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Virtual worlds, travel, and the picturesque garden

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Abstract *Debate concerning virtual reality is often drawn in terms of sharply defined dichotomies—for example, between “real” (or “actual”) and “virtual,” “authentic” and “inauthentic,” and “natural” and “artificial.” In this paper we offer an alternative approach by suggesting a conception of a virtual world that highlights a continuity and commonality with our sense of everyday reality. We accomplish this in part by an examination of the English picturesque garden as if it were a virtual world partially constructed out of ideas and objects collected during travels to foreign lands on the Grand Tour. Such foreign travel transformed not only the English person’s sense of self, but also altered the English landscape. We conclude that in one sense the “real” England is also a “virtual” reality.*

The advent of virtual reality technology (vrt) has been heralded both as savior and devil. Proponents claim that as we move through the virtual worlds we create for ourselves, human beings will finally be able to realize our true selves in that grand and Romantic sense in which Coleridge meant it, i.e., as beings “made in God’s image, and that, too, in the sublimest sense, the Image of the Creator.”¹ This vision inspires Howard Rheingold’s claim that “Virtual Reality is the revolutionary technology that immerses you in a computer generated world of your own making.”² Critics of vrt, by contrast, emphasize the danger of this immersion. Sandra Christenson, for example, says that “the virtual reality environment ... causes an actor to be completely immersed in a computer-mediated reality, in which the only interaction the actor will have is with a computer program. No conversations at all take place with others in this space.”³ From this perspective, vrt is a harbinger of doom where humanity increasingly is immersed in a false and derivative world shaped by the demands of an all-encompassing, inhumane technology.

This paper offers a response to such a sharp opposition by suggesting that the conventional ways of characterizing virtual reality are highly misleading. In section one, for instance, our examination of the pedagogical and therapeutic uses of vrt indicates that the most basic dichotomy of “virtual” and “real” (or “actual”) obscures the way in which experiences in a virtual world can, in principle, facilitate an enhanced and more authentic relationship with actuality. Through the course of the paper, moreover, we shall augment the latter point by attempting to specify a rich characterization of a “virtual world” that highlights a continuity and commonality with our sense of “everyday reality.” This is particularly apparent in the last section of the paper which investigates the English picturesque garden as if it were a virtual world partially constructed out of ideas and objects collected during travels to foreign lands on the Grand Tour. For insofar as this travel abroad not only transformed an English person’s sense of self but also, thereby, the English landscape, then, in one sense at least, the “real” England is also a “virtual” reality.

Critics might respond that this move toward a richer notion of a virtual world evades the fact that in the vast majority of cases where a virtual world is more narrowly construed, the purpose is merely to entertain. In other words, in the virtual worlds with which we are most familiar, namely, those generated by vrt, the point is to escape reality, not to come into greater and/or deeper contact with it. Section two, however, counters this criticism by examining the concept of a “virtual vacation.” Virtual vacations occupy the more trivial end of the spectrum of vrt applications. Yet virtual and actual travel differ in degree, not in kind, so the concept of a virtual vacation clarifies the philosophical point arising from pedagogical and therapeutic applications. Indeed, it does so precisely because it is less serious than pedagogy and therapy. *Any* kind of human travel, that is, has traditionally required normative justification and hence similar types of justification can be used to support virtual as well as actual travel. Section two concludes, therefore, with a specific example—the English involvement in the Grand Tour during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—and with the argument that this travel is best justified by the criterion of authenticity originally used to elucidate vrt applications in section one.

Section three takes this argument much farther. It investigates the reconstruction of the English landscape by those inspired by the experience of the Grand Tour, concentrating upon a second dichotomy by which virtual and actual reality have often been differentiated, namely, the dichotomy between “artificial” and “natural.” Once again, however, this convention obscures the immediate issue and exacerbates the original separation between virtual and actual. An English picturesque garden, that is, did attempt to be natural as opposed to what the English thought of as artificial gardens in the neo-classical French and Italian style. Yet the picturesque garden is a construction which imposed upon nature the constraints of paintings which they had seen in (and brought back from) Italy in their travels on the Grand Tour. A garden in the picturesque style, we conclude, is a virtual world according to the criteria of such a world worked out in this paper. For it exhibits a complex mingling of the virtual and the real—neither simulacrum nor reality—which can, moreover, be entered without any moral qualms whatsoever.

I: One Virtue of Virtual Reality

Sandra Christensen expresses a widespread assumption regarding vrt when she claims that it engenders a kind of solipsistic universe consisting only of oneself and a machine.⁴

And if that is the case, then virtual reality encourages the kind of inauthentic experience that threatens to undermine both our humanity and our vital connection with reality. Robert Nozick, arguing several years ago in a different but clearly related context, elaborates on the moral worries brought on by such a scenario. Living one's life in a machine-made reality, he says, will limit us "to a world no deeper or more important than that which people can construct." This is largely a private mental realm akin to dreams and imaginings and in such a world, therefore, "there is no actual contact with any deeper reality, though the experience of it can be simulated." Human beings, on the contrary, aspire "to live (an active verb) ourselves, in contact with reality. (And this machines cannot do for us.)"⁵

In sum, the criticism is that the very constitution of a virtual world creates a troubling dissonance between subjective experience and reality, and this encourages a shabby facsimile of reality to portray itself as (and get mistaken for) the real thing. Yet one of the most common applications of vrt—in the area of professional training—suggests that the language used to formulate both parts of this criticism is highly misleading. To argue, for example, that surgeons practicing difficult medical techniques in a virtual world have "no actual contact with reality" as opposed to just a simulation of it, is simply to evade the complex meaning of "reality" by using question-begging epithets. The patient on whom the surgeon performs a triple-bypass is certainly a "virtual" patient (simulated by the computer) and must be contrasted to the "real" patients on which the surgeon will operate when she is fully qualified. (Indeed, this is when we call the surgeon a "real" surgeon.) Still, the pedagogical context requires seamless continuity and overlap between "the virtual" and "the real" because the surgeon's ability to perform the operation on the real patient depends (partly) on prior practice with virtual ones.

The experience of the learner, moreover, accentuates the continuity. For it would be simply inaccurate to claim that the person practicing a surgical technique on a virtual patient is merely experiencing something rather than actually doing it—the claim that gives rise to the Nozick-like normative judgement that "what we desire is to live ... ourselves in contact with reality. (And this, machines cannot do for us.)" This judgement might be acceptable in the abstract, but it cannot do justice to the virtue of vrt in this specific context because the surgeon is not asking a machine to do his surgery for him. Rather, she is using a machine-simulated context—that is, enters a virtual world—to actually learn to do something for herself. The dichotomy of "real" and "virtual" can scarcely be applied to the skill resulting from the learning process as a whole. And developing the real skill within the virtual world is itself made possible by drawing on previous book-learning, observation in real operating rooms, and so on. Vrt, therefore, is accurately described in this context as a means by which we learn how to do something for ourselves.

The original criticism, of course, is less concerned with professional training than with the self-reflexive question of how human beings can actualize their true selves (whatever that troublesome phrase might mean, exactly), or become who they would like to become. But framed more precisely, a similar response can be given to that question. In an influential body of work exploring the impact of computer technology on human identity Sherry Turkle, for example, argues that virtual reality does not have to be an entertaining medium of escapism, but can be fruitfully compared to a therapeutic milieu. In other words, when a person enters a virtual world with a constructed persona and interacts with other virtual persons, the process can turn out to be more a matter of working through complex, unresolved personal issues than

playing out a fantasy. For Turkle conceives a virtual world as an experimental space within which a shy or vulnerable person, for example, anonymously acts out certain possibilities, and on the basis of that virtual experience later integrates certain responses and attitudes into her behavior. In a telling phrase, therefore, a virtual world functions as an "identity workshop" similar to the practical workshop of the apprentice surgeon, but dealing with the more emotionally charged learning experiences involved in the construction of personal and sexual identity.⁶

This is obviously not the whole story. Anne Balsamo quite rightly argues that the development of vrt is particularly susceptible to being shaped by the play of certain socio-economic as well as technological power dynamics. Instead of liberating human creativity and self-expression, it is probably more likely that virtual worlds will be populated by the superficial images of humanity beloved by young, white, monied males, and will replicate the clichéd, fragmented, cultural narratives that presently rule the mass media.⁷ Nevertheless, that is an empirical claim. It does not justify describing vrt—an actual "experience machine" to use Nozick's phrase⁸—in such a way that it intrinsically and inevitably distances a person from "reality." For, as we have seen, there is no necessary implication for those who embrace the value of simulated experiences that they must also move away from the bumps and pains of real life towards a permanent, solipsistic existence of "floating in a tank, with electrodes attached to your brain."⁹ It is perfectly possible for virtual worlds to function as a medium of self-discovery and authentic living. The canny consumer of experience machines can use virtual worlds as a way to "actually become" the sort of person she would willingly accept to be.

In making this claim, there is no implication that virtual experiences—experiences that take place in a technologically generated virtual world—are equivalent to actual ones. For instance, there is a significant amount of background knowledge infusing the consciousness of those persons participating in virtual worlds. The surgeon operating on the virtual patient knows that such a patient cannot die, whereas the knowledge that a patient in an actual operating room *can* die thoroughly affects and influences a surgeon's behavior. Similarly, the therapeutic value of vrt depends on a person's knowledge that behavior in a virtual world does not produce consequences that might traumatically stick to one, as is the case with an actual encounter. In brief, virtual surgical operations or social interactions are free of important constraints that define actuality. Non-equivalence, however, should not blind us to the commonality between the two experiences, the commonality by virtue of which a virtual experience can facilitate an improvement in the way one actually experiences the world.

This commonality can be clarified in the relationship between a virtual and real body. Unfortunately, in trying to capture the significance of that moment when a person dons the relevant technological garb and enters a virtual world, philosophers have tended to take a Cartesian approach.¹⁰ Hence, the dissociation from one's actual body is radicalized and the virtual experience is imbued with the camera-like perspective of a "disembodied gaze."¹¹ Normative conclusions follow from this Cartesian approach. Supposedly freed from all the constraints of one's actual body, proponents of vrt laud the polymorphous possibilities of becoming anything one wants to be (consistent with available software and hardware). Critics, on the other hand, dwell on disturbing references to a person's actual body as if it were an inhibiting but eminently disposable "piece of meat."¹² Recently, however, Craig Murray has argued that vrt *works* best when engineers attempt to mediate between the virtual and actual body: "a virtual body which incorporates the depth, expanse and weight of vr input/output devices as well as a

“sympathetic” virtual narrative, will facilitate the melding of the physical and virtual into one phenomenal body.”¹³

This phenomenological approach insists that the space inhabited by human beings is partly defined by our distinctive form of embodiment. The space in which we act, as Erwin Straus put it, is an expansion of our “body scheme.”¹⁴ Still, our bodies are malleable. The sense of touch embodied in the hand, for example, is capable of being extended by tools such as a blind person’s cane or a surgeon’s scalpel. A vrt generated world, therefore, provides an excellent place in which a surgeon can learn to master his scalpel. Yet it does so precisely because the surgeon’s virtual body is engineered to mesh with the tactile and proprioceptive responses of his or her actual body. Indeed, a scalpel can be seen as a kind of prosthetic device to which the surgeon’s actual body must learn to accommodate itself. And if a virtual experience is the pedagogical means by which this happens, then the actual body must exhibit a degree of virtuality when it starts to move within the actuality of its transformed social space. However paradoxical, this way of talking maintains the integrity of the actual body. For in emphasizing continuity and commonality with the virtual body, it blocks any suggestion that the former is an irrelevant “piece of meat” or that the latter is a vehicle designed primarily to escape the constraints of reality.

II: From Virtual Vacations to the Grand Tour (and Back Again)

So far we have concentrated on vrt applications that are well suited to the goal of authenticity and in which specific tasks enforce a kind of temporal responsibility.¹⁵ As we noted in our introduction, however, these are not the sort of examples critics of vrt typically have in mind when they criticize virtual reality as inauthentic. They are thinking rather of the escapist entertainment applications of vrt. Let us, then, examine these as test cases for our commonality thesis and use this to work toward a richer than usual notion of “virtual world.” We will concentrate on the relationship between virtual and actual travel.

Consider, as an example, the difference between a one-week virtual vacation to Florida and a real one-week Florida vacation. Assuming that most people are only looking for a fun in the sun, purely “R & R” kind of vacation, programmers are likely to eliminate every intrusion upon the desired reality of Florida. Or, more accurately, they are likely to eliminate every intrusion of reality upon the Florida fantasy bought and paid for by the vacationer actually flying south. Probably the whole of the flight from chilly northern climates (weather delays, plane fear, cramped seats, bad food, etc.) will be eliminated, along with unusual cold snaps in February, hotel room surprises or tourist crime, and so on. In short, what one typically wants in such a vacation is nothing more than a predictable and determinate—that is to say, the most easily simulated sort of—experience.

Again, there is no attempt to deny the differences between a virtual and an actual Florida vacation. Most obviously, the virtual trip is more under the control of its creators and programmers than an actual vacation could ever be. Indeed, that is exactly the point and appeal of the virtual vacation we are imagining. It is scarcely a lacking, for example, that virtual travelers do not actually travel or bring back from their virtual vacation any kind of knowledge about the “real” Florida conducive to transforming their lives. After all, the very point of this kind of vacation is to escape into a superficial, Disney-like experience dissociated from the complex realities of any real time or place. The virtual Florida vacation is a paradigm case of an experience devoid of authenticity

and the contrast with our original examples of vrt applications could not be clearer. Still, it is difficult to criticize this application for its authenticity, that is, for being an application in which subjective experience is sharply dissociated from reality. For the real Florida vacation is inauthentic in just the same way(s) as the virtual Florida vacation; the latter does not necessarily possess less value relative to the former. To suggest otherwise would require importing into this discussion some independent criterion for assessing the value of human travel. In this regard, however, it is noteworthy that the very practice of travel itself (as with the more recent phenomenon of vrt) has traditionally required an axiological justification.

As is often the case, Aristotle provides a good starting point for discussion. Without claiming that he was historically responsible for the view that travel required a justification, his theory of motion is interestingly symbolic of that view. Recall that under the rubric of his theory of motion, Aristotle claimed that the natural state of an object, when in its natural place, is rest. Hence, motion is unnatural in such circumstances and requires an external force: once this force is removed, the object returns to its natural place where it once again enters into its natural state of rest.¹⁶ Similarly, it has been widely held historically that people too should be at “rest,” that their natural place was “home,” and that to move from that location required a reason or explanation.

The most typical justification of travel has always been the practical need(s) of people in business or the trades. Commerce aside, however, the pilgrimage was the initial justification provided for travel and it remained the primary justification well into the medieval period. But eventually this justification broke down. As Justin Stagl puts it:

Towards the end of the Middle Ages the secular components were clearly on the advance against the religious one. Pilgrimages tended to degenerate into a mere pretext for other things. A comparison of late medieval pilgrim reports shows less and less attention was paid to religious actions and sentiments, whereas the distance covered became increasingly more important Pilgrimage was losing its legitimacy About the year 1550, pilgrimage had ceased to be a plausible justification for travel. A new legitimization was needed.¹⁷

Medieval moralists had seen travel other than pilgrimage as mere curiosity likely to give rise to “a wandering, unstable state of mind” focused on “a fastidious, excessive, morally diverting interest in things and people” and hence away from God.¹⁸ The pilgrimage rationale, however, was eventually abandoned in favor of a pedagogical justification for travel. Referring to the fifteenth century, Margaret Aston notes that travel was becoming tied to exploration that could:

act as a powerful stimulus to the philosophically inclined To travel well is to question well, as both the writing and reading of books (travel books and others) shows, the fifteenth century became increasingly appreciative of the virtues of the good traveler. More people were undertaking more travel of various sorts, and their explorations, intellectual and geographical, made an important contribution to the outlook of the age.¹⁹

The role of travel in a person’s education eventually became part of the “*ars apodemica*,” a formal theory and justification of travel, expressed by theorists such as Theodore Zwinger (1533–88). This provided prospective travelers with a particular educational mission, as well as the means to attain that end, and sought to avoid having travel degenerate into a mindless and useless wandering. Thus Zwicker, in a publication dated

1638, offers the following definition of “legitimate” travel: “Travel is thus a certain journey, undertaken by a suitable man out of the desire and wish to wander through, inspect and get to know external places, in order to acquire from there some good or other, which could be useful either to the fatherland and its friends or to ourselves.”²⁰

Not surprisingly, this increasingly came to be seen as imposing too great a burden on the traveler who was more interested in frivolous sightseeing than in the academic rigor demanded by the *ars apodemica*. Stagl, for instance, says that by the eighteenth century “the old encyclopedic style of traveling was superceded by scientific expeditions on the one hand and “tourism” on the other.”²¹ Tourism, as opposed to pilgrimage or education, revolves around the subjective states of an individual and insofar as this type of travel requires a justification, it lies in the maximization of pleasure. As an empirical generalization, however, this is not achieved by “useless wandering.” Rather, “mindless and useless” pleasure is maximized by temporarily inhabiting a destination explicitly designed for such a purpose. Hence the virtual Florida vacation described previously, seems to be a matter of technology drawing a philosophical conclusion from historical trends.

Still, Stagl’s bifurcation distorts the complex reality of travel even with regard to scientific expeditions. It is true that scientists and academics engaged in particular forms of research have, since the eighteenth century, always been forced to travel in a way more like the pragmatic and utilitarian travel required in certain businesses. Linnaeus is a case in point. He traveled little himself, and then only as a young man and only through bordering Scandinavian countries. However, he hoped to establish a wide-ranging circle of travelers consisting of students (both present and former) and associates. These travelers were to bring back a variety of plants that Linnaeus planned to domesticate and then use for economic development. His project failed but it remains as an interesting attempt to blend travel, science, and business.²² There were, of course, other attempts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to combine travel and science. However, in contrast to Linnaeus, Darwin’s voyage on the *Beagle* or Richard Burton’s attempts to discover the source of the Nile, for example, contained a core element of *self-exploration*. This theme is intensified in Henry Thoreau’s *New England “travelogues”* (*The Maine Woods*, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, *A Yankee in Canada* and *Cape Cod*), where he attempts to artistically fuse his search for authentic living with an attempt “to get to know external places.” In his essay, *Walking*, moreover, Thoreau playfully subverts the medieval justification for travel while appropriating the idea of pilgrimage. In other words, he praises the “mere idlers and vagabonds” who exploit the idea of going “to the Holy Land” as a pretext to receive charity which they then use to pursue what the *ars apodemica* would call “useless wandering.” Thoreau loved, and knew his “home” (Concord and the surrounding areas) in massive scientific detail, but his point was that if life is a journey then “the shortest walk” ought to be taken “in the spirit of undying adventure” like those “setting out on a holy crusade without specific destination and unsure of their safe return.”²³

Things get even more complicated regarding the other side of Stagl’s bifurcation—tourist travel. Thoreau, for instance, is an inspirational source for the two waves of late nineteenth and late twentieth century North American “eco-tourists”. These tourists are different from Florida vacationers in that they seem to be focused on external places rather than subjective states, and are motivated by an educational purpose and/or the desire of city-dwellers to benefit therapeutically from a temporary immersion in nature. To simply emphasize the contradictions between eco-tourism and the sort of tourism that can be duplicated in virtual vacations can, however, be misleading. After all, in the

argument above, a virtual vacation exemplifies one way in which sophisticated technology can create a virtual world conducive to a circumscribed set of human possibilities. And the point here is not just that vrt applications can enhance other possibilities (educational and therapeutic), but rather it is to suggest that the root concept of a virtual world is not reducible to any specific vrt application. In *Walking*, for example, Thoreau says "the West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild," and even though this has been adopted as a slogan by many environmentalists, "the Wild" is not synonymous with "wilderness." It does not refer to any specific place—some eco-tourist destination—because a person can be in the Wild, Thoreau says, in the midst of a crowded city. The Wild, let us say, is a virtual world. And given its intimate connection with actual travel in Thoreau's context, it makes no sense to completely dissociate this world from "reality."

In fact, any form of travel can be examined in terms of the virtual world with which it is bound, and assessed according to the reality made available by that virtual world. The Grand Tour, for instance, was the most striking travel phenomenon in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the precursor of twentieth century mass tourism. And in some sense, it seems to embody Stagl's bifurcation between business travel and tourism. As we noted above, vacationers (whether virtual or real) to destinations such as Florida appear to be focused on destination and have little sympathy with the idea that "getting there is half the fun." Early travelers, including those taking the Grand Tour, would have agreed. Their reasons for doing so would have stemmed from the truly horrid conditions under which they had to suffer while traveling. This would have included deplorable road conditions (or even lack thereof), disease, political and religious battles, and bandits. Contemporary complaints about things such as cramped seats on planes pale by comparison. Given the historical dangers of travel, therefore, it is little wonder that these tourists were thoroughly unappreciative of landscapes that were in any way wild, or "natural." Of philosophical interest here is that there was little appreciation for what later came to be perceived as the sublime; sublime landscapes were thought of only as encumbrances to travel, not something intrinsically valuable.²⁴ Especially during the early days of the Grand Tour, travelers were likely to perceive such "natural" settings as merely a "solitary wilderness" containing vistas which were "nothing but hideous."²⁵ Unlike a Thoreau who was drawn to the inhuman "otherness" of wilderness areas, they wanted to arrive at their destination as safely and quickly as possible. Richard Lassell's *Italian Voyage* (1670, second edition 1698), for example, was popular because "... it gives much practical advice. He made the journey to Italy five times, by as many routes, and accounted the passage over Mount Cenis the most desirable for speed and convenience. He well exemplified the usual English opinion. Italy he regarded as "Nature's Darling ... receiving such gracious looks from the Sun and Heaven, that if there be any fault in Italy, it is, that her Mother Nature hath indulged her even to wantonness."²⁶

Given this, one might be tempted to say that the Grand Tour only really started when the journey was over; that is to say, when the travelers reached Italy. And there would be *some* truth in such a claim, especially in the early days of the tour when travel conditions were particularly bad. However, to say this without qualification would be misleading for at least a couple of reasons. Travel conditions did improve gradually and, over time, travelers became less hostile to the trip itself. Moreover, the very danger of the trip was influential in the development of the sublime and, eventually, to the picturesque. This stems from the fact that the very difficulties of travel were part of what was taken to be the moral message of the sublime. Writing in the eighteenth century, for

example, John Dennis notes that “no passion is attended with greater Joy than Enthusiastic Terror, which proceeds from our reflecting that we are out of danger at the very time that we see it before us.”²⁷ Hence, when one had returned home safe and sound, one could reflect on the dangers of traveling through places such as the Alps which displayed the power of God’s hand at its fullest and marvel at that power aesthetically. That is, the terror brought on by the sublime required both the feeling of actual terror and an appropriate distance from it.

This interest in the sublime, however, took time (and better travel conditions). Initially, interest by travelers on the Grand Tour were more clearly focused on the pleasures of the Italian landscape alluded to in Lassel’s guidebook—architectural mementos of ancient civilizations in sunny, peasant-dotted vistas. Over time, there was a subtle shift in emphasis on the part of tourists from these pleasures—that is, the pleasures of landscape, whether beautiful or sublime, to increased attention to the Italian galleries and museums. This shift in emphasis resulted in the fact that in the heyday of the Grand Tour, members of the English aristocracy and wealthy landed class brought home massive numbers of paintings and other works of visual art that would later be classified as “picturesque.” And any shift in emphasis takes place wholly within the perspective of the picturesque. This certainly does not mean, however, that all tourists had a common mind-set.

On the one hand, Uvedale Price, a prime exponent of the picturesque, captures a typical attitude of an eighteenth century Englishman. In his *Dialogue*, he has one of his characters exclaim the following while observing the work of picturesque landscape artist, Claude Lorraine: “I have great pleasure in seeing the same soft lights, the same general glow which we admired in the real landscape represented with such skill, that, now the true splendor of the sun is no longer before us, the picture seems nature itself.” The speaker then adds a comment that perhaps suggests why Claude was so admired by the British: “What a picture would this be to have in one’s sitting-room! To have always before one such an image of fine weather, such a happy mixture of warmth and freshness!”²⁸ This second passage in particular is significant. For the emphasis on a specific destination along with the desire for a clearly defined sensory-emotional ambiance that can be provoked on demand by visual stimulation, indicates how susceptible the average Englishman would be to the temptation of a virtual Grand Tour. On the other hand, there is truth in the claim that “soon after the Peace of Ryswick in 1697, the grand tour became part of a gentleman’s preparation for life.”²⁹ Some tourists, that is, were consciously engaging upon an educational experience or even a kind of pilgrimage, and their experience of picturesque art points to a much more profound characteristic of virtuality in their travel. The Grand Tour, in other words, can be conceived quite literally as an “identity workshop”—the means by which an eighteenth and nineteenth century Englishmen could seek to redefine personal and national identity. The nature of this quest is inextricably linked to the concept of the picturesque, but that complicates the issue as much as it clarifies. For it is notoriously difficult to pin down the ambiguous and evolving meaning of the picturesque.

III: Picturesque Art, Landscape Design and “the Real England”

Definitions of the picturesque such as the following paraphrase from the 1801 supplement to Johnson’s *Dictionary* seem overly general: that which is “pleasing to the eye, what strikes the viewer as singular or appeals to him with the force of a painting, what is expressible in painting or would either afford a good subject for a painted landscape

or help in conceiving one.”³⁰ In fact, though there was general agreement concerning the “picture-quality” of the picturesque, the attempt to add detail to this general conception lead to internecine warfare within the movement as various writers attempted more detailed accounts of the concept.³¹ Indeed, some have claimed that this problem of definition emanates from the inescapably derivative nature of the movement, namely, as something curiously “in-between” the longstanding accepted canon of the beautiful and the then newly formed and burgeoning conception of the sublime. This is why Sidney Robinson, in his discussion of the picturesque, chooses the notion of “mixture” as its defining characteristic.³² These disputes, however, need not be of particular concern to us here other than to note that we can helpfully separate the kind of picturesque paintings these connoisseurs brought back to England into two types.

First of all, we have the calm, gentle and “beautiful” representations by Claude Lorraine. Claude still held to the conventional aesthetic hierarchy that set “historical” paintings above “landscapes”; indeed, such a hierarchy was the basis on which were made criticisms of his (relatively) poor treatment of the human form. His superlative composition skills—which lay in depicting light, particularly at sunrise and sunset, as it spread over sea, rivers, meadows, buildings, and so on—overcame this deficit, however. Moreover, he integrated Greek and Roman figures into his exquisitely organized designs to create an effect of a highly idealized Italian landscape in which ruins and pastoral settings evoked the distant and lost (but still recoverable) utopian past originally expressed by Claude’s beloved Virgil, the “discoverer” of Arcadia according to Bruno Snell.³³ Secondly, we have the more sublime paintings of Salvatore Rosa, featuring wind-blasted trees, jagged rocks, and desolate expanses. Back home and hence distanced from the travails of a horrid journey through difficult, bandit-ridden terrain on their journeys through the Alps to Italy, the English connoisseurs could now repress those realities of travel and perceive those landscapes as something intrinsically valuable.

With Claude and Rosa, the tourists did, in some sense, enter different worlds, but both painters are appropriately considered picturesque insofar as they were concentrating on and, in part, discovering the visual properties of things, i.e., on the external features of objects. We get a hint of the change in perspective this signified when we compare and contrast the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and their respective conceptions of what is involved in the art of painting, particularly landscape painting. Those in the seventeenth century thought that “The principle part of painting is to *know* what is most beautiful in nature and most proper to that art” (du Fresnoy, 1665), while artists and aestheticians of the eighteenth century developed the view that “The art of seeing Nature is the greatest object of painting” (Reynolds, 1781).³⁴ That is, aesthetics during this period was changing from an interest in an internal mental state conceived in the epistemological category of knowledge to an interest in and focus on that which virtual reality can more easily capture in its simulations/representations, namely, the external, experiential features of an object. It is noteworthy that the compositional skills of Claude and Rosa resulted in striking forms of realism.

What was perhaps most novel about British picturesque gardeners was that they saw a connection between such paintings and landscape. Hence, Humphrey Repton, one of the main adherents and practitioners of picturesque gardening, chose the phrase “landscape gardening” because, he said, “the art can only be advanced and perfected by the united powers of the landscape painter and the practical gardener.”³⁵ It was hoped by so doing that people would come to “look at real landscapes with a painter’s gusto.”³⁶ When British travelers returned home from the Grand Tour, however, they did not see “natural-looking” gardens resembling a Claude or Rosa painting. Indeed, they saw quite

the opposite: the deliberately and self consciously “artificial” neo-classical gardens in French, Italian, and Dutch style. Increasingly, the British were repelled by this, and began arguing for a dramatic change. Addison, writing in the *Spectator* in 1712, for instance, complains of such neo-classical gardens dominating the English landscape: “our British Gardeners ... instead of honoring Nature, love to deviate from it as much as possible. Our trees rise in Cones, Globes and Pyramids. We see the Marks of the Scissors upon every Plant and Bush ... for my own part, I would rather look upon a Tree in all its Luxuriancy and Diffusion of Boughs and Branches, than when it is thus cut off and Trimmed into a Mathematical Figure.”³⁷ Shaftesbury’s distaste of the geometrical designs of the formal gardens depends even more on an appeal to “naturalism”: “I shall no longer resist the passion for things of a natural kind: where neither Art nor the Conceit or Caprice of Man has spoiled their genuine order by breaking in upon the Primitive State.”³⁸

If, however, the landscape was deficient by virtue of being seen through eyes transformed by Claude and Rosa, then this appeal to a “natural” state (or, more strongly, a “primitive” state) was highly misleading. First of all, these painters, as we have seen, used a mastery of the visual properties of phenomena to construct distinctive and thoroughly idealized versions of nature. William Gilpin, for example, was both seminally influential in the English picturesque movement and “one of the most influential English travelers of the eighteenth, or indeed of any century.”³⁹ And he comments that the picturesque artist is forced “to lay down his little rules ... which he calls the principles of picturesque beauty ... to adapt such diminutive parts of nature’s surfaces to his own eye, as comes within its scope.”⁴⁰ Indeed, the very way in which he claimed nature was to be perceived picturesquely demonstrates that nature must be altered and framed for human and hence aesthetic perception. For though nature is, as God’s creation, “always great in design, [it is or may be] unequal in composition” due to the vast scale within which God, but not humans, works, and such a scale is incomprehensible for us. “The artist in the mean time, is,” Gilpin claims, “confined to *space* ... [in order to] adapt such diminutive parts of nature’s surfaces to his own eye, as comes within his scope.”⁴¹ This active, transformative character of aesthetic activity takes on an overtly technological twist in the landscape artists’ use of a “Claude” or “Grey’s” glass:

The spectator stood with his back to the scene and viewed it in the glass, at one remove and already framed as if it were a picture. The scene itself was distorted and recomposed to a degree depending on the convexity of the glass, in the same way it is by modern camera lenses: “When the objects are great and near, it removes them to a due distance, and shews them in the soft colours nature, and the most regular perspective the eye can perceive, art teach, or science demonstrate” [Gilpin]. The soft colors were achieved by using different backing foils—the equivalent of camera filters—designed to reproduce the much-admired mellow tones and golden light which bathes the landscape in Claude’s paintings.⁴²

Secondly, when the concept of the picturesque is applied to landscape gardening the role of artifice takes on added importance. From Capability Brown and William Kent through to Humphrey Repton and the most zealous advocates of the picturesque such as Price and Payne Knight, the effort was to achieve a more “natural looking” garden, precisely through imagination and artifice. The landscape gardeners were emulating painters who strove to create a nature that was, at the same time, an ideal. The painters

used diverse techniques and artifice, that is, to “complete” nature in the Aristotelian sense of the term. And in the context of landscape gardening, this sense of completing nature shaped the meaning of the ubiquitous eighteenth century term “improvement.”⁴³ Brown, Repton, and Price differed on what a “natural” landscape consisted in, but Janet Browne sums up the common concern: “to provide a representation of nature at its best, to rearrange it in a way that reality could not manage to do by itself.”⁴⁴

The more the English began to *see* the landscape with the eyes of the picturesque painters, then the more they wanted to actually reconstruct the landscape accordingly. From 1750 on, Lancelot “Capability” Brown ploughed under huge numbers of formal gardens for the English elite in order to produce his own vision of a Claude-like landscape in which grass lawns swept up to houses looking onto open vistas shaped by serpentine water-ways and informal clusters of trees. The effect of such an Improvement is described in Tom Stoppard’s play, *Arcadia*: gazing across her grounds, Lady Croom expresses an appreciation of her Sidley Park estate that had been transformed by Brown in 1763: it is “a picture, and a most amiable picture, too;” on the meadows overlooking a created “lake,” in fact, even “the right amount of sheep are tastefully arranged—in short, it is nature as God intended, and I can say with the painter, *Et in Arcadia ego*.”⁴⁵ Unlike Lady Croom, however, Stoppard realizes that Sidley Park was far from “nature as God intended.” After all, the landscape of Sidley Park was modeled on the paintings of Claude but in 1807, as the dramatic action of *Arcadia* begins, Sidley Park is about to be “improved” again. The smooth pastoral ambiance created by Capability Brown and so admired by Lady Croom will soon disappear to be replaced by a garden in the later picturesque style. Indeed, her landscape architect provides a sketch full of Gothic effects, reflecting his belief that “irregularity is the chiefest principle of the picturesque style.”⁴⁶

On seeing the sketch, Lady Croom’s precocious daughter, Thomasina, exclaims, “It is a Salvator.” Stoppard’s typically succinct line captures the aesthetic significance of the remodeling. In addition, however, it opens the door to seeing just how the landscape gardeners—as opposed to the painters who inspired them—come to transcend any Aristotelian interpretation of the mingling of nature and artificial that defines their work. Janet Browne, for instance, notes that the gardeners modeled a house and its grounds like a series of pictures. Each picture—or “view”—of the place provided a “carefully chosen representation of nature.”⁴⁷ So just as a painter need not be constrained by “reality” in creating the most “natural” landscape—this can be eliminated, that can be added; this can be highlighted, that can be muted—so a gardener/architect can craft a multi-perspectival view of a landscape. A landscape becomes a carefully created series of “landscapes.” The magnitude of such projects (invariably reflected in the financial cost) had the effect, however, of liberating the gardeners and providing yet another turn to the evolving character of the picturesque. For it placed a premium on the talent for devising ingenious means of involving a spectator’s perception in such a way that it fooled the eye into embracing attractive, enchanting illusions. Any attempt to trick the spectator with a realistic illusion was antithetical to the aesthetical goals of a Claude.⁴⁸ Yet Janet Browne refers repeatedly to the gardeners’ love of “visual trickery” and points out that the purpose of the ha-ha, for example, was to deceive the eyes of the viewers into seeing continuity between “grounds and larger setting.”⁴⁹

This technical innovation, moreover, points to a wider vision that conceived all nature as a garden—obliterating, for example, the traditional distinction between safe, ordered “garden” and terrifying “wilderness.” And it gives added support to the plausibility of referring to the virtual reality of the English gardens constructed at the

time. Recall a previous argument (pp. 86–87 above) that criticizes a Cartesian approach to a virtual experience and concludes with the positive point that it is both desirable and possible to achieve “the melding of the physical and virtual into one phenomenal body.” Similarly, then, the English garden is appropriately conceived as the “phenomenal body” that results from the melding of the existing physical environment and the virtual worlds experienced in foreign travel.⁵⁰ The virtual quality of the gardens can no more be deleted from their character than the qualities of recalcitrant actuality. And the interplay between the two brings into focus the rich notion of a virtual world being worked out in this paper. Janet Browne, for instance, notes that the very idea of an English garden incarnated the attempt to transcend “the usual constraints of the ordinary world.”⁵¹ As is the case with a virtual world generated by vrt, however, this does not mean that the construction of the English garden was pursued without any inherent constraints. Two significant constraints should be noted. One is biological and the other is political although there are interesting connections between the two.

First of all, there was a tendency amongst many of the landscape gardeners (and their clientele) to underestimate the horticultural difficulties of domesticating foreign plant and tree specimens in the renovated English estates. The desire for such diversity was partly aesthetic and partly due to the proprietary mind of a competitive collector. Eventually, however, the English realized that soil, climatic condition, etc. precluded certain possibilities that seemed to be required by the demands of their idealized model. They had to learn essentially the same lesson put to Linnaeus when his attempt to engage in wholesale domestication of foreign species late in the eighteenth century failed. Certain species could survive in a different geographical area but some simply could not, and even those that could survive did so only with extensive labor and technology. Increasingly, therefore, the landscape gardeners concentrated their artistry on those species that were “suitable” to their native land and turned away from those that seem overly “artificial” and out of place. Secondly, in a writer such as Uvedale Price, this way of thinking took on political overtones. Consider this passage: neither “improvers nor legislators will leave everything to neglect and accident”; they will work, rather, “not to suppress the workings of nature, but to watch, and take indications from them; for who would choose to settle in that place, or under that government, where all the warnings, indications, and all the free efforts of nature, were forcibly counteracted and suppressed.”⁵²

The political texture of Price’s remarks concerning the landscape makes it clear that the landscape gardeners were dealing with deeper issues even as they were working with geographical “externalities.” More specifically, reconstructing the external features of the English landscape was an integral part of the process of redefining what is was to be English. At the outset, writers like Addison and Shaftesbury encouraged the idea that neo-classical gardens in the French-Italian style were an unacceptable intrusion of effeminate, Papist, and aristocratic-dictatorial values on good, hardy, and “natural” English values and culture. Their desire, then, was to break through what they perceived as a false, inauthentic, geometrical, and unnatural landscape to create a “true” English one. But by the time of Repton, Price and Payne Knight, the big fear amongst the class with the land and money to afford landscape architects was the Jacobin spirit that had destroyed France and was then remodeling the political scene in America.⁵³ Hence the popularity of the more Gothic approach which reaffirmed the established ways, and reverence for England’s traditional incrementalism. Inspired by the wild, adventurous Rosa, moreover, the later picturesque gardens created a space more appropriate to

private encounters and daydreams than public displays. It was quite literally a place created for the less political value of fantasy.

This notion of the picturesque, therefore, embodied an intriguing convergence of political, artistic and geographical themes that highlights the plausibility of conceiving the Grand Tour as an “identity workshop.” For the English tourists entered into the art worlds of Claude and Rosa, and used this space not only to change their ways of seeing England but also to create a kind of England appropriate to the shifting appreciation of who they were. Consider another moment in Tom Stoppard’s *Arcadia* when Bernard Nightingale, an unbearably arrogant English don and Hannah Jarvis, a freelance academic writer, engage in the following discussion precipitated by their looking at an 1810 picture of an English estate: “Lovely,” claims Bernard, “the real England.” Hannah’s response, we would suggest, indicates exactly the point we have been attempting to make in our discussion of the picturesque: “You can stop being silly now Bernard. English landscape was invented by gardeners imitating foreign painters who were evoking classical authors. The whole thing was brought home in the luggage from the Grand Tour. Here, look, Capability Brown doing Claude who was doing Virgil. *Arcadia*! And here superimposed by Humphrey Repton untamed nature in the style of Salvatore Rosa. It’s the gothic novel expressed in landscape. Everything but vampires.”⁵⁴

The silly notion of a “real England,” in other words, distorts and simplifies the complex blending of actual and virtual that goes to make up the normative notion of an England that evolves to accommodate the desires and aspirations of its citizens. Our more general conclusion, however, is that this is conceptually identical to the way the dichotomy between reality and some shabby facsimile of reality, used by Nozick and Christensen at the beginning of the paper, distorts the character of vrt. Both depend upon the incoherent notion of Reality (Actuality or Nature) as some uninterpreted, raw state. Yet the dichotomy of actual/virtual as well as natural/artificial obscures the fact that a virtual world provides a means by which we can *access* “reality” and eventually transform the “reality” in which we presently live for the better. To adapt the eighteenth and nineteenth century language of a Brown or Repton to the situation of a wired twenty-first century populace, for example, a virtual world constructed by vrt can be the medium in which we “improve” ourselves. In any event, we ought to be much less concerned about whether something is virtual or actual and more interested in the type of virtuality possessed by certain actualities.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Letters Of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Vol. 1, ed. E. H. Coleridge, (London, 1895), 352. Coleridge's emphasis.
2. Howard Rheingold, *Virtual Reality* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 388.
3. Sandra Christensen, "Virtuality, Conversation, and Morality," *Technology Studies*, 3, no. 2 (1996): 210.
4. Christensen, "Virtuality, Conversation, and Morality." It should be noted that Christensen distinguishes between two types of computer generated "reality"—"vr" which seeks to "immerse one within the artificial reality" (200)—and "cyberspace"—"which denotes various communication and information technologies" (200) such as the internet. Her negative claims cited in our text refer to problems she sees with the former, not the later.
5. Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 43 and 44. Nozick's emphasis. Nozick further develops his notion of an "experience machine" in *The Examined Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1989), 104–8.
6. Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984); and Sherry Turkle, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1995).
7. Anne Balsamo, "The Virtual Body in Cyberspace," *Research in Philosophy and Technology*, 13 (1993): 119–39. Also see Susie Bright, *Sexual Reality: A Virtual Sex Reader* (Pittsburgh and San Francisco: Cleis Press, 1992), 60–70.
8. Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, 41.
9. Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, 41.
10. See William Bogard, *The Simulation of Surveillance: Hypercontrol in Telematic Societies* (New York: Cambridge University press, 1996); Simon Perry, "Virtual Reality as the Completion of the Enlightenment Project," in *Culture on the Brink: Ideologies and Technologies*, ed. G. Bender and T. Druckery (Seattle: Bay Press, 1994), 231–48. This Cartesian approach is explored in detail by Craig Murray, "Toward a Phenomenology of the Body in Virtual reality," *Research in Philosophy and Technology*, 19 (2000): 149–73.
11. Balsamo, "The Virtual Body in Cyberspace," 125.
12. Michael Heim, "The Erotic Ontology of Cyberspace" in *Cyberspace: First Steps* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 75.
13. Craig Murray, "Toward a Phenomenology of the Body in Virtual Reality," 157.
14. E. W. Strauss, *Phenomenological Psychology* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1966).
15. This responsibility can be destroyed involuntarily as in Oliver Stone's apocalyptic scenario in *Wild Palms*. In a film like *Strange Days*, however, the situation is more ambiguous. Vrt becomes the most fashionable and sophisticated mind-altering "drug," but insofar as a person exercises temporal responsibility it becomes difficult to condemn the drug a priori. The reason for this is apparent in the case of the "holodeck" on the Starship Enterprise. This is often used as a classic example of a virtual experience, and it is invariably used as a medium in which crew members stressed out by the pressures of reality can escape into fantasized times, places and situations. When they leave the holodeck and assume their responsibilities they are "refreshed" not "changed." Crew members experience what we will call a "virtual vacation."
16. Aristotle, *Physics*, bk. 2, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 236–52.
17. Justin Stagl, *A History of Curiosity: The Theory of Travel 1550–1800* (Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995), 47.
18. Christian Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage: The Literature of Discovery in Fourteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 20, 21.
19. Margaret Aston, *The Fifteenth Century: The Prospect of Europe* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1968), 85.
20. S. Zwicker, *Brevanum apodemicum methodice concinnatum* (Danzig, 1638). Cited in Stagl, *A History of Curiosity*, 71.
21. Stagl, *A History of Curiosity*, 89.
22. See Lisbet Koerner, "Purposes of Linnaean Travel: a Preliminary Research Report," in *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany, and Representations of Nature*, eds David Philip Miller and Peter Hanns Reill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 117–52.
23. Henry Thoreau, *Walking*, in *The Portable Thoreau*, ed. Carl Bode (New York: Viking Press, 1964), 609. For material on the American obsession with national parks, wilderness vacations, etc. and the ambiguous relationship between "nature" and "wilderness", see David Rothenberg, *Wild Ideas* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

24. It is interesting that one of the main theorists of the sublime, Immanuel Kant, was notoriously a non-traveler.
25. Cited in Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (London: Frank Cass, 1927. Reissued, Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1967), 130, 131.
26. In Elizabeth W. Manwaring, *Italian Landscape in 18th Century England* (London: Frank Cass, 1965, 1925), 8.
27. Cited in Tim Fulford, *Language, Liberty, and Authority: Poetry, Criticism, and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 22.
28. Uvedale Price, *Dialogue*. Cited in Manwaring, *Italian Landscape*, 55.
29. Manwaring, *Italian Landscape*, 7. Our emphasis.
30. Cited in Alexander Ross, *The Imprint of the Picturesque in 19th Century British Fiction* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), 272.
31. See, e.g., Stephen Daniels, *Humphrey Repton* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999) for a discussion of the battles fought between various members of the picturesque movement.
32. Sidney Robinson, *Inquiry into the Picturesque* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 4–8.
33. Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, trans. T. G. Rosenmeyer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953).
34. Cited in Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 52.
35. Cited in Daniels, *Humphrey Repton*, 13.
36. Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 7.
37. Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 414, June 25 (1712).
38. Shaftesbury, *The Moralists, A Rhapsody*. Cited in Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 54.
39. Ian Ousby, *The Englishman's England: Taste, Travel, and the Rise of Tourism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 92–3.
40. In Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 113, Gilpin's emphasis.
41. In Hussey, *The Picturesque*, Gilpin's emphasis.
42. Ousby, *The Englishman's England*, 155. The Claude glass suggests that vrt is simply an updated and sophisticated optical technology. Hence, Craig Murray claims that vrt is "a predominantly optical technology" that "has the same and additional properties as those of the traditional lense technologies." Murray, "Toward a Phenomenology of the Body in Virtual Reality," 156.
43. "Improvement," of course, is part and parcel of other, non-aesthetic, variables. See Stephen Daniels, "Humphrey Repton and the Improvement of the Estate," *Fields of Vision* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 80–111.
44. Janet Browne, "Botany in the Boudoir and Garden," in *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany, and Representations in Nature*, 167.
45. Tom Stoppard, *Arcadia* (New York, Hollywood, London and Toronto: Samuel French, 1993), 12.
46. Stoppard, *Arcadia*, 12.
47. Browne, "Botany in the Boudoir," 167.
48. John Barrell, "The Public Prospect and the Private View: The Politics of Taste in Eighteenth Century Britain," in *Landscape, Natural Beauty, and the Arts*, eds Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 83.
49. Browne, "Botany in the Boudoir," 168.
50. Travel is essential to understanding this point. Brown and Kent's Claude-like virtuality incarnated the early days of the Grand Tour in the pure serenity of the views provided: neo-classical structures and shepherd allusions created an Arcadian world of the sort that had fed their imaginations while touring the Italian museums and countryside. It could be argued that the English gardens were shaped and inspired by Claude-like paintings, but that the *traveling to Italy* was, of itself, irrelevant. But this criticism has been dealt with in preemptory fashion on pp. 90–91 above. For the very nature (and "content") of this Arcadian virtuality to which they were attracted was partly determined by a repression of the terrors of the journey to Italy. This is all the more apparent when the theory of the picturesque comes to be identified with a very different, Rosa-like content. For the more "irregular" gardens of Repton and Price/Knight are equally pictures (and constrained by optical-visual properties) but are inspired by the very features of the places traveled *through* in order to get to Italy (and hence the tour), namely, all those features that were repressed by earlier travelers. One way of looking at this is that once home, travelers could appreciate better the views on the journey that were infused with genuine terror at the time. Another is simply that the conditions of travel improved and the rough, craggy and irregular could be enjoyed more at the time. Moreover, once tourism for the English became focused in England itself then conditions

were even better for appreciating the wilder Rosa-like scenes in one's own country. Also see Ousby, *The Englishman's England* for more on the issue of English travel within Britain.

51. Browne, "Botany and the Boudoir," 166.
52. Uvedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1796). Cited in Robinson, *Inquiry into the Picturesque*, 74. There is a hint in this passage of the relation people at the time saw between politics and gardening that Robinson discusses at some length. This political allusion, however, also reflects the point made previously regarding the "natural"—"artificial" distinction. In other words, the picturesque garden produced, according to Sidney Robinson, a "haphazard appearance or lack of clearly systematic arrangement" which is representative of "natural" settings when in fact they are "the result of conscious choices." (Robinson, *Inquiry into the Picturesque*, xi.) In fact, as Robinson goes on to note, having the artificial presented as natural was laced into many different parts of the picturesque movement. For example: "Wandering and searching are essentially picturesque activities that the eighteenth century formalized for tourists traveling to views recognized as pictures. Scenes could be collected by travelers who gave the views a status removed from the 'original' meaning given them by local inhabitants." (Robinson, *Inquiry into the Picturesque*, xiii.)
53. See, e.g., Barrell, "The Public Prospect and the Private View," 81–102.
54. Stoppard, *Arcadia*, 25.

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