

# B1 Nature in Art and Architecture

## Teachers' Critical Anthology

*A work in progress: September 2017*

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Texts relevant to specified artists:

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### **Specified sculptors/3D:**

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### **Specified architects:**

- John Nash (1752-1835) page 21
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### **Notes for Approaching Critical Texts in A Level Teaching**

Would recommend breaking this down into three stages:

- Comprehension • Analysis • Application

### **Comprehension**

The first stage of working with the critical texts might be to ensure that students have a grasp of what the text is saying, as well as information about its production, distribution and reception. Teaching might focus on exploring unfamiliar terminology and extracting the text's point or argument. In terms of contextualising the text, students might explore who has written it, when and where was it published, and who was its intended audience. If information is known about the text's reception or impact, that might be helpful too. This kind of information will feed into the next stage of critically analysing it.

**Exercise:** Summarise the main argument of the text in no more than three sentences.

**Exercise:** Highlight specific areas of the text that you found difficult to understand. Try to unpack why you found them difficult.

**Exercise:** Pick out one sentence that you feel provides a particularly clear indication of the overall argument. Explain why you have chosen this sentence.

## Analysis

This second stage is to encourage students to do more than paraphrase the text but to be able to say something about it and to make connections between it and their chosen art work(s). Reflecting critically about the text might be described as refusing to take it at face value, to assume it's right/accurate/helpful, so exploring the text *as a piece of writing* - how has it been researched/argued/structured - might be useful. Getting them to think about how helpful is the text in understanding the art work(s) might also be a good starting point, as well as commenting on similarities and differences between them. On a basic level, the 'formula' might go something like: both critical text and art work raise questions about/offer perspectives onto gender/race/class/history/painting/landscape/the artist etc [show evidence of how/if they converge] but.... [and then go on to explore the differences between them].

**Exercise:** Highlight all of the ways the text attempts to persuade you of its argument. This should include all the evidence cited, including the work(s) of art discussed (*on which elements of the work does it focus?*). You should also think about the text itself, including the language used and the way it is structured.

**Exercise:** Pick out one sentence that you found particularly persuasive. What, specifically, made it stand out?

**Exercise:** Are you persuaded by the argument? If so, why?

**Exercise:** Can you think of anything that would unsettle some of the claims being made? For instance, are there other ways of thinking about or viewing the work(s) of art discussed? What does the author ignore or overlook?

## Application

The final stage seeks to ensure the students know how to engage with the text in their own writing. Do they know the difference between paraphrase and quotation, and how each are referenced to avoid plagiarising the author's words and ideas? Thinking about how they decide which parts of the text might make an effective quotation could be useful (i.e. nothing too long, too bland, too obvious etc). Reminding them that it's important not to use a quotation to make a point but to make a point about a quotation could be helpful, and links back to the previous stage of demonstrating critical engagement with it. Quotations cannot do all the heavy-lifting in the essay.

**When referring to a text in an essay, students should aim to do all of the above:**

- Outline the relevant part of the argument, potentially including a quote

- Highlight what is persuasive/useful about the critical text - how it can help to illuminate the issues being discussed
- Reflect on the particular strengths and weaknesses of the text by looking at what it uses to substantiate its claims and what it ignores

*Guidance notes kindly provided by the Department of Art History, University of Sussex*

### **Requirements for inclusion of critical texts from the Specification and Mark Scheme**

*Candidates are only required to refer to their critical texts in the second 925 mark) question of each Theme section. They may, of course, choose to refer to them in the first, shorter question but this is not required for full credit.*

<b>Level 1:</b>	<b>No relevant reference to critical texts</b>
<b>Level 2:</b>	<b>Some relevant use of view(s) from critical texts</b>
<b>Level 3:</b>	<b>Competent use of views from critical texts</b>
<b>Level 4:</b>	<b>Secure integration of view(s) from critical texts</b>
<b>Level 5:</b>	<b>Insightful integration of view(s) from critical texts.</b>

**General critical texts relevant to the theme of Nature in Art and Architecture (or part thereof)**

**Edmund Burke** Extracts from *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, 1756, (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1914).

**Part I: Section VII: On the Sublime**

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 conversant 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. I say the strongest emotion, because I am satisfied the ideas of pain are much more powerful than those which enter on the part of pleasure. Without all doubt, the torments which we may be made to suffer

are much greater in their effect on the body and mind, than any pleasure which the most learned voluptuary could suggest, or than the liveliest imagination, and the most sound and exquisitely sensible body, could enjoy. Nay, I am in great doubt whether any man could be found, who would earn a life of the most perfect satisfaction, at the price of ending it in the torments, which justice inflicted in a few hours on the late unfortunate regicide in France. But as pain is stronger in its operation than pleasure, so death is in general a much more affecting idea than pain; because there are very few pains, however exquisite, which are not preferred to death: nay, what generally makes pain itself, if I may say so, more painful, is, that it is considered as an emissary of this king of terrors. When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are, delightful, as we every day experience. The cause of this I shall endeavour to investigate hereafter.

#### Part II: Section I: Of the Passion Created by the Sublime

The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature, when those causes operate most powerfully, is astonishment: and astonishment 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. Astonishment, as I have said, is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree; the inferior effects are admiration, reverence, and respect.

#### Part II: Section XVII: The Sublime and the Beautiful Compared

On closing this general view of beauty, it naturally occurs that we should compare it with the sublime; and in this comparison there appears a remarkable contrast. For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small; beauty should be smooth and polished; the great, rugged and negligent: beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensibly; the great in many cases loves the right line; and when it deviates, it often makes a strong deviation: beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy: beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, and even massive. They are indeed ideas of a very different nature, one being founded on pain, the other on pleasure; and, however they may vary afterwards from the direct nature of their causes, yet these causes keep up an eternal distinction between them, a distinction never to be forgotten by any whose business it is to affect the passions. In the infinite variety of natural combinations, we must expect to find the qualities of things the most remote imaginable from each other united in the same object. We must expect also to find combinations of the same kind in the works of art. But when we consider the power of an object upon our passions, we must know that when anything is intended to affect the mind by the force of some predominant property, the affection produced is like to be the more uniform and perfect, if all the other properties or qualities of the object be of the same nature, and tending to the same design as the principal. "If black and white blend, soften, and unite A thousand ways, are there no black and white?" If the qualities of the sublime and beautiful are sometimes found united, does this prove that they are the same; does it prove that they are any way allied; does it prove even that they are not opposite and contradictory? Black and white may soften, may blend; but they are not therefore the same.

#### Part III: Section V: How the Sublime is Produced

Having considered terror as producing an unnatural tension and certain violent emotions of the nerves; it easily follows, from what we have just said, that whatever is fitted to produce such a tension must be productive of a passion similar to terror,[32] and

consequently must be a source of the sublime, though it should have no idea of danger connected with it. So that little remains towards showing the cause of the sublime, but to show that the instances we have given of it in the second part relate to such things, as are fitted by nature to produce this sort of tension, either by the primary operation of the mind or the body. With regard to such things as affect by the associated idea of danger, there can be no doubt but that they produce terror, and act by some modification of that passion; and that terror, when sufficiently violent, raises the emotions of the body just mentioned, can as little be doubted. But if the sublime is built on terror or some passion like it, which has pain for its object, it is previously proper to inquire how any species of delight can be derived from a cause so apparently contrary to it. I say delight, because, as I have often remarked, it is very evidently different in its cause, and in its own nature, from actual and positive pleasure.

#### Part IV: Section IX: Why Visual Objects of Great Dimensions are Sublime

VISION is performed by having a picture, formed by the rays of light which are reflected from the object, painted in one piece, instantaneously, on the retina, or last nervous part of the eye. Or, according to others, there is but one point of any object painted on the eye in such a manner as to be perceived at once; but by moving the eye, we gather up, with great celerity, the several parts of the object, so as to form one uniform piece. If the former opinion be allowed, it will be considered, [\[1\]](#) that 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 the sublime. Again, if we take it, that one point only of an object is distinguishable at once, the matter will amount nearly to the same thing, or rather it will make the origin of the sublime from greatness of dimension yet clearer. For if but one point is observed at once, the eye must traverse the vast space of such bodies with great quickness, and consequently the fine nerves and muscles destined to the motion of that part must be very much strained; and their great sensibility must make them highly affected by this straining. Besides, it signifies just nothing to the effect produced, whether a body has its parts connected and makes its impression at once; or, making but one impression of a point at a time, causes a succession of the same or others so quickly as to make them seem united; as is evident from the common effect of whirling about a lighted torch or piece of wood: which, if done with celerity, seems a circle of fire.

**George Santayana** Extract from *The Sense of Beauty*, 1896, (New York: Scribner's, 1896)  
Pages 133 - 137

#### Example of Landscape

An extraordinary taste for landscape compensates us for this ignorance of what is best and most finished in the arts. The natural landscape is an indeterminate object; it almost always contains enough diversity to allow the eye a great liberty in selecting, emphasizing, and grouping its elements, and it is furthermore rich in suggestion and in vague emotional stimulus. A landscape to be seen has to be composed, and to be loved has to be moralized. That is the reason why rude or vulgar people are indifferent to their natural surroundings. It does not occur to them that the work-a-day world is capable of aesthetic contemplation. Only on holidays, when they add to themselves and their belongings some unusual ornament, do they stop to watch the effect. The far more beautiful daily aspects of their environment escape them altogether. When, however, we learn to apperceive; when we grow fond of tracing lines and developing vistas; when,

above all, the subtler influences of places on our mental tone are transmuted into an expressiveness in those places, and they are furthermore poetized by our day-dreams, and turned by our instant fancy into so many hints of a fairyland of happy living and vague adventure, — then we feel that the landscape is beautiful. The forest, the fields, all wild or rural scenes, are then full of companionship and entertainment.

This is a beauty dependent on reverie, fancy, and objectified emotion. The promiscuous natural landscape cannot be enjoyed in any other way. It has no real unity, and therefore requires to have some form or other supplied by the fancy; which can be the more readily done, in that the possible forms are many, and the constant changes in the object offer varying suggestions to the eye. In fact, psychologically speaking, there is no such thing as a landscape; what we call such is an infinity of different scraps and glimpses given in succession. Even a painted landscape, although it tends to select and emphasize some parts of the field, is composed by adding together a multitude of views. When this painting is observed in its turn, it is surveyed as a real landscape would be, and apperceived partially and piecemeal; although, of course, it offers much less wealth of material than its living original, and is therefore vastly inferior.

Only the extreme of what is called impressionism tries to give upon canvas one absolute momentary view; the result is that when the beholder has himself actually been struck by that aspect, the picture has an extraordinary force and emotional value — like the vivid power of recalling the past possessed by smells. But, on the other hand, such a work is empty and trivial in the extreme; it is the photograph of a detached impression, not followed, as it would be in nature, by many variations of itself. An object so unusual is often unrecognizable, if the vision thus unnaturally isolated has never happened to come vividly into our own experience. The opposite school — what might be called *discursive* landscape painting — collects so many glimpses and gives so fully the sum of our positive observations of a particular scene, that its work is sure to be perfectly intelligible and plain. If it seems unreal and uninteresting, that is because it is formless, like the collective object it represents, while it lacks that sensuous intensity and movement which might have made the reality stimulating.

The landscape contains, of course, innumerable things which have determinate forms; but if the attention is directed specifically to them, we have no longer what, by a curious limitation of the word, is called the love of nature. Not very long ago it was usual for painters of landscapes to introduce figures, buildings, or ruins to add some human association to the beauty of the place. Or, if wildness and desolation were to be pictured, at least one weary wayfarer must be seen sitting upon a broken column. He might wear a toga and then be Marius among the ruins of Carthage. The landscape without figures would have seemed meaningless; the spectator would have sat in suspense awaiting something, as at the theatre when the curtain rises on an empty stage. The indeterminateness of the suggestions of an unhumanized scene was then felt as a defect; now we feel it rather as an exaltation. We need to be free; our emotion suffices us; we do not ask for a description of the object which interests us as a part of ourselves. We should blush to say so simple and obvious a thing as that to us "the mountains are a feeling"; nor should we think of apologizing for our romanticism as Byron did:

I love not man the less but nature more  
From these our interviews, in which I steal,  
From all I may be, or have been before,  
To mingle with the universe, and feel  
What I can ne'er express.

This ability to rest in nature unadorned and to find entertainment in her aspects, is, of course, a great gain. Aesthetic education consists in training ourselves to see the maximum of beauty. To see it in the physical world, which must continually be about us, is a great progress toward that marriage of the imagination with the reality which is the goal of contemplation.

While we gain this mastery of the formless, however, we should not lose the more necessary capacity of seeing form in those things which happen to have it. In respect to

most of those things which are determinate as well as natural, we are usually in that state of aesthetic unconsciousness which the peasant is in in respect to the landscape. We treat human life and its environment with the same utilitarian eye with which he regards the field and mountain. That is beautiful which is expressive of convenience and wealth; the rest is indifferent. If we mean by love of nature aesthetic delight in the world in which we casually live (and what can be more *natural* than man and all his arts?), we may say that the absolute love of *nature* hardly exists among us. What we love is the stimulation of our own personal emotions and dreams; and landscape appeals to us, as music does to those who have no sense for musical form.

There would seem to be no truth in the saying that the ancients loved nature less than we. They loved landscape less – less, at least, in proportion to their love of the definite things it contained. The vague and changing effects of the atmosphere, the masses of mountains, the infinite and living complexity of forests, did not fascinate them. They had not that preponderant taste for the indeterminate that makes the landscape a favourite subject of contemplation. But love of nature, and comprehension of her, they had in a most eminent degree; in fact, they actually made explicit that objectification of our own soul in her, which for the romantic poet remains a mere vague and shifting suggestion. What are the celestial gods, the nymphs, the fauns, the dryads, but the definite apperceptions of that haunting spirit which we think we see in the sky, the mountains, and the woods? We may think that our vague intuition grasps the truth of what their childish imagination turned into a fable. But our belief, if it is one, is just as fabulous, just as much a projection of human nature into material things; and if we renounce all positive conception of quasi-mental principles in nature, and reduce our moralizing of her to a poetic expression of our own sensations, then can we say that our verbal and illusive images are comparable as representations of the life of nature to the precision, variety, humour, and beauty of the Greek mythology?

T. J. Clark "Modernism, Postmodernism, and Steam." *October*, vol. 100, 2002, pp. 155-174. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/779097](http://www.jstor.org/stable/779097). *Extract*, pp. 156-159.

Once I had seen the photograph of The Influence Machine, and started to think about the way it spoke to our present utopia of information, I could not stop coming up with points of comparison for it from the art of the last 150 years. I thought of the end of modernism in the late 1960s, and of steam, in Robert Morris, as the figure of that ending. I read Morris's steam piece as essentially a literalization of the previous century's pursuit of abstraction, reduction, and dematerialization-its wish to give art over to the moment, the event, to pure contingency. I had my doubts about what Morris's literalization of these impulses did-whether to literalize them was to banalize them-but at least I understood, or thought I understood, where Morris was coming from. And I knew he knew he was at the end of something, so maybe even the banality of the metaphor was deliberate-it showed us what modernism amounted to by 1968. This still left me with the problem of what Oursler achieved by giving Morris's steam a face. That is, by projecting onto modernism's emptying and dispersal enough of an apparition, a suffering subject, a stream of words.

Then, of course, I began to realize that steam, in the art of the last two centuries, was never unequivocally a figure of emptying and evanescence. It was always also an image of power. Steam could be harnessed; steam could be compressed. Steam was what initially made the machine world possible. It was the middle term in mankind's great reconstruction of Nature. *Rain, Steam, and Speed*. The speed that followed from

compression turns the world into one great vortex in the Turner, one devouring spectral eye, where rain, sun, cloud, and river are seen, from the compartment window, as they have never been seen before. Steam is power and possibility, then; but also, very soon, it is antiquated-it is a figure of nostalgia, for a future, or a sense of futurity, that the modern age had at the beginning but could never make come to pass. Hence the trails or puffs of steam always on the horizon of de Chirico's dreamscapes. A train races by across the Imperial desert. It looks as though the Banana Republic is producing the requisite goods. Or are we already belated visitors here, tourists, gawping at ruins half overtaken by the sand? Is modernity spreading and multiplying still to the ends of the earth-setting up its statues and smokestacks, having its great city perspectives march off into the distance as far as the eye can see? Or is this a retrospect, a collection of fragments? A cloud of steam in de Chirico is often glimpsed between the columns of an empty arcade. Once upon a time the arches led to the station, and people hurried to catch the express. Not anymore. Once upon a time people gloried in the vastness of the new perspectives, and built themselves dream-houses devoted to the worship of cog wheels and tensile strength. But modernity was always haunted by the idea that this moment of dreaming, of infinite possibility, was over.

That is what is meant, I think, by de Chirico's great title of 1914, *Nostalgia of the Infinite*. A great title, but one whose tone (as so often in de Chirico, and in modernism as a whole) is impossible to pin down. No doubt an interpretation is bound to be steered by our knowing that the year in question was fated, and fatal, and sensed to be so at the time-you did not have to be a gloomy Nietzschean to feel, in 1914, that the infinite was about to be put to death. But even here, at this terrible turning point, the nostalgia was strong. It matters, I think, that de Chirico's engineer father was in charge of building the railroad from conscios Athens to Corinth. De Chirico's art is partly a series of attempts to return again to that founding moment, and revel again in Father's victory-modernity's victory-over natural obstacles, his turning of antiquity into decor seen from a speeding carriage.

We could ask of the Tony Oursler, by contrast, whether in it steam and the machine have left in them any suggestion-any memory of possibility and power. Or is what they produce just so much illusion? *The Influence Machine*, Oursler calls his piece. "Influence" is a dead, dispiriting word. (In America it comes with a price tag.) The men and women in the Galerie des Machines in 1889 were not "influenced" by the mechanics of modernity. They were dwarfed by it, maybe; crushed by it; but also elated and magnified. The machines were their creations. Adorno is doubtless right that objectified labor is menacing, and in a sense demonic; but in modernity it is also wonderful, heavenly. If Oursler's machine no longer plays out this dialectic, even vestigially, then it may be true that we have left modernity behind.

My key term of comparison with the Oursler, therefore, is Manet's *Le Chemin de fer*. Steam is this painting's great subject, clearly; and how people relate to steam, how they face it or do not face it; how they turn to face us. It does not take much ingenuity to see that steam in the Manet is a metaphor for a general, maybe constitutive, instability-for things in modernity incessantly changing their shape, hurrying forward, dispersing, and growing impalpable. The picture is perfectly conscious of the fact that their doing so is deeply appealing. It is a sight for sore eyes. We all like watching the trains go by. But steam in *Le Chemin de fer* is also a figure for that shifting and impalpability getting into the texture of life. Steam is a metaphor for appearance, and appearances here being transitory, and for some reason also thoroughly guarded. Steam is the surface that life as a whole is becoming. The girl and the governess are put in a space that is more like a cage than a *terrain vague*. From railings to picture plane there are no more than two or three feet.

Steam and appearance, then: that is certainly Manet's ruling trope. But not simply appearance canceling depth, and ruling out inwardness altogether. Manet and modernism



never go that far. The governess is reading and dreaming. For a moment she may be all outwardness and facingness, but she still has two fingers keeping her place in her book. Maybe steam could also be a metaphor for the freedom of the imagination. But then we look again at those implacable railings, dividing and ruling the rectangle, pressing everything up to the picture surface. Surfaces are too easily *organized*, that is the trouble with modern mobility and anonymity. Always in the new city freedom (evanescence) is the other side of frozenness and constraint.

**Other suggestions include extracts from:**

- E.H. Gombrich (1953) "Renaissance artistic theory and the development of landscape painting," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 41, pp. 335-360. Reprinted in *Norm and Form*, 1966.
- Immanuel Kant Aesthetics: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-aesthetics/>
- Geraldine A. Johnson (2005) "The challenge of nature and the antique," *Renaissance Art: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 45-60.
- Robert Macfarlane 'Walking the Line: For 40 years Richard Long has been tramping through wilderness, making his mark on the landscape. Robert Macfarlane follows his tracks', *The Guardian*, 23/5/09. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/may/23/richard-long-photography-tate-britain>

**WJT Mitchell 'Landscape and Power' (University of Chicago Press, 2002) Ch1: Imperial Landscape**

Theses on Landscape

1. Landscape is not a genre of art but a medium.
2. Landscape is a medium of exchange between the human and the natural, the self and the other. As such, it is like money: good for nothing in itself, but expressive of a potentially limitless reserve of value.
3. Like money, landscape is a social hieroglyph that conceals the actual basis of its value. It does so by naturalising its conventions and conventionalising its nature.
4. Landscape is a natural scene mediated by culture. It is both a represented and presented space, both a signifier and a signified, both a frame and what a frame contains, both a real place and its simulacrum, both a package and the commodity inside the package.
5. Landscape is a medium found in all cultures.
6. Landscape is a particular historical formation associated with European imperialism.
7. Theses 5 and 6 do not contradict one another.

8. Landscape is an exhausted medium, no longer viable as a mode of artistic expression. Like life, landscape is boring: we must not say so.
9. The landscape referred to in Thesis 8 is the same as that of Thesis 6.

**John Berger 'Ways of Seeing' Penguin, 2008 Extract p105-108**

Prior to recent interest in ecology, nature was not thought of as the object of the activities of capitalism; rather it was thought of as the arena in which capitalism and social life and each individual life had its being. Aspects of nature were objects of scientific study, but nature-as-a-whole defied possession. One might put this even more simply. The sky has no surface and is intangible; the sky cannot be turned into a thing or given a quantity. And landscape painting begins with the problem of painting sky and distance. The first pure landscapes - painted in Holland in the seventeenth century - answered no direct social need. (As a result, Ruysdael starved and Hobbema had to give up.) Landscape painting was, from its inception, a relatively independent activity. Its painters naturally inherited and so, to a large extent, were forced to continue the methods and norms of the tradition. But each time the tradition of oil painting was significantly modified, the first initiative came from landscape painting. From the seventeenth century onwards the exceptional innovators in terms of vision and therefore technique were Ruysdael, Rembrandt (the use of light in his later work derived from his landscape studies), Constable (in his sketches), Turner and, at the end of the period, Monet and the Impressionists. Furthermore, their innovations led progressively away from the substantial and tangible toward the indeterminate and intangible. Nevertheless, the special relation between oil painting and property did play a certain role even in the development of landscape painting. Consider the well-known example of Gainsborough's *Mr and Mrs Andrews*... ...Why did Lord Hardwick want a picture of his Park? Why did Mr and Mrs Andrews commission a portrait of themselves with a recognisable landscape of their own land as background? They are not a couple in Nature as Rousseau imagined nature. They are landowners and their proprietary attitude toward what surrounds them is visible in their stance and their expressions... ...The point being made is that, among the pleasures their portrait gave to Mr and Mrs Andrews, was the pleasure of seeing themselves depicted as landowners and this pleasure was enhanced by the ability of oil paint to render their land in all its substantiality.

**Specified Artist: JMW Turner**

**Robert Cumming 'Landscape' from Deighton, Elizabeth (ed.), *Looking Into Paintings, The Open University*, 1985 Section on Turner's *Crossing the Brook* (1815) pp189-191**

"Subject Matter

"... Which country is represented in this painting?

"I have asked this question of many different audiences, and the most frequent answer has been Italy; the least frequent answer, England. Curiously, both answers are correct. In overall visual terms, the landscape is more Italianate than English (the left-hand tree is certainly not typical of England), the dry, hot, dusty light is far removed from the archetypal silver-grey moist English light of Constable's *The Haywain* (Plate 31). Yet we know from contemporary accounts that Turner's direct source of inspiration was the Tamar Valley in Devon, and in the painting there are details in the hills beyond and to the right of the bridge which are clearly Devon tin mines (not so easily discernible in a reproduction). Turner had made pencil sketches in a visit to Devon in 1813, and these were the basis of

the present picture. Turner has deliberately cultivated an Italianate air so that spectators of the painting should be put in mind of Italy.

“In the early nineteenth century serious painting was still dominated by the league table of subject-matter which placed History painting at the top and Landscape and Still Life at the bottom. Turner sought to raise the status of landscape painting in Britain, much as Sir Joshua Reynolds had raised the status of portraiture a generation earlier. Turner did this, not by convincing people that the hierarchy was wrong (that was Constable’s approach and he failed), but by allying landscape with History painting. Turner’s approach succeeded. At this period, he frequently painted landscapes which contained an illustration of or reference to classical literature, in the manner of Claude of Poussin. Here there is no such reference but the visual appearance is so close to a landscape by Claude that the connection has served to elevate its standing. The model is, in fact Claude’s Hagar and Ishmael (Figure 77) which Turner knew. This conscious manoeuvre by Turner may seem highly artificial, and of course it is. But it is important to grasp it since much landscape painting can only be understood correctly in this sort of context. Turner knew exactly what the conventions were regarding History painting and landscape and he was prepared to play the game to the limit within the rules. His contemporaries knew this and admired the skill with which he did it. By the end of the nineteenth century the rules had changed. Landscape painting had become as important to artists as History painting was at the beginning of the century, and it is this revolution which makes nineteenth-century landscape painting so important and so prolific.”

**Sarah Monks ‘Suffer a Sea-Change’: Turner, Painting, Drowning’**

Extract from: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/sarah-monks-suffer-a-sea-change-turner-painting-drowning-r1136832>

...Lying on his deathbed, cared for by the wife of a man who had drowned, Turner asked his fellow artist David Roberts a question which smacks of remarkable defiance against nature and history: ‘So I am to become a nonentity, am I?’<sup>24</sup> The spectres of dissolution and its defiance repeatedly characterise his late seascapes, and it is on one of these - *Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour’s Mouth* (fig.4) - that any discussion of Turner’s relationship with the sublimity of drowning must focus.

Exhibited as ‘Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour’s Mouth making Signals in Shallow Water, and going by the Lead. The Author was in this Storm on the Night the Ariel left Harwich’, this painting makes explicit claims (in its image and in its title) to first-hand experience. As so often in Turner’s work, that experience is one in which nature and human culture work across and against each other. In its confrontation with raw unassailable forces beyond human determination, that culture’s attempts to organise and cut through the world in its own interests (courtesy of engines, boats and straight-ahead navigation) are cast as a hubris familiar from ancient mythology. And in his desperate attempt to remain upright and proceed through space on his own terms - that is, to resist being stilled, swallowed and negated - man burns out both himself and his resources, the overworked engine that drives the boat’s thrashing wheel leaving a foul scorchmark across the sky. There, even the systematisation of the visual into language appears futile, the boat’s distress signal appearing little more than a transient spectacle already most clearly figured by its own feeble remnants: a rocket and red cinders falling, like Icarus and his feathers, into the sea.<sup>25</sup> The vessel’s crew (indicated perhaps by a figure who reaches down to the water from directly beneath the mast) ‘go by the lead’, plumbing the depths in order to gauge their proximity to the bottom and to death.

That such an effort will result in only temporary and apparent truths is suggested by the water itself, which threatens at one point to pull the vessel down and at the next (and most especially in the left-hand side of the painting) to be capable of throwing it up into the heavens. Like the fold, the wave serves as a means of transporting bodies between and through different states: the subjects of Turner's seascapes are swept up, down and along by his waves, and therefore undergo a giddy 'alteration' between being borne aloft and consumed, between transcendence and decomposition. In this painting, the characteristically circular composition of his late seascapes acts as an engine, forcefully propelling the painting's effects out and into our space, so that Turner's waves serve as both figures and vehicles for an aesthetic experience in which the image might enfold its viewer. Yet the circular format also leaves us in little doubt about the real source and sole site of that experience: the artist, around whom the world seems to revolve and who compels its movements like a more powerful Canute. This painting is perhaps the pinnacle of Turner's ability to carve multiple axes within pictorial space. At its heart is a large flash of whitish paint which might represent the glaring light cast by the flare, or the spray of towering waves similar to those we see in the foreground, or indeed the ghost of a sail (of a kind that Turner would hymn - and whose extinction he would seem to mourn - in *The Sun of Venice Going to Sea* fig.5). In any case, this area of the image also appears both as a highly worked patch of thick paint, at one point almost obliterating the boat's mast, and as the compensatory interlude between glowering expanses of darkness which seem to press in upon it from all sides. The phantom of a figure (another of Turner's onboard surrogates perhaps, to join 'Van Tromp' and Ulysses from earlier works) stands in its midst. Somewhere between field experiment and self experiment, *Snow Storm* signals Turner's buccaneering desire to assume art *in extremis*, inserting himself into its raw force as heroic test case.

In a painting which highlights the readiness of its 'Author' to find himself adrift from his cultural inheritance, compelled to devise his own pictorial materials, language and forms whilst exercising his own criteria about their use, it is significant that the resulting image depicts not a scene of clear departure or arrival but rather a moment out at sea and mid-voyage. *Snow Storm* is about artistic process ('making Signals') rather than product; indeed, it seems to be a signal fired off from the very midst of painting. What Turner reveals himself to have been caught up in here is therefore less the agonies involved in taking leave of tradition (or those of establishing the new) than the full whiteout of art itself, away from its ports of call.

This painting therefore indicates - even beyond the titular myth of its origin - a substantial shift in the relationship between art and embodied knowledge. Since the late seventeenth century, marine painters had worked with a perspectival formula which enabled them to stage an expansive world of freely circulating bodies as if seen, known and gauged by an embodied viewer. In its systematic relation of horizon line and eye level, that formula was able to articulate a searching, speculative regard which was ambitious because it looked forward, projecting knowledge and possession out to vision's furthest reaches. In turn, this perspectival formula helped to constitute the self as taking place before a visible world within which it found its capacities and its clear limits, an effect underlined by the marine painter's established repertoire, which ran between calm and storm, the beautiful and the sublime. Turner shattered the horizon and, with that, this settled epistemology. *Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* concerns itself not with knowledge of the world as an entity 'over there', but with knowledge of the self as an isolated body immersed within, and overtaken by, inchoate experience; system, whether perspectival or mechanical, has little purchase here. What Turner has observed (and simultaneously staged) is less the world and its elemental forms than the processes of painting and thought: this work seems to depict its own creation. In particular, the picture (its title opening with a blizzard of alliteration) performs the moment before knowledge, when

vision, thought and bodily experience are effectively equivalent and have yet to tip over into the re-cognition that will define them as distinct, and differently valued, types of 'knowledge'.<sup>33</sup> A chaotic miasma from which form only hesitantly and incompletely emerges, Turner's painting approximates the blank space - the khora, prior to knowledge, words and meaning - into which origins are born in philosophical thought. Significantly, this primordial state of suspended possibilities is no longer implied by the horizon but rather constitutes the entirety of the scene before us. Vaguely discernible within it is the upright human figure (the figure for but not necessarily of Turner himself) around which the image is organised. At once inside and outside the seascape, the artist is now its sole structural predicate, taking the place of both the horizon line and its viewer. Turner seems to speak to us from over there, from the underside of painting, matter and pure, asocial experience.

He was, after all, an artist who apparently wanted to be buried in one of his pictures, and whose Royal Academy exhibits in 1842 included both this painting and *Peace - Burial at Sea*, two works which between them triangulate painting, drowning and death. The purported subject-matter of *Snow Storm* implies the costs of such a voyage into the unknown: the possibility of a disaster which can only be kept at bay by the careful and constant monitoring of one's proximity to the seabed, a perfect metaphor for the self-reflective, self-scrutinising methods of the artist, and indeed the individual, within modernity. Estranged from the safe havens of established convention by conspicuous historical change, the (artistic) subject was now obliged or liberated - Turner would have it both ways, practising a melancholic exuberance into old age - to travel under their own steam.

Read as an image of culture in tension with nature or as an allegory of artistic originality, *Snow Storm* shows Daedalus's realm of human ingenuity and creation at once assaulted and reasserted. But his is not the only mythology conjured by this picture of tempest. In a veiled reference to the recent disaster of the *Fairy* (which had left Harwich in November 1840, sinking with all hands shortly afterwards), Turner's title conjures the malign sprite Ariel from Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*. Turner's evocation of this play is more than passing fancy or allusion. For, in his most significant intervention into the narrative, Ariel whispers into the ear of shipwrecked Ferdinand a beautiful lie about drowning:

Full fathoms five thy father lies;  
Of his bones are coral made;  
Those are pearls that were his eyes:  
Nothing of him that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.

In Ariel's song, Ferdinand's father Alonso survives his drowning in mutated form, having been transformed into something 'rich and strange' courtesy of a merger with his new environment. Alonso has not vanished or faded but rather has undergone a liquefying 'sea-change', his difference from his surroundings diluted to the point that his body has become (in the words of the literature theorist Ian Baucom) 'a catalog of the things that wash over it', a body of work. As a figure for art's capacity to deceive and delight, 'Ariel' also refers us back to Turner's status as artist and, perhaps, to the sea itself, which appears in painting and play alike as a space of deception and artifice, reaching out like the sailor's tropical delirium 'calenture' to challenge settled distinctions between high and low, art and sinking.

### **Specified artist: Claude Monet**

**Monet by himself, edited by Richard Kendall. Macdonald & Co. 1989, page 9.**

It was perhaps only during these years at Argenteuil that Claude Monet's exceptional powers of observation and visual analysis first came into their own. Painting by now almost exclusively from the landscape, Monet worked at his canvases in the open air, scrutinizing the chosen subject in bright natural light and meticulously analysing its tones, colours and textures. When Paul Cézanne said of him that he was 'Only an eye, but my God what an eye!', he surely had in mind Monet's extraordinary ability to see his surroundings in a vivid and apparently untutored way, and to translate that vision into startlingly original compositions. Monet's technique of building up the picture surface in a series of small strokes of paint helped to keep his colours pure and to suggest the sparkle of natural light, as well as conveying something of the artist's exhilaration in the presence of nature. At Argenteuil he converted a boat into a floating studio, enabling him to study the reflections, textures and tones of the river at closer quarters than ever before. Monet's reputation amongst his peers, many of whom shared his delight in the shifting moods of the river, was such that painters like Renoir and Manet came to Argenteuil to paint by his side. Though he was not the strongest personality in this circle, Monet's pictures helped to define some of the group's aspirations, and it was a happy coincidence that turned one of his own canvases, characteristically based on the play of light on water, into the unofficial symbol of their first group exhibition.

**Karin Sagner-Düchting, Claude Monet 1840-1926: A Feast for the Eyes. Taschen.1990, page 47**

Monet now devoted himself almost exclusively to the landscape painting which was to prove the major forum of the Impressionist innovations of the seventies. *Women in the Garden*, *On the Seine at Bennecourt* and *La Grenouillère* form the historical sites from which Monet set off along the individual paths which were to lead him beyond the work of Manet and Courbet to a new style of painting. It was a style which embraced their new understanding of reality, but started by necessity from work en plein air. It therefore opened up new areas and aspects of reality which combined both the novelties of the modern city and an interpretation of landscape as championed by the Barbizon school. The new approach to nature this latter had entailed, so different to conventional painting, had been inspired in particular by English and Dutch landscape painting. Monet's own stay in England and Holland in 1870/71, necessitated by the ravages of war, was thus significant at more than just a personal level.

**Extract from Duret, The Impressionist Painters, cited in Karin Sagner-Düchting, Claude Monet 1840-1926: A Feast for the Eyes. Taschen.1990, page 100**

Duret was right to call Monet the most Impressionist of all the Impressionists 'for he has succeeded in fixing on the canvas those fleeting appearances which painters before him have either neglected or believed impossible to reproduce with the brush. He has recorded in all their truth the thousand nuances assumed by the waters of the ocean and rivers, the play of light in the clouds, the changing colouring of flowers and the transparent reflections of foliage under a burning sun. Since he paints landscapes not only in their unchanging and permanent state, but also from fleeting and chance atmospheric points of view, Monet renders and astonishingly lively and moving impression of the subject he has chosen. His paintings give real impressions. His snow scenes make us shiver, while his sunshine warms.'

Letter to Gustave Geffroy, quoted in Monet by himself, edited by Richard Kendall. Macdonald & Co. 1989, page 246.

Giverny, 1 July 1912

...I am well, but desperate about the weather. I'd begun to work, but I'm having to abandon what I had set out to do. Nature won't be summoned to order and won't be kept waiting. It must be caught, well caught which is not the case today, since I've been indifferent to everything for so long. And then there's my son Jean whose health is a worry to me. Please write and tell me how you are.

Best wishes from your old CLAUDE

MONET

### **Specified Artist: Georgia O'Keeffe**

*Extract from Whitney Chadwick 'Women, Art and Society', Thames & Hudson 1990*

Georgia O'Keeffe ... spent much of her life trying to escape attempts by critics and a well-meaning public to read her life in her work. O'Keeffe's place in the history of modern American art.... remains circumscribed by critical attempts to create a special category for her.... The "rediscovery" that began her recent meteoric rise to the forefront of American art came only with her retrospective exhibition at the Whitney Museum, New York, in 1970 when a new generation of viewers were drawn to the uncompromising example of her life and the quiet integrity of her work.

Her relationship to her colleagues in the circle around Stieglitz, with whom she began living in 1919 - the painters Marsden Hartley, Charles Demuth, Arthur Dove and the photographer Paul Strand - was often equivocal. Referring to them as "the boys", she later commented that "The men liked to put me down as the best woman painter. I think I'm one of the best painters."....

O'Keeffe's paintings of the 1920s - from the planar precisionist studies of New York's buildings and skyline to the New Mexico landscapes with their distilled forms and intense colours and the many paintings of single flowers - are intensely personal statements expressed in the reductive language of early Modernism..... Throughout the 1920s, the complex associations between O'Keeffe's paintings of natural forms and the female body elicited readings which the artist herself recognized as ideological constructions. Responding to the widespread popularizing of Freud's ideas in America, Henry McBride noted "Georgia O'Keeffe is probably what they will be calling in a few years a BF (before Freud) since all her inhibitions seem to have been removed before the Freudian recommendations were preached upon this side of the Atlantic. She became free without the aid of Freud. But she had aid. There was another who took the place of Freud... It is of course Alfred Stieglitz...."

The ideology of femininity, which presented O'Keeffe as Stieglitz's protégée, that constructed her considerable talent as "essentially feminine" legitimized male authority and male succession. "Alfred Stieglitz presents" read the announcement for 1923 exhibition at his gallery; the following year he declared "Woman can only create babies

say the scientists, but I say they can produce art - and Georgia O'Keeffe is the proof of it."

In a decade of declining birth rates women were confronted by a barrage of literature urging them to stay home where, as mothers and homemakers, they became perfect marketing targets for a new peacetime economy based on household consumption. Throughout the 1920, O'Keeffe was forced to watch her work constantly appropriated to an ideology of sexual difference built on the emotional differences between the sexes which supported this social reorganization. Men were "rational", manipulating the environment for the good of their families; women were "intuitive" and expressive", dominated by their feelings and their biological roles. She was shocked when, in 1920, Marsden Hartley wrote an article casting her abstractions in Freudian terms and discussing "feminine perceptions and feminine powers of expression" in her work and that of Delaunay and Laurencin. "No man could feel as Georgia O'Keeffe" notes the Modernist critic, Paul Rosenfeld in 1924, "and utter himself precisely in such curves and colours; for in those curves and spots and prismatic colour there is the woman referring the universe to her own frame, her own balance; and rendering in her picture of things her body's subconscious knowledge of itself."

### **Specified Artist: Barbara Hepworth**

*Extract from: <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/20/figure-and-landscape-barbara-hepworths-phenomenology-of-perception>*

#### ***Rachel Smith Figure and Landscape: Barbara Hepworth's Phenomenology of Perception***

In an interview for *Studio* magazine in 1946 Barbara Hepworth was asked to describe her main sources of inspiration. Anticipating her response, the interviewer volunteered that these included 'negro sculpture, the human figure, aerodynamics, or dreams'. She replied simply: 'The main sources of my inspiration are the human figure and landscape; also the one in relation to the other.' The relationship between the figure and landscape interested Hepworth throughout her career, but especially after moving to St Ives in 1939, and remained at the core of her work for the rest of her life. In 1966, for example, she stressed that 'Every work in sculpture is ... either a figure I see, or a sensation I have, whether in Yorkshire, Cornwall or Greece, or the Mediterranean'. Just a few months later she spoke about the two as if they were inseparable: 'I cannot write anything about landscape without writing about the human figure and human spirit inhabiting the landscape. For me, the whole art of sculpture is the fusion of these two elements.'....

In a statement written in 1951 Hepworth described how the form of a figure standing within the landscape had always been at the heart of her work. She explained:

The forms which have had special meaning for me since childhood have been the standing form (which is the translation of my feeling towards the human being standing in landscape); the 'two forms' - (which is the tender relationship of one living thing beside another) & the 'closed form', such as oval, spherical or pierced form (sometimes incorporating colour) which translates for me the association of meaning of gesture in landscape; in the repose of say a mother & child, or the feeling of the embrace of living things, either in nature or in the human spirit.

Within her description of three types of forms, Hepworth explicitly related both the 'standing form' and 'closed form' to the experience of the landscape. She also compared 'closed forms' to the 'repose' of a mother and child and natural forms which 'embrace',



implying a figure which is affected by these postures, motions or frames. Hepworth continued by stressing the importance of two aspects to each of these forms that are fundamental to the phenomenological view of experience: first, Hepworth noted 'our sense of touch is a fundamental sensibility which comes into action at birth', and, second, she highlighted the 'stereognostic sense' as 'the ability to feel weight & form & assess its significance'. Hepworth concluded that both of these sensations should be communicated in sculpture through its relation to the human scale. She wrote:

In all these shapes the translation of what one feels about man & nature, must be conveyed by the sculptor in terms of mass, inner tensions & rhythm, scale in relation to our human size & the quality of surface which speaks through our hands as well as eyes.

***Hepworth on Hepworth: A sculptor speaks of stone. April 1930***

Carving to me is more interesting than modelling, because there is an unlimited variety of materials from which to draw inspiration. Each material demands a particular treatment and there are an infinite number of subjects in life each to be re-created in a particular material. In fact, it would be possible to carve the same subject in a different stone each time, throughout life, without a repetition of form.

**Specified Artist: Barry Flanagan**

***Extract from Richard Cork 'Sculpture in the Close' The Listener 21 July 1988, republished in : 'New Spirit, new sculpture, new money: art in the 1980s Yale, 2003***

Cambridge colleges have never been renowned for their involvement with contemporary art. Twenty years ago, when I was an undergraduate, the advent of a fierce yellow Anthony Caro was greeted with superior disdain in many common rooms. A few years later, this hostility towards the modern reached a vicious climax when Barry Flanagan's sculpture was completely destroyed by vandals, soon after its installation in Laundress Green.

*Sculpture in the Close*, an exhibition which has now transformed the grounds of Jesus College, is therefore something of a miracle. Colin Renfrew, the Master of Jesus, whose informed enthusiasm for contemporary sculpture is conveyed in his catalogue essay, has allowed his lawns and cloisters to be occupied by work from half-a-dozen sharply differentiated artists. He pays tribute to the role played by Veronica Ryan, Artist in Residence at the college over the past year. Her organic forms, instinct with a feeling for the materials she employs, express themselves most mysteriously in the lead sheet Cavities sunk into the grass of Cloister Court. Far from violating their surroundings, they take their place gently enough in an area which contains the oldest of Cambridge college buildings....

The two most impressive participants in the show are not, however, at war with their environment. Barry Flanagan's *Bronze Horse* occupies its prime position in the First Court as if it had always been positioned there. It seems absolutely right and inevitable, embodying the sculptor's tribute to the horses of San Marco with poise and dignity. The grace Flanagan displays in this five-year-old work reaches a new pitch of elegance in the more recent *Kouros Horse*, with its slimmer and surprisingly attenuated proportions. Compared with the confidence of *Bronze Horse*, it appears more vulnerable too, with a prop supporting its raised front leg. This unease becomes overt in Flanagan's third exhibit, the bronze *Elephant*. Modelled with a far rougher and more broken touch than the horses,

perhaps to signify disquiet, he perches unsteadily on a base too small to hold his weight with comfort. The elephant is stranded, as if forced to occupy his awkward mound by a ringmaster who imposes his alien will on the long-suffering animal.

Equilibrium is restored in the Fellows Garden, where Richard Long has made a large work specially for its allotted place. In a wide stretch of lawn near one of the most majestic trees in Cambridge, he incised a series of concentric circles in the turf. They show up grey against the prevailing green, and expand quietly outwards like ripples caused by a pebble thrown into a pond. The rhythms of the work echo the grand circular arena encompassed by the tree, and yet Long's installation does not appear dwarfed by its surroundings. Assured, plain-spoken and at the same time suggestive of primordial secrets, it fuses with the setting in a deceptively effortless harmony.

### **Specified 3D artist: Richard Long**

**Jeffrey Kastner (ed) : Land and environmental art. Phaidon, 1998**

Page 11: Among the many relationships that define the human condition, the individual's connection to the environment is primary. Nature is the biggest of big pictures. We aspire to leave our mark.

We have consistently sought to connect on some level with the landscape. Among most complex and fascinating of these works is land art. What began in the mid sixties with a small number of committed conceptualists, has grown over the last thirty years to include a widely diverging collection of forms, approaches and theoretical positions.

In many ways this is a quintessentially American art form. Eco and environmental art began in the American cultural crucible of new York and the open spaces of its western deserts. It involved artists from around the world who brought very different approaches to bear. This was never a movement in the traditional sense, since all work has as its pivot in the land and the individual's responses to and activity within.

Land art is concerned with the way both time and natural forces impact on objects and gestures: It is at once critical of and nostalgic for the notion of 'the garden'; alternately aggressive and nurturing towards the landscape.

Land art emerged from a mid-60s art world that was seeking to break with the cult of the personalised, transcendental expression embodied in American post-war abstraction. Artists found alternatives to the gallery or museum by co-opting other urban building types or working in the open air.

Richard Long: Heaven and Earth / edited by **Clarrie Wallis**. (Exhibition Catalogue) (2009 : London) Wallis, Clarrie. Tate Britain London : *Tate Publishing*, 2009. **PAGE 145**

*Edited Version of 'Words After the Fact' 1982 published on the occasion of solo exhibition at Arnolfini, Bristol 1983. Artist Statement from Richard Long*

In the mid-sixties the language and ambition of art was due for renewal. I felt art had barely recognised the natural landscapes which cover this planet, or had used the experiences those places could offer. Starting on my own doorstep and later spreading, part of my work since has been trying to engage this potential. I see it as abstract art laid down in the real spaces of the world. It is not romantic; I use the world as I find it.

My work is simple and practical. I may choose rolling moorland to make a straight ten mile walk because that is the best place to make such a work, and I know such places well.

I like the idea of using the land without possessing it. A walk marks time with an accumulation of footsteps. It defines the form of the land. Walking the roads and paths is to trace a portrait of the country. I have become interested in using a walk to express original ideas about the land, art, and walking itself.

A walk is also the means of discovering places in which to make sculpture in 'remote' areas, places of nature, places of great power and contemplation. These works are made of the place, they are a rearrangement of it and in time will be reabsorbed by it. I hope to make work for the land, not against it.

I like the idea that art can be made anywhere, perhaps seen by few people, or not recognised as art when they do. I think that is a great freedom won for art and for the viewer.

My photographs and captions are facts which bring the appropriate accessibility to the spirit of these remote or otherwise unrecognisable works.

Time passes, a place remains. A walk moves through life, it is physical but afterwards invisible. A sculpture is still, a stopping place, visible.

The freedom to use precisely all degrees of visibility and permanence is important in my work. Art can be a step or a stone. A sculpture, a map, a text, a photograph; all the forms of my work are equal and complimentary. The knowledge of my actions, in whatever form, is the art. My art is the essence of my experience, not a representation of it.

My inside and outside sculptures are made in the same spirit. The urban and rural worlds are mutually dependent, and they both have equal significance in my work.

My work has become a simple metaphor of life.

A figure walking down his road, making his mark.

It is an affirmation of my human scale and sense: how far I walk, what stones I pick up, my particular experiences. Nature has more effect on me than I on it. I am content with the vocabulary of universal and common means; walking, placing, stones, sticks, water, circles, lines, days, nights, roads.

**Marta Tafalla** From Allen Carlson to Richard Long: The Art-Based Appreciation of Nature

University of Barcelona Abstract. 2010 <http://proceedings.eurosa.org/2/tafalla2010.pdf>

The question I ask in this paper is whether some works of art could teach us to aesthetically appreciate nature. The first part of the text presents the current debate in analytical aesthetics on appreciation of nature, and examines Allen Carlson's thesis that only natural sciences, and not art, teach us to appreciate natural beauty. Carlson argues that natural sciences as biology or ecology show us nature as it is, making possible an objective aesthetics of nature, while art only projects subjective ideas on it. The text examines the arguments raised against this thesis by different authors, some of them defending a cognitivist position and some a non-cognitivist one. The second part analyzes Carlson's rejection of art, and focuses on his reasons for rejecting landscape painting. Carlson argues that landscape painting distorts the true character of natural environments because it frames and flattens environments into scenery. He claims that aesthetic appreciation of nature is not a matter of looking at views from a distance, as we contemplate pictures in a gallery, but it is being involved in the environment, moving

through it, and not only looking, but hearing, touching, smelling. The third part proposes the work of Richard Long as an art that cannot be rejected by Carlson arguments. Land art was born at the same time as philosophical aesthetics of nature was renewed by Ronald Hepburn after a long time of oblivion, and we can find some affinities between Carlson's critiques to landscape painting and some land art works, like the art of Richard Long. Long explores natural environments in a new way, and it is argued that his art can teach us to aesthetically appreciate nature.

Other suggestions:

- **Adrian Searle** 'Written in mud' The Guardian Tuesday July 10, 2007  
Inspired by his journeys in the wilderness, Richard Long's enigmatic work is at its best when he keeps it simple,
- **Sean O'Hagan** 'One step beyond' The Observer Sunday 10 May 2009  
At 22, Richard Long changed the face of British sculpture. Yet his works are as simple as a track in the snow or a stone circle - left to nature and passers-by. As Tate Britain brings his art indoors, he tells Sean O'Hagan how walking has inspired his life's work
- <http://www.richardlong.org/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/audiointerviews/profilepages/longr1.shtml>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/sculptors/12820.shtml>

### **Specified Architect: John Nash**

**John Brooks** *The Gothic Revival*, Phaidon, 1999 p164-66

...for where the Sublime overawes, the Picturesque woos, and the spectator, entranced by visual pleasure, becomes aesthetically and ideologically complicit, helping to make and validate the meanings of castellar gothic and sylvan setting: both what is signified and what is skipped.

Like so much else that was gothic, picturesque castles become popular as Britain went to war with France. While consolidating the ideology of property, the castle's martial resonances further associates proprietorship with resolution in the cause of national defence. At the same time, the miscellaneous ideas and practices of the Picturesque received their first theoretical treatment, in the writings of William Gilpin, Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight himself. Though their emphases differed - Gilpin's were primarily pictorial, Prices's psychological, Knight's intellectual - all were enamoured of the effects of untamed nature, which fitted well-established notions of gothic as rugged and organic, and vitally encouraged a taste for the kind of visual variety gothic offered. But their principal concern was landscape: architecture was secondary, and issues of style tangential.

More directly addressed to architecture was the modified version of picturesque theory in *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1795) by Humphrey Repton (1752-1818), a

professional and highly successful landscape gardener, famous for the *Red Books* he produced to explain and illustrate estate improvements to prospective clients. In *Sketches and Hints* Repton endorsed the pursuit of the Picturesque, but rejected wild nature in favour of an aesthetic of 'propriety and convenience' that emphasised the social and political meaning of landownership. The layout of the whole estate should announce 'appropriation' - Repton's own term - and thus signify the 'unity and continuity of unmixed property' belonging to the landowner. Repton made explicit the covert ideological strategies that were described earlier in discussing eighteenth-century landscaping. An expression of Romantic conservation, Repton's aesthetic of 'appropriation' was a strategic bid to reinforce the physical presence in the British countryside of its traditional governors, the hereditary landed interest, and thus the regime of paternalism and deference that Burke, and later Scott, identified with chivalry....

John Nash (1752-1835), the king of the picturesque castle, was Repton's partner between 1796 and 1802. Nash's early practice centred on Carmarthen, and he knew the circle of Knight and Price, gothicising Hafod House (1794) on the estate of Knight's cousin Thomas Johnes, and designing the gothic Castle House (1795), beside the sea at Aberystwyth, for Price himself. Nash's partnership with Repton followed his move to London, the start of a social career that made him the pet architect and crony of the Prince Regent (later George IV, r.1820-30). The first major product of the Repton collaboration was Luscombe Castle, Dawlish (1799), on the salubrious south Devon coast, for the banker Charles Hoare, who had a large income and a sickly wife. Repton's picturesque planting was matched by Nash's highly inventive house, all angles and irregularities, with an octagonal, battlemented tower, a veranda-cum-conservatory lit by huge gothic windows, and a kitchen range set obliquely and terminating in a turret. More intimately varied as well as more compact than Downton, Luscombe is altogether friskier; and a lot further away from any castle that the Middle Ages put up....

*p167* The picturesque castle became one of the Gothic Revival's central building types, and, with Nash as chief magician, spread its enchantment over Romantic Britain, most winningly, perhaps, amid upland scenery. They were designed by architects of every status.

**Sir John Summerson**, *Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830* (1953) (1993 edition, p451-2)

Nash seems to have joined Repton [Humphry Repton 1752-1818, landscape gardener - i.e. in partnership] about 1795, soon after which date he left Wales and returned to London. The partnership lasted till about 1802, when there was a misunderstanding, and architect and landscape gardener went their several ways. But while it lasted, it was fruitful. While Repton 'improved' estates, Nash rebuilt or altered the houses on them and adorned them with lodges, cottages, dairies and other trifles. In doing so he adopted a style intended to be in itself picturesque. .... A house such as Luscombe, Devon, built for the banker Charles Hoare (1800) has much the same deliberate irregularity, though within a smaller compass. From Payne Knight, Nash will certainly have derived the idea of an Italian type of house, of irregular silhouette with a round, conical-roofed tower and deep eaves; for this type, used in small villas such as Cronkhill, Shropshire, of 1802, and others elsewhere, derives very obviously from the canvases of Claude Lorrain, a source which Payne Knight believed that architects might, with advantage, explore. The house is in the vernacular of the Italian Campagna, a style which had no architectural credentials whatever but which, seen through Claude's eyes, had picturesque beauty. In as house such as Cronkhill, Nash gives the architectural essence of the Picturesque movement.

Before the rupture with Repton, Nash had already found himself (no doubt, as Repton's partner) at the court of the Prince of Wales, for whom...he designed a conservatory in

1798. Further patronage in this high quarter was, however, long delayed and up to the time of the Regency Nash was engaged exclusively as a country-house and ornamental-cottage builder. Though some of his houses, like Rokingham, Co. Roscommon (for Lord Lorton, 1810) were classical, most were 'castellated' or Gothic, like the rambling groups of Caerhays, Cornwall (for Lord Bettesworth), or, at the other end of England, Ravensworth Castle (for Sir Thomas Liddell, Bt) both built in 1808; or, indeed, his own miniature castle at East Cowes, I.o.W (1798 onwards, now demolished). While these illustrated the Picturesque idea in a grand way, his cottages and lodges neatly epitomized it. With hips, gables and dormers, brick, half-timber and thatch, Nash became as versatile as any 'Tudor' cottage architect of a century later. At Blaise Castle, near Bristol, he built (1811) a whole set of these cottages, assembling as one group designs he has executed elsewhere. They survive as a most interesting anthology, evincing a care for the practicalities of peasant life, no less than a flair for the Picturesque.

The rediscovery of the cottage, primarily as a component in an improved Picturesque landscape, but secondarily as an architectural toy with an intrinsic interest of its own, led to a series of books of designs for such things being published. In the period 1790 to 1810, they came out at an average rate of more than one a year. They are very different from the usually rather blockish farm and cottage designs of earlier authors and have three main sources of inspiration - first, the 'primitive hut', that hypothesis so dear to Neo-classical theory; second, the ancient vernacular of the English countryside as painters such as Gainsborough and Morland saw it; third, the Italian vernacular as illustrated in the seventeenth-century classics of landscape-painting. Soane, in his *Plans of Building* of 1788, gives a dairy (at Hamels, Herts) which is a prototypal temple in timber, and there are further examples in his *Sketches* of 1793, including porches made of 'trunks of trees decorated with woodbines and honeysuckles'.

from Peter Beacham and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Cornwall (The Buildings of England)*, 2014, (p584-6)

Caerhays Castle: A very picturesque mansion, in a superb position overlooking Porthluney Bay, so deeply hidden in its woods that the sudden revelation of the castle with its battlemented walls and square and round towers among ornamental trees and shrubs is breathtaking. Built in 1808 for J. Bettesworth-Trevelyan by John Nash, his only surviving essay in castellated Gothic. It replaced an earlier house and garden on the same site. Of the earlier house there is little visible (save one C16 door jamb reused as a lintel to the cellar), but the foundations of the present building may incorporate older fabric. Approximately L-plan, asymmetrically composed with the main range running SW-NE and culminating in a massive circular tower with an attached, higher, circular stair-tower. The other range extends SE from the SW end ending in a circular turret with the services and stables attached to the W. The entrance front centres on a two-storey porte cochère between a polygonal tower l. and a square tower r. The garden front has two polygonal towers and a slender polygonal tower with an ogee stone roof to complement the main NE corner tower. The interior is planned around a long, wide gallery through the main axis of the house, with a stair rising and returning in two flights at the SW end; at the other a lobby gives access to a circular closet with a library l. and a circular drawing room r., the latter connecting with a suite of rooms along the garden front. The gallery rises to the roof with long skylights and an iron-railed balcony. Nash employs ornament sparingly but where the gallery joins the walls used his typical arrangement of miniature groins springing originally from round colonettes, now lost. The service buildings are arranged around two courtyards with clock tower and bellcote: a smaller inner court with offices, originally dairies, and servants' hall to the N, the larger outer court with stables and coachhouses.

The gardens and pleasure grounds are among the most celebrated in Cornwall. The formal gardens are an integral part of Nash's Gothick conception, in an impressive series of terraces to the SE and NW of the house; it is unclear to what extent he incorporated the walls of the earlier garden shown on an estate map of 1802 but they appear to survive best in the walls of the terraces and towers to the rear of the house. The later terraces are enclosed by crenelated walls, the SE wall facing the sea battered and buttressed, breaking forward into two small bastions, and climaxing in a tower rising in two graduated stages. The surrounding slopes around the house are terraced into a series of grass and gravel walks with drives and paths through the woodland, richly underplanted with important collections of ornamental trees and shrubs, especially camellias, derived from early C20 plant-hunting expeditions associated with J.C. Williams: his family bought Caerhays in 1852 and have continued to develop the garden's design and planting from Nash's original layout. Another pleasure garden walk descends S past an early C19 arch by Nash: SE towards the sea is a serpentine lake formed by damming the River Luney. Surrounding it all is the extensive Park including a C19 deer park created by Michael Williams, replacing the Trevanions' earlier park of the C15.

#### **Specified Architect: Antoni Gaudí**

**Maria Antonetta Crippa, *Antoni Gaudí 1852-1926: From Nature into Architecture* (Cologne: Taschen, 2015), 71.**

Visiting the interior of Casa Mila, and the nearby Casa Batlló, walking up and down the stairs and round the apartments, one's gaze falls onto walls stirred by waves and gorges, on doors and windows in curved wood and coloured glass, on brass handles that seem to have been made from hand-clenched wax casts, on ceilings in shaped plaster, on the numerous hand-crafted and surprisingly valuable furnishings and fixtures. The sensation is one of being pleasantly immersed in the cavity of a gigantic body, rendered warm and hospitable by continuous contrasts of light and colour obtained through the use of a wide range of building materials. In the interior decoration of Casa Mila there is a prevalence of ornamental marine themes, which accentuates this sense of fluid continuity. The ceilings, in particular, are finished with broad waves of moulded plaster that simulate the movement of water, sometimes ruffled by the wind, sometimes wrapped into spirals which recall the eddies and curls of foam on the sea shore. There are etched polyp and marine flora patterns here and there, together with sea snails in relief.

"Do you want to know where I found my model? An upright tree; it bears its branches and these, in turn, their twigs, and these in turn their leaves. And every individual part has been growing harmoniously, magnificently, ever since God, the artist, created it." Antoni Gaudí

**Aicart, Joan, "Gaudí and Mediterranean Culture." *Quaderns de la Mediterrània* 15 (2011): 101-105. <http://www.iemed.org/observatori-fr/arees-danalisi/arxiu-adjunts/qm-15-originals/Gaudi%20and%20mediterranean%20culture.pdf>**

The works of Gaudí, and especially his most representative creation, the Sagrada Família, show the extensive richness and abundance of the Mediterranean. With his architectonic legacy, Gaudí seeks to discover the latent secrets of Mediterranean nature through its metaphorical meaning and religious system of symbols. Therefore, his buildings are constructed based on reminiscences of Mediterranean culture, geography, light and metaphors and his style is a declaration of ethical principles of Christian genesis for everyone who contemplates his work. This Mediterranean style consists of two basic elements that distinguish the work of the Catalan architect: light and forms of nature,

which evoke the heritage of Mediterranean civilisations. All of them (trees, cypresses, birds and palm trees) transmit a system of symbols of mystical and spiritual roots, used by the three religions of the Mediterranean shore: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

In the 19th century, Modernisme emerged in Catalonia, Modern Style in England, Stile Liberty in Italy and Art Nouveau in France. Romanticism had spread a return to the essential, to the natural, which later became abundant references to nature. Gaudí, immersed in this environment, went beyond his historical moment and introduced himself into the cultural roots of inspiration in nature throughout history, above all the countries of the Mediterranean basin, and later did not attempt a servile imitation of the natural environment but rather to understand the creative and functional processes that nature conceals. In this article we will focus, firstly, on the influence of the Mediterranean, both in terms of culture and the geographical and light position in Gaudí's way of building, and secondly, we will explore the metaphors of Mediterranean roots that appear in his works....

Much of Gaudí's work can be framed within his dialogue between nature and the search for harmony. In this respect, we can make a comparison with Greek civilisation, a period when the first philosophers started to reason on the different natural elements. One of the main guides for their constructions consisted of following the formula of the golden section, present in nature's way of development. Following the reasoning of the suitability of light in the Mediterranean region, Gaudí's constructive and decorative style gives great importance to the reception of light by spaces and the way these spaces can best exploit the light they receive, for example through colour. In the Sagrada Família the glass windows are not figurative; that is, they do not represent moments or symbols related with the Gospel or the lives of saints but, although they possess a religious theme, are formed by glass of different colours that illuminates the space in a determined way according to the time of day and how the sun illuminates each glass window at each moment. In this way, a great variety of colours and lighting are created in the interior of the Sagrada Família, which reminds us of the idea of having entered a different space, in the sacred space of the temple. In other spaces, such as some houses or Park Güell, we see an explosion of colour owing to the use of the mosaic characteristic of Gaudí's work, called *trencadís*....

Another constructive element of the Sagrada Família common to other Mediterranean civilisations in direct observation of the world of nature is the idea of the tree as a support for the interior structure and its proportionality with man. "All styles are organisms related to nature; some are isolating crags, like the Greek and Roman; others mountain ranges and peaks, like the Indian. All consist of a minimum support; in other words, the column and the supported horizontal parts. The whole is the tree, and its proportions are similar to the human figure, so that it is not a tree-tree (as the building has distinct functions to that of a forest) but a tree-man. And this embraces and explains all styles: including the Egyptian, Greek, Byzantine, and Gothic tree-man." In the search for the creation of a support, man comes across the image of the tree, which will later adapt to a proportion analogous to the human figure and to that which he himself can reach through sight. The Sagrada Família synthesises the idea of the support of the columns through the form of a tree that, effectively, rises up thanks to the interior structure of the catenary arches.

The observation of nature and its laws led Gaudí to apply the catenary arch system in his works. The way nature is organised according to the weight of gravity is the catenary form, through the form of the conoid, whether downwards or upwards. The first project in which Gaudí begins to manage forms close to the catenary is that of the Catholic Missions in Tangiers. This was Gaudí's first great project, for which he had to seek out structural solutions in what he had studied, in the observation of the original environment and in the place where he was going to construct his work: "The secular architectonic burden means that most current architects, instead of constructing buildings full of humanity, only create enormous paperweights. All buildings are a product of the earth, like the tree that sprouts from it, and is identified with it."



## The Use of Metaphors of Mediterranean Root

...[A]n element very present in the Mediterranean basin, ... is the grapevine, a kind of vine that climbs walls or different types of vertical supports. In Mediterranean culture this type of plantation abounded, as it was located on one of the walls of the house together with a structure that created a great shady space. There, with the appropriate arrangement of a table and chairs, it was possible to share intimate moments, hold banquets, shelter from the sun and offer hospitality to strangers.

In terms of the system of symbols of the Sagrada Família, Isidre Puig Boada, disciple of Gaudí and head architect of the temple between 1966 and 1974, tells us: "Suspended in the triumphal arch there will be a canopy that will cover the altar; it will be crowned by a cross, from the foot of which a grapevine will emerge that with its leaves and bunches will weave the whole canopy. 'Can you imagine anything more beautiful,' said Gaudí, 'than a table prepared under a grapevine?'" The metaphor between the grapevine and a house on the Mediterranean coast and the altar is based, first, on the association with a pleasant, protective, space where one is comfortable. On a level of more profound meaning, the grapevine was the place where the family or the people of the house welcomed the guest and showed their intimacy. On the altar, it is God himself who welcomes us and makes us participants in his intimacy through his blood and flesh, represented by the symbols of wine and the Eucharist respectively.

The second metaphor is that of the tree of life in the form of a cypress, embodied in the Sagrada Família in the cypress that crowns the Nativity Façade. For the Romans, this tree was a metaphor of the kingdoms of the underworld, those mysterious kingdoms that exist under ground associated with life after death. The cypress was dedicated to Pluto, Roman God of the underworld, as its roots are deep. This is why the cypress is present in many cemeteries of the Mediterranean basin that belong to Judaism, Islam and Christianity. The reason for this presence is that in the three religions the deep roots that the cypress buries in the ground are united with its elongated figure that points towards the sky. It thus becomes a metaphor of the hope that enables men to connect again with divinity, linking the underworld with its deep roots with the world above, through its elongated form. Moreover, the cypress is a metaphor of eternity as its leaf is perennial; that is, it remains alive and coloured throughout the year, and its wood is strong and lasting, as can be seen in the doors of Saint Peter's in the Vatican, made of cypress wood, which after more than a thousand years are still in good condition.

On the Nativity Façade of the Sagrada Família we see...this tree protecting the figure of a pelican opening its chest with its beak to give its flesh and blood, just as Christ feeds men who want to receive him and returns them to life with his sacrifice. The cypress renews the life that had been denied man after having disobeyed God in Paradise. Thus, the cypress of the Sagrada Família is filled with birds that climb the tree, a metaphor of the souls of the just who ascend to God. We say metaphor because the cypress usually shelters different birds under its thick foliage. The bird represents, moreover, both for Islam and for Christianity the soul of man who searches, who ascends from the earthly to the spiritual. The medieval writer Faridud-Din Atar wrote in the 12th century the poem *The Conference of Birds*, in which he describes the journey of a group of birds in search of their king, a rejection of man's search towards the divine.

Moreover, we find that the fruit of the cypress, when it is closed, is a compact and circular fruit, and when it opens it expands in the four directions, following the way nature develops. Gaudí uses the fruit of the cypress to represent the form of a cross in three dimensions, which he introduces in almost all his buildings.

Lastly, we will explore the metaphor of the palm tree, present again in the Nativity Façade of the Sagrada Família, and whose function is to act as a column between the portals of Faith, Charity and Hope. The palm tree is a tree that grows in warm and temperate regions, and is characterised as growing with little water in places where other trees cannot. For the Egyptians, it was an element of great importance because it provided a great quantity of nutrients through its fruits and the objects that could be

obtained through it (paper, rope, sugar, liquors...). Its leaf, the palm, was a symbol of victory for the Romans and its fruit, the date, nourished the idea of abundance in the desert. Therefore, in the imaginary of both Islam and Judaism we find numerous references to palm trees. There are examples in the Old Testament: "The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree" and in the Koran: "It is He who sends down water from the sky, and with it we bring forth vegetation of all kinds, and out of it we bring forth green stalks, from which we bring forth thick clustered grain. And out of the date-palm come forth clusters of dates hanging low and near." In the Jewish festival of Passover, the Hebrew people receive Christ with palm branches that represent power and victory.

**John Ruskin**, *THE LAMP OF BEAUTY from The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1849), 101-2. [https://www.gutenberg.org/files/35898/35898-h/35898-h.htm#Page\\_100](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/35898/35898-h/35898-h.htm#Page_100)

I. It was stated, in the outset of the preceding chapter, that the value of architecture depended on two distinct characters: the one, the impression it receives from human power; the other, the image it bears of the natural creation. I have endeavored to show in what manner its majesty was attributable to a sympathy with the effort and trouble of human life... I desire now to trace that happier element of its excellence, consisting in a noble rendering of images of Beauty, derived chiefly from the external appearances of organic nature...

II. It will be thought that I have somewhat rashly limited the elements of architectural beauty to imitative forms. I do not mean to assert that every arrangement of line is directly suggested by a natural object; but that all beautiful lines are adaptations of those which are commonest in the external creation; that in proportion to the richness of their association, the resemblance to natural work, as a type and help, must be more closely attempted, and more clearly seen; and that beyond a certain point ... man cannot advance in the invention of beauty, without directly imitating natural form.

Thus, in the Doric temple, the triglyph and cornice are unimitative; or imitative only of artificial cuttings of wood. ...The fluting of the column, which I doubt not was the Greek symbol of the bark of the tree, was imitative in its origin, and feebly resembled many caniculated organic structures... the Doric capital was unimitative; but all the beauty it had was dependent on the precision of its ovolo, a natural curve of the most frequent occurrence. The Ionic capital ... nevertheless depended for all the beauty that it had on its adoption of a spiral line, perhaps the commonest of all that characterise the inferior orders of animal organism and habitation. Farther progress could not be made without a direct imitation of the acanthus leaf.

Again: the Romanesque arch is beautiful as an abstract line. Its type is always before us in that of the apparent vault of heaven, and horizon of the earth. The cylindrical pillar is always beautiful, for God has so moulded the stem of every tree that it is pleasant to the eyes. The pointed arch is beautiful; it is the termination of every leaf that shakes in summer wind, and its most fortunate associations are directly borrowed from the trefoiled grass of the field, or from the stars of its flowers. Further than this, man's invention could not reach without frank imitation. His next step was to gather the flowers themselves, and wreath them in his capitals...

### **Specified Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright**

**Leeron Hoory** 'When Buildings Blend with Nature: On Frank Lloyd Wright's Organic Architecture' from <http://gardencollage.com/change/sustainability/frank-lloyd-wright/> August 1, 2016

Frank Lloyd Wright originally coined the phrase “organic architecture” before the word ‘organic’ came to be associated with everything from juice and dry cleaning to farming and makeup. The iconic architect is famous for designing structures that blend into their surroundings in groundbreaking, innovative ways.

Today, looking at the skylines of our most urban cities, it’s easy to view buildings as the antithesis of their natural surroundings. Yet, in the early twentieth century, Wright envisioned an architecture that was not a shield, but rather a bridge to nature, and strived “to make the landscape more beautiful than before the building was built.”

Born in 1867, Wright grew up near the Wisconsin River. Surrounded by nature as a child, he had an intuitive relationship to the processes and cycles of the earth, which became the basis for his lifelong inspiration as an architect. Wright wrote, at an early stage of his career, that “Although our practice for centuries has been for the most part to turn from [nature], seeking inspiration in books and adhering slavishly to dead formulae, her wealth of suggestion is inexhaustible; her riches greater than any man’s desire.” Throughout his career, Wright was also inspired and informed by Whitman, Emerson, Ruskin, and (perhaps most importantly) Thoreau....

In his book, *In the Realm of Ideas*, Aaron Green writes: “Carrying the concept ‘form follows function’ a conclusive step further into ‘form and function are one,’ Wright threw new light on a major tenet of organic architecture. The building must have its own form, its beauty emergent from its consonance with nature.” Wright also blended vertical and horizontal elements, such that there’s no definite beginning or end to the structure.

And yet, his concept of “organic architecture” is distinct from the actual structures Wright designed. Organic architecture referred to a set of principles, which were simple yet elaborate, often subtle. For example, Wright avoided creating rooms in rectangles, wanting to get away from the idea of a box as a room, because, he wrote, “the architecture of freedom and democracy needed something basically better than the box.” In its place, he designed the corner window, bringing in more light to the interior.

Each of the bedrooms in Fallingwater has a terrace, and there are two terraces off the living room, serving up ample limbo space between the inside and outside. The furniture was all predesigned for the house in the way that it’s perfectly planted into the structure- it’s almost growing from it, just like the house grows from the surrounding woody environment.

On a more subtle level, the lines of Wright’s buildings are slightly curved; he avoided straight edges so as to mimic the curves seen in nature, which has no straight lines. Describing some of the features that contribute to organic architecture, he wrote in 1908: “gently sloping roofs, low proportions, quiet sky lines, suppressed heavysset chimneys and sheltering overhangs, low terraces and outreaching walls sequestering private gardens.”

Wright kept his materials simple; he’d use stone or brick masonry and plaster, sometimes wood as an accent. In Fallingwater he used reinforced concrete and stone masonry. For him, art was in finding the natural characteristics in these materials- he’d strip the wood of varnish and stain it, for example.

Even in the arrangement of his materials, Wright would pay close attention to his surroundings and mimic the region. Waggoner writes that “The stone is laid up in a rough, horizontal fashion that is reminiscent of the native sandstone formations found in the region. The steel is painted Cherokee red, a color indicative of the fire-fueled steel-making process. Even the pale ocher color of the concrete suggests the earthen nature of the material.”

Wright favored natural color schemes that included “the soft, warm, optimistic tones of earths and autumn leaves” over “pessimistic blues, purples, or cold greens and grays of the ribbon counter” and encouraged going into the woods to find them.

Wright’s concept of organic architecture, and the works inspired by them, created a new-found continuity in architectural structures that persists to this day- an enduring method of immersing humanity into nature rather than pulling them away from it.

### **Specified architect: Santiago Calatrava**

Jodidio, Philip Santiago Calatrava 1998, Köln: Taschen

... Yet with his combined interests in art, engineering, and architecture, Calatrava is indeed close to the heart of one of the most intense debates in the recent history of construction and design. As Sigfried Giedion wrote in his seminal book Space, Time and Architecture, “The advent of the structural engineer with speedier, industrialized form-giving components broke up the artistic bombast and shattered the privileged position of the architect and provided the basis for present-day developments...”.... P. 8

“One might say that what we do is a natural continuation of the work of Gaudi and Gonzalez, a work of artisans moving towards abstract art.” (Interview with Calatrava, June 1997\*) The kind of art that Santiago Calatrava is referring to is apparent in his most successful bridges and buildings, and yet it remains difficult to describe in words. Another of the essential figures of twentieth century engineering, the Italian Pier Luigi Nervi attempted such a definition in a series of lectures he delivered at Harvard in 1961: “It is very difficult to explain the reason for our immediate approval of forms which come to us from a physical world with which we, seemingly, have no direct tie whatsoever. Why do these forms satisfy and move us in the same manner as natural things such as flowers, plants, and landscapes to which we have become accustomed through numberless generations? It can be noted that these achievements have in common a structural essence, a necessary absence of all decoration, a purity of line and shape more than sufficient to define an authentic style, a style I have termed the truthful style. I realise how difficult it is to find the right words to express this concept.” P.14

“I honestly am not looking for metaphors. I never thought of a bird, but more of the research that I am sometimes pretentious enough to call sculpture” (\*). Indeed both the drawing and sculpture by Calatrava that are most closely related to Satolas seem to find their origin not in the metaphor of a bird, but in a style of the eye and eyelid, a recurring theme in his work. “The eye”, says Calatrava, “is the real tool of the architect, and that is an idea that goes back to the Babylonians.” P. 21-22

### **Hatherley, Owen In Praise of White Elephants**

[www.jacobinmag.com/2014/01/in-praise-of-white-elephants](http://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/01/in-praise-of-white-elephants)

*Though easy targets for fiscal hawks, public architecture that’s luxurious and dramatic – even excessive – should be ours as a right.*

According to Santiago Calatrava, there is a Communist conspiracy against him in the Valencia City Council.

The hometown of the world-famous engineer-architect is littered with his structures, which have become tourist calling cards— here he has designed the City of Arts and Sciences, a multi-building arts complex, along with metro stations and bridges. The conspiracy, if it is one, has emerged because of the huge expense involved in the upkeep of those structures, which a cash-strapped council is no longer able to undertake to the architect's exacting specifications.

While most “icon” buildings are demonstratively useless— often galleries and museums whose form is of far greater importance than their functions— what Calatrava specializes in is infrastructure, or rather, making things that should be entirely functional utterly useless. He is not a particularly original designer. His railway stations are visibly inspired by the faintly kitsch futurism of the high Cold War era, evoking especially the “organic” concrete structure of Eero Saarinen's TWA Terminal for JFK Airport. Calatrava's railway stations in Zurich and Lisbon, or the incongruously immense (and frankly, breathtaking) Guillemins Station in the Belgian steel town of Liège, are intended to give the effect of an immense organism into whose concrete ribs you are plunged in order to buy your ticket and get your train.

The organic metaphor is ubiquitous and deliberately played upon by the architect— the concept is the metaphor, and the metaphor is an advert, an easily remembered cliché. Here, Calatrava is a truly heinous offender— his description of the new station for the World Trade Center site in New York as “a dove released from a child's hand” deserves pride of place in the annals of architects' bullshit. There's also no doubt his stations need a huge amount of maintenance to keep their sheen. Although his designs make great play of their structure, making a spectacle of their bone-like frames, these are invariably painted a gleaming white, as nothing is loathed— especially by urban regenerators— so much as bare concrete.

But that constant maintenance is only one of the problems with Calatrava's work. For a trained engineer, he has notoriously little interest in economy of structure. As a rule, since the mid nineteenth century, the aim in bridge design has been to achieve the greatest structural feats with the scarcest of means— to do “more with less,” in Buckminster Fuller's phrase. That line probably reached its peak in recent years with Norman Foster's Millau Viaduct, which spans a vast canyon with little more than thin spindles of concrete and steel. For Calatrava, though, organic metaphor trumps all, and the structural purpose of his bridges— in Dublin, Salford, Dallas, Venice and elsewhere— is subordinated to their rhetorical purpose, as sweeping statements of the transformation of industrial docks and canals into showpieces of real-estate speculation. They must billow, swoop, and spiral, because otherwise they wouldn't be eye-catching as advertisements. The preference for shiny cladding leads to some literal pitfalls— his bridges in Venice and Bilbao both have tiles which, it's been claimed, are too slippery to walk on. The resultant lack of interest in economy is now rebounding on the architect, although he could fairly plead this is what he was hired for.

The city of Valencia evidently has very good reasons for wanting to prosecute Calatrava. But as the monuments to the neoliberal boom become white elephants, we should not get too carried away with *schadenfreude* (though come to think of it, one can easily imagine Calatrava designing an airport “inspired by the form of the bones of a white elephant”).

The UK, for instance, now faces the question of what to do with a legacy of large and dramatic arts centers, galleries, and museums built in post-industrial cities outside the capital. Like Calatrava's work, they are a matter of rhetoric and regeneration, obvious signs that “something” was “being done” for these stricken towns: the National Centre for Popular Music in Sheffield by Nigel Coates; The Public in West Bromwich by Will Alsop; the

New Art Gallery in Walsall by Caruso St John; the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art by Erick van Egeraat; and Urbis in Manchester by Ian Simpson, among many others.

Most of them were at least partly funded by the National Lottery, and a tax on the poor to fund the arts is not admirable. Many, if not all of them, are as architecturally vacuous as Calatrava— one-line architectural blipverts. Some, like Sheffield’s “pop centre,” were abandoned within a couple of years of their opening. Others, like Urbis or The Public, are shifting their functions toward something less arty. Though there’s truth to the argument that this money could have been better put toward, say, an industrial policy, or research and development, rather than buildings that offer few tangible benefits to the towns in question other than jobs serving coffee and “outreach” to local schools, it is conservatives who see no reason why provincial cities should have arts centers in the first place. Such things are for London— why should the plebes want to see installations?

But that same argument is used against public infrastructure spending. During the boom, Spain— in great contrast to Britain— poured money into public transportation, with a post-industrial city like Bilbao building a Foster-designed Metro system. The exorbitance of the Athens Metro, extended for the purposes of the Calatrava-designed Olympic complex, is often used as an exemplar of the foolishness with which Greece spent before its financial collapse.

The Left should be very careful here, as this is an austerity argument— an argument against public space and the public good. An argument, essentially, that we cannot have nice things— that bridges, railway stations, and art galleries are somehow dubious means of spending “taxpayers’ money.” The twisted right-wing mutation of social democracy that dominated Europe during the boom seldom had the public interest at heart, and every concession to it had to be balanced by something profit-making. But for its conservative successors, the public interest is entirely nonexistent.

Public buildings and structures that are luxurious, dramatic, even excessive— if hopefully less whimsical and egotistical than those of Calatrava— should be ours as a right, not as a reservation for the wealthy.