claims about the natural environment when the manner in which we experience it exceeds and confounds our conventional models of framing? It attempted to eliminate the frame by expanding it outside of the immediate field of vision of the observer in

a bid to perfectly replicate real views, the others, including the train and scenic film, transformed the manner in which the frame operated by pressuring the view laterally and in depth. While these technologies, which I have referred to as the first stages of the technological sublime, may have renegotiated the limits of the frame, they introduced a new distancing tool in its place; the screen. Paradoxically, all three were important devices in helping to mediate the national anxiety, an anxiety which all three in fact were a factor in, because they tied themselves to rhetoric of the natural sublime and eventually became conflated with the benefits of nature appreciation. By modeling and reconstructing the debate and, eventually, offering a space for contemplative detachment from the scene, these forms of virtual tours provided a manner of escape into the third stage of the sublime, into Kant's imagined state of overcoming and recovery. That form of escape reversed the perceptual priorities of object and image, transforming the nature of that final reflexivity and placing man once again as above and beyond the non-human world.

The Natural, Technological, and Postmodern Sublime

The forms of technology that contemporary and postmodern theorists associate with the technological sublime seem vastly different to the ones I have isolated in the 19th and early 20th century. But the insidious role these historical technologies of representation played in the shift of epistemological and perceptual priorities shares a common bond with the effects of their postmodern counterparts. Jonathan Bordo defines the postmodern technological sublime as not so much the outcome of technologies like the atomic bomb but the manner in which they have become embedded into the cultural world view. He begins from a premise shared by many critics of the technological sublime, writing,

> Under modern technological conditions, our sense of the sublime surfaces from the technological incommensurability of instruments and ends. The sources of

> the threatening processes are abstractively too remote to grasp relevantly in situations of crisis while the repercussions are too calamitous to envisage...I want to say that the notion of incommensurability and hence the sublime undergo a dramatic change under conditions of modern technology because the principal cause of the sublime comes from processes released by human ingenuity and construction: technology... The sublime arises, not from what reason has excluded and suppressed, but from the products of reason itself.[494]

Technology represents itself as a means to organizing and controlling the material world, but its reach exceeds our rational powers of forethought. Its representation as a mere instrument masks our inability to "delimit" and control its consequences.[495] Bordo posits this conceptual definition alongside Heidegger's warning of the dangers of modern technology, writing that technology has the "power to strip the human being of this special and exempt status as the only one entity only partially enmeshed in technology. Enmeshment is both material and epistemological. We dispose ourselves to technology physically through technology as a mode of access that anchors us to the world. Not only might such total enmeshment occur but we would be unable even to discern its occurrence."[496] This means that technology masks its own ideological role, performing as something which remains conceptually apart even as we become embedded within it. Like Cavell's argument about the role of film and screen in larger philosophical debate over the merits and limits to skepticism, technology has a dual function, "anchoring" us to the material world while providing a way for human beings to feel superior to and apart from it. Here technology seems to respond to our anxiety over our relationship to the non-human world by mirroring the same problematic, it provides a way for us to feel outside of the rest of the material world as we stand immersed within it. Bordo uses the metaphor of the screen to describe technologies

---

[494] Jonathan Bordo,"Ecological Peril, Modern Technology and the Postmodern Sublime," in *Shadow Spirit: Postmodernism and Religion*, eds Philippa Berry and Andrew Wernick (London :Routledge, 1992), 175.
[495] Bordo, 174.
[496] Ibid., 170-1.

paradoxical effect on the cultural imaginary. Deconstructing the ideological framework cemented in this view "require[s] penetrating the screen of technological representation itself"[497].

Bordo associates this screen with what he calls the "administrative gaze"[498] and turns to a contemporary equivalent of the tools of representation from the 19th century, our ability to now see ourselves from space, as an example of its ideological nature , describing it as "a technological platform for the transcendental viewpoint."[499] This view seems to provide the same model of spectatorship as the painted panorama, train and scenic film: a detached position which still provides some of the effects associated with immersion. Each also shifted the perceived cause of astonishment felt by the observer, away from the scene set before them to the technology which made it possible. The devices which were meant to be merely a means have exceeded their roles and constructed new perceptual fields, whether by displaying an entirely new way of seeing the landscape as it blurs by or allowing us to get closer than ever before from the safety of the theatre auditorium. These first stages of the technological sublime paved the way for those which came later, first transforming how we saw, then how we saw ourselves in the role as observer, confirming our privileged status, which, finally, instigated the transformation of the material scene itself, leading to much of the ecological peril we now find ourselves in. Without early conflation between certain technologies of representation and the non-human world they depicted, these cultural and theoretical shifts would not have been possible.

Engagement in an Aesthetics of Astonishment

[497] Ibid., 176.
[498] Ibid., 169.
[499] Ibid., 169.

One British filmmaker has attempted to renegotiate the role representational technologies play in developing aesthetic experience about natural spaces and forces. Experimental artist Chris Welsby cites 19th century landscape models, like the moving and painted panorama, and puts them in dialogue with contemporary concerns over the role of technology in defining the aesthetic appreciation of natural spaces. His films experiment with different states of perceptual engagement, exploring the realm of reflective contemplation (*River Yar*, 1976), visual and sensory immersion (*Shore Line I*, 1977), and overwhelmed detachment (*Wind Vane*, 1972), by emphasizing the relationship between the frame, screen, proximity, and the physical properties of the natural world which he attempts to make contact with.

Welsby began his artistic career as a painter before becoming interested in the structural aesthetics of film and joining the London Film-Makers' Co-op in the 1970s. This early training in landscape art strongly influenced his filmmaking practice. Describing his work as "envisaging a relationship between technology and nature based on principles other than exploitation and domination"[500], he continuously addresses them as antidotes to the ideology embedded in the landscape painting and photography of the nineteenth century. He writes, "I have avoided the objective *view* point implicit in panoramic vistas or depictions of homogeneous pictorial space. I have instead concentrated on 'close up' detail and the more transient aspects of the landscape, using the flickering, luminous characteristics of the film and video mediums, and their respective technologies, to suggest both the beauty and fragility of the natural world."[501] Here he explicitly refers to the dialectic inherent in the natural and technological sublime but the relationship which he defines between the natural and the technological is neither a conflation nor hierarchical.

---

[500] Chris Welsby, "Introduction," *Simon Fraser University: Chris Welsby*, Accessed September 03, 2014http://www.sfu.ca/~welsby/index.htm.
[501] Ibid.

Instead he describes it as a "symbiotic model" where subjectivity is placed at the forefront and "technology and nature are both viewed as interrelated parts of a larger gestalt."[502] Unlike the painted panorama which relied on a rhetoric of mathematical precision and attention to detail, Welsby highlights the complexity of expression and contact, challenging the dichotomy between art and science. This creates, as theorist Peter Wollen has argued, a very novel relationship between technology, spectator, and natural world "in which observation is separated from surveillance, and technology from domination."[503]

In a similar manner to the early scenic film genre, Welsby takes the problem of "contact" as a primary concern in his body of work. That contact is not only visual, but engages all the senses, because he chooses different physical features of the environment, like motion and sound, which can interact with the cinematic process and leave behind some sort of a trace of that interaction. Both his earliest and recent work articulates the precarious point at which natural and human forces overlap. In *Wind Vane* (1972) he mounted two cameras on tripods in Hampstead Heath in London. Both were attached to wind vanes which, as the wind began to blow, would control the speed and direction of the cameras as they were forced horizontally back and forth. The 16mm work is displayed simultaneously on two screens constructing a powerful immersive experience that is also equally destabilizing. The viewer is both mesmerized by the frenetic pace of the panning while also shifting between the competing imagery.

One of his more recent projects, *Tree Studies* (2006) relies on similar method, albeit using a much more advanced digital process. In this installation three screens depict a specific angle of the same pre recorded tree. The sound and quality of the image is being controlled by an

[502] Ibid.
[503] Peter Wollen, "Landscape, Meteorology, and Chris Welsby," *Millennium Film Workshop* (1987): 211.

operating system which is tracking real time planetary weather systems over four different continents: Australia, Europe, North America and Asia. Welsby describes the work as suggesting "an environmental model where technology can work collaboratively with natural forces"[504] constructing a new "post Romantic form of landscape art"[505] which can comment on the complex yet subtle changes living systems have on our perception of the outer world.

Multiple projection is an important reoccurring theme and method in his body of work. But it is not always used to present new approaches to environmental representation. In *Shore Line I* and *II* he problematize's place and perceptual experience through the use of multiple screen projection, explicitly commenting on the 19th century panorama craze. In the *Shore Line* films, a duplicate fifteen foot loop of colour film is projected side by side by six projectors which are themselves placed on their sides. This creates a portrait format where the horizon and shore line of each projected image lines up but the film itself is not synchronised. The overall effect appears to be panoramic but, as the viewer continues to watch, quickly breaks down and becomes fragmented. He writes, "The infinitely complex rhythm of the waves breaking on the shore forms a complex counterpoint to the random nature of the projection event."[506] Here Welsby attempts a kind of deconstruction of the panoramic model of spectatorship and ideology, rather than being immersive and contemplative, the realism is a trick and the spectator becomes aware of the apparatus rather than the aesthetics of the projected place.

Welsby's work signals a continued driving interest in the manner in which the film medium can perform as a tool of environmental aesthetic engagement. Rather than being

---

[504] Chris Welsby, "Tree Studies," *Simon Fraser University: Chris Welsby*, Accessed September 03, 2014, http://www.sfu.ca/~welsby/Tree_S_N.htm.

[505] Ibid.

[506] Chris Welsby, "Shore Line II," *Simon Fraser University: Chris Welsby*, Accessed September 03, 2014http://www.sfu.ca/~welsby/Shornote.htm.

imbedded in the tourism industry though, these installations challenge the role of both firsthand and technologically mediated experience by providing a way for the outside world to participate alongside the film medium and embodied spectator. His work actively responds to both the historical industry, discourse surrounding the technological and natural sublime, and the contemporary revival of immersive media platforms, like widescreen and 3D technology, which privilege the visual attraction and elements of the spectacular. His films provide evidence of the continued relevance of critical analysis of the historical narrative.

Conclusion: All for the Want of a View

This project has traced the complex debates surrounding immersion and contemplation across the 18th, 19th, and early 20th century. Those debates were rooted in the emergence of the natural sublime, a concept intended to test and legitimize a set of new experiential states attached to certain interactions with natural environments. With the rise of natural appreciation, first during tours to the Continent and then domestically in Great Britain, standards of taste became increasingly contradictory and enigmatic. Unlike previous models, which were bound to textual sources and the strict rules of beauty, firsthand experience with nature resisted traditional attempts to frame, categorize, and evaluate it. The discourse surrounding the 18th century's natural sublime became the place where the potential and pitfalls of firsthand experience could be debated. Two interrelated discourses quickly moved to the forefront. The first was philosophical and attempted to understand the causal relationship between the internal faculties of the subject and the outside world. The second would become largely cultural and was interested in prescribing the appropriate manner and physical position in which to experience the dialectic of immersion and contemplation which defined the sublime. It would eventually

develop into its own cultural industry, sublimating previous anxieties about firsthand contact into a quest to attain the perfect sublime view.

Over the next century multiple representational media were used to facilitate that quest and tailor it to the needs and circumstances of different socio-economic groups across the country, ending with the scenic film genre. Each of these media and texts entered the complex terrain highlighting a specific form of travel. Early travel guides heralded the aesthetic benefits of walking. The painted panorama would begin by championing the advantages of the previous picturesque guides before promoting itself as both representation and tour in one. The scenic film, and, eventually, the films produced by the British Transport Unit, would establish links to both traditional forms of travel and more heavily technological ones like train tours. By doing so the film medium was able to embed the former inside the latter, naturalizing its own role along with other mediated forms of travel.

This sojourn through the centuries has provided a very different lens in which to interpret the early scenic genre than the one offered by academics associated with the modernity thesis. Traditionally thought of as first moving in parallel with other early genres in the cinema of attractions model before failing to transition into the institutional mode, the genre has been largely neglected by film scholars. By considering this body of work as one of the driving aspects of the cultural industry surrounding domestic nature appreciation in Great Britain, formal and discursive complexities which would not have been otherwise apparent come into view. Each participating media and text was at the vanguard of aesthetic experience, demanding a form of engagement and risk which challenged both contemporary and historically established frameworks. The British scenic promoted this participatory aspect of spectatorship, creating both formal juxtapositions and overlaps between astonishment and contemplation. The dialectic

demanded far more from astonishment than contemporary theorists and historians currently associate it with. Instead of a form of internal arrestment which sustains the spectator's attention, sublime astonishment provides the necessary break from the experience's immersive qualities, forcing the spectator into a state of reflexivity.

This long historical reading also provides a rationale for the continued stability of the genre. Not only was the scenic a powerful tool for the tourist industry but it was also able to illustrate many of the concerns facing both environmental aesthetics and the emerging film industry. The two fields were testing out the potential and limitations of visual representation and the frame. Film, much like the painted panorama, was able to recreate a similar set of conditions as a spectator on tour. On screen, aesthetic and epistemological judgments were always on the brink of being challenged as the frame gave way to the immersive space always existing just along side.

The British tradition struggled with the point at which self and other made contact tying an unresolved aesthetics of astonishment to both engagement and dissolution. The two remain linked to the current rhetoric. Travelogues still dot the media landscape employing even more immersive techniques, groups of ramblers still take walking tours along the highlands and Snowdonia, and psychologists and philosophers continue to study the causes and effects of awe on the individual[507]. While imagery traditionally associated with the natural sublime may have

[507] Recently the preservation organization Sierra Club and newspaper *The Guardian* published articles tracing and comparing scientific approaches to isolating and studying feelings of awe in individuals encountering natural landscapes: Jake Abrahamson,"The Science of Awe," Sierra Club. October 02, 2014. Accessed December 22, 2014. http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2014-6-november-december/feature/science-awe?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=20141014_AweScience. Oliver Burkeman, "Awe: The Powerful Emotion with Strange and Beautiful Effects." *The Guardian* (London), August 18, 2015. Accessed August 18, 2015. http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/oliver-burkeman-column/2015/aug/18/awe-powerful-emotion-strange-beautiful-effects

lost its aesthetic and critical weight, the model of spectatorship remains as precarious and subversive as ever before, forever exceeding the frameworks we attempt to understand it with.

Bibliography

Abrahamson, Jake. "The Science of Awe." Sierra Club. October 02, 2014. Accessed December 22, 2014. http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2014-6-november-december/feature/science-awe?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=20141014_AweScience.

Abrams, M.H. *English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism*. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Addison, Joseph. "Remarks on Several Parts of Italy Ect." In *The Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Addison*. Vol. 4. Oxford: D.A. Talboys, 1830.

-----. " On the Pleasures of the Imagination." *The Spectator*, no. 412, June 23, 1712. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12030/12030-h/12030-h/SV2/Spectator2.html#section411

-----. "The Spectator." In *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla, 62-69. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Aitken, Ian. "Documentary."*British Film Institute*. 2014. http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/446186/

Altick, Richard D. *The Shows of London*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1978.

Anthony, Scott and James G. Mansell. "Introduction: The Documentary Film Movement and The Spaces of Identity." *Twentieth Century British History* 1, no. 23 (2012): 1-11.

Armstrong, Nancy. "Realism Before and After Photography: " 'The Fantastical Form of a Relation among Things.'" In *A Concise Companion to Realism*, edited by Matthew Beaumont, 102-120. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

"Apparatus for Exhibiting Pictures," British Patent no. 1612, granted June 19, 1787. Facsimile in Lauren Mannoni, Donata Pesenti Campagnoni, and David Robinson, Light and Movement : Incunabula of the Motion Picture 1420-1896. Gemona:La Cineteca del Fruli/ Le Gionarte del Cinema Muto, 1995.

Ashfield, Andrew, and Peter De Bolla, eds. *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

"At the Palace," *Punch*, August 6, 1898, 57.

Bagwell, Philip S. *The Transport Revolution from 1700*. London: B.T. Batsford, 1974.

Bahti, Timothy. ""Strange Utterance": The (Un)Natural Language of the Sublime in Wordsworth's Prelude." In *A Companion to Romantic Poetry*, edited by Charles Mahoney, 483-502. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Bailie, John. "An Essay on the Sublime." In *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla, 87-100. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Baker, John. *An Historical and Critical Examination of English Space and Time Theories*. Bronxville, 1930.

Barker, Henry Aston. *Coronation of His Majesty George the Fourth*. London, 1823.

Basil, Willey. "On Wordsworth and Locke Tradition." In *English Romantic Poets; Modern Essays in Criticism,* edited by M.H. Abrams. New York: Oxford UP, 1960.

Bazin, André. *Jean Renoir*, Edited by Francois Truffaut. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973.

Beattie, James. "Dissertations Moral and Critical ." In *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla, 180- 194. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Edited by Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1968.

-----. *Reflections*. Edited by Peter Demetz. New York: Schocken Books, 1986.

Berleant, Arnold. "The Aesthetics of Art and Nature." In *Landscape, Natural Beauty, and the Arts*, edited by Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell, 228-43. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

The Bioscope, no. 168 (December 30, 1909).

Bohls, Elizabeth. *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics*, 1716-1818. Cambridge, 1995.

Bordo, Jonathan. "Ecological Peril, Modern Technology and the Postmodern Sublime." In *Shadow Spirit: Postmodernism and Religion*, edited by Philippa Berry and Andrew Wernick, 165-180. London :Routledge, 1992.

Bottomore, Stephen. "The Panicking Audience?: Early Cinema and the 'train effect,'" *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 19.2 (1999): 177-216.

Brady, Emily. *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Nature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Buddemeier, Heinz. *Panorama, Diorama, Photographie: Entstehung und Wirkung Neuer Medien im 19.* Munich, 1970.

Burford, Robert. *Himalaya Mountains, with the British stations of Kussowlee, Soobathoo, and Simla and a vast extent of the plains of Hindostan*. London: 1847.

-----. *Mont Blanc, The Valley of Chamonix and the Surrounding Mountains.* London, 1837.

-----. *Panorama of the Rhine*. London, 1843.

-----. *View of the Falls of Niagara*. London, 1833.

Burke, Edmund. "A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful." In *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla. 131-143. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

-----. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, edited by Adam Phillips. Oxford England: Oxford UP, 1990.

Burkeman, Oliver. "Awe: The Powerful Emotion with Strange and Beautiful Effects." *The Guardian* (London), August 18, 2015. Accessed August 18, 2015. http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/oliver-burkeman-column/2015/aug/18/awe-powerful-emotion-strange-beautiful-effects

Burnet, Thomas. *The sacred theory of the earth: containing an account of the original of the earth, And of all the General Changes which it hath already undergone, or is to undergo, till the Consummation of all Things. In Two Volumes. The Two First Books Concerning the Deluge, and Concerning Paradise. The Two Last Books Concerning the Burning of the World, and Concerning the New Heavens and New Earth. With a Review of the Theory, and of its Proofs; especially in reference to Scripture. The sixth edition. To which is added, the author's defence of the work, from the exceptions of Mr.Warren, and the examination of Mr. Keil. And An ode to the Author by Mr. Addison.* London : printed for J. Hooke, 1726.

Carlson, Allen. "The Aesthetics of Environmental Architecture and Landscape, Territory, and Terrain."In *Building Material* 13 (2005): 60-63.

----."Appreciation and the Natural Environmant."In *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 37.3 (1979): 267-75.

-----"Environmental Aesthetics." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. ed. Edward Zalta. Stanford University, 21 June 2012. Web. 31 Mar. 2014. <http://plato stanford. edu/archives/sum2012/entries/environmental-aesthetics/>.

----. "Environmental Aesthetics and the Dilemma of Aesthetic Education." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 10.2 (1976): 69-82.

----. "Nature, Aesthetic Appreciation, and Knowledge." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 53.4 (1995): 393-400.

----."Nature, Aesthetic Judgment, and Objectivity." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 40.1 (1981): 15-27.

Carroll, Noël. *Beyond Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2001.

Catalogue of Kinemacolor Film Subjects: Animated Scene in their Actual Colors. London: The Natural Color Kinematograph Company, 1912.

Cavell, Stanley. *The World Viewed; Reflections on the Ontology of Film*. New York: Viking Press, 1971.

Chanan, Michael. *The Dream That Kicks: The Prehistory and Early Years of Cinema in Britain*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.

The Charles Urban Trading Company Catalogue. London: The Charles Urban Trading Company, 1909.

The Charles Urban Trading Company Catalogue Supplement, 1907-1908. London: The Charles Urban Trading Company,1908.

Claretie, Jules. *Voyages d'un Parisien*. Paris, 1865.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism*, Edited by Thomas Middleton Raysor. Cambridge, Mass., 1936.

-----."Lecture 13 (On Poesy or Art)." In *The Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, edited by H.N. Coleridge. London: William Pickering, 1836.

-----. *Shakespearean Criticism*. Edited by T.M. Raysor. London, 1960.

Comment, Bernard. *The Painted Panorama*. London: Reaktion, 1999.

Comolli, Jean-Louis. "Machines of the Visible." *The Cinematic Apparatus*, edited by Teresa De Lauretis and Stephen Heath. St. Martin's Press, 1980.

Corrigan, Timothy. *A Cinema without Walls: Movies and Culture after Vietnam* . New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991.

Crary, Jonathan. *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999.

----. *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990.

Cronon, William. "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,"In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature,* edited by William Cronon, 69-90. New York, 1996.

Daily Telegraph (London), August 18, 1903.

Dennis, John. *Advancement and Reformation*. In *Critical Work*, edited by Edward Niles Hooker. Baltimore, 1938-1943.

-----. *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*. In *Critical Works*, edited by Edward Niles Hooker. Baltimore, 1939-1943.

------. *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose*. London, 1693.

"Derby Castle,"*The Isle of Man Times and General Advertiser*, 4 June, 1895, 2.

Dussinger, John. "Hester Piozzi, Italy, and the Johnsonian Aether." *South Central Review* 9.4 (Winter, 1992).

The Era (London), 1840-1860.

Elsaesser, Thomas, and Adam Barker, eds. *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*. London: BFI Pub., 1990.

Ferguson, Frances. *Solitude and the Sublime: Romanticism and the Aesthetics of Individuation*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Fried, Michael. *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and the Beholder in the Age of Diderot*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1980.

Friedberg, Anne. *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2006.

------ *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*. London: University of California Press, 1994.

Galperin, William H. *The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993.

Gaudreault, André, Tim Barnard, Jacques Malthête, and Georges Méliès. *Film and Attraction: From Kinematography to Cinema*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 2011.

Gerard, Alexander. "An Essay on Taste," in *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla, 168-172. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Gilpin, William. *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, on Several Parts of England ; Particularly the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, Made in the Year 1772*. 3rd ed. London: Printed for R. Blamire, 1792.

--------.*Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty, on Picturesque Travel, and on Sketching Landscape: With a Poem on Landscape Painting: To These Are Now Added, Two Essays Giving an Account of the Principles and Mode in Which the Author Executed His Own Drawings*. 3rd ed. London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1808.

Gilroy, Amanda, ed. *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel, 1775-1844*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.

Gledhill, Christine. *Reframing British Cinema: 1918-1928 ; between Restraint and Passion*. London: Bfi Publ., 2003.

Griffiths, Alison. *Shivers down Your Spine: Cinema, Museums, and the Immersive View*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Gunning, Tom. "An Aesthetics of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)Credulous Spectator." *Art and Text* 34 (Fall 1989), Rpt. in *Film Theory and Criticism*, edited by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, 862-877. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

-----. "Before documentary: early nonfiction films and the 'view' aesthetic." In *Uncharted Territory: Essays on Early Nonfiction Film*, edited by Daan Hertogs and Nico De Klerk, 9-24. Amsterdam: Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1997.

----."The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde."In *Early Cinema: Space*, *Frame, Narrative*, edited by Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker, 56-62. British Film Institute, 1989.

----."Landscape and the Fantasy of Moving Pictures: Early Cinema's Phantom Rides."In *Cinema and Landscape*. edited by Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner, 31-70 Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2010.

----. "Modernity and Cinema: A Culture of Shocks and Flows." In *Cinema and Modernity*, edited by Murray Pomerance, 297-315. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006.

----. "Moving away from the Index: Cinema and the Impression of Reality"*differences*. 18, 1 Spring (2007): 29-52.

----."The World in its Own Image: "The Myth of Total Cinema."In *Opening Bazin: Postwar Film Theory and Its Afterlife*, edited by Dudley Andrew and Hervé Joubert-Laurencin, 119-126. New York: Oxford UP, 2011.

----. "' The Whole World Within Reach' Travel Images without Borders." In *Virtual Voyages: Cinema and Travel*, edited by Jeffrey Ruoff, 25-41. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

-----."The Whole Town's Gawking : Early Cinema and the Visual Experience of Modernity." *Yale Journal of Criticism* 7, no. 2 (1994): 189-201.

"Hale's Tours and Scenes of the World." *Motion Picture World* 29, no. 3 (15 July 1916):372.

Hanley, Keith. "Wordsworth's Grand Tour." In *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel, 1775-1844*, edited by Amanda Gilroy, 71-92. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.

Harper, Graeme, and Jonathan Rayner, eds. *Cinema and Landscape*. Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2010.

Hartley, David. "Observations On Man." In *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla, 101- 105. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

"The Heart of England." *Monthly Film Bulletin* 21, no. 250 (November 1954): 165.

Heidegger, Martin. "The Age of the World Picture." In *The Question concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 3-35. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.

Hepworth, Cecil M. *Came the Dawn; Memories of a Film Pioneer*. London: Phoenix House, 1951.

Hepworth Manufacturing Company Catalogue. London: Hepworth Manufacturing Company, 1903.

Hepworth Manufacturing Company Catalogue. London: Hepworth Manufacturing Company, 1906.

Hepburn, Ronald, W. "Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty."*British Analytical Philosophy*, edited by B. Williams and A. Montefiore. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul,1966.

------ ."The Aesthetics of Sky and Space," *Environmental Values* 19, no. 3 (2010).

Holmes, Oliver Wendell. "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph." In *Classic Essays on Photography*, edited by Alan Trachtenberg, 71-82. New Haven, CT: Leete's Island Books, 1980.

Home, Henry. "Elements of Criticism." In *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla, 224-232.Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Howell, James. *Epistolae Ho-Elianae: The Familiar Letters.* London, 1890.

Hipple, Walter John. *The Beautiful, the Sublime, & the Picturesque in Eighteenth-century British Aesthetic Theory*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1957.

Hitt, Christopher. "Toward an Ecological Sublime." *New Literary History.* 30, 3. (1999): 603-623.

Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2013.

Huhtamo, Erkki. *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles*. Cambridge, MA: MiT Press, 2013.

Hussey, Christopher. *The Picturesque; Studies in a Point of View*. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1967.

Hyde,Ralph. *Panoramania! The Art and Entertainment of the 'All- Embracing' View*. London: Trefoil Publications,1988.

Jeffrey, Ian. "Photography and Nature." *Art Journal* 41.1 (1981): 26-32.

Kant, Immanuel. *The Critique of Judgment*. Trans. by J. H. Bernard. Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2000.

Keil, Charlie. "'To Here from Modernity' Style Historiography and Transitional Cinema." In *American Cinema's Transitional: Era Audiences, Institutions, Practices*, edited by Charlie Keil and Shelley Stamp, 51-65. University of California Press, 2004.

Kim, Benjamin. "Generating a National Sublime: Wordsworth's 'The River Duddon' and 'The Guide to the Lakes'" *Studies in Romanticism* 45, no. 1 (2006): 49-75.

Koch, Gertrud, Volker Pantenburg, and Simon Rothöhler, eds. *Screen Dynamics: Mapping the Borders of Cinema*. Wien: Österreichisches Filmmuseum, 2012.

Kracauer, Seigfried. "The Cult of Distraction." *New German Critique* 40 (Winter,1987).

-------.*Theory of Film; the Redemption of Physical Reality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.

Lefebvre, Martin, ed. *Landscape and Film*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Lefebvre, Martin. "On Landscape in Narrative Film." *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 20.1 (2011).

List of Urban Film Subjects. London: The Charles Urban Trading Company, November 1903.

Locke, John. *The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke: With a General Introd. and Commentary*. Compiled by John W. Yolton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Longinus. *Longinus on the Sublime: The Greek Text Edited after the Paris Manuscript with Introd., Transl., Facs. and Appendices*. Translated by W. Rhys Roberts. 2nd ed. Cambridge: U.P, 1907.

Longinus. *Poetics / On the Sublime / Longinus ; Transl. by W.H. Fyfe ; Rev. by Donald Russell. On Style / Demetrius ; Ed. and Transl. by Doreen C. Innes ; Based on W. Rhys Roberts*. Translated by D.A Russell and W. Rhys. Roberts. Cambridge, MA, Etc.: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Lovejoy, Arthur. "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms." *PMLA* 39(1924).

Low, Rachael, and Roger Manvell. *History of the British Film : 1896-1906*. Vol. 1. Edition Edited by Jeffrey Richards. New York: Routledge, 1997.

"Maskelyne and Cooke's," *The Era* (London), April 18 ,1896, 16.

Matless, David. "Accents of Landscape in GPO Country: The Horsey Mail, 1938." *Twentieth Century British History* 1, no. 23 (2012): 57-79.

McKernan, Luke. *Charles Urban: Pioneering the Non-fiction Film in Britain and America, 1897-1925*. Exeter, Devon: University of Exeter Press, 2013.

McKusick, James. *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Meisel, Martin. *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England.* Princeton N.J. : Princeton UP, 1983.

Monk, Samuel Holt. *The Sublime; a Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-century England*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1960.

More, Henry. *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*. London, 1712.

Morning Post (London), October 18th , 1902.

Musser, Charles. "A Cinema of Contemplation, A Cinema of Discernment: Spectatorship, Intertextuality, and Attractions in the 1890s." In *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, edited by Wanda Strauven, 159-80. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.

Nabholtz, John R. "Wordsworth's "Guide to the Lakes" and the Picturesque Tradition." *Modern Philology MOD PHILOLOGY* 61, no. 4 (1964): 288-97.

Novak, Barbara. *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825-1875*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Nicolson, Marjorie Hope. *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory; the Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1959.

Nye, David E. *American Technological Sublime*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994.

Oettermann, Stephan. *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium*. New York: Zone Books, 1997.

Oracle (London) no. 624, May 28 1791.

Pomerance, Murray, ed. *Cinema and Modernity*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006.

Porter, Loraine, and Bryony Dixon. *Picture Perfect: Landscape, Place and Travel in British Cinema before 1930*. Exeter, UK: Exeter, 2007.

Pragnell, Hubert. *The London Panoramas of Robert Barker and Thomas Girtin, circa 1800*. London: Topographical Society, 1968.

Priestley, Joseph. "A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism." In *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla, 119-123. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Price, Uvedale, and Thomas Dick Lauder. *Sir Uvedale Price on the Picturesque: With an Essay on the Origin of Taste and Much Original Matter*. Edinburgh: Caldwell, Lloyd &, 1842.

"The Prince's Derby," *Strand Magazine*, August, 1896, 136.

Pyne William. *Wine and Walnuts; or, After Dinner Chit- Chat* . London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1824.

Riding, Christina. "Shipwreck, Self-preservation and the Sublime." *The Art of the Sublime*, Edited by Nigel Llewellyn and Christine Riding, January 2013, 11 January 2014 <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/christine-riding-shipwreck-self-preservation-and-the-sublime-r1133015>.

Rosen, Charles, and Henri Zerner. *Romanticism and Realism: The Mythology of Nineteenth-century Art*. New York: Viking, 1984.

Rothman, William. "Film, Modernity, Cavell." In *Cinema and Modernity*, edited by Murray Pomerance, 316-331. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006.

Ruoff, Jeffrey. *Virtual Voyages: Cinema and Travel*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Ruskin, John. *The Complete Works of John Ruskin*. Vol. 3. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1905.

Schama, Simon. *Landscape and Memory*. New York: Vintage, 1996.

Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization and Perception of Time and Space*. Berkeley: University of California, 1986.

Shapshay, Sandra. "Contemporary Environmental Aesthetics and the Neglect of the Sublime." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 53.2 (2013): 181-93.

Shaw, Philip. "'Mimic sights': a note on panorama and other indoor displays in Book 7 of 'The Prelude.' (by Wordsworth)", in *Notes and Queries* 40.4 (Dec. 1993).

-----."Modernism and the Sublime." *The Art of the Sublime*, Edited by Nigel Llwellyn and Christine Riding, January 2013, 11 January 2014 < http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/philip-shaw-modernism-and-the-sublime-r1109219>.

-----. *The Sublime*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Smith, Paul. "British Transport Films." British Transport Films. Accessed May 22, 2015. http://www.britishtransportfilms.co.uk/.

Snow, Michael. “Michael Snow and Bruce Elder in Conversation, 1982.” *The Collected Writings of Michael Snow*, 221-231. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1994.

Singer, Ben. *Melodrama and Modernity Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

-------."Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and the Rise of Popular Sensationlism." In *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, edited by Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, 72-102. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Sobchack, Vivian. "'Cutting to the Quick': Techne, Physis, and Poiesis and the Attractions of Slow Motion." In *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, by Wanda Strauven, 337-54. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.

Starn, Randolph. “Seeing Culture in a Room for a Renaissance Prince.” In *The New Cultural History*, edited by Lynn Hunt, 205-232. University of California Press, 1989.

Straus, Erwin. *The Primary World of the Senses*.New York and London, 1963.

"Tintern Abbey, Tourism and Romantic Landscape: William Wordsworth from Guide to the Lakes." The Norton Anthology of English Literature. 2010. Accessed June 06, 2014. http%3A%2F%2Fwww.wwnorton.com%2Fcollege%2Fenglish%2Fnael%2Fromantic%2Ftopic_1%2Fguide.htm.

Tosi, Virgilio. *Cinema before Cinema: The Origins of Scientific Cinematography*. London: British Universities Film & Video Council, 2005.

Turvey, Gerry. "Panoramas, Parades and the Picturesque: The Aesthetics of British Actuality Films, 1895-1901." *Film History: An International Journal* 16.1 (2004): 9-27.

Urban, Charles. *Cinematograph in Science, Education and Matters of State*. London: The Charles Urban Trading Company, 1907.

-----. *A Yank in Britain: The Lost Memoirs of Charles Urban, Film Pioneer*, Edited by Luke McKernan. Hastings: The Projections Box, 1999.

Urbanora Catalogue. London: The Charles Urban Trading Company, 1906.

Uricchio, William. “Ways of Seeing: The New Vision of Early Non-Fiction Film.” In *Uncharted Territory: Essays on Early Nonfiction Film*, edited by Daan Hertogs and Nico De Klerk, 119-131. Amsterdam: Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1997.

Usher, James. “Clio: or, a Discourse on Taste.” In *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla, 147-156. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Wallace, Anne D. *Walking, Literature, and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Ward, Mathew. *English Items; or, Microcosmic Views of England and Englishmen*. New York, 1853.

Warwick Trading Company Catalogue. London: Warwick Trading Company, 1904.

Wendell Holmes, Oliver. "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph." In *Classic Essays on Photography*, edited by Alan Trachtenberg, 71-82. New Haven, CT: Leete's Island Books, 1980.

Weiskel, Thomas. *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976.

Welsby, Chris. "Introduction." *Simon Fraser University: Chris Welsby*. Accessed September 03, 2014. http://www.sfu.ca/~welsby/index.htm.

Wesling, Donald. *Wordsworth and the Adequacy of Landscape*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970.

West, Thomas, and Jonathan Wordsworth. *A Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire: 1784*. Oxford: Woodstock, 1989.

Whittock, Trevor. *Metaphor and Film*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Williams, Helen Maria. “A Tour in Switzerland.” In *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Andrew Ashfield and Peter De Bolla, 302-306. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Winter, O. “The Cinematograph.” *The New Review*, May, 1896, 507-513.

Wlecke, Albert O. *Wordsworth and the Sublime*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.

Wollen,Peter. "Landscape, Meteorology, and Chris Welsby." *Millennium Film Workshop* (1987): 208-11.

Wood, Gillen D'Arcy. *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860*. New York, NY : Palgrave, 2001.

Wordsworth, Christopher. *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*. Vol. 2. London: Edward Moxon, 1851.

Wordsworth, William, and Ernest De Selincourt. *Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes with an Introduction, Appendices, and Notes Textual and Illustrative*. 5th ed. London: Henry Frowde, 1906.

Wordsworth, William, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Lyrical Ballads 1798 and 1800*. Edited by Dahlia Porter and Michael Gamer. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2008.

Wordsworth, William. , "Letter to Lady Beaumont, 21 May 1807." In *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years*, edited by E de Selincourt, 8 vols, 182-183. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.

------.*Poetical Works*. Edited by Thomas Hutchinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936.

------. *The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850: Authoritative Texts, Context and Reception, Recent Critical Essays*. Edited by Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill. New York: Norton, 1979.

------. *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*. Edited by W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.

------.*Wordsworth's Literary Criticism: Reprint of the Edition by Nowell C. Smith*. Edited by Howard Mills and Nowell Charles. Smith. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1988.

Filmography

The Ascent of Mont Blanc; 15,781 Feet High. United Kingdom: Warwick Trading Co., 1902. 35 mm.

Autumn in the Forest. Directed by Gaston Quiribet. United Kingdom: Hepworth Manufacturing Company, 1909.

Away for the Day. Directed by John Krish.1952. United Kingdom: British Transport Films. 16 mm.

A Beautiful Panorama of Railway Ride from St German to Milray. United Kingdom: Mitchell and Kenyon, 1901. 35 mm.

Breaking Waves. United Kingdom: Hepworth Manufacturing Company, 1901.

Burnham Beeches. Directed by Gaston Quiribet. United Kingdom: Hepworth Manufacturing Comapany,1909. 35 mm.

A Day with the Gypsies. Directed by Gaston Quiribet. United Kingdom: Hepworth Manufacturing Company, 1906. 16mm.

Discover Britain By Train. Directed by C. David Lochner. United Kingdom: British Transport Films, 1978. 16 mm.

Churned Waters. United Kingdom: Warwick Trading Co, 1899. 35 mm.

Conway, River of a Thousand Moods. United Kingdom: Hepworth Manufacturing Company, 1921. British Film Institute Mediatheques.

From Bud to Blossom. United Kingdom: Charles Urban Trading Co., 1910.

Frost-Bound Nature. United Kingdom: Hepworth Manufacturing Company,1909.

The Heart of England. Directed by Michael Clarke. 1954. United Kingdom: British Transport Films, 2005. DVD.

The Horsey Mail. Directed by Pat Jackson. United Kingdom: General Post Office Film Unit, 1938. 35 mm.

A Letter for Wales. Directed by Tony Thompson. 1960. United Kingdom: British Transport Films, 1987. DVD.

A Midsummer Day's Work. Directed by Alberto Cavalcanti. United Kingdom: General Post Office Film Unit, 1939. 35 mm.

Moonlight on the Thames. United Kingdom: Hepworth Manufacturing Company, 1909.

North Wales, England: The Land of Castles and Waterfalls. United Kingdom: Charles Urban Trading Co.,1907. 35 mm.

In the Scottish Highlands. United Kingdom: Charles Urban Trading Co., 1908. 35 mm.

Phantom Ride, Chamonix. United Kingdom: Paul's Animatograph Works, 1900. 35 mm.

Phantom Ride from Chamonix to Vallorcine. France: Éclair, 1910. 35 mm.

Phantom Ride on the Furness Railway. United Kingdom: Mitchell and Kenyon, 1901. 35 mm.

Phantom Railway Ride. United Kingdom,1901. 35 mm.

Phantom Ride and Panorama. United Kingdom: Hepworth and Co., 1902. 35 mm.

Phantom Train Ride, Railway Journey. United Kingdom: Mitchell and Kenyon, 1900. 35 mm.

Picturesque North Wales. United Kingdom: Charles Urban Trading Co., 1910. 35 mm.

A Ride on a Toy Railway. United Kingdom: Hepworth and Co., 1902. 35 mm.

Rocky Shore . United Kingdom: R.W. Paul, 1896. 35 mm.

Rough Sea at Dover. Directed by Birt Acres. United Kingdom, 1895.

Rough Sea, Niagara Falls. United Kingdom,1895.

Scenes on the Cornish Riviera. United Kingdom: Charles Urban Trading Co.,1904. 35 mm.

Scottish Highlands. Directed by Michael Orrom. United Kingdom: British Transport Films, 1953. 35 mm.

Shore Line . Directed by Chris Welsby. United Kingdom. 1977. Six Screen Film Installation. 16 mm.

Shore Line II. Directed by Chris Welsby. United Kingdom. 1979. Six Screen Film Installation. 16 mm.

Thames Panorama. United Kingdom: Hepworth Manufacturing Company, 1899.

Tree Studies. Directed by Chris Welsby. United Kingdom. 2006. Three Screen Digital Media Installation.

Unseen World Collection. United Kingdom: Charles Urban Trading Co., 1903.

Up the River with Molly. Directed by Gaston Quiribet. United Kingdom: Hepworth Manufacturing Company,1921. 35mm.

View from an Engine Front, Barnstaple. United Kingdom: Warwick Trading Co., 1898. 35.mm.

Visit to Mount Etna. United Kingdom: Warwick Trading Company, 1900. 35 mm.

The Waterfalls of Wales. United Kingdom: Hepworth Manufacturing Company, 1904. 35 mm.

West Country Journey. Directed by Syd Sharples. 1953. United Kingdom: British Transport Films, 1987. DVD.

Wind Vane. Directed by Chris Welsby. United Kingdom. 1972. Twin Screen Film Installation. 16 mm.