

Karl Kusserow and Alan C. Braddock

Nature's Nation American Art and Environment

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Ordering the Land

Picturing People, Picturing Places

If the impulse to conceptually order the natural world through successive epistemological regimes of divine revelation, natural theology, and Enlightenment science characterized Western thought over time, a similar desire to organize nature's archetypal representation—the landscape view—is apparent from the start in American visual culture as well. In 1590 the artist and publisher Theodor de Bry (1528–1598) issued a group of images illustrating Thomas Hariot's *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* [...], written by a member of Sir Walter Raleigh's second expedition to coastal North Carolina (1585–86), and significant as the earliest English account of North America. De Bry's accompanying engravings, based on watercolors by another expeditioner, John White (ca. 1540–ca. 1593), comprise natural history illustrations, ethnographic portraits, genre and town scenes, maps, and landscape views. Collectively, they present an optimistic, wish-fulfillment vision of America as a place of both great exoticism and promise, in keeping with the essentially promotional, expansionist aims of Hariot's text.

Several of de Bry's engravings picture resource extraction, underscoring the New World's appealing natural abundance (see also his contemporaneous engraving of Indigenous silver miners; fig. 113). *Their manner of fishynge in Virginia* (fig. 33) shows people of the Roanoke or Secotan tribes—Carolina Algonquians—harvesting fish in various ways from the manifestly plentiful waters off Roanoke Island. Although the sight portrayed would have been entirely unfamiliar to its intended European audience of backers and prospective settlers of Raleigh's envisioned colony, the engraving works hard to present the alien tableau in the most favorable light.

Apart from the copious array of fish and fowl, the image itself is composed as a stable grid, structuring the exotic scene with a reassuringly rational rectilinearity. The strips of land at front and back, the frieze-like canoe in the foreground (echoed by others in the distance), and particularly the water's articulation through innumerable layers of parallel lines all impart a horizontal stasis to the view, one regularly bisected at right angles by the spaced weirs in the background as well as by the foreground standing figures. The impression is one of visual fixity and conceptual control despite the foreign subject. Even the peculiar marine life, situated parallel to the picture plane and for the most part horizontally, adheres to the pictorial order and is rendered as generalized, easily understood icons. De Bry additionally adopts the drawing technique of doubling (the repetition of pictorial elements in pairs), which amplifies the depicted plenitude while subtly diminishing the potentially alienating strangeness of its parts, supplying multiple examples of natural oddities that might otherwise appear disconcertingly unique. And by orienting certain important pairs, such as the figures in the canoe, to show corresponding front and back sides, the engraving affords an additional sense of knowledge and subjective control—namely, of the scene existing for the viewer. The overall effect is to render a potentially overwhelming and threatening new environment as not only comprehensible but also capable of—even inviting—colonial dominion.¹

This was essential, as America was considered by Europeans with a mixture of both trepidation and allure. The royal patent Raleigh received from Queen Elizabeth “to discover, search, find out, and view such remote heathen and barbarous lands ... as to him ... shall seem good, and the same to



FIGURE 33: Theodor de Bry (Flemish, 1528–1598), after John White (English, ca. 1540–ca. 1593), *Their manner of fishynge in Virginia*. Engraving. Published in Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* [...], (Frankfurt: 1590). The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC

have, hold, occupy, and enjoy” suggests these countervailing apprehensions of the unknown place (“heathen and barbarous” yet possible to “enjoy”), then as much concept as entity. White later returned to Roanoke Island on a second Raleigh expedition, now intending to establish and govern the first permanent English settlement in North America. He deposited just over one hundred settlers on the island in the summer of 1587 and returned to England for provisions, but by the time he was able to come back three years later, the Lost Colony, as it came to be called, had vanished, indicating the difficulty of early settlement and further conditioning European thoughts about the North American environment. These were complemented during the early seventeenth century by Puritan and especially Pilgrim accounts of, in the words of Plymouth Colony leader William Bradford, whose Pilgrim settlers arrived on the *Mayflower*, “a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of beasts and wild men.” Similarly bleak conceptions held sway until midcentury and beyond, as when the Puritan poet and minister Michael Wigglesworth, of the larger Massachusetts Bay Colony based in Boston, described New England as “A Waste and howling wilderness” ruled by Satan. The supposedly uncivilized, unimproved American environment—in actuality inhabited and in various ways productively managed by diverse Indigenous peoples for centuries—served as metaphor as well as perceived reality. By figuring America as wilderness, and wilderness as depraved and irreligious, Europeans justified their conquest and transformation of it by divine right. When the philosopher John Locke evoked the first words of Genesis to contend, with property rights in mind, “In the beginning all the world was America,” he solidified a linkage, entrenched by 1689 when he wrote it, of New World nature and godly sanction. America offered up a stage for the sacred project, articulated elsewhere in the book of Genesis, to “subdue . . . and have dominion . . . over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (as if nature had no right to exist but to serve humankind).²

The menacing connotations of wilderness did not end with the seventeenth century, and the images produced here by Europeans during the early eighteenth century, surviving in numbers finally exceeding the seventy watercolors made by White more than a century before, both reflected and bolstered this understanding—mostly, counterintuitively, through portraits. The art of portraying people would seem an unlikely place to discern environmental attitudes, but in

expressing the relationship of sitters to their often outdoor surroundings, portraits offer the opportunity to explore evolving human relations not just with one another but with everything else. And in any case they are about all we have, since portraits constitute the only pictorial Western art produced in quantity in North America before the end of the eighteenth century. By examining a continuum of American portraits incorporating natural or landscape backgrounds from across the eighteenth century, we can compare and contrast the ways in which each constructs the external world, and discern the sitters' relationship to it. Although American artists relied heavily on European sources in devising their compositions—on prints made after painted portraits, on occasional exposure to the paintings themselves, and more diffusely on mutual immersion in a transatlantic visual aesthetic—they exerted their own agency in the particular sources they chose to adopt, and in how they modified and developed those sources. Many European portraits were set indoors and contain no landscape elements at all. That American artists gravitated toward the inclusion of natural backgrounds suggests they were influenced not only by foreign artistic precedent but also by local conditions and attitudes about their existence at what was considered the margins of the cultivated world.³

The German-born artist Justus Engelhardt Kühn (died 1717) painted the most ambitious surviving portraits of early colonial America, all dozen or so of them made for the same three, interrelated Maryland families. His paired portrayals of the Darnall children, Henry III (ca. 1710; Maryland Historical Society) and his sister Eleanor (fig. 34), are staples of American art textbooks, in part because the portrait of Henry includes the earliest known, and deeply troubling, depiction of an African American in American art—a collared servant sequestered, unlike his sister's pet dog, on the opposite side of an elaborate balustrade. Also disconcerting are the portraits' background views onto the realm of nature, which seems anything but natural. Instead, the external world appears fantastical, in elaborate scenes of imaginary gardens with ornamental fountains and baroque architectural trappings—views all the more obviously invented for the failure of the two of them to match. Although the wealthy Darnalls owned some thirty-five thousand acres west of Maryland's Chesapeake Bay and completed a large brick mansion, the Woodyard, in the years immediately preceding Kühn's paintings—which must have been meant to hang

there—both portraits are set before landscapes nothing remotely like what would have been present there or anywhere else in the colonies at the time. Rather, in conjuring baroque, parklike vistas as regimented as the checkered pavement on which Eleanor stands, Kühn and other early émigré artists, familiar with the existence of such places from prints or paintings or firsthand experience abroad, offered a representation of American “nature” that confidently portended the productive, even aestheticized, domestication of a landscape whose actual wild and uncultivated state was considered unappealing and downright threatening. Later portraits, such as the portrayal, some twenty years later, of another young girl likewise set apart by a balustrade from the less elaborate but comparably regulated nature beyond (fig. 35), share a common impulse to bring conceptual control to an unruly world, until actual dominion might be achieved. They serve as visual analogues to the observations of settlers dating back to the previous century, eager to describe progress in transforming the fearsome wilderness: “The hideous Thickets in this place were such, that Wolves and Beares nurst up their young from the eyes of all beholders, in those very places where the streets are full of Girles and Boys sporting up and downe, with a continued concourse of people.”⁴

Similar strategies characterize early American landscape representations in their other limited appearances, such as the drawing of Savannah, Georgia, completed in 1734 by George Jones (active 1733–1734) after Noble Jones (1702/5–1775) (fig. 36). Here artifice also prevails over any possible observed reality as the settlement, merely a year old, is rendered with a systematized linearity that extends even to the trees of the encroaching forest and the wholly prospective layout of the unimproved lots. Like de Bry's fishing scene of a century and a half before, the image's overwhelming rectilinearity imparts stability and coherence to the articulated natural forms, in keeping with their mutual aim of encouraging settlement through nature's rationalization. It is not such a distance from here to the willful symmetries in the backgrounds of Kühn's Darnall children paintings; in each case, a desire to mentally organize and visually shape an untouched environment widely held to be useless and overwhelming allows it instead to be imagined as manageable and fruitfully habitable.

Around the second third of the eighteenth century, such overtly fictive landscape inventions gave way to persuasively



FIGURE 34: Justus Engelhardt Kühn (American, born Germany, died 1717), *Eleanor Darnall*, 1704–1796, ca. 1710. Oil on canvas, 137.8 × 111.8 cm. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore. Bequest of Miss Ellen C. Daingerfield (1912.1.5)



FIGURE 35: Unidentified artist, *De Peyster Girl, with a Lamb*, ca. 1730–35. Oil on canvas, 127.6 × 104.1 cm. New-York Historical Society. Bequest of Catherine Augusta De Peyster (1911.5)

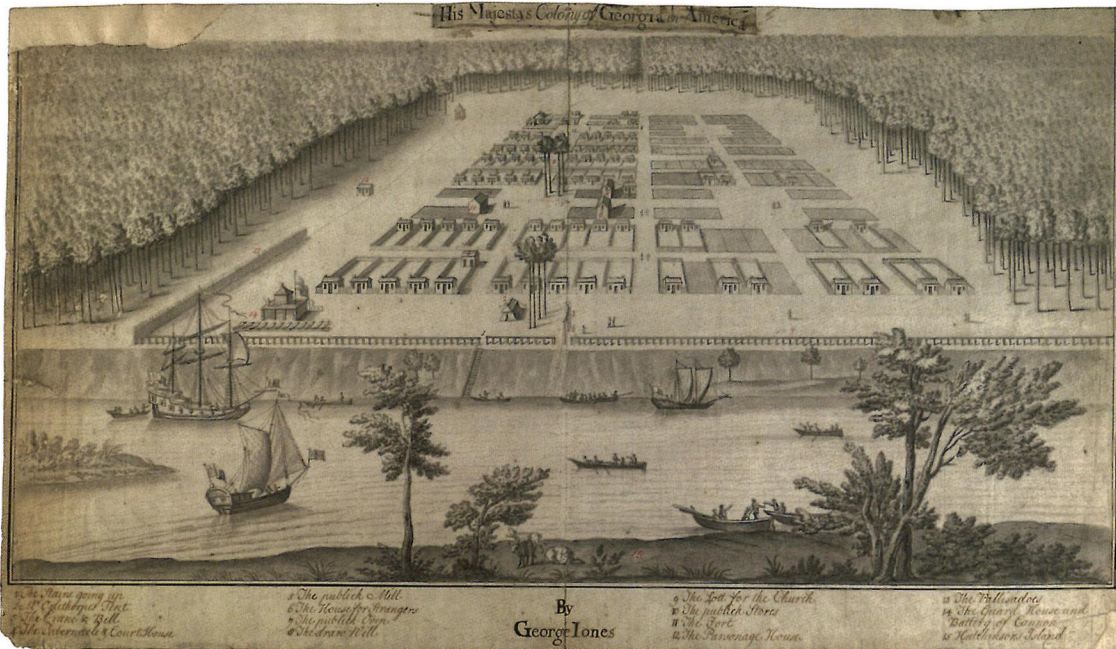


FIGURE 36: George Jones (British, active 1733–1734), after Noble Jones (American, born England, 1702/5–1775), *A View of Savannah as It Stood the 29th of March, 1734*, 1734. Ink on paper, 37.5 × 65 cm. University of Georgia Libraries, Athens. Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library



FIGURE 37: John Smibert (American, born Scotland, 1688–1751), *Portrait of Mrs. Hugh Hall*, 1733. Oil on canvas, 124.5 × 99.1 cm. Denver Art Museum. Funds from 1983 Collectors' Choice Benefit, Acquisition Challenge Grant, Mabel Y. Hughes Charitable Trust, Volunteer Endowment, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Atchison, Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Benson, Mr. and Mrs. William C. Foxley, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Haines Jr., Mr. and Mrs. William R. James, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick R. Mayer, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Petteys, Mr. and Mrs. Walter S. Rosenberry III, Mr. and Mrs. Keith Singer, and anonymous donors (1984.819)

realistic settings. These conceivably actual landscapes, though they retain an air of creative design due to their generic appearance, embody a distinct shift in conceptions of American nature, from one in which a disorderly wilderness is metaphorically tamed through wholesale invention to one in which a more plausible naturalized setting can be appreciated on its own terms. This shift was informed by changes abroad, where Enlightenment discovery led to a dawning understanding of environmental complexity and the subsequent association of the divine with nature in even its wilder aspects. The concept of sublimity and a proto-Romantic appreciation of unregulated nature developed in the writings of Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, and later William Gilpin and others, and was materially expressed in landscape painting and design as well as in period portraiture. In America, as settlement advanced and the perceived threat of wilderness receded, the emerging notion of a productive human symbiosis with nature perfectly suited local conditions. It is first broached pictorially in the work of John Smibert (1688–1751), the most advanced painter active in the colonies before 1750. The subject of his 1733 *Portrait of Mrs. Hugh Hall* (fig. 37) occupies a new, liminal space both of and apart from her placid natural surroundings—in contrast to the emphatic separation of the two in the earlier portraits we have seen—and she conspicuously points a finger to relate herself to the adjacent landscape. This device, commonly encountered in religious images in which the finger is pointed upward to connote divine assistance, here signifies nature's beneficence in constructing the world of the sitter. Certainly Mrs. Hall was not literally linked to the sort of nature shown in her portrait—she lived in Boston, and her husband was a merchant with strong family ties to Barbados, not the temperate vales Smibert has conjured for his wife's portrait. Rather, her representation as in harmony with nature responded more generally to changing attitudes here and abroad about it, and to the specific conditions of her American situation.⁵

The few surviving proper landscapes of the period (those unaffiliated with portraits) reveal a similar loosening, naturalizing impulse. British military officer and artist Thomas Davies (ca. 1737–1812) made sketches for *View of the Lines at Lake George, 1759* (fig. 38) while serving in the French and Indian War, and completed the painting based on them some years later. Davies's canvas shows the encampment of British troops at the lake's southern end, following the destruction



FIGURE 38: Thomas Davies (British, ca. 1737–1812), *View of the Lines at Lake George, 1759, ca. 1774*. Oil on canvas, 64.1 × 76.8 cm. Fort Ticonderoga Museum, Ticonderoga, New York



FIGURE 39: Ralph Earl (American, 1751–1801), *Esther Boardman*, 1789. Oil on canvas, 108 × 81.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Edith and Henry Noss, 1991 (1991.338)



FIGURE 40: Ralph Earl, *Daniel Boardman*, 1789. Oil on canvas, 207.4 × 140.4 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Gift of Mrs. W. Murray Crane (1948.8.1)

of the adjacent Fort William Henry by the French and their Native American allies. Comparing Davies's picture to the earlier but similarly utilitarian Savannah scene—of which it is a kind of mirror image, a view looking over a settlement onto water instead of the reverse—the sense of human integration with the surrounding environment is now far more complete, with the receding tent rows echoed in the ranging hills beyond, their forms in turn softened and conjoined with their watery reflections, and the entire prospect framed by brushy trees. Despite the subject—a military installation hacked out of the wilderness—the image stresses the intermingling of its parts, including people with the encompassing landscape.

As ongoing settlement and cultivation enabled artists to encounter a nature that was in actuality domesticated, their portraits increasingly feature particular environments

within the natural world rather than portraying it as a general construct, as in Smibert's paintings. In 1789 Ralph Earl (1751–1801) painted a portrait of Esther Boardman (fig. 39) seated on a hill before a distant view of New Milford, the Connecticut town her family was instrumental in settling. In this and other Boardman family portraits by Earl—he painted nineteen—we see the realization of an ideal Kühn could only imagine and Smibert approached just figuratively: the co-optation and commodification through human agency of the American wilderness. Enlightenment thought had affirmed knowledge and development in place of the Calvinist narrative of human degradation, and the related efflorescence of natural history posited progress through the improvement and transformation of the physical world. Portraits like Earl's, picturing the subjugation, settlement, and cultivation of nature, finally embodied these aims.⁶



FIGURE 41: Ralph Earl, *Looking East from Denny Hill*, 1800. Oil on canvas, 116.2 × 201.6 cm. Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts (1916.97)

Esther's portrait makes a fascinating comparison with Earl's larger and grander one of her brother Daniel (fig. 40), which the artist completed the same year. Each is set on a rise along the Housatonic River, looking northwest toward town, where the spire of the Congregational Church, founded by the siblings' grandfather (and Daniel's namesake), locates the scene and grants the sitters a kind of baronial dominion over it. Esther is seated on the ground, Earl's preferred format for young women, and further bound to it by her moss-green gown; her dark ringlets link her to the adjacent trees, and her forearms echo the angle of the slope on which she rests. Compared to the portrait of her brother, we see more of the hillside and less of the town. Daniel stands rather than sits, and seems set before rather than within his natural surroundings. His fashionable pose mirrors the serpentine form of the upright tree opposite, but his elbow points to town, and his white shirt, vest, and breeches tie him to the buildings and fencerows there, and to the sky over them, bringing the cultivated background forward. Daniel's right shirtsleeve, whose ruffled edges connect him to the similarly articulated background fences, likewise has a bridging effect, and the reddish lining of his hat and the hanging seals at his waist draw out other parts of the town.

Whereas Esther's portrait affords us a glimpse of the town through the screen of nature, in Daniel's it is as much the subject as he is. Compared to the earlier portraits we have

seen, both Boardmans evince a new closeness with the environment, but in different ways. Esther is of the woods, allied with the land in its natural state; Daniel is of the town, linked to his surroundings in their transformed state, and with nature as property. The gendered implications of the comparison can be seen to reveal a persistent parallel between the historical domination of both women and nature by male interests of conquest and property, such that sexism and environmental exploitation can each be considered artifacts of patriarchy.⁷

Late in his career, Earl produced a handful of pure landscapes, logical extensions of the views of property so often appearing in his portraits behind their subjects. Indeed, the first of these were themselves portraits of a sort—only of houses not people—expressing the ability of his sitters to now transfer their identities onto the environments they had domesticated, in the tradition of English estate views. Earl's earliest landscape, of the Ruggles homestead in New Milford (1796; current location unknown), is one such picture, showing its modest subject enveloped—even engulfed—by the surrounding landscape, inadvertently expressing the enormity of the unsettled world. It makes an interesting comparison with the artist's last landscape, *Looking East from Denny Hill* (fig. 41), completed a year before Earl's death in 1801. This, by contrast, is a view *from* its patron's property, and is indebted to another European tradition of more expansive

“prospect” views. The later painting looks outward instead of back in, anticipating the emergence of landscape representation that was to flourish in American art during the nineteenth century, and which was also deeply informed by changing perceptions of the relationship between people and their surrounding environments.

The Promise of the Picturesque

Before embarking on his brief career as a landscape artist, Earl painted an unusual portrait that referenced both genres. As if to test the waters, he first produced a portrait of someone else painting a landscape. Earl's portrayal of Colonel William Taylor (fig. 42) came a year after his paintings of Esther and Daniel Boardman, and formed part of a similar



FIGURE 42: Ralph Earl, *Portrait of Colonel William Taylor*, 1790. Oil on canvas, 123.8 × 96.5 cm. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. Charles Clifton Fund, 1935 (1935:14.1)

series of likenesses done for the Taylors, an interrelated New Milford family. William was the son of Nathaniel Taylor, who in 1749 married Tamar Boardman after assuming her father's pastoral duties at the church visible in the back of both Esther's and Daniel's portraits. A farmer, merchant, and Revolutionary War veteran, William Taylor was also an early amateur landscape painter.

Curiously, William's depiction by Earl seems more like that of his female cousin, Esther, than his contemporary male relative, Daniel Boardman, who stands distinct and proprietary before the vista behind him. Taylor is shown seated parallel to the landscape visible through the adjacent open window, and united with it by the pervasive green palette. The arrangement of the composition coheres the scene as well, forming a pictorial and conceptual circle moving counterclockwise from the landscape the sitter has been observing, through the means of his perception—eyes and head—down his extended arm (echoed by the curved arm of the chair) to the instrument for recording his impressions (pen), and finally to their realization on the easel propped before him. The painting thematizes the translation through art of real to represented landscape. Coming on the eve of Earl's own engagement with pure landscape painting—and that of American art, generally—the sort of landscape he shows Taylor creating assumes particular interest, as does the kind of actual landscape deemed worthy of artistic attention.

Compared to topographical views like the one of Savannah in 1734 (see fig. 36), the landscapes set before Taylor are different. Both the vista through the window conjured by Earl and, even more, Taylor's schematic rendition of it are informed by the aesthetic dictates of the picturesque, a pictorial idiom then flourishing in England that found especially fertile ground in America, where it remained the dominant mode of landscape representation for over half a century. Occupying a middle ground between the transcriptive tradition of British estate views and topographical scenes—increasingly disdained for their slavish, mechanical orientation—and the richly imaginative but somewhat outmoded conventions of classical landscape descended from the French master Claude Lorrain (1604/5–1682), the picturesque arose in England during the mid-eighteenth century and was later influentially theorized by William Gilpin, Uvedale Price, and Richard Payne Knight. It responded there to the accelerated enclosure (the transfer of communal properties to private individual plots) and



FIGURE 43: John Taylor (American, 1735–1806), *A Wooded Classical Landscape at Evening with Figures in the Foreground*, 1772. Oil on canvas, 101.6 × 127 cm. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas (2011.13)

commodification of the land long under way, as well as to the advent of the Industrial Revolution. Each engendered an enhanced appreciation for landscape—as property or as metaphorical escape for an expanded class of urban patrons.⁸

Just how the image Taylor is painting differs from previous types of landscape representation can be seen by comparing it not only to the Savannah view, from which it overtly diverges, but also to a classical Claudian landscape by another American artist named Taylor, from which it more subtly departs. John Taylor (1735–1806) completed *A Wooded Classical Landscape at Evening with Figures in the Foreground* in 1772 (fig. 43). At the time, he resided in England, having moved from Philadelphia a decade earlier. His father had helped Benjamin Franklin found the University of Pennsylvania, and in a 1783 letter Franklin expressed his esteem for Taylor's art while underscoring the lack of an American market to support it: "Our geniuses all go to Europe. In England at present the best History Painter, West; the best Portrait Painter, Copley; and the best Landscape Painter, Taylor, at Bath are all

Americans." In *A Wooded Classical Landscape*, the soft forms, ethereal light, smooth modulation from foreground to background through atmospheric (tonal) rather than linear (geometric) perspective, and the historicizing subject and iconography all epitomize the Claudian landscape, itself an archetype of the beautiful, the aesthetic category codified during the mid-eighteenth century in opposition to the sublime. The picturesque fit somewhere in between these ideals, advocating in place of the grace and ease of the beautiful, or the awe and grandeur of the sublime, a more approachable variety, irregularity, liveliness, and even apparent disorder. Crucially, however, these were to be presented within, and organized by, a methodized approach to representation whose logic and eventual familiarity created the opposite effect—"a sort of irregular symmetry," or controlled diversity, as the British surveyor James Clarke described it in 1787.⁹

To see how this was accomplished, we can return to William Taylor's sketch (see fig. 42). It takes the landscape Earl shows through the window—already picturesque in its



FIGURE 44: William Winstanley (British, active 1793–1806), *View of the North [Hudson] River (Morning)*, ca. 1793. Oil on canvas, 117.5 × 151.8 cm. Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, Virginia. Purchase, 1940 (W-1179)

variability, partial concealment, and suggestion of movement and change as the viewer imagines progressing through it—and transmutes it into a schematized and coherent system of geometric forms. Borrowing from the language of the classical landscape the coulisses (wedges of land pointing inward from alternate sides, moving progressively backward) and repoussoirs (foreground framing devices leading into the scene) that structure Claudian compositions, but simplifying and greatly accentuating their use, Taylor's sketch—and the picturesque, generally—offered a means of controlling and ordering the diverse landscape. This rationalizing effect was of special appeal to Americans, imposing a conceptual logic on nature's complexity and seeming disarray. It allowed them to exchange a nature that was still overwhelmingly wild with one more accessibly pastoral, mitigating their sense of being overmatched by their environmental surroundings. Gilpin himself noted, "The idea of a wild country, in a natural state . . . is to the generality of people but an unpleasing one." The picturesque presented a means of conventionalizing unimproved nature and bestowing a benign and familiar order. If its appeal in England was largely aesthetic, in America it offered

the ability to render a vast and unsettled world as lucid and manageable as the sketch on William Taylor's desk.¹⁰

We have only Earl's picture to know how Taylor's painting actually looked, but there were a few other, professional landscape artists at work in the new United States at the same time. All born in England, they reversed the migration Franklin had described only a decade before, hoping to find in America a viable market among a population now numbering four million. Most came first to Philadelphia, then the nation's capital, including William Birch (1755–1834) in 1794, William Groombridge (1748–1811) around the same time, and William Winstanley (active 1793–1806) by 1793. In April of that year, Winstanley sold to none other than George Washington two large landscapes for the President's House on Market Street, for which Alexander Hamilton soon after expressed admiration: "There are two views of situations on Hudson's River painted by Mr Winstanly [*sic*], in the drawing Room of Mrs. Washington, which have great intrinsic merit." What could it mean for the country's first president to acquire and publicly display scarce landscapes of American subjects, and for Hamilton to deem them full of merit?¹¹

Whether Winstanley's paintings even depict the Hudson River is questionable; they are possibly pastiches created by the artist to suggest a place he had not seen. Paired compositions evoking different times of day, the more impressive *View of the North [Hudson] River (Morning)* (fig. 44) is a generalized riverine landscape in the manner of earlier British pastoral landscapists Alexander Cozens, Thomas Gainsborough, and Richard Wilson, artists for whom effect and invention trumped truth to nature. The painting is a paradigm of picturesque composition, providing modulated, stepwise access into the depicted scene, framed at each edge with trees that open up to reveal a view onto smooth, serpentine water. The work's veracity seems not to have mattered. What apparently was desired was a landscape that, in looking much like idyllic England, projected onto untamed America a vision of what might be. A surveyor by training, Washington was an avid and experienced gardener and landscaper, whose cultivated designs for Mount Vernon expressed his values of logic, decorum, and control. In electing to purchase and show such an unlikely bucolic portrayal of the mighty Hudson, he expressed a similar wish to bring art to bear on the domestication of American nature.¹²

If Winstanley had in fact been to the Hudson River, his representation of it was evidently mediated by such concerns. The picturesque allowed, even encouraged, this kind of pictorial manipulation. "Nature's compositions are seldom complete or correct," wrote the Reverend R. H. Newell in 1821. And although "Nature must be the foundation . . . [It] must be raised and improved," noted a 1789 Boston magazine article, "with such additions and combinations, as a fertile imagination may form," concluded Philadelphia's *Portfolio* in 1812. In 1792 Gilpin marked the distinction between beautiful and picturesque scenes as "between those, which please the eye in their *natural state*; and those, which please from some quality, capable of being *illustrated in painting*"—that is, through their manipulation into desirable form. In an American context, such aesthetic management must have been especially alluring, as it entailed the ability to literally move mountains to make nature respond to human aims.¹³

Washington thought Winstanley's paintings so appealing he bought two more the following year, and when he finally returned to Mount Vernon in 1797, he installed the original two prominently in his "New Room" (fig. 45). No ordinary space, this was by far the largest, most formal, most stylistically



FIGURE 45: New Room, Mount Vernon, constructed 1776–87, refurnished 1797–99. In the current installation, the Winstanley paintings flank the projecting fireplace at right. Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, Virginia

up-to-date chamber in Washington's home, the last and grandest of his many improvements. It served as a "show" or statement room, and—in ways difficult to fully grasp today—was meant to represent and convey its proprietor's taste, interests, and beliefs. Like the grand salons of contemporary British country houses, it served as Mount Vernon's picture gallery, where Washington hung his best and favorite works. Many of the twenty-one paintings or engravings displayed in the room at his death in 1799 were fittingly American, including engravings by John Trumbull (1756–1843) of scenes from the Revolutionary War and the artist's portrait of the victorious general at Yorktown (each visible on the back wall in fig. 45). Works of this sort would have been

expected during a time when history was construed largely as biography, its progression a result of the deeds of great men. But Washington's deliberate acquisition of landscapes (his collection eventually included seven) was unusual, and made the New Room effectively the first gallery of American landscape art, conveying an apparent understanding of the physical world's crucial import for the nation's future. The collective message was optimistic, and in such a symbolically resonant space, the Winstanleys fit right in, picturing an American environment made accessible and domesticated through the controlling conventions of the picturesque.¹⁴

Perhaps out of propriety, none of the multiple copies Washington purchased in 1798 of the engravings by

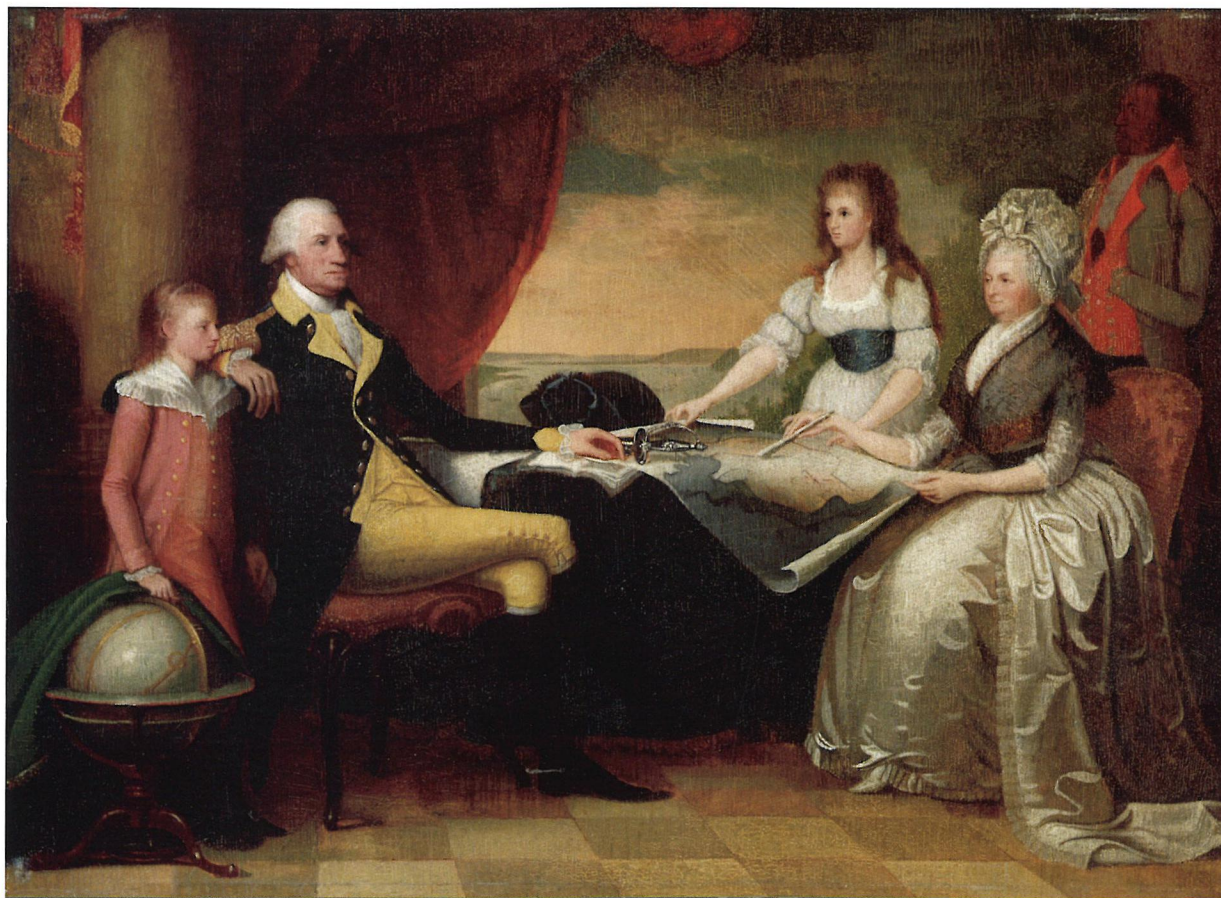


FIGURE 46: Edward Savage (American, 1761–1817), *The Washington Family*, 1798–1805. Oil on mahogany, 46 × 61.2 cm. Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, Wilmington, Delaware. Bequest of Henry Francis du Pont (1961.0708)

Edward Savage (1761–1817) after his painting of *The Washington Family* (fig. 46) adorned the New Room, though he clearly approved of the image. Instead one was displayed in the small or family dining room nearby, appropriate for a portrait of the president's relations gathered domestically around a table. But in a sense it would not have been out of place in the grander, rhetorical chamber. Savage's picture shows Washington in military dress surrounded by family at Mount Vernon, engaged in the study of Pierre Charles L'Enfant's design for the proposed capital up the Potomac, which is visible in the background. Like the Trumbull portrait and engravings in the New Room it valorizes the country's first leader, and like Winstanley's landscapes it is concerned with the refashioning of the American environment—in this case literally—for beneficial ends. What distinguishes *The Washington Family* from these untroubled imaginings of America's promise is the presence, among Washington's "relatives," of an enslaved American. Savage's initial study for his family portrait did not include the likeness of William Lee, Washington's favored body servant; instead, a group of background trees served a similar framing role in the composition. In the life-size painting he completed before issuing the engraving, the artist replaced the trees with the figure of a black servant, "borrow[ing] John Riley...to pose as one of Washington's servants," as he "had no black model at hand." Only late in the picture's evolution did Lee appear, apparently an afterthought. It seems ironic that the artist would incorporate a slave in the image only belatedly, as it was enslaved labor that actually accomplished much of the environmental transformation proposed by L'Enfant's plan, which involved extensive draining of the swampy site.¹⁵

At least Savage eventually included Lee. The same could not be said for Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1764–1820), who in representing the Washingtons did the opposite. In the transition from study to finished version of his image showing the family conversing on Mount Vernon's famed portico, the figure of a black attendant—probably William Lee's brother, Frank—disappears as one of the president is inserted (figs. 47, 48). Latrobe paid an overnight visit to the Washingtons in the summer of 1796, and in his journal recalled a lengthy discussion with the president on that same porch about another land reclamation project, for the Great Dismal Swamp to the south. Washington was one of the original three managers in a company formed to promote its conversion from wetland to profitable, arable real estate.



FIGURE 47: Benjamin Henry Latrobe (British, 1764–1820), *Sketch of a groupe for a drawing of Mount Vernon*, 1796. Graphite and ink on paper. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore (1960.108.1.2.21)



FIGURE 48: Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *Detail of View of Mount Vernon with the Washington Family on the Piazza, July 16, 1796*, 1796. Watercolor, ink, and graphite on paper. Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, Virginia. Purchased with funds provided in part by an anonymous donor, 2013



FIGURE 49: Edward Savage, *The East Front of Mount Vernon*, ca. 1787-92. Oil on canvas, 55.9 × 90.2 cm. Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, Virginia. Bequest of Helen W. Thompson, 1964

Sixty slaves were assembled to dig drainage ditches, but the effort was ultimately unsuccessful, and by the time Washington discussed it with Latrobe, he had sold his stake at a loss. Though the venture failed, one imagines the enslaved individuals tasked with carrying it out had a still bleaker perspective on the project than did its genteel investors. Latrobe's erasure of the slave from the Mount Vernon picture underscores the uncanny invisibility of more than 90 percent of the plantation's human population, even as the environmental engineering projects revolving around this image and Savage's belie that population's indispensability to the business of American empire building—and indicate how different Americans might perceive the same environments quite differently.¹⁶

The racially bifurcated composition of early American environmental experience is broached again in two other Mount Vernon images by Savage, estate views made

around 1790. One shows the mansion's west façade, with Washington and family identifiably promenading in the foreground, while diminutive, unvariegated slaves ring the periphery of the image—something of an inversion of their essential role in enabling every aspect of the scene, from the construction of the building that is its focus to maintenance of its elaborate grounds. Savage's other view depicts the plantation's famed east front overlooking the Potomac (fig. 49). Although human figures are not featured, the image still manages to separate owner from owned by isolating the white mansion from the (literally) colored "House for Families" or slave quarters behind it with a large intervening tree, as well as by the prominent representation of an actual structure that ran between them, a so-called ha-ha, or earthen fence. Savage did not sign either painting, but the appearance of a ship on the Potomac in the lower corner of the latter image calls to

mind a vessel of that name, HMS *Savage*, a British warship that in 1781 was positioned at the same spot on the river as in Savage's painting, threatening to burn Mount Vernon as part of the ongoing hostilities. Seventeen of the estate's slaves took advantage of the ship's proximity to escape servitude (Virginia's Royal Governor had offered "Freedom to All Indented Servts & Slaves [the Property of Rebels] that will repair to his majestys Standard—being able to bear Arms"). Their readiness to flee their known surroundings and join forces against the army led by Washington affirms that life at Mount Vernon was not for everyone the idyllic picture Savage portrays it to be.¹⁷

A rare and more truthful representation of African American environmental experience can be seen in Francis Guy's *Perry Hall, Slave Quarters with Field Hands at Work* of a few years later (fig. 50). Guy (1760–1820) was a contemporary

of Savage, active during the early nineteenth century around Baltimore. Shortly after his completion of the Perry Hall painting—one of three views of Harry Dorsey Gough's estate showing his human, animal, built, and territorial possessions—Guy's reputation was battered by a series of critiques that his work was insufficiently refined. In what was apparently the first art dispute played out in American critical literature, Eliza Godefroy stated in the *Baltimore Observer* that "if Mr. Guy's genius is a diamond, it is one without polish," the first of several disparagements that eventually caused the artist to respond in a competing journal. Writing in the *American*, Latrobe later described one of Guy's landscapes as containing "some charming parts—some detestable ones." The gist of the criticisms related to the self-taught artist's transcriptive tendencies, as against the inclination of a more stylish artist such as Winstanley toward manipulation and "improvement." While



FIGURE 50: Francis Guy (American, born England, 1760–1820), *Perry Hall, Slave Quarters with Field Hands at Work*, ca. 1805. Oil on canvas, 55.9 × 76.2 cm. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore (1986–33)



FIGURE 51: George Beck (British, active in the United States, 1748–1812), *Great Falls of the Potomac*, 1797. Oil on canvas, 111.8 × 140.3 cm. Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, Virginia. Gift of Theodore Lyman Jr., 1885 (W-2)

Guy's critics had such technical considerations in mind in delivering their censure, in the case of his unvarnished depiction of slave labor, one wonders whether the subject unsettled viewers as much as its means of portrayal.¹⁸

The painting's afterlife implies as much. Only a decade following Gough's commission of the work, it was given to one of his former slaves, Esther Hall, along with her freedom. In a not uncommon expression of the confused and conflicted system of human chattelism, Hall was a confidante of Gough's daughter, Sarah, who died shortly before Hall was released from bondage. Sarah's father was himself equivocal about slavery, and although he held fifty slaves at his death, he had freed still more, suggesting Guy's painting may have been uncomfortable to contemplate on the walls of his parlor. It must have been similarly strange for Hall and her descendants, who kept the painting through four generations, knowing that one of the small figures shown working Gough's land may have been their ancestor.¹⁹



FIGURE 52: John Trumbull (American, 1756–1843), *Niagara Falls from an Upper Bank on the British Side*, 1807. Oil on canvas, 62 × 92.9 cm. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut. Bequest of Daniel Wadsworth (1848.4)

Had Washington received from Guy a painting anything like the one the artist delivered to Gough, it would never have been displayed in Mount Vernon's New Room. In that decorous space the most sensational representations of the American environment were dramatic in a different way. Compared to Winstanley's sedate pair of Hudson River vignettes, George Beck's 1797 evocations of another American waterway—*The Potomac River Breaking through the Blue Ridge* and *Great Falls of the Potomac*—are Romantic expressions of nature's vitality (fig. 51; see fig. 45 for a view of both paintings in the New Room). Also an English émigré, Beck (1748–1812) was the most experienced of the early landscape artists at work in this country. He had exhibited at London's Royal Academy and was attuned to advanced artistic practice when he arrived in Maryland in 1793. If Winstanley's pictures of the Hudson epitomize the picturesque, Beck's of the Potomac gesture toward, without fully embracing, the countervailing sublime. Rather than show the scenic stretch of river seen from Mount Vernon's veranda, Beck opted to depict the Potomac in action. Yet in doing so, he was careful to retain the controlling strategies of the picturesque, subordinating the energy of his subject to familiar framing and ordering devices—repoussoirs of tree and clouds, coulisses of rock—so that the dynamic river is ultimately portrayed as contained and nonthreatening. Departing from European contemporaries focused on the sublime, Beck subjugated nature's energies to a pictorial idiom that allowed him to fill his scenes simultaneously with a sense of both power and control. In this he was like artists whose contemporaneous portrayals of the greatest American waterwork, Niagara, frequently rendered the sublime site as finally under the aesthetic jurisdiction of the picturesque (fig. 52). Although visitors to Niagara spared nothing in their verbal panegyrics, in representing it visually they, too, seemed compelled to present even this most exceptional of American environments as within the bounds of rule and order.²⁰

A view farther down the Potomac painted by Beck around the same time overlooks Georgetown and the new federal city of Washington in a more typically picturesque way (fig. 53). It served as the basis for an especially successful engraving issued by the artist in 1800 that offers an instructive comparison with the original image, indicating how a classically picturesque view might be subtly adjusted to further enhance its resonance for an audience vested in seeing the American environment as fundamentally accessible and

inviting (fig. 54). Beck's original painting presents a view onto the Potomac that is essentially static, one that premises the viewer as observer, not participant. Although broadly the same, the engraving by contrast invites the viewer in through a series of modest but effectual alterations: in the print the road leads gradually downward and around an alluring curve, not into pictorial oblivion, as in the painting, and passage along it is encouraged by the appearance of cart tracks and a pair of distant horsemen in place of an inscrutable group blocking the way; figures move into the scene instead of out from it, and visual impediments in the painting—the house in the middle distance, the prominent island, the highly articulated clouds—are removed, diminished, or softened to accommodate them, replaced by gently rolling hills, a distant bridge, and a sailboat; even the medium itself—crisp aquatint engraving—promotes lucidity and legibility. Beck's print optimally exemplifies the efficacy of the picturesque as a tool of expansionist ideology. "At all times, and everywhere," wrote Englishman William Marshall in *A Review of the Landscape* (1795), "one great end of Landscape painting is to bring distant scenery, and such more particularly as it is wild and not easily accessible, under the eye"—that is, within figurative and conceptual reach. Like the theatrical devices upon which it drew—side screens, backdrop, props—the picturesque was meant to create a space, a world, into which the viewer is invited and drawn. As such, it was the ideal artistic means to present a vast and unsettled American environment as "under the eye" of human dominion.²¹

Beck's basic composition proved so appealing that it became something of a template, later repeated in numerous paintings articulating westward expansion. Around 1830 it was emblazoned on English earthenware plates made for the American market, with the added embellishment of a mounted horse shown prancing into the scene, accentuating the essential impulse of the topos and making it widely available. In England itself, however, the artifice of picturesque manipulation was wearing thin. Writer and editor Sir John Stoddart observed in 1801, "The old mode of composing pictures by certain formulae, like apothecaries' prescriptions, or receipts in cookery, seems (at least in landscape) to have given way to the study of nature." Richard Wilson (1713/14–1782), the leading British landscapist of his generation, in his last works downplayed pictorial orchestration and adherence to classical formulae in favor of a more closely observed



FIGURE 53: George Beck, *Georgetown and City of Washington*, ca. 1797. Watercolor and gouache on paper, 38.1 × 50.8 cm. Arader Galleries, New York

naturalism. Similarly, in 1802 the young John Constable (1776–1837) wrote to a friend, “For the last two years I have been running after pictures, and seeking the truth at second hand,” when, he had come to realize, “Nature is the fountain’s head, the source from whence all originality must spring.” He thus resolved to “endeavor to get a pure and unaffected representation of the scenes that may employ me.” His renowned cloud studies—begun in 1821 and purely observational—were the eventual embodiment of this essentially opposite approach, which characterized British landscape art’s move, generally, away from idealizing artificiality toward naturalism, transience, and close study of the environment, as ultimately theorized by John Ruskin (1819–1900).²²

American art did not soon follow. For a generation of English émigré artists such as Joshua Shaw (1776–1860)—an exact contemporary of Constable—and even later, native-born ones, including Alvan Fisher (1792–1863) and Thomas Doughty (1793–1856), the old picturesque formulas held sway. Doughty’s *In the Catskills* (fig. 55), with its prominent framing elements, clear division of fore-, middle-, and

background, and alternating landscape elements leading successively back from left and right, might well have been painted, like Davies’s view of Lake George (see fig. 38), during the eighteenth century. It was completed about 1835. The usual explanation for the discrepancy between American and British landscape painting at the time invokes colonial discourse in terms of center-periphery relations (the lag in stylistic transmission between advanced metropole and undeveloped hinterland) and the supposed unsophistication of artists at work outside cosmopolitan hubs, as well as the related lack of an economically viable, informed patronage to encourage development and currency in such places. While perhaps partially credible (although the American Eastern Seaboard in 1830 was no longer such a backwater), in addition to these excusatory explanations, it might more affirmatively be asserted that American landscape paintings appeared the way they did because their forms resonated with their creators’ and consumers’ environmental perceptions—or, more accurately, predilections. The wilderness was being selectively “tamed,” but the project of settlement on a



FIGURE 54: Thomas Cartwright (British, active early 19th century), after George Beck, *George Town and Federal City, or City of Washington*, 1800. Aquatint; sheet, trimmed: 45.3 × 58 cm. Published by Atkins and Nightingale, London and Philadelphia. Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Prints & Photographs Division

continental scale remained overwhelming. In representing the imposing American world as comprehensibly ordered, controllable through manipulation, and invitingly accessible, the picturesque did very different cultural work than in established England. Its retention here well beyond its use there perhaps implies neither ignorance nor intransigence; the leading American landscape artists of the early to mid-nineteenth century, Doughty, Thomas Cole (1801–1848), and Asher B. Durand (1796–1886), all made artistic sojourns abroad (Cole was born there). Rather, it affirms how representing landscapes means representing attitudes about them, attitudes informed by larger ideas about the human relationship to the environment. Cole, although his early works departed considerably from the American norm (as discussed in the next essay), was like his peers in rejecting the foreign trend toward naturalism. In 1825 he wrote to a patron, “If I am not misinformed, the finest pictures which have been produced, both Historical and Landscape, have been compositions.... [The pictures] of all the great painters, are something more than imitations of Nature.... If the



FIGURE 55: Thomas Doughty (American, 1793–1856), *In the Catskills*, ca. 1835. Oil on canvas, 63.5 × 88.9 cm. Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Affiliated with the Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Museum purchase (1977.2.5)

imagination is shackled, and nothing is described but what we see, seldom will anything truly great be produced." The picturesque afforded American artists a means to address the perceived essential challenge of the era, "subduing nature," in Alexis de Tocqueville's concise appraisal. Small wonder it lingered here so long.²³

At midcentury, following Cole's early death, the most esteemed American landscape painter was Durand. In 1855 his hortatory "Letters on Landscape Painting" were published in the *Crayon: A Journal Devoted to the Graphic Arts, and the Literature Related to Them*, an influential periodical founded and coedited by his art critic son. In an apparent move beyond Cole's position, and befitting the journal's new, Ruskinian inclination, Durand's first letter urges the aspiring painter, "go first to Nature to learn to paint landscape," advocating outdoor study and the creation of meticulous plein air oil sketches. Significantly, however, the naturalistic images that resulted were ultimately to form the basis for larger, invented compositions: "And when you shall have

learnt to imitate her," Durand continued, "you may then study the pictures of great artists with benefit. They will aid you in the acquirement of the knowledge...to select, combine and set off the varied beauty of nature by means of what, in artistic language, is called treatment, management." The approach Durand espoused thus offered both the naturalism promoted by current artistic theory and the opportunity to manipulate its parts into grander fabrications. The artist did just this in grafting portions of various on-site oil studies, including the crossed logs at the center of *Kaaterskill Landscape* (1850; Princeton University Art Museum), into the larger studio production, *Kaaterskill Clove* (fig. 56), exhibited in 1851 to wide acclaim at New York's National Academy of Design. Durand's method meant he could be "true" to nature while also bringing it "under [his] eye," instilling its complex particulars with appealingly picturesque conventions of order and accessibility. To underscore the latter, his view of the famous Catskill Mountains site adopts an unusual low perspective (most artists depicted the Clove



FIGURE 56: Asher B. Durand (American, 1796–1886), *Kaaterskill Clove*, 1850. Oil on canvas, 101.6 × 152.4 cm. USC Fisher Museum of Art, Los Angeles. The Elizabeth Holmes Fisher Collection (EF:45:03)



FIGURE 57: Asher B. Durand, *Landscape*, 1859. Oil on canvas, 77 × 61.5 cm. Princeton University Art Museum. Gift of J. O. MacIntosh, Class of 1902 (y1955-3249)



FIGURE 58: Asher B. Durand, *Kindred Spirits*, 1849. Oil on canvas, 111.8 × 91.4 cm. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas (2010.106)

from an elevated position), allowing the buckskin-clad figure shown entering into the scene to become a visual correlative of the viewer, forging ahead into the wilderness.²⁴

A similar diminutive figure appears in a later composition by Durand, *Landscape* of 1859, whose generic title suggests its likely invented character (fig. 57). Fully employing the compositional techniques of repoussoir, coulisse, and atmospheric perspective to provide graduated entrance into the scene via diminishing formal elements and gradational tonal modulation, the painting is an archetype of the picturesque landscape of access. In it the American environment is presented as logical and harmonious, appealing and available. Durand wrote, “That is a fine picture which at once takes possession of you—draws you into it—you traverse it—breathe its atmosphere—feel its sunshine.” In a detail that might be an illustration of the idea, the figure depicted walking into the artist’s inviting tableau

is attired, appropriately enough, in red shirt, white hat, and blue pants.²⁵

Landscape is structured quite similarly to Durand’s best-known painting, *Kindred Spirits*, completed a decade earlier as a painted eulogy to his friend Cole, who died in 1848 (fig. 58). It shows their mutual friend, poet and editor William Cullen Bryant, standing with Cole on a precipice overlooking another Durandian confection, one again evoking Kaaterskill Clove as well as the waterfall of the same name, both early subjects of Cole, but a topographically impossible combination. Perhaps in homage to his friend’s more ruggedly sublime images of the locale, Durand piles up the landmasses undulating up and back into the distance—tumultuously, compared with the smooth declension of the same forms in *Landscape*; this gives the scene, despite the sheltering, ocular foreground, an uncharacteristic forbidding quality. A series of ascending waterfalls, rather than a



FIGURE 59: Asher B. Durand, *Kaaterskill Clove*, 1866. Oil on canvas, 97.2 × 152.4 cm. The Century Association, New York



FIGURE 60: Thomas Cole (American, born England, 1801–1848), *The Clove, Catskills*, ca. 1827. Oil on canvas, 64.2 × 89.2 cm. New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut. Charles F. Smith Fund (1945.22)

sloping path, connects foreground to background, so that it is difficult to conceive “traversing,” or even moving around much, in Durand’s painting for Cole.²⁶

Later, in 1866, the artist did paint a more accurate image of the Clove as seen from the opposite end of his 1850 view, and it offers a telling comparison with one by Cole from decades before (figs. 59, 60). Cole’s vertiginous *The Clove, Catskills* on an overcast autumn day rejects the viewer’s entry through its jarring palette, agitated brushwork, craggy forms, and inclusion of a Native American already occupying the scene. It champions wilderness on its own, sublimely foreboding terms, even as it represents the place—topographically, at least—more faithfully than Durand’s *Kaaterskill Clove*, which presents a toned-down, lower, more approachable version of the actual site (fig. 61). Durand’s painting shows how far he and other American artists went, with the notable exception of Cole in his early career, to present an account of the American environment made appealing through picturesque convention, a world conducive to entrance, occupation, and settlement.

Durand’s art was widely imitated. Woodland scenes by him, invariably including a path through and out of the depicted thicket—again connoting accessibility and occupancy—were repeated by a subsequent generation of closer adherents to Ruskin, notably William Trost Richards (1833–1905). Robert S. Duncanson (1821–1872), an African American artist regarded as among the country’s best landscapists, drew from both Durand and Cole in producing his often ethereal pastorals. His *Untitled (Landscape)* (fig. 62)—imaginary like Durand’s, yet also all the more meaningful for it—is in the idyllic spirit of that artist’s renowned *Morning of Life* (1840; formerly National Academy Museum), which Duncanson may have known from its exhibition in 1840 and 1858 at the National Academy of Design. Durand’s painting formed part of an allegorical pair referencing temporality, a common theme at midcentury, whereas Duncanson’s work removed itself from time completely, offering a dream of a landscape, replete with temple-like structures in the background and a punt with boatman on a placid lake, all bathed in raking, golden light. Duncanson specialized in such otherworldly scenes, often with literary allusions, and made copies of both Cole’s *Garden of Eden* (1828; Amon Carter Museum) and *Dream of Arcadia* (ca. 1838; Denver Art Museum), the latter especially mimetic. The two artists’ evocations of Arcadia (a classical pastoral vision of human harmony with nature)



FIGURE 61: Kaaterskill Clove from Haines Falls Bridge, 2009. Photograph by Chris Sanfino

FIGURE 62: Robert S. Duncanson (American, 1821–1872), *Untitled (Landscape)*, late 1850s. Oil on canvas, 61 × 91 cm. Princeton University Art Museum. Museum purchase, Kathleen Compton Sherrerd Fund for Acquisitions in American Art and Mary Trumbull Adams Art Fund (2011–107)



differ mainly in terms of palette: Cole's is crisp and bright, whereas Duncanson's is darker and more muted, including, notably, the skin tones of its imagined inhabitants.²⁷

Duncanson stated, "I have no color [race] on the brain all I have on the brain is paint." The artist was the mixed-race grandson of an enslaved Virginian who had been freed by his owner (and likely father). Duncanson's parents moved to upstate New York to escape the increasing hostility toward free blacks in the South, eventually settling in Cincinnati, "The Athens of the West," a center of both artistic and abolitionist activity. Because he was light-skinned, the artist was afforded greater opportunity than other African Americans, and in 1842 three of his early works were accepted for display at the Cincinnati Academy of Fine Arts. He probably was not allowed to study there, however, and his family was not permitted into the exhibition to see his paintings. In light of this and other challenges and indignities Duncanson faced on account of race, it is difficult to conceive that "color" did not have a prominent place in his mind, and art.²⁸

Landscape suggests as much. Painted during the late 1850s, it followed the artist's participation in the production, with African American photographer James Presley Ball (1825–1904), of a panoramic painting (now lost) titled *Mammoth Pictorial Tour of the United States Comprising Views of the African Slave Trade*, depicting "the horrors of slavery from capture in Africa through middle passage to bondage," according to an



FIGURE 63: Robert S. Duncanson, Detail of *Untitled (Landscape)*, late 1850s

accompanying pamphlet. The painting toured the United States and made explicit its creators' abolitionist stance during a time of cresting racial tension. *Landscape* comments on race as well, only far more subtly, even privately, as close inspection of the painting's three small figures reveals (fig. 63). As evocative as the similarly diminutive characters in Durand's paintings, or the absent one in Latrobe's image of George Washington's porch, Duncanson's figures have been carefully—intentionally—rendered in three distinct skin tones: black, brown, and white. Their insertion by the artist into his serene fantasy landscape, harmoniously interacting, seems to conjure the world he hoped might be, even if the gradually disappearing path leading toward them implies it may remain beyond reach. That Duncanson felt compelled to secretly situate his grouping at the back of a fictive landscape indicates his inability to envision such a scene in the environment he did inhabit, even though the seated white woman looking on from the trees seems his way of directing us to see its possibility. As still more small figures in paintings imply—Savage's African Americans outside Mount Vernon and Guy's slaves at work in Harry Gough's fields—the American experience of the environment was crucially mediated by subject position. Coerced labor, the denial of land ownership, and the American environment broadly as a theater of racial injustice caused witnesses like Duncanson to apprehend it differently. For him the concept of a pristine, uncomplicated American landscape must on some level have been anathema, sullied as it was with iniquity.²⁹

As Duncanson's art shows, environmental perception is socially and culturally determined. There are different ways to construe landscape representation, including not at all. Many Native American cultures have long eschewed notions of individual property ownership—real estate—and conceptualized their relationship to the land differently, avoiding mapping or illusionistic pictorial delineation. Such formalized geometries often have little purchase in cultures without the same interests in the regularization of distance and topography. These might instead be considered in relative and experiential terms, inflected by seasonality, environmental conditions, and previous empirical encounter. Among the Inupiaq people of what is now northwestern Alaska, there exists a long tradition of graphic art, expressed principally in ivory carving, above all on the functional handles of the bow drills used to carry it out. The iconography of an early nineteenth-century ivory bow drill is richly embellished



FIGURE 64: Inupiaq, Bow drill, early 19th century. Ivory and dark pigment, 1.8 × 44.8 × 1 cm. Princeton University Art Museum. Bequest of John B. Elliott, Class of 1951 (1998-491)

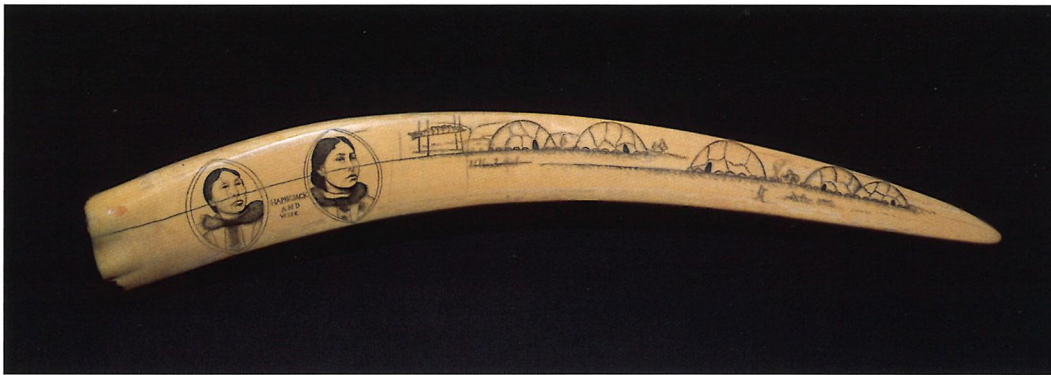


FIGURE 65: Angokwazhuk (Happy Jack) (Inupiaq, ca. 1870-1918), Nome, Alaska, Engraved walrus tusk, 1900-1904. Walrus tusk and graphite, 8.9 × 71.8 × 5.7 cm. Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, New York. Gift of Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw, Thaw Collection (T0713)

with pictographic activity scenes typical of the domestic routines, hunting, and social events of daily Inupiaq life (fig. 64). The particular activity depicted was determined more by seasonal considerations than by locative ones, indicative of an orientation to the environment based as much on factors of time as place—in contrast to Euro-American landscape practice.³⁰

Around 1890 the influx of whaling ships and traders, ongoing since the beginning of the century, and the introduction of mission school education engendered a shift from the old engraving style to a more illusionistic one that introduced spatial, as opposed to experiential, representation of the environment. In order to accommodate the desire for this new type of engraving—produced extensively to serve the curio trade following the Klondike

Gold Rush of 1896—different materials were adapted for use, including broader walrus tusks on which there was room for perspectival scenes. The most renowned carver in the new manner was Angokwazhuk (ca. 1870-1918), known as Happy Jack, who excelled at both veristic reproduction of photographic images and the invention of his own. A walrus tusk he engraved around the turn of the century (fig. 65) features each: vignettes of the artist and his wife from a photograph as well as a village scene incorporating perspectival spatial recession via overlapping and diminution of forms. The contrast between Angokwazhuk's apprehension of his environment and the visualization shown on the earlier bow drill is striking, and one wonders if it accompanied a change in environmental consciousness parallel to the pictorial one. Either way, the art of Inupiaq carvers underscores the



FIGURE 66: Worthington Whittredge (American, 1820–1910), *The Old Hunting Grounds*, 1864. Oil on canvas, 92.1 × 68.9 cm. Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Affiliated with Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Gift of Barbara B. Millhouse (1976.2.10)

very different means by which environmental perception can be rendered.³¹

Interestingly, when American artists sought to evoke Indigenous landscapes, it was often in ways that similarly eschewed space (fig. 66), metaphorically denying bodily access and suggesting the foreclosure of Native Americans' continued occupation of their own original environments. The deep space and controlled forms of the picturesque were tools of Anglo-American imperial design, reifying and affirming its aims. Only when Indigenous peoples were depicted gazing elegiacally at landscapes lost to them, or shown giving it away (see Introduction, fig. 3), were they afforded the same privileged view.

Notes

1 On the White/de Bry corpus of Roanoke images, see Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); for an ecocritical reading, see Timothy Sweet, "Filling the Field: The Roanoke Images of John White and Theodor de Bry," in *A Keener Perception: Ecocritical Studies in American Art History*, ed. Alan C. Braddock and Cristoph Irmscher (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009), 23–42.

2 Elizabeth I quoted in Louis De Vorsey, "European Encounters: Discovery and Exploration," in *North America: The Historical Geography of a Changing Continent*, ed. Thomas F. McIlwraith and Edward K. Muller, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 44. William Bradford from his *Of Plimouth Plantation*, journal account of ca. 1630, excerpted in *Major Problems in American Environmental History: Documents and Essays*, ed. Carolyn Merchant, 3rd ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2012), 73. Wigglesworth quoted in Matthew Dennis, "Cultures of Nature: To ca. 1810," in *A Companion to American Environmental History*, ed. Douglas Cazaux Sackman (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 222. For Native Americans' environmental impact and management, see Melanie Perreault, "American Wilderness and First Contact," in *American Wilderness: A New History*, ed. Michael Lewis (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15–34; William M. Denevan, "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492," in *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 414–42; and William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, rev. ed. (New York: Hill & Wang, 2003). For received notions of wilderness, especially as inflected by Judeo-Christian tradition, see "Old World Roots of Opinion," chap. 1 in Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 5th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); and Vittoria Di Palma, *Wasteland: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014). Locke's now famous statement first appeared in his *Second Treatise on Government*, dated 1690 but published 1689. Gen. 1:28.

3 European prints—mezzotints in particular—have long been recognized as frequently providing the basis of American portrait compositions; see John Marshall Phillips, Barbara N. Parker, and Kathryn C. Buhler, eds., *The Waldron Phoenix Belknap, Jr. Collection of Portraits and Silver, with a Note on the Discoveries of Waldron Phoenix Belknap, Jr. Concerning the Influence of the English Mezzotint on Colonial Painting* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955).

4 Edward Johnson, *Wonder-working Providence* (1654), quoted in Merchant, *Major Problems in American Environmental History*, 81–82. On the Kühn portrait, see Kathleen Orr Pomeroy, "Faith in Art: Justus Engelhardt Kühn's Portrait of Eleanor Darnall" (M.A. thesis, Georgetown University, 2009); and Elisabeth L. Roark, "Keeping the Faith: The Catholic Context and Content of Justus Engelhardt Kühn's Portrait of Eleanor Darnall, ca. 1710," *Maryland Historical Magazine* (Winter 2014): 391–427, each of which argues for the image's extensive religious content in the context of its Catholic patronage. While often compelling, collectively the recondite meanings attributed to seemingly every one of the portrait's details presuppose a highly elaborate knowledge of Catholic symbolism, and Kühn was a devout Protestant. See also Roark, "Justus Engelhardt Kühn (?–1717), Portrait Painter to a Colonial

Aristocracy," chap. 5 in *Artists of Colonial America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 73–90.

5 Hugh Hall was a commission merchant, slaver, and distiller—and the subject in 1758 of what is believed to be John Singleton Copley's first pastel (Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc. no. 1996.279). The transformation of environmental beliefs underlying the move from a nature portrayed as contained and controlled to one more freely and realistically rendered is discussed in an American context in "The Romantic Wilderness," chap. 3 in Nash, *Wilderness*, 44–66; also see William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 69–90. On the iconographic significance of the upward-pointing finger, also in an American context, see David Steinberg, "Charles Willson Peale: The Portraitist as Divine," in *New Perspectives on Charles Willson Peale: A 250th Anniversary Celebration*, ed. Lillian B. Miller and David C. Ward (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 131–43.

6 Although he lacked the technical proficiency and polish of the better-known American portraitists of his generation, Gilbert Stuart and John Trumbull, Earl painted more ambitious portraits. See Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser with Richard L. Bushman, Stephen H. Kornhauser, and Aileen Ribeiro, *Ralph Earl: The Face of the Young Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Kornhauser, "'By Your Inimitable Hand': Elijah Boardman's Patronage of Ralph Earl," *American Art Journal* 23, no. 1 (1991): 4–19; and Robert Blair St. George, "Disappearing Acts," chap. 4 in *Conversing by Signs: Poetics of Implication in Colonial New England Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

7 This is a central tenet of ecofeminism, a philosophy and political movement—and a type of ecocritical analysis—combining ecological and feminist concerns, viewing each as rooted in male social dominance. See Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), which places the problem in historical context; and Karen J. Warren, "Feminist Environmental Philosophy," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2015 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/feminism-environmental/>. For the American context, see Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975); and Kolodny, *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630–1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). On ecofeminism and art, see Kelly C. Baum, "Earthkeeping, Earthshaking," in *Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, Politics*, ed. Emily Eliza Scott and Kirsten Swenson (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 110–21.

8 Gilpin and Price were the original expositors of the picturesque; Knight explained and expanded their views. See William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; and On Sketching Landscape: To Which Is Added a Poem, On Landscape Painting* (London: R. Blamire, 1792); Uvedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape* (London: J. Robson, 1794); Richard Payne Knight, *An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (London:

T. Payne and J. White, 1805). On British art and enclosure, see Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740–1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). For British and American landscape art in relation to each other, see Andrew Wilton and Tim Barringer, *American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States, 1820–1880* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

9 Franklin quoted in Arthur S. Marks, "An Eighteenth-Century American Landscape Painter Rediscovered: John Taylor of Bath," *American Art Journal* 10, no. 2 (November 1978): 81–82. Edmund Burke categorized the beautiful as against the sublime in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1757). James Clarke, *Survey of the Lakes* (1787), quoted in Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760–1800* (Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1989), 54. On the picturesque, also see Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927); and Sidney K. Robinson, *Inquiry into the Picturesque* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

10 Gilpin quoted in Edward J. Nygren, "From View to Vision," *Views and Visions: American Landscape before 1830*, ed. Edward J. Nygren with Bruce Robertson (Washington, DC: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1986), 18; in the same volume, see especially Amy R. W. Myers, "Imposing Order on the Wilderness: Natural History Illustration and Landscape Portrayal," 105–32. On early American landscape, also see William H. Gerdts, "American Landscape Painting: Critical Judgments, 1730–1845," *American Art Journal* 17, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 28–59. On the continued perception of the overwhelming environment into the nineteenth century, see Alan Taylor, "'Wasty Ways': Stories of American Settlement," in *American Environmental History*, ed. Louis S. Warren (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 102–18.

11 Hamilton quoted on webpage "View of the North [Hudson] River (Morning)," Mount Vernon website, <http://www.mountvernon.org/preservation/collections-holdings/browse-the-museum-collections/object/w-1179/>. For the painting's pendant, *View of the North [Hudson] River (Evening)*, see <http://www.mountvernon.org/preservation/collections-holdings/browse-the-museum-collections/object/w-1180/>.

12 On Washington as a gardener, see Andrea Wulf, "'The Cincinnatus of the West': George Washington's American Garden at Mount Vernon," in *Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 13–34.

13 Newell quoted in Andrews, *Search for the Picturesque*, 30. "Nature must be the foundation" from anonymous article, "Rules for Painting. Founded on Reason," in *Gentlemen and Ladies Town and Country Magazine* (November 1789), quoted in Gerdts, "American Landscape Painting," 31; "with such additions and combinations" from Poussin [pseud.], "Travel," *Portfolio* 4, no. 6 (1812): 84. Gilpin quoted in Andrews, *Search for the Picturesque*, 57. On the ideological implications of picturesque manipulation and convention in an American context, see Bryan Wolf, "Revolution in the Landscape: John Trumbull and Picturesque Painting," in *John Trumbull: The Hand and Spirit of a Painter*, ed. Helen A. Cooper (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982), 206–15.

- 14 For information on the New Room and Washington's collection, see Susan P. Schoelwer, "Design, Construction, Decoration, and Furnishing the New Room, 1774–1799" and "How Did the Washingtons Use the New Room," and Jessie MacLeod, "Furnishing the New Room," Mount Vernon website, <http://www.mountvernon.org/the-estate-gardens/the-mansion/the-new-room/>.
- 15 For Washington's purchase of the Savage print, see "The Washington Family," Mount Vernon website, <http://www.mountvernon.org/preservation/collections-holdings/browse-the-museum-collections/object/w-2363/>. The original study for *The Washington Family*, currently in a private collection, is reproduced in Louisa Dresser, "Edward Savage, 1761–1817," *Art in America* 40, no. 4 (Autumn 1952): 200. On the complex history of the image, see Ellen G. Miles, cat. entry for *The Washington Family, in American Paintings of the Eighteenth Century: The Collections of the National Gallery of Art, a Systematic Catalogue*, ed. Ellen G. Miles (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1995), 146–58; "borrow[ing] John Riley" quoted 152. For the role of slaves in constructing the city of Washington, see J. D. Dickey, *Empire of Mud: The Secret History of Washington, DC* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2014).
- 16 For the distinction between Latrobe's study and finished work, see Jessie MacLeod, "Enslaved People of Mount Vernon: Biographies," in *Lives Bound Together: Slavery at George Washington's Mount Vernon*, ed. Susan P. Schoelwer (Mount Vernon, VA: Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, 2016), 6–7. For Latrobe's visit to Mount Vernon, see Edward C. Carter, ed., *The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1795–1798*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 161–72; and Edward C. Carter, John C. Van Horne, and Charles E. Brownell, eds., *Latrobe's View of America, 1795–1820: Selections from the Watercolors and Sketches* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 22–24, 92–95. On Washington and the Great Dismal Swamp, see Michael A. Blaakman, "Dismal Swamp Company," Mount Vernon website, <http://www.mountvernon.org/digital-encyclopedia/article/dismal-swamp-company/>. On slavery's fundamental role on environmental perception, see Kimberly K. Smith, *African American Environmental Thought: Foundations* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), 2007.
- 17 Virginia Royal Governor John Murray quoted on webpage "H.M.S. Savage," Mount Vernon website, <http://www.mountvernon.org/digital-encyclopedia/article/hms-savage/>. For information on slavery on Washington's plantation, see "Slavery," Mount Vernon website, <http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/slavery/>.
- 18 See J. Hall Pleasants, "Four Late Eighteenth Century Anglo-American Landscape Painters," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 52, no. 2 (January 1943): 245–49, Godefroy quoted 247, Latrobe quoted 264; also see Gerdt, "American Landscape Painting," 33–37; and especially John Michael Vlach, *The Planter's Prospect: Privilege and Slavery in Plantation Paintings* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 51, and more generally chap. 2, "Proofs of Power: The Maryland Estate Paintings of Francis Guy."
- 19 For Gough's gift to Hall, see Vlach, *Planter's Prospect*, 60. On Gough and slavery, see Dee Andrews, *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760–1800: The Shaping of an Evangelical Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 130–31.
- 20 On Beck, see Pleasants, "American Landscape Painters"; Edna Talbott Whitley, "George Beck: An Eighteenth-Century Painter," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 67 (1969): 20–36; and Daniel Kurt Ackermann, "Research Note: '...that ingenious artist Mr. G. Beck'—George Beck's American Wilderness," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 35 (2014), http://www.mesdajournal.org/2014/research-note-that-ingenious-artist-mr-g-beck-george-becks-american-wilderness/#_ftnref26. For representations of Niagara, see Jeremy Elwell Adamson, *Niagara: Two Centuries of Changing Attitudes, 1697–1901* (Washington, DC: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1985); on Trumbull's depictions of it, see Wolf, "Revolution in the Landscape," 208–12.
- 21 Marshall quoted in Andrews, *Search for the Picturesque*, 66. On the picturesque's encouragement of the viewer to enter into the depicted scene, see Roger Paden, "Picturesque Landscape Painting and Environmental Aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 49, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 39–61. The relatively new field of environmental aesthetics makes compelling arguments regarding how and why the genre of landscape arose and evolved as it did in relation to broader aesthetic theory; see Allen Carlson, *Nature and Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), and *Aesthetics and the Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art, and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2000). Also of interest in explicating the behavioral bases of landscape representation is the prospect-refuge theory articulated by Jay Appleton in *The Experience of Landscape*, rev. ed. (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 1996).
- 22 For an image of the plate, see "Plate with a View of Washington, District of Columbia," Yale University Art Gallery website, <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/6280>. Stoddart quoted in Andrews, *Search for the Picturesque*, 33. On Richard Wilson and his distinct late work, see Martin Postle and Robin Simon, eds., *Richard Wilson and the Transformation of European Landscape Painting* (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art; Cardiff: Amguedda Cymru-National Museum Wales, 2014); and David H. Solkin, *Richard Wilson: The Landscape of Reaction* (London: Tate Gallery, 1982). Constable quoted in Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 117. For the shift toward naturalism in British art, generally, see Kathleen Nicholson, "Naturalizing Time/Temporalizing Nature: Turner's Transformation of Landscape Painting," in *Glorious Nature: British Landscape Painting, 1750–1850*, ed. Katharine Baetjer (New York: Hudson Hills, 1993), 31–46; and Michael Rosenthal, *British Landscape Painting* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982). Ruskin's *Modern Painters I* (1843) argued for "truth to nature" as against pictorial convention.
- 23 Cole, in a letter dated December 25, 1826, to Baltimore collector Robert Gilmore Jr., quoted in Gerdt, "American Landscape Painting," 49. For Tocqueville's "subduing nature" in broader context, see Nash, *Wilderness*, 23ff. Shaw, Fisher, and Doughty are discussed in Nygren, *Views and Visions*.
- 24 Durand's "Letters on Landscape Painting" are reproduced in their entirety in Linda S. Ferber, ed., *Kindred Spirits: Asher B. Durand and the American Landscape* (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 2007), 231–52, quoted 233. For these in relation to Cole's "Essay on American Scenery" (1836), see John Davis, "Writings on Landscape by Thomas Cole and

Asher B. Durand," in *America! Storie di pittura dal Nuovo Mondo*, ed. Marco Goldin (Brescia, Italy: Museo di Santa Giulia, 2007), 42–49. The relationship between *Kaaterskill Landscape* and *Kaaterskill Clove* is made in David B. Lawall, *Asher B. Durand: A Documentary Catalogue of the Narrative and Landscape Paintings* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978), 86, 175; Lawall notes that Durand adopted, but reversed, a pair of prominent trees from another oil sketch in composing *Kaaterskill Clove*, suggesting how freely he manipulated his forms.

25 Durand, "Letters," no. III, quoted in Ferber, *Kindred Spirits*, 236.

26 Kaaterskill Clove and Falls are oriented close but perpendicular to each other, obviating the possibility of Durand's view. Bryan Wolf sees *Kindred Spirits* differently, as domesticating the sublime landscapes of Cole by doing away with any disruptions to the viewer's visual access, offering "a womblike enclosure that protects rather than threatens"; see Bryan Wolf, "All the World's a Code: Art and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century American Painting," *Art Journal* 44, no. 4 (Winter 1984): 328–37, quoted 330.

27 Duncanson's *Garden of Eden* (1852) is at the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; his *Dream of Arcadia* (1852) is at the Brooklyn Museum.

28 Duncanson quoted in Joseph D. Ketner, *The Emergence of the African-American Artist: Robert S. Duncanson, 1821–1872* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 111. Also see David M. Lubin, "Reconstructing Duncanson," chap. 3 in *Picturing a Nation: Art and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 107–57.

29 The ways in which race inflected Duncanson's art is discussed in Ketner, *Duncanson*; and Lubin, "Reconstructing Duncanson." For diverging views, see Wendy J. Katz, "Robert S. Duncanson, Race, and Auguste Comte's Positivism in Cincinnati," *American Studies* 53, no. 1 (2014): 79–115; and Margaret Rose Vendryes, "Race Identity/Identifying Race: Robert S. Duncanson and Nineteenth-Century American Painting," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 27, no. 1 (2001): 82–99, 103–4. On African American environmental perception, see Smith, *African American Environmental Thought*; and Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll, eds., *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005).

30 See G. Malcolm Lewis, "Maps, Mapmaking, and Map Use by Native North Americans," in *Cartography in the Traditional African, American, Arctic, Australian, and Pacific Societies*, ed. David Woodward and G. Malcolm Lewis, vol. 2, bk. 3 of *The History of Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 51–182, esp. 176–82; and Mark Warhus, *Another America: Native American Maps and the History of Our Land* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). For Inupiaq ivory engraving, see Christopher Green, "Bow Drills" webpage, *Messages Across Time and Space: Inupiat Drawings from the 1890s at Columbia University* exhibition website, Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, Columbia University, https://edblogs.columbia.edu/AHISG4862_001_2015_1/iii-class-research/inupiat-aesthetics/inupiaq-material-culture-in-conversation-with-the-avery-properties-drawings/the-drill-bow-and-the-inupiaq-graphic-tradition/; and Dorothy Jean Ray, *A Legacy of Arctic Art* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Museum, 1996), 99–137.

31 It has historically been all too easy to account for the conceptual transition of some Inupiaq artists to a more conventional style of representation in terms of a putative advancement in artistic skills—Western visitors taught natives how to "do" art better—but such racial imperialism elides both the aesthetic strengths of earlier Inupiaq art and its compelling imaging of a different way of construing environmental relations. See Christopher Green, "The Expansion of the Inupiaq Graphic Art Tradition in the Late Nineteenth Century" webpage, *Messages Across Time and Space* exhibition website, https://edblogs.columbia.edu/AHISG4862_001_2015_1/iii-class-research/inupiat-aesthetics/you-cant-teach-what-is-known-sourcing-the-expansion-of-the-inupiaq-graphic-art-tradition-in-the-late-nineteenth-century/; also see Susan W. Fair, "Early Western Education, Reindeer Herding, and Inupiaq Drawing in Northwest Alaska: Wales, the Saniq Coast, and Shishmaref to Cape Espenberg," in *Eskimo Drawings*, ed. Suzi Jones (Anchorage: Anchorage Museum of History and Art, 2003), 35–75. On Angokwazhuk (Happy Jack), see Christopher Green, "Angokwazhuk (Happy Jack) and Guy Kakarook" webpage, in *Messages Across Time and Space* exhibition website, https://edblogs.columbia.edu/AHISG4862_001_2015_1/iii-class-research/inupiat-aesthetics/inupiat-art-and-artists/happy-jack-and-guy-karakuk/; Dorothy Jean Ray, "Happy Jack and His Artistry," *American Indian Art Magazine* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1989): 40–53; and Ray, "Happy Jack and Guy Kakarook: Their Art and Their Heritage," in Jones, *Eskimo Drawings*, 19–34.