

Vision and Revision: Mountain Scenery  
in Snowdonia 1750-1880

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## Thesis Abstract

This thesis examines the visual depiction of mountain scenery in Snowdonia by artists, writers, illustrators and photographers from 1750 onwards. The scenery became associated with particular visual aesthetics. These are the topographical, the classical, the picturesque and the sublime. Its fundamental point is to demonstrate how these identities became established via a process of vision and revision. This study demonstrates the extensive range of visual material that has hitherto remained unknown. It is essentially a history of the mountain landscape of Snowdonia from the artist's point of view.

Chapter one introduces four aesthetic categories that have been applied to this mountain scenery. The second chapter examines the role that Richard Wilson played in the visual establishment of Snowdonia and discusses how his painting came to serve the needs of the Welsh landed gentry and how, in the late twentieth century, this imagery is still being used in the promotion of north Wales. Chapter three examines the topographical aesthetic in relation to Dolbadarn Castle and Snowdon and demonstrates how this early viewpoint has predominantly retained its topographical status. Chapter four discusses Snowdon from Capel Curig and examines the classical identities that have been applied to this view from its first appearance at the Royal Academy in 1787 to its photographic appropriation in contemporary tourist literature. Chapter five examines the picturesque viewpoint of the Pont Aberglaslyn in connection with the tour guide literature, first recorded in the late 1770s but now ceased. The final chapter discusses the sublime as a mode of vision at the Llyn Idwal site and the nearby scenery of the Nant Ffrancon pass from the appearance of this subject at the Royal Academy in the third decade of the nineteenth century.

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## Preface

The depictions of Snowdonia's mountain landscape by artists are numerous but only a small number of these works appear in exhibition catalogues, essays and surveys of British landscape painting. There are over five hundred and fifty artists who have depicted this mountain scenery listed in my bibliographic list *Artists of Snowdonia Mountain Scenery 1750-2000*.<sup>1</sup> Some examples of Snowdonian mountain scenery being recorded include Peter Bicknell's exhibition catalogue of 1981, *Horror, Beauty and Immensity: Picturesque Landscape in Britain, 1750-1850*.<sup>2</sup> In which Bicknell discusses a number of Snowdonia subjects by artists such as Wilson, Sandby, Loutherbourn and the Varley brothers. Louis Hawes catalogue of 1982, *Presences of Nature, British Landscape 1780-1830* is another example. In the first section, *Mountain Landscapes*; Hawes illustrates several examples of landscape painting depicting north Wales. Andrew Wilton and Anne Lyles exhibition catalogue of 1993, titled, *The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750-1880*, contains several examples of Welsh mountain scenery in their survey of watercolour development. Luke Herrmann's authoritative 1973 study of 18th-century landscape, *British Landscape Painting of the 18th Century* and Jan Reynolds *The Williams Family of Painters*, published in 1975 reproduces several examples of Snowdonian mountain scenery. A recent publication, from 1996, is Charlotte Klonk's, *Science and the Perception of Nature*, her chapter, *Sketching from Nature: John and Cornelius Varley*, deals with these artists' sketching tours to north Wales and in this chapter she reproduces several works associated with Cader Idris.

There has been little work that has focused on the depiction of Snowdonia as a subject in its own right. However a number of writers have made contributions to this subject, including, Michael Andrews *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*, published in 1989 in which Andrews presents a chapter solely on north Wales. *The North Wales tour: mountains and bards* focuses on the early tours to north Wales and it includes a wide range of mountain subjects. This chapter contains 23 reproductions related to north Wales and many of these pictures are reproduced for the first time and include sketchbook pages by P. Sandby,

T.Rowlandson, G.Cumberland, W.Gilpin, J.M.W.Turner, J.Skinner, C.Varley, S.Ireland and J.S.Cotman. Paul Joyner's *Dolbadarn Studies on a Theme* with essays by Paul Joyner, Peter Bicknell, John Gage, Francis McCarthy, C.J.Spurgeon, and David Penn looks at one subject, Dolbadarn Castle. The six essays in the catalogue each offer an interpretation of the subject and this multi-layered approach enables a number of factors to be presented simultaneously. Paul Joyner has produced a number of studies on individual artists connected with Wales.<sup>3</sup> His recent *Artists in Wales c.1740 - c.1851, A handlist of artists living and working in Wales from, c.1742 up to c. 1851* was published in 1997. A D Fraser Jenkins, 'The Romantic Traveller in Wales', *Bulletin of the National Museum of Wales*, Cardiff, winter 1970, is a valuable essay on the journeys of visiting artists to Wales. In this context Peter Hughes' article, 'Paul Sandby's Tour of Wales with Joseph Banks' and 'Paul Sandby and Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn', both in the *Burlington Magazine* discuss the first tours of Wales and the Snowdonian mountains to be recorded. Donald Moore's *Moses Griffith: Artist and Illustrator in the service of Thomas Pennant*, Welsh Arts Council, 1979, examines Griffith's early topographical watercolours of north Wales and his role as an illustrator of geological, botanical and archaeological subjects. The catalogue includes a digital map, *Distribution of Locations Drawn by Moses Griffith in North Wales*, produced by the Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales. Eric Rowan (ed.), *Art in Wales 2000 BC-AD. 1850'*, Cardiff, 1978 and his own *Art in Wales An Illustrated History 1850-1980*, Cardiff, 1985, together, offer a comprehensive survey of visual art in Wales. Mardy Rees, *Welsh Painters, Engravers, Sculptors 1527-1911*, Caernarvon, 1911, remains the most comprehensive and important early study on Welsh produced art available and therefore remains an important early study of the subject. David Solkin produced a catalogue on the Welsh born artist Richard Wilson for the Tate Gallery in 1982.<sup>4</sup> Solkin's *Richard Wilson: The Landscape of Reaction* coincided with the patriotism generated by the Falklands war. Solkin's revision of Wilson in association with his Welsh landed gentry patrons was not well received in some quarters where Solkin's text was perceived as a threat to the status quo.<sup>5</sup>

Some writers have concentrated on a single artist and their individual response to the mountain scenery of north Wales. Andrew Wilton's comprehensive catalogue of 1984, *Turner in Wales* covers all of Turner's tours to Wales in detail and Wilton supplies a map for each of the five tours undertaken by Turner through Wales. I refer the reader

to this publication for a discussion of Turner's tours to north Wales and the drawings and watercolours that he produced there. Peter Lord's recent study, *Clarence Whaite and the Welsh Art World, The Betws-y-Coed Artists' Colony 1844-1914* was published in 1998. Lord discusses the emergence of a Welsh art world centred on the painters connected with the village and the role played by Clarence Whaite in the formation of this artistic colony.

A number of writers have made important contributions to this subject area as a result of their own academic research. These include Paul Joyner's PhD thesis, *A Place for a Poussin: A study of Art and artists in Wales, c.1750-1850, with a hand list of artists working in Wales c.1750-c.1850*, 2 Vols. PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1989. The first volume of this study contains chapters on little known but significant Welsh artists living and working in Wales. Volume two contains a hand-list of Welsh artists and craftsmen living and working in the Principality during the hundred-year period covered by the study. The illustrations to the text follow in this section and it also contains location maps on artistic activity in Wales and an index of associated places. Paul Joyner's thesis marks an important position in the history of the study of Welsh art and artists. Francis McCarthy, *The treatment of mountain scenery by some British writers and artists in the eighteenth century-with some special attention to North Wales*, 2 Vols. PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1963. This thesis became a seminal study for my work as a large proportion of it discusses Welsh mountain scenery. In Chapter six, *Mountains in British Art 1740-1810, with special reference to those of North Wales* McCarthy reveals the extent of this subject and its potential for further research. Chapter seven, *The Tour of North Wales in literature and art 1770 - 1810* surveys this rich vein of travel writing and visual depiction of this area. Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones, *Views in Wales c.1760-1830*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, Australia, 1988, gives an interpretative overview of the perception of Welsh landscape in connection with the whole of Wales. Her thesis covers various categories that include art, myth, travel, politics and the social conditions of the day. In this study she has examined the outsider's view of Wales both written and visual. In this thesis she reveals the ways in which this perception of Wales has been constructed and re-evaluated from the second half of the eighteenth century to the third decade of the nineteenth.

Other authors have researched the literature associated with the mountain scenery of Wales. This includes the written accounts recorded by the visitor and the later guidebook literature that often promoted the mountain landscape of Snowdonia. An example of this research is Gwynfryn Walters, *The tourist and guide book literature of Wales 1770-1870. A descriptive and bibliographic survey with an analysis of the cartographic content and its content* MSc thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1966. In this important study of Welsh literature Walters makes a distinction between the tourist literature of the later eighteenth century and the guidebook literature that came to dominate the nineteenth century. In this context he examined the travel literature of north Wales where this change of attitude was particularly evident. The six chapters are a mixture of descriptive literature surveys coupled with related lists of bibliographical material. The second volume is an atlas of literature for Wales. Ronald Paul Evans has made a particular study of Thomas Pennant, his MA thesis, *Thomas Pennant's writings on North Wales*, University of Wales, Swansea, 1985, discusses Pennant's travel writing. His doctorate thesis *The life and work of Thomas Pennant (1726-1798)*, PhD. thesis, University of Wales, Swansea, 1994 examines Pennant's contribution to the cultural life of Wales.

Independent Welsh publishers such as Y Lolfa Cyf of Talybont and Gwasg Carreg Gwalch of Llanrwst have featured Snowdonian subject matter. This material is now available to the general reader in tourists' information centres, book and gift shops. Among these is James Bogle's, *Artists in Snowdonia*, a picture book containing thirty reproductions of artists' pictures in colour. Turner is represented by five images. Wilson, Cotman, Cox, John Piper and John Varley are each given two. The remaining fifteen works include four from the eighteenth century, six from the nineteenth century and five from the twentieth. Adjacent to each picture is a short summary text and simple instructions to enable the reader to access the same viewpoint that the artists depicted. There are some errors, for example in the entry for Cotman's V&A watercolour, *Road to Capel Curig*, the bridge is identified by Bogle as the Ogwen Bridge but it actually depicts the Pont-y-Pair in the centre of present day Betws-y-Coed. There is a short essay which abruptly finishes in eighteen hundred and the remainder of the nineteenth and twentieth century are given only a paragraph. In spite of these shortcomings Bogle's book has introduced thirty colour reproductions of

Snowdonia into the public domain and his book suggests that there is more to be discovered.

A recent publication on the literature of Snowdonia by David Kirk is *Snowdonia, a historical anthology* published in 1994. It consists of sixty samples of written comments on Snowdonia that cover the period from the fifteenth century to the late nineteenth century and it serves as an introduction to the rich literature of Snowdonia that was largely written by visitors to the region.

I have constructed a number of databases compiled from exhibition records and these document the representation of this mountain territory. I have used the early London exhibition venues of *The Society of Artists* and *The Free Society of Artists* covering the second half of the eighteenth century. In the first half of the nineteenth century the *British Institution* covers the period from 1806 to 1867. For these I have consulted the records of Algernon Graves.<sup>6</sup> The records of the *Royal Academy* in London begin from its foundation in 1769 to the present day and these records provide an unbroken list of artists and their works shown there. Graves compiled a dictionary of exhibitors and their works from 1769 to 1904. This dictionary format has been continued since and a record is available for the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> Taken together these records of the *Royal Academy* and other exhibition lists provide a reliable document of exhibition venues in London. All the databases adhere to the same format. This data is compiled from nine sources of information taken from the records. These consists of (1) artist's name, (2) title of work, (3) exhibition date, (4) exhibition number, (5) subject, with sub-categories of subject, (6) location, with sub-categories of place, (7) venue, (8) price (when available), (9) source reference. The sub-categories of subject (5), and location (6), offer a further range of interpretative analysis to be made from the accumulative data. The subject category (5) list is not solely restricted exclusively to mountain scenery but embraces a range of other landscape features. The twelve categories that I have used are, (1) bridge, (2) castle, (3) general, (4) industrial, (5) lake, (6) mill, (7) mountain, (8) mountain lake, (9) mountain stream, (10) river, (11) valley, (12) waterfall. Other subjects that are related to north Wales but not directly associated with its landscape have been omitted. The location category (6) contains forty named examples of place and these are based on geographical areas rather than specific places with the exception of locations such as Caernarvon and Conway,

which are usually associated with the depiction of a castle. The category of Snowdon for example includes all the views associated with this particular mountain or area. Some paintings are simply titled 'Snowdon' and these make no reference to any specific viewpoint. The title of work category (2) allows access to particular locations and any variations of title can be established and the popularity of a given site analysed. These databases allow pertinent facts to be revealed which would otherwise have remained hidden.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> This database contains a named work of mountain scenery that has been in a public exhibition or is in a museum or private collection. See vol.3., Appendix I., *Artists of Snowdonia Mountain Scenery 1750-2000. A reference list.*

<sup>2</sup> The references to the works cited in this introduction are listed in the bibliography.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Paul Joyner, *S. H. Grimm: Views in Wales*, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1983 and Paul Joyner, *Thomas Tudor 1785-1855 An artist from Monmouth*, exhibition catalogue, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> David Solkin's research for this exhibition of Wilson was partly based on his postgraduate thesis, David Solkin, *Richard Wilson and the British Landscape*, unpublished PhD thesis, Yale University, 1978.

<sup>5</sup> For a further discussion of this controversy see, Neil McWilliam and Alex Potts, 'The landscape of reaction: Richard Wilson and his critics', *History Workshop Journal* 16, 1983, pp.171-5. See also, Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision, Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.4.

<sup>6</sup> The published records of Algenon Graves are listed in the bibliography.

<sup>7</sup> The twentieth century record up to 1970 is available in the four-volume work of Angela Jarman. The period from 1971 to 1989 was compiled by Charles Baile de Laperriere, see bibliography.

## Introduction

This thesis identifies and examines the pictorial representations of Snowdonia's mountain scenery by artists from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. The associated travel book literature is also considered in relation to the representations of this mountain scenery. My practice as an artist painting the mountains of Snowdonia initially fostered my research into this subject. I needed to be able to relate my work to the work of others in the same area. It quickly became obvious that such information was not readily available. The purpose of this study is to gather together the visual material in order to provide a resource for further investigation. It offers both a classification and an analysis of this material in coming to an understanding of artists' visual perceptions on visiting the area. It embraces the work of artists over a period of time, examining similarities and differences and relating the work produced of Snowdonia to perceived perceptions.

Snowdonia is a distinct geographical region of north Wales. It is a comparatively small highland area and its mountain scenery has attracted visitors for centuries. Its compactness, and obviously recognisable features and its accessibility from the major centres of population in Britain caused it to be made into a National Park in 1951, further underlying its identity as a unit. Many studies of landscape art have utilised subject matter from Snowdonia, for example, Louis Hawes *Presences of Nature* (1980). Studies that have focused on Welsh art and culture have made use of a few images of national significance, for example, *The Bard*. But only a small number of the available works are reproduced. Thus the vast majority of available visual material is not shown. Paintings exist but they are dispersed among many collections and some are in storage almost forgotten. William Cubley's *Llyn Idwal*, for example, remains hidden in a storage depot in Liverpool. Work that is not seen cannot become part of current perception. There is also a tendency for the same pictures to be reproduced and this also contributes to the overall perception that the depiction of Snowdonia's mountain scenery is only a marginal activity. To date this is the first study that has been produced on the pictorial representation of Snowdonia's mountain scenery as a whole.

The extent of mountain scenery in Snowdonia can be revealed if the large body of visual work produced by artists and writers on landscape is collected and examined. Snowdonia with its strong identity as a landscape region has produced a considerable number of representations. It is mostly artists visiting the region that have produced these images. Existing studies have obscured the extent of the visual material available and the aim of this study is to reveal this large body of work as a coherent whole. Therefore I have examined as much of the available material as possible.

I have examined this large body of visual material and made comparisons between works and this has revealed a number of significant viewpoints. A study of the material, viewpoint by viewpoint, suggests that the choice of subject is closely related to aesthetic theories. The visual work produced usually falls into an aesthetic category that is directly associated with a mountain viewpoint location. An example of this occurs at the Pont Aberglaslyn site where artists applied a picturesque aesthetic to the motif having ignored the nearby classical landscape at Capel Curig or the sublime aesthetic utilised at Llyn Idwal. Artists sought landscape viewpoints that fitted and suited their aesthetic capabilities.

Landscape artists visiting Snowdonia were generally not Welsh. They came without any notions of national or historical symbols as subject matter. Artists in general use landscape to meet their own needs and requirements. Mountain landscape was perceived as a neutral vehicle for landscape painting. The preconceptions that they did come with were those landscape aesthetics that had already been formed outside Snowdonia. This, I argue, applies even to the Welsh born artist Richard Wilson. Visiting artists to Snowdonia looked for the examples of mountain landscape they required and found it. Artists in Snowdonia selected specific viewpoint sites that met their aesthetic requirements. Snowdonia could supply a motif for all the landscape categories that are utilised in landscape painting, print production, photography and in written description.

This study contains six chapters illustrating the classification of the researched material and drawing comparison within aesthetic categories. In chapter one I discuss the four landscape categories of the topographical, classical, picturesque and the sublime that have been applied to this mountain scenery. All of Snowdonia's depicted



mountain viewpoints are associated with one or more of these categories. The classical category contains five or more recessional planes the picturesque usually three and the sublime two or fewer. The topographical category refers to a clear and accurate representation depicted via a number of compositional planes usually between five and three. In chapter one these landscape categories are discussed with a particular emphasis on the later eighteenth century categories of the picturesque and the sublime.

In chapter two I examine the mountain sites Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle and Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris that were painted by Richard Wilson in the mid 1760's. I discuss Wilson's painting *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* and its classical associations, and its importance as a symbol of Wales and possible reasons why other artists do not replicate this view. I show how Wilson's view has retained its status as an icon representing Snowdonia in the promotional literature and its later appropriation in photographic form. Wilson's companion painting of Cader Idris; *Llyn-y-Cau Cader Idris* is also analysed.

Chapter three examines a topographical viewpoint towards Snowdon as seen in *A View in Nant Beris* by Moses Griffith. This engraving in Thomas Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* depicts the historical Dolbadarn Castle seen from the lakeside of Llyn Peris. Pennant's seminal role in the promotion of Snowdonia and Griffith's engravings that depict it are examined. A number of topographical views of this site from 1742 onwards are analysed including the later reproduced postcard views and recent photography used in travel literature. The descriptive narratives of this location in the guidebook literature after *A Tour in Wales* are discussed in relation to their depicted imagery.

Chapter four discusses the classical viewpoint Snowdon from Capel Curig first exhibited by De Loutherbourg at the *Royal Academy* in 1787. De Loutherbourg's painting *Snowdon from Capel Curig, a morning* and the many revisions of this view are discussed along with the contemporary written descriptions of the vista. The establishment of tourist hotels and the improvement in roads and the later arrival of the railway at nearby Betts-y-Coed are also debated. The later use of this viewpoint in photographic form in the promotional travel literature of Wales is examined.

Chapter five examines the picturesque in relation to the site at the Pont Aberglaslyn and its connections with the guidebook literature both written and visual. Later versions of this scene verge on the sublime but retain enough of the picturesque to remain defined in that category. I show how the demise of this viewpoint by the third quarter of the nineteenth century was due to a change of land use with the obscuring of the view by tree growth

Chapter six investigates the sublime site of the Llyn Idwal located high in the Nant Ffrancon pass. Artists exploited this location from the third decade of the nineteenth century and it is still the subject of artistic revision today. The nearby Tryfan and Glyder Fach mountain and their suitability for representing the sublime are also deliberated.

The aesthetic factors that determine a landscape category in relation to a viewpoint location are more complex than a single landscape category implies and these variations are discussed within each chapter. A representative number of artists have been examined at each location to confirm the site's visual identity. The numerous revisions by succeeding generations of artists both professional and amateur of these sites are discussed along with the appearance of these subjects in paintings at the *Royal Academy* and at other exhibition venues. Throughout this study I have examined the narrative descriptions in the travel literature of north Wales in association with the depictions of Snowdonia's mountain scenery illustrated in this travel literature.<sup>1</sup> In connection with this I have deconstructed the aesthetic category used in relation to the text description of place along with the pictorial representation of it and vice-versa.

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<sup>1</sup> The travel and guidebook literature associated with Snowdonia between 1750 and 1900 is listed in *Bibliography of the published and unpublished tour accounts and the guidebook literature of Snowdonia 1770-1900*.

## Chapter One.

### Landscape Aesthetics and Snowdonia.

Analyses of the collected visual material reveal aesthetic categories into which depictions of Snowdonia's mountain scenery may be placed. These landscape categories are not exclusive but are generally the topographical, the classical, the picturesque and the sublime. This chapter examines the categories and scrutinises the theories of the picturesque and the sublime. The combination of these categories in landscape art is discussed. Richard Wilson's contributory role and the Italianate aesthetic he used in his representations of Snowdonia's mountain scenery are discussed separately in chapter two, Wilson's Imagery: *Snowdon and Cader Idris*.

The term topographical when applied to landscape pictures refers to a truthful representation of place or subject. This is usually a building or other man-made structure set within a landscape format. The term also applies to those landscapes that are a direct transcript of place with no elaborations of the imagination. The word topographical dates from 1570 and is defined as, *pertaining to, or dealing with topography*.<sup>1</sup> The related term topography, which predates topographical by twenty-one years, is defined as:

The science or practice of describing a particular place, city, town, manor, parish, or tract of land; the accurate and detailed delineation and description of a locality.<sup>2</sup>

The delineation of accurate views required a method of representation that was capable of producing a detailed visual analysis of the seen subject. Drawing was a favoured method that was capable of producing the required amount of information. This approach along with the application of a wash tint enabled a tonal range to be present. Many topographical views in the eighteenth century were reproduced as engraved prints. The topographical artists working with a tinted wash or watercolour technique were able to meet the visual requirements of the engraving process. Many topographical artists of the eighteenth century such as Moses Griffith (1747-1819) were also able to engrave a copper plate.

By the second half of the eighteenth century the content of a topographical view was wide ranging. The compositional visual structures used by the artist topographers varied according to what was being depicted. The connecting links between these different subjects and their pictorial visual structure is that they were all carefully drawn with everything depicted in sharp focus and illuminated in a clear and even light.

These qualities are clearly evident in a watercolour titled, *Fisherwick Park, Staffordshire* (Figure 1) drawn by Moses Griffith in 1778. It is typical of the type of watercolour Griffith produced as book illustration. In this work the architectural features of the house are carefully drawn in a linear style and thin washes delineate the newly landscaped grounds that surround the house and the insipid colours utilised are reflected in the pale sky tones.

The topographical landscape picture convinces its audience by its depiction of reality so convincing that it is seen as actual rather than as a fiction depicted with a brush. This applies equally to the monochromatic prints that were produced from the original works with no loss of reality on the part of the spectator. This can be explained by the absence of any imaginative qualities being employed to disrupt this vision and turn it into a contrived or altered view of nature. Michael Stephan in *A Transformational Theory of Aesthetics* discusses this aspect of cognitive perception in relation to paintings.<sup>3</sup> The topographical aesthetic applied to the visualisation of a mountain viewpoint in Snowdonia is the subject of chapter three, *Topographical Snowdonia: A View in Nant Beris*.

The Classical as a mode of vision is based upon the idea of imitation. In the plastic arts it has its origins in the classical writings of Plato.<sup>4</sup> It was Aristotle who defined the mimesis concept further in this *Poetics*.<sup>5</sup> The concept of imitation that Aristotle offered lasted well into the eighteenth century and embraced both the actual and the idea. This dual aspect was applied to the representations of idealised subjects.

The term Classical when applied to landscape painting refers to a style of realist painting that used models from Greek and Latin antiquity in both its themes and in its vision of idealised beauty. This ideal beauty is embodied in the work of Nicholas

Poussin (1594-1665) the French landscape painter who worked in Rome. Poussin gave this explanation of classical landscape:

The idea of beauty does not infuse itself into matter unless it has been prepared as much as possible. This preparation consists of three things: order, mode and form. Order means the spacing of the parts; mode has to do with quantity; form has to do with lines and colours.<sup>6</sup>

The compositional structure that Poussin applied to his landscape paintings was based on a geometric construction that was able to underpin the golden section formula that he applied to this recessional space. His oil painting, *Orpheus and Eurydice* (Figure 36) exemplifies this approach. In this landscape the light is carefully controlled enabling five or more recessional planes to be read by the spectator one by one as they recede from foreground to background.

The classical landscape practised by Poussin and his contemporaries was the antithesis of the romanticism of the later eighteenth century and the associated theories of the picturesque and the sublime. An excellent study of the classical influence on British landscape art is given in Elizabeth Wheeler Manwaring's, *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth century England: A Study Chiefly of the Influence of Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa on English Taste, 1700-1800*.<sup>7</sup> In the classical mode no emotional involvement by the artist is allowed to intrude, instead the concept allows only an elevated perfectionism to be represented. The contemporary audience saw such works as high art while subjects such as the self-portrait were not valued and consequently had little status.<sup>8</sup> The relationship between audience and the represented work is explored in Robert Holub's book, *Reception Theory*.<sup>9</sup> The classical aesthetic applied to the visualisation of a mountain viewpoint in Snowdonia is the subject of chapter four, Classical Snowdonia: *Snowdon from Capel Curig*.

The term picturesque dates from 1703 when it referred to the style of a picture as: *Like a picture; fit to be the subject of an effective picture; possessing pleasing and interesting qualities of form and colour*.<sup>10</sup>

By the second half of the eighteenth century the term picturesque referred to the depiction of certain types of scenery. It was William Gilpin (1724-1804) traveller,

teacher, artist, writer, and clergyman of Boldre in Hampshire who made the picturesque aesthetic viable. The five plane formula of classical landscape was now reduced to three. This consisted of a foreground, a middle distance and a background. An example of Gilpin's use of a three-plane structure is his aquatint print, *View of a castle on Lake Dochart* (Figure 2)<sup>11</sup>. This visual simplification required subjects that could meet this reduced compositional structure. If the natural appearance of a place failed to meet this picturesque aesthetic then nature could be recomposed according to Gilpin's rules of picturesque beauty. Gilpin gave an explanation of the picturesque in 1768: *a term expressive of that peculiar kind of beauty, which is agreeable in a picture*.<sup>12</sup> The picturesque became fashionable in the later eighteenth century and the early nineteenth. It coincided with the increase in landscape subjects that were shown in the London exhibitions such as the *Royal Academy*. The picturesque aesthetic played an integral role in the emerging romanticism of the period.

Gilpin advocated his picturesque ideas first in manuscript journals that were derived from his tours of Britain. These were later published as illustrated guides in quarto or octavo. His tours to north Wales, for example, were made in 1769 and 1773, yet the book based on them was not available to the public until 1809.<sup>13</sup> It was the last of his six tour books to be published.<sup>14</sup> The first and most influential was, *Observations on the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales etc., Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; Made in the Summer of the Year 1770*.<sup>15</sup> In these books Gilpin gave aesthetic instructions on how scenery should be viewed, experienced and recorded. Many subsequent visitors, connoisseurs, tourists, and artists, both amateur and professional, enthusiastically followed his advice on scenery as they followed his routes and experienced at first hand their own version of the picturesque. Gilpin's tripartite aesthetic with its fondness for irregularity and roughness was applied to a range of subjects, ruined abbeys, castles, cottages, gnarled trees, winding rivers and mountain valleys and scenery all were favoured. Sometimes a landscape view was reconstructed so as to look well in a picture. The published books contain illustrations in aquatint and these prints were derived from Gilpin's own monochromatic wash drawings, Gilpin found aquatint to be a:

...a very beautiful mode of multiplying drawings: and certainly comes the nearest to any mode we know, to the softness of the pencil.<sup>16</sup>

Gilpin's small-illustrated books were easily carried on tour and they were also easy to read as Gilpin supplied English translations for any Latin text used. They were instruction manuals for the appropriate response to scenery, the formula by which to experience the picturesque rather than to observe it directly. A response that required the use of the imagination in conjunction with a visual motif that met the requirements of the picturesque aesthetic.

Gilpin drew the attention of his readers directly to mountain scenery and where to find it in his *Observations, on Several Parts of England; Particularly the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland Relative to Picturesque Beauty, made in the Year 1772*, published in 1786.<sup>17</sup> After highlighting the northern mountains of Britain he drew attention to the mountains of Wales.<sup>18</sup>

In visual terms the picturesque aesthetic could be applied to the mountainous country of north Wales more successfully than to other mountain regions of Britain. This was because the jagged silhouetted profiles of Snowdonia's mountains provided a ready vehicle for a more viable picturesque treatment of mountain scenery than either the Lake District or Scotland could provide. The result of a different geological structure. The popularity of Snowdonia's mountain territory was further enhanced by its geographical proximity to the centres where the majority of potential tourists lived such as London, Oxford and Cambridge. Therefore access to Snowdonia was considerably easier and quicker than to the north of England or Scotland.

Gilpin was aware of the discrepancy between the depicted view and its lack of topographical accuracy in his publications. He addressed this issue in *The Account of the Prints* section of *Observations on Several Parts of Great Britain, particularly the Highlands of Scotland, Relative to Picturesque Beauty, made in the Year 1776* of 1789,<sup>19</sup> he wrote:

With regard to the prints which adorn these volumes, I can only say what I have said of those in other publications of the same kind; that few of them pretend to be exact portraits. They in general only Characterise the counties through which the reader is carried. They were slightly taken in the course of a hasty journey; and at best meant only to preserve the great lines of the country: and even this, I fear

not always accurately. I have therefore made confession to the public, that when I have seen a line out of place, I have a great propensity to correct it by one that is more picturesque.<sup>20</sup>

The shape of these aquatinted views is oval, recalling the optics generated by the Claude Glass. There were two main types of glass in use at this time, the convex mirror, which gave a darkened recomposed image, and the coloured glass type that tinted the view in various hues. Thomas West (1720-1779) in his *Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire* first published in 1778 gave precise instructions for the use of the convex mirror:

The person using it ought always to turn his back to the object that he views. It should be suspended by the upper part of the case, holding it a little to the right or left (as the position of the parts to be viewed require) and the face screened from the sun. A glass of four inches or four inches and a half is the proper size.<sup>21</sup>

West went on to describe the image captured on the reflective surface of the Claude Glass, that it:

...removes the object to a due distance, and shows them in the soft colours of nature, and the most regular perspective the eye can perceive or science demonstrate.<sup>22</sup>

Gilpin also described the optical effects created by the Claude Glass in use:

Minute exhibitions of the convex-mirror, *composition forms*, and *colours* are brought closer together; and the eye examines the *general effect*, the forms of the objects, and the *beauty of the tints*, in one complex view.<sup>23</sup>

Gilpin in *The Highlands of Scotland* referred to the tinted glass variety of Claude Glass and its suitability for generating a picturesque effect by the discoloration of light:

The only picturesque glasses are those, which the artists call Claude Lorrain glasses. They are combined of two different colours, and if the hues are well sorted, they give the objects of nature a soft, mellow tinge, like the colouring of that master.<sup>24</sup>



These mirrors became more of an accessory than an essential tool of landscape vision. They were not suitable for use in a classical landscape construction or a topographical view and they had no place in the later sublime aesthetic. When they were used in situ they added to the picturesque effect only by their optical distortion of reality.

Gilpin preferred to visualise the picturesque in relation to actual scenery rather than use a mirror even if this meant improving on the natural appearance of place to look more like a painting or print. Here lies the paradox of the Gilpin aesthetic. He wanted actual views to conform to his tripartite schema and he searched them out to fit his vision and if they did not conform he changed their visual structure accordingly. The degree of compositional improvement was based on a set of variable and sometimes contradictory precepts that Gilpin himself kept adjusting. As Malcolm Andrews has highlighted in his book *The Search for the Picturesque* <sup>25</sup> Gilpin mixes the word beauty with picturesque and vice versa with no clear distinction made between the two. His last major essay on landscape aesthetics was published in *Three Essays* in 1792. By this date all his tours had been finished and his written and visual contributions to the picturesque debate had been completed. In his first essay *On Picturesque Beauty* published in *Three Essays* Gilpin attempted to distinguish between the picturesque and the beautiful:

Disputes about beauty might perhaps be involved in less confusion, If a distinction were established, which certainly exists, between such objects as are *beautiful*, and such as are *picturesque* - between those, which please the eye in their *natural state*; and those, which please from some quality, capable of being *illustrated by painting*. <sup>26</sup>

Gilpin goes on to differentiate between the various surfaces of objects that are capable of elucidating a picturesque response, asking the question: *What is that quality in objects, which particularly marks them as picturesque?* <sup>27</sup> Smoothness, which Gilpin stated did not display any picturesque qualities on its own, could be converted into roughness where it acquired a picturesque quality. The picturesque qualities of roughness and ruggedness as Gilpin observed could be present on a small or large scale:

Both ideas however equally enter into the picturesque; both are

observable in the smaller, as well as in the larger parts of nature  
- in the outline, and bark of a tree, as in the rude summit, and  
craggy sides of a mountain.<sup>28</sup>

Gilpin inserted two rectangular prints into his essay to demonstrate the limitations of a smooth landscape picture compared with a rougher more varied one, which met the pictorial requirements he advocated. The first print depicts a smooth non-picturesque landscape the second supposedly of the same view is picturesque. I have titled them, *Non-Picturesque Mountain View* (Figure 3) and *Picturesque Mountain View* (Figure 4) respectively. As Gilpin stated in the *Explanation of the Prints*:

It is the intention of these two prints to illustrate how very adverse  
The idea of *smoothness* is to the *composition* of landscape. In the  
second of them the *great lines* of the landscape are exactly the same  
as in the first; only they are *more broken*.<sup>29</sup>

The two prints were placed in the main text and Gilpin gave this description of the first print *Non Picturesque Mountain View* (Figure 3):

...in *landscape painting* smooth objects would produce no compositions at all. In a mountain-scene what composition could arise from the corner of a smooth knoll coming forward on one side, intersected by a smooth knoll on the other; with a smooth plain perhaps in the middle, and a smooth mountain in the distance? The very idea is disgusting.<sup>30</sup>

Gilpin wrote the following commentary referring to the second plate, *Picturesque Mountain View* (Figure 4):

Picturesque composition consists in uniting in one whole a variety of parts; and these parts can only be obtained from rough objects. If the smooth mountains and plains were broken by different objects, the composition would be good, if we suppose the great lines of it were so before. *Variety* too is equally necessary in his composition; so is contrast. Both of these he finds in rough object; and neither of them in smooth... From such reasoning then we infer, that it is not merely for the sake of his execution that the painter prefers rough objects to smooth. The very essence of his art requires it.<sup>31</sup>

As can be seen from Gilpin's written statements and the reproduced images a degree of roughness is an essential component of the picturesque aesthetic. Artists who sought Gilpin's picturesque applied these concepts generally rather than exactly.

Landscape subjects were adapted compositionally to meet the aesthetic rather than to directly imitate it. Consequently there are varying proportions of the picturesque contained in a variety of works that are generally labelled picturesque. Gilpin's basic compositional formula of the three-plane structure adapted itself to a large range of subject and technique. It is particularly associated with landscape views executed in watercolour and the many prints connected with the emerging fashion for romantic scenery that also embodied an element of feeling as well.

In north Wales the picturesque aesthetic was favoured for the depiction of mountain scenery, the proportion of the picturesque aesthetic varied according to the requirements and knowledge of the visiting artists. Not only were they seeking views of mountain scenery but many were also seeking to apply Gilpin's picturesque vision as well. In some works an element of the sublime intruded into the established picturesque construction of space and it changed pictorially from three planes to two or less. This disruption of the picturesque space was often caused by a reduction in visibility, or the subject depicted suggested danger or the threat of it. The lack of recession and the denial of the three-plane structure could turn the picturesque view into a representation of the landscape sublime. The sublime will be discussed shortly.

Other writers on the picturesque such as Uvedale Price (1747-1829) and Richard Payne Knight (1751-1824) were mainly concerned with the picturesque debate in relation to the landscape garden.<sup>32</sup> Uvedale Price owned four thousand acres at Foxley in Herefordshire. Here he put into practise his vision of the picturesque as applied to landscape design. His theories were published in 1794 and in his *Essay On The Picturesque* he advocated that the picturesque was located midway between the beautiful and the sublime. Richard Payne Knight a near neighbour owned an estate of ten thousand acres at Downton Castle near Ludlow. Here in a steep sided valley he carried out his version of the landscaped garden. He also published his theories in, *The Landscape, A Didactic Poem*, illustrated by Thomas Hearne and published in 1794.<sup>33</sup> This was followed by *Analytical Inquiry into the Principals of Taste* published in 1805.<sup>34</sup> In his second book he criticised some of Price's precepts arguing that the picturesque was purely a visual or imaginative experience.<sup>35</sup>

A number of studies on the picturesque have been published.<sup>36</sup> An important text and introduction to the ideas of the movement remains Christopher Hussey's, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View*.<sup>37</sup> John Dixon Hunt's essays of the 1980s provide a more recent analysis of the subject.<sup>38</sup> The Picturesque aesthetic applied to the visualisation of a mountain viewpoint in Snowdonia is the subject of chapter five, *Picturesque Snowdonia: Pont Aberglaslyn*.

The sublime as a concept has its origins in the classical writings of Longinus in his treatise, *On the Sublime*.<sup>39</sup> A version existed before the first century AD as part of a text by Cecilius.<sup>40</sup> In Longinus the sublime is cited as having the power to transport the senses so that they become witnesses to grand conceptions evoking such feelings as awe, wonder and exhalation beyond ordinary experience. Longinus defined five categories of the sublime:

The first and most important is the ability to form grand conceptions, as I have explained in my commentary on Xenophon. Second comes the stimulus of powerful and inspired emotion. These two elements of the sublime are very largely innate, while the remainder are the product of art - that is, the proper formation of the two types of figure, figures of thought and figures of speech, together with the creation of a noble diction, which in its turn may be resolved into the choice of words, the use of imagery, and the elaboration of the style. The fifth source of grandeur, which embraces all those I have already mentioned, is the total effect resulting from dignity and elevation.<sup>41</sup>

The main thesis deals with each of these categories in turn. It is preceded by a definition of the sublime in which Longinus follows Horace and earlier writers. He states that:

Sublimity is innate, an inborn gift, but it must be cultivated, among other ways by imitation or emulation of writers who have shown themselves capable of achieving sublimity; art is necessary if the natural ability is to be used to the best effect.<sup>42</sup>

A later text connected with the sublime was published in 1684. Thomas Burnet's *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*<sup>43</sup> introduced the idea that a wild and vast nature could expand the imagination.<sup>44</sup> Burnet expressed this sublime concept as:<sup>45</sup>

Whatsoever hath but the Shadow and appearance of the INFINITE, as all Things have that are too big for our Comprehension, they fill and overbear the Mind with their Excess, and cast it into a pleasing

kind of Stupor and Admiration.<sup>46</sup>

John Dennis (1637-1734) recorded the overpowering aspect of the sublime in 1688 on a journey through the Alps when he encountered mountain scenery. He described his sublime experiences while on a dangerous path in front of nature as: 'a delightful horror, a terrible joy and at the same time, that I was infinitely pleas'd, I trembled'.<sup>47</sup> His writing was originally stimulated by his readings of Longinus. Marjorie Nicholson has drawn attention to the importance of Dennis and his reworked sublime aesthetic:

Dennis' contribution to the development of the Sublime was threefold: He analysed, as no previous writer, the causes of sublimity; he developed its effects upon psychological grounds unknown to Longinus; he based his conception not upon rhetorical theories but upon his own experience and attitudes native to the English...<sup>48</sup>

In the summer of 1712 Joseph Addison (1672-1719) published his essay *The Pleasures of the Imagination* in a series of editions of the journal *Spectator*. In his essay he describes the sense of awe and immensity evoked by the natural sublime:

Our Imagination loves to be filled with an object, or to grasp at any thing that is too big for its Capacity. We are flung into a pleasing Astonishment at such unbounded Views, and feel a delightful Stillness and Amazement in the Soul at the Apprehension of them.<sup>49</sup>

The *Infinite* as described by Burnet, quoted earlier, was further explored by Addison when he recorded the limits of man's comprehension of the universe and his relationship to the sublime:

...a different set of planets, and still discover new depths of ether, so as not to be seen by the strongest of our telescopes, we are lost in such a labyrinth of suns and worlds, and confounded with the immensity and magnificence of nature.<sup>50</sup>

Addison's concepts of vastness were expressed thirty-five years later in an essay by John Baillie:

Vast Objects occasion vast Sensations... Where an object is *vast* and at the same Time *uniform*, there is to the imagination no Limits of its Vastness, and the Mind runs out into Infinity, continually *creating* as

it were from the *Pattern*.<sup>51</sup>

Ten years later Edmund Burke (1729-1797) published his seminal book on the sublime. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* differentiates between the beautiful and the sublime by a close examination of each listed category. Burke's book on sublime aesthetics would become an appropriate treatise for those artists in the second half of the eighteenth century who were interested in delineating mountain scenery while pursuing an alternative to the *Picturesque* as promoted by William Gilpin.

The sublime as an aesthetic category applicable to real landscape, landscape poetry and pictures had become an established term by the time of Burke's publication. From the beginning of the eighteenth century the sublime was defined as:

Of things in nature and art: Calculated to inspire awe, deep reverence, or lofty emotion, by reason of beauty, vastness, or grandeur 1700.<sup>52</sup>

John Ruskin (1819-1900) offered this definition of the sublime in relation to art in the first volume of *Modern Painters* published in 1843:

...sublimity is not a specific term - not a term descriptive of the effect of a particular class of ideas. Anything which elevates the mind is sublime, and the elevation of mind is produced by the contemplation of greatness of any kind; but chiefly, of course, by the greatness of the noblest things. Sublimity is, therefore, only another word for the effect of greatness upon the feelings - greatness, whether of matter, space, power, virtue, or beauty: and there is perhaps no desirable quality of a work of art, which, its perfection, is not, in some way or degree, sublime.<sup>53</sup>

Ruskin disagreed with Burke's assertion that self-preservation was an ingredient of the sublime arguing that danger is sublime but not the fear of it. He agreed with Burke's declaration that 'the simple conception or idea of greatness of suffering or extent of destruction is sublime, whether there be any connection of that idea with ourselves or not'.<sup>54</sup> Ruskin in *Modern Painters* separated the components of the sublime and the beautiful into separate classifications under the general heading of *Truths*.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) published his *Critique of Judgement* in 1790. He greatly admired Burke's critique on the sublime. As Andrew Wilton has pointed out Kant:

clarified matters somewhat by suggesting that the sublime was characterised primarily by boundlessness while the beautiful, dependent on form, naturally resulted from the presence of boundaries.<sup>55</sup>

In his book Kant relates the concept of the sublime to mountain scenery and the power of the imagination to depict it. Landscape features such as mountain peaks, high waterfalls, deep gorges, and caverns do not necessarily produce fear by themselves but as Kant stated, 'only attempt to feel fear by the aid of the imagination'.<sup>56</sup>

Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry* consists of five parts which are subdivided into a number of single categories. As he stated in the preface:

I must caution the reader against imagining that I intended a full dissertation on the Sublime and Beautiful. My enquiry went no further than to the origin of these ideas.<sup>57</sup>

The five sections of the *Enquiry* are sub-titled. These are, Part I, *Novelty*, Part II, *Of the passion caused by the Sublime*, Part III, *Of Beauty*, Part IV, *Of the efficient causes of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Part V, *Of Words*.

In Part III, *Of Beauty*, section XXVII, the two aesthetic categories are compared, and under the heading, *Sublime and Beautiful*, Burke wrote:

On closing this general view of beauty, it naturally occurs, that we should compare it with the sublime; and in 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.<sup>58</sup>

The concept of the beautiful as smooth and polished mirrors Gilpin's picturesque aesthetic. Picturesque landscapes that become obscured cease to function as

picturesque views and produce the sublime with a corresponding lack of recessional space. Burke acknowledged that in some situations the sublime and the beautiful could combine in varying proportions, as he stated:

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.<sup>59</sup>

Burke defined the concept of vastness as sublime in Part IV, section VII, *Vastness*. This category has direct application to mountain scenery rather than to the lowland plain, which by definition is not capable of generating the sublime on its own:

Greatness of dimension is a powerful cause of the sublime... A perpendicular has more force in forming the sublime, than an inclined plain; and the effects of a rugged and broken surface seem stronger than where it is smooth and polished.<sup>60</sup>

The next category Burke gives is titled, section VIII, *Infinity*. Here Burke describes another cause of the sublime, a concept that had also been suggested by Burnet and Addison:

Another source of the sublime is *Infinity*; if it does not rather belong to the last. Infinity has a tendency to fill the mind with that sort of delightful horror, which is the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime.<sup>61</sup>

As Marjorie Hope Nicholson has pointed out in her important study *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory* a profound change in taste occurred midway through the eighteenth century towards mountains in general and the representation of them in both literature and art. This change of taste was embraced in the emerging Romanticism of the period taking place in the last decades of the century and the first of the nineteenth. This changed perception meant that there was no longer an aversion to mountains. Rather, for the educated, this was replaced with a passionate appreciation of them.

The first visual responses that embraced the sublime were made in the Alps by visiting British artists. This can be seen for example in the mountain watercolours of William Pars (1743-1782) and Francis Towne (1739-1816). Pars exhibited his alpine



watercolours at the *Royal Academy* in 1771 and *The Rhone Glacier and the Source of the Rhone* (Figure 5), drawn the previous year, was one of these. Pars made this work thirteen years after the *Enquiry* was published and here he presents a visual interpretation of the sublime particularly as linked to the Burke category of *vastness*. This desolate landscape contains figures on the left, one is pointing upwards towards the infinite; *infinity* is another sublime category from Burke. This watercolour of the mountain sublime recalls lines from Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822):

Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky.  
Mont Blanc appears, still, snowy, and serene <sup>62</sup>

In 1781 Francis Towne making his first visit to the Alps produced a set of watercolours of the glaciers on Mont Blanc.<sup>63</sup> In his vertical sketchbook drawings Towne captured the sublime grandeur and immensity of the mountain scenery. William Wordsworth (1770-1850) referred to the attraction of the mountains and their capacity for generating the sublime in 1810:

A stranger to mountain imagery naturally on his arrival looks out  
for sublimity in every object that admits to it. <sup>64</sup>

Wordsworth set part of his epic biographical poem *The Prelude* in Snowdonia. At the end of the work he describes the sublime as encountered on an ascent made in the moonlight to the summit of Snowdon.<sup>65</sup> Although the text was begun in 1798 it was largely written in the summer months of 1805. It was not published in its complete form until shortly after the poet's death in 1850.

The possibility of the landscape sublime is hinted at in the opening lines of the Conclusion in *The Prelude*:

I left Bethgelert's huts at couching-time  
And westward took my way, to see the sun  
Rise from the top of Snowdon. To the door  
Of a rude cottage at the mountains base  
We came, and roused the shepherd who attends  
The adventurous stranger's steps, a trusty guide;  
Then, cheered by short refreshment, we sallied forth.<sup>66</sup>

The idea of observing the sunrise from the highest peak in England and Wales was in itself a potentially sublime experience and if the night was clear then the possibility of observing the stars and the infinite would heighten the visual experience still further.<sup>67</sup> After making the long ascent and approaching the higher slopes:

The moon hung naked in a firmament  
Of azure without a cloud, and at my feet  
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.  
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved  
All over this still ocean; and beyond  
Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,  
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,<sup>68</sup>

The landscape described here contains many ingredients of the Burkean sublime, vastness, infinite space, vague forms and darkness. Wordsworth uses the word sublime in line eighty, 'Mid circumstances awful and sublime'.<sup>69</sup> He then associates the term sublime, with pain, and the beautiful, with joy, as Burke had done in the *Enquiry*:

In presence of sublime or beautiful forms  
With the adverse principals of pain and joy-<sup>70</sup>

Nineteenth century artists rendering the landscape sublime in north Wales choose mountain subjects that presented images of sheer vertical rock such as at Llyn Idwal. At this site the lack of recessional space and restriction of sky in the framing of the view all helped to empower the terrible Burkean sublime. This landscape is discussed in chapter six as representative of a viewpoint associated with the sublime. Another aspect of the sublime was achieved by obscuring a landscape and turning it into a dissolved vapour soaked picture with a similar denial of recessional space. The portrayal of clouds drifting and partly obscuring the mountains can also produce a sublime effect. In some mountain views these effects are combined to produce the sublime. The sublime aesthetic applied to the visualisation of mountain viewpoints in Snowdonia is the subject of chapter six, *Sublime Snowdonia: Llyn Idwal*.

The depiction of the mountain landscape of north Wales often consisted of a number of landscape categories fitting together. This was rarely an equal partnership. Usually a smaller or greater proportion of another aesthetic remains in the artist's vision of

place. A single category interpretation does not mean that there is no other aesthetic category present only that it is not the overriding aesthetic. An example of this intermixing of landscape aesthetics can be seen in De Loutherbourg's painting, *Snowdon from Capel Curig, a morning* (Figure 37) which is discussed in chapter four under the category heading *Classical*. This painting contains elements of the classical, the picturesque and the sublime altogether in one frame. I have categorised it as a classical painting because the qualities of this aesthetic and the artist's depiction of Snowdon are proportionately stronger than the other two categories. Although an element of the picturesque is present in the foreground and the sublime is evident in the cloud-capped summit peaks the overriding visual construct is of a classical construction of space and proportion. Other variations occur in this chapter and in the following chapters on the *Picturesque* and the *Sublime*. The *Topographical* chapter with the exception of the variations in the number of recessional planes depicted largely adheres to its own visual precepts of truthful realism.

The four landscape categories are related to a mountain landscape viewpoint. Each landscape site has also become connected by artistic replication with a specific landscape aesthetic. The mountain geology at each location purports a particular visual response to be favoured over others. Any variations from the established visual aesthetic at a particular location is discussed in the relevant chapter. Artists have comprehensibly represented these viewpoints and these locations have been extensively exhibited at the *Royal Academy* and at other exhibition venues. The four aesthetic categories and their representative mountain viewpoints form independent chapters in this study.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> C. T. Onions, ed., *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary on Historical Principles*, Oxford, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Stephan, *A Transformational Theory of Aesthetics*, London, 1990.

<sup>4</sup> For an analysis of Plato's various definitions of imitation see, Richard McKeon, 'Literary Criticism and the Concept of Imitation in Antiquity', in *Critics and Criticism, Ancient and Modern*, ed., R. S. Crane, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1952, pp.147-9.

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, 'On the Art of Poetry', in *Classical Literary Criticism*, ed., T. S. Dorsch, Penguin Books, London, 1965, pp.29-75.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in, Maurice de Sausmarez, 'Poussins Orpheus and Eurydice', in Carel Wright ed., *Painters on Painting*, vol. 2, Cassell, London, 1969, p.25

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<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Wheeler Manwaring, *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England: A Study Chiefly of the Influence of Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa on English Taste, 1700-1800*, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., London, 1925.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of these differences see, Meyer Henry Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1953, especially, chapter IX, ii. 'Subjective and Objective, and Romantic Polysemism', pp. 238-39.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Holub, *Reception Theory*, Methuen, London, 1984.

<sup>10</sup> C. T. Onions, ed., *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary on Historical Principals*, Oxford, 1968.

<sup>11</sup> This aquatint print is plate XX, in William Gilpin, *Observations on Several Parts of Great Britain, Particularly The High-Lands of Scotland Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1776*, (1789), vol. 1., T Cadell & W Davies, Strand, London, 1808.

<sup>12</sup> William Gilpin, *An Essay on Prints*, (1768), T Cadell & W Davies, Strand, London, 1802, p. xii.

<sup>13</sup> William Gilpin, *Observations on Several Parts of the Counties of Cambridge, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. Also on Several Parts of North Wales, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, In Two Tours, The Former Made in 1769, the Latter in 1773*, T Cadell & W Davies, Strand, London, 1809.

<sup>14</sup> For further information see, Carl Paul Barber, *William Gilpin, His Drawings, Teaching and Theory of the Picturesque*, Oxford, 1963.

<sup>15</sup> William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye and Several Parts of South Wales etc., Relative to Picturesque Beauty; Made in the Summer of 1770*, (1782) R Blamire, Strand, London, 1789. Although dated 1782 it was not available until the summer of 1783. There is an extra-illustrated copy of the first edition; (seven hundred were published) in the National Library of Wales. The 34 watercolours are oval and appear to have been cut from larger rectangular drawings. The dense script on the reverse of these pictures is not in Gilpin's hand.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ix.

<sup>17</sup> William Gilpin, *Observations on Several Parts of England, Particularly the Mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland, Relative to Picturesque Beauty made in the Year 1772*, (1786) 2 vols., T Cadell & W Davies, Strand, London, 1808.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>19</sup> William Gilpin, *Observations on Several Parts of Great Britain, Particularly the High-Lands of Scotland, Relative to Picturesque Beauty, made in the Year 1776*, 2 vols. (1789), T Cadell & W Davies, Strand, London, 1808.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.1., p. ix.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas West, *A Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire*, (1778) London and Kendall, 1821, p.13.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.

<sup>23</sup> William Gilpin, *Observations on Forest Scenery and Other Woodland Views, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Illustrated by scenes of the New Forest in Hampshire*, (1791) London, 1808, p.225.

<sup>24</sup> W. Gilpin, *The Highlands*, vol.1., p.124.

<sup>25</sup> Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*, Aldershot, 1989, p.57.

<sup>26</sup> William Gilpin, *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: with a Poem on Landscape Painting* (1792) London, 1808, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.6-7.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xv.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.19.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

<sup>32</sup> For a recent discussion on the picturesque landscape gardens of Price and Knight see, Stephen Daniels & Charles Watkins eds., *The Picturesque Landscape: Visions of Georgian Herefordshire*, exhibition catalogue, Hereford City Art Gallery & University Art Gallery Nottingham, Nottingham, 1994.

<sup>33</sup> The second edition was published in 1795 (London) and contains an additional 40 lines of poetic text. In this edition Knight responded to the criticisms of the first edition in the supplementary notes, postscript, and advertisement sections of the republished work.

<sup>34</sup> This was in its fourth edition by 1808 (London).

<sup>35</sup> For further information on Knight see, Michael Clark and Nicolas Penny eds., *The Arrogant Connoisseur: Richard Payne Knight*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1982.

<sup>36</sup> These include, Esther Moir, *The Discovery of Britain: The English Tourist*, London, 1964. Her book contains much useful information particularly chapter ten, 'The Picturesque and the Romantic: The Wye and North Wales'. Peter Bicknell, *Beauty, Horror and Immensity: Picturesque Landscape in Britain 1750-1850*, exh. cat., Cambridge, 1981. This focuses on the influence of those landscape painters working in Italy in the seventeenth century. On the appreciation of natural scenery in Britain, see, Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain 1750-1850*, Aldershot, 1989, Andrews presents a comprehensive review of the picturesque and its application in various parts of Britain. See also, Matthew C Brennan, *Wordsworth, Turner, and the Romantic Landscape: A Study of the Traditions of the Picturesque and Sublime*, London, 1987, and Stephen Copley and Peter Garside eds., *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics since 1770*, Cambridge, 1994.

<sup>37</sup> Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View*, London, 1927.

<sup>38</sup> See, John Dixon Hunt, 'Picturesque Mirrors and the Ruins of the Past', *Art History*, Vol. 4. No. 3., September 1981, and John Dixon Hunt, 'Ut Pictura Poesis, Ut Pictura Hortus and the Picturesque', *Word and Image* I, 1985.

<sup>39</sup> Longinus, 'On the Sublime' in, *Classical Literary Criticism, Aristotle: On the Art of Poetry, Horace: On the Art of Poetry, Longinus: On the Sublime*, ed., T. S. Dorsch, London, 1965, pp.97-158.

<sup>40</sup> For a discussion of the origins of the earlier text prior to Longinus see, *Ibid.*, 'Introduction', pp.24-25.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p.108.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, cited p.25.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Burnet, *The Sacred Theory of the Earth: Containing an Account of the Original of the Earth and of All the General Changes Which It Hath Already Undergone or Is to Undergo, till the Consummation of All Things*, London 1684. It was previously published in Latin in 1681. The translated version appeared in 1684 and was revised and enlarged in 1690-91.

<sup>44</sup> For further information on Burnet see, Marjorie Hope Nicholson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Developments of the Aesthetics of the Infinite*, Cornell, 1959, especially chapter Five 'A Sacred Theory of the Earth' and Chapter Six, 'The Burnet Controversy'.

<sup>45</sup> Bishop Thomas Burnet had based part of his text on his experience of mountains while on a journey through the Alps in 1671.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Burnet, *Sacred Theory of the Earth*, (1684) Southern Illinois University Press, 1965, p. 109. This a reprint of 1694 edition.

<sup>47</sup> John Dennis, letter from the Alps, quoted in, Louis Hawes, *Presences of Nature: British Landscape 1780-1830*, Yale Centre for British Art, 1982, pp.2-3.

<sup>48</sup> Marjorie Hope Nicholson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Developments of the Aesthetics of the Infinite*, Cornell, 1959, p.281.

<sup>49</sup> Joseph Addison, 'The Pleasures of the Imagination' in, *Spectator*, No. 412, July 23, 1712.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 420, July 2, 1712.

<sup>51</sup> John Baillie, *Essay on the Sublime*, London, 1747, pp.7-9.

<sup>52</sup> C. T. Onions, ed., *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary on Historical Principals*, Oxford, 1968.

<sup>53</sup> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Volume 1, Of General Principals, and of Truth*, (1843) London, 1908, chapter III., 'Of the Sublime', p.44.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.45.

<sup>55</sup> Andrew Wilton, *Turner and the Sublime*, British Museum Publications, London, 1980, p.29.

<sup>56</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, (1790) translated, J H Bernard, London, 1931, p.136.

<sup>57</sup> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. With an Introductory Discourse concerning Taste, and several other Additions*, (1757) London, 1782, pp. vii-vii.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.238-39.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p.238

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.127-28.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.129.

<sup>62</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Mont Blanc, Lines written in the Vale of Chamouni', (1816) lines, 60-61, in *Shelley*, ed., K. Raine, London, 1973.

<sup>63</sup> These are reproduced in colour with an accompanying text in, Timothy Wilcox, *Francis Towne*, exhibition catalogue, Tate Gallery Publications, London, 1997, pp.88-105.

<sup>64</sup> William Wordsworth, *A Guide Through the District of the Lakes in the North of England with a Description of the Scenery*, (1810) Kendal, 1835, p.99.

<sup>65</sup> The twenty-three-year-old Wordsworth made his ascent of Snowdon with Robert Jones a friend from his Cambridge days accompanied by a guide in the summer of 1793.

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<sup>66</sup> William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, (1850) ed., E. E. Reynolds, London, 1960, p.195, lines 4-10.

<sup>67</sup> Wordsworth fails to give a description of the sunrise from the top of Snowdon in *The Prelude* and it is possible that he did not witness it.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p.196, lines 40-46.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p.197, lines 79-80.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.199, lines 164-65.

## Wilson's Imagery: Snowdon and Cader Idris.

A colour photograph titled, *Nantlle Lake* (Figure 6) was reproduced in *Snowdonia Mountains and Coast* a promotional colour brochure published in 1997.<sup>1</sup> This horizontal picture depicts a view across the lake and through a gap in the descending mountains towards a high mountain that fills the distant horizon. The top of this mountain is overhung by a bank of cloud that has gathered around the summit peak. Near the shore of the lake a small boat has been carefully placed in view and this adds interest to the immediate foreground area of the picture. This photograph was placed in the self-catering section of this publication under the heading *Royal Caernarfon, Llanberis and the Villages of Snowdon*. The picture is surrounded by block advertisements for accommodation yet it retains a strong visual presence. This picture provides a motif of Snowdonia that is also a concept of place, a concept that highlights the visual identity of lake and mountain, culminating in a readily accessible image of mountain scenery. This view has an element of a classical construction in the tripartite sequence that the spectator is taken through when viewing this picture, either in actuality, in photographic form, or in the paintings and prints that depict this location.

Another example of this motif in the promotional literature for Snowdonia can be seen in another version taken from the same viewpoint. In this rendition dating from 1995, the colour photograph is captioned, *Llyn Nantlle, Snowdonia* (Figure 7). It depicts the same view as *Nantlle Lake* (Figure 6) but uses a vertical format.<sup>2</sup> This picture covers the whole of the inside page of the official 'Wales Tourist Board' holiday brochure with the title heading, *Wales 1995, Holidays & short breaks all year round*. In this photograph a boat is moored at the lakeside and in the immediate foreground two figures are shown, posed as a romantic couple enjoying a picnic and beyond them the mountain scenery of Snowdonia can be seen. Between the figures is a wicker basket containing a bunch of 'out of season' daffodils, the national flower for Wales. Both figures are 'posed' as visitors to this location and in addition to their

intended picnic the woman has a map spread out on the ground and this confirms their status as visitors.

The realities of public access at this location are very different in actuality from the one that the photograph illustrates. A number of warning signs between the road and the lakeside, state, that there is no public access to the lakeshore and that the land is private property.<sup>3</sup> Today there is no public access to this spectacular viewpoint towards Snowdon. These two photographs retain a visual power that is due to the inherent structural identity that the pictures of this viewpoint have retained since their first appearance in the middle decades of the eighteenth century.

The latent identity that is present in both of these photographs allows the image to present an idea of Snowdonia that exists in a viewer's imagination while also presenting a topographically accurate record of place. This contemporary revision derives from an earlier representation of this view by the Welsh-born artist Richard Wilson (1713-1782),<sup>4</sup> who painted two versions of this vista in the mid 1760s. Wilson's oil painting is titled, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) and this painting is the first significant oil painting of Snowdon to be made. A version of this subject was exhibited in London at the *Society of Artists* exhibition in 1766 where it was exhibited as '*North-west view of Snowden and its environs*' (no. 189).<sup>5</sup> It was one of four works that Wilson showed there that year.<sup>6</sup>

Richard Wilson's *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) was reproduced on the front cover of *Snowdonia National Park* (Figure 8) a guidebook published in 1973.<sup>7</sup> The painting is reproduced in monochrome beneath the guidebook title. This picture is left uncaptioned on the front cover and there is no direct reference to it in the guide.<sup>8</sup> A monochrome photograph of the view that Wilson painted also appears in this publication and is titled, *Plate XII (b) Llyn Nantlle Uchaf, Moel Hebog Range*.<sup>9</sup> This photograph shows the summit of Snowdon partially obscured by cloud.

Wilson's painting, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9), has an explicit title which describes the content of the landscape that he depicted. This powerful pictorial motif of mountain scenery has been assimilated into recent tourist board literature. The lack of identification or acknowledgement of Snowdon in the titles of the two tourist board



photographs (Figure 6) and (Figure 7) suggests how potent this revision is, no further support or explanation in the titles is required.

Wilson in, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) set out to produce a landscape painting which could stand as an emblem and symbol for Snowdonia and its mountain scenery. He produced a picture that could attest to the region's wealth and status. It was the Welsh landowning gentry who were Wilson's likely patrons for his mountain pictures of Snowdonia.<sup>10</sup> It was this group who controlled the landscape that Wilson depicted in his views of north Wales and in later works, such as the landscapes that he painted for Sir Watkin Williams Wynn (1748-1789) at Wynnstay in the early 1770s.<sup>11</sup>

The original purchaser of *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle*<sup>12</sup> was the wealthy landowner William Vaughan<sup>13</sup> who was the first Chief President of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorian.<sup>14</sup> The main aim of this Society was to promote Welsh identity and culture. Vaughan was the Society's President between 1751 until his death in 1775. Wilson would have been familiar with his potential client's taste and many of these potential patrons would have made a visit to Italy to follow the grand tour themselves. Wilson was obliged to meet their taste if his painting was to take its rightful place in their picture collections. If Wilson's *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) were to hang next to a Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), a Gaspard Dughet (1615-1675) or another Italianate picture in a gentleman's collection then it had to retain a classical structure to be acceptable. Wilson in *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* was able to paint for his potential clients and satisfy their preference for the classical by supplying a vision of Snowdon under an Italian sky. It was this preference that the poet William Cowper highlighted when he wrote:

I admire - None more admires - the painter's magic skill  
Who shows me that which I shall never see,  
Conveys a distant country into mine,  
And throws Italian light on English walls.<sup>15</sup>

In *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) Wilson has chosen to represent an image of the mountain based upon a natural vista which conveniently fitted the classical model applied by Wilson to this view. The Italian light, which Cowper referred to is now cast on to a Welsh mountain landscape and Snowdon appears as though it is situated in the campagna in Italy. He has depicted the two Nantlle lakes and these make up the

foreground. Beyond the second lake, in the middle distance the intervening mountains form a pair of side screens that interrupt the vista. On the left, in the middle distance, the lower slopes of the Mynydd Mawr 2290' can be seen while on the right hand, the mountain, Y Garn 2080' descends to frame part of the U shape through which the eye is taken. Beyond this section the hump shape of the Clogwn-y-Gare interrupts the vista beyond which the pale tones of the distant Snowdon 3560' can be seen. This painting contains three distinct stages through which the eye is carefully led and controlled. Wilson has painted this landscape in part as if he were painting Italy. This applies more to how the painting looks rather than to what is actually depicted. This view presents the highest mountain of north Wales in a framework that conveniently fitted the classical construction that Wilson chose to apply for his emblematic oil painting of Snowdon. Wilson chose to depict this subject in a clear light that is clearly derived from his experiences of Italy rather than Wales and it is this treatment as well that marks this picture out as being an image of mountain scenery while retaining the look of Claude. The treatment of light and dark in this composition emphasises the vista towards Snowdon. This is achieved by the use of an elliptical shape that forms a perceptible crescent arc that strongly contrasts the lighter areas from those in deep shadow. The deep areas of shadow in this painting around the foreground lakes indicate that an early morning scene has been represented. Wilson's own revisioning of north Wales in classic mode should be seen as an amalgamation of these factors rather than one cause or reason being predominant.

Wilson's painting, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) is not devoid of human activity. There are various activities taking place in this idyllic and serene setting and it is as much a contemporary view of Wales as it is an ideal one. On the lower lake (foreground) are two boats, which contain people and at the head of the lake a single figure in a boat can be ascertained. These craft diminish in scale rapidly in the painting, the result of the recessionary space that Wilson has used to achieve his vista of Snowdon. In the second lake a further six boats can be seen although they appear as mere specks at this visual distance within the painting. Above this area a pall of smoke ascends gently upwards and disappears into Snowdon's misty bulk. This smoke describes a workaday activity in the landscape. In the immediate foreground close to and above the lower lake are three figures. These figures appear to be staffage figures

inserted by Wilson to fulfil that function in the painting's composition. John Barrell, among others makes this judgement:

...the work of such a painter as Richard Wilson, whose landscapes are entirely free of the reek of the human, the figures in them simply objects of colour insufficiently particularised to contribute anything to our sense of the meaning of his pictures, and judged appropriate to their surroundings by the criteria of art, not experience.<sup>16</sup>

This is not the case with the foreground figures in Wilson's painting, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9). These figures are very much a part of the contemporary landscape that Wilson chose to represent. In some texts it is suggested that these foreground figures represent fishermen:

Like the classical figures who people the Arcadian landscapes of Claude, the fishermen introduce activity into the timeless, tranquil scene, and lead the viewer into the painting.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from the false identification of the activity in which the two foreground male figures are engaged there is also a female figure present. She is standing on the right and is dressed in refined clothes. All three figures are shown in a classical guise so that they fit the Italianate vision that Wilson has selected. The two male figures are local to this landscape and are busy entertaining their lady visitor with a unique curiosity. This was the so-called floating island a feature of the lake and an entertaining sight to be shown to outsiders.<sup>18</sup> A piece of former bank had broken free and formed a small floating island and sometimes cattle became marooned on it if it had been in contact with the shore. Pennant had observed the floating island phenomena and described it:

It had on it a floating Island, of an irregular shape, about nine yards long, It appeared to be only a piece of the tubery, undermined by the water, torn off, and kept together by the close entangling of the roots, which form that species of ground. It frequently is set in motion by the wind; often joins its native banks... and cattle are frequently surprised on it.<sup>19</sup>

In *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) Wilson has depicted the actual moment in which the floating island is about to be pushed away from the lake shore for the enjoyment of the lady visitor. The male figures are engaged in the process of pushing the island away from the bank. The standing figure is holding a long stick, (not a

fishing rod as some texts have stated). This long and slightly irregular pole would be used to push the unseen island away from the bank. The seated figure is obscuring any real sight of the island but he is engaged in the very act of pushing it out from the shore. The angle of his stick confirms this. The figures form part of a foreground area, which include, on the right, a tree which frames the view according to the repoussoir convention for this type of classic landscape. This tranquil and classically contrived scene is actually filled with a great deal of human activity which Wilson has deliberately inserted into his vision of Snowdon set in this remote district of north Wales.

The tripartite compositional structure that Wilson used is reflected in the arrangement of colour that he applied to this motif of Snowdonia. The colour is also carefully organised into three balanced stages that coincide with the three areas of foreground, middle distance and background. Wilson's choice of colour mirrors this description by William Mason (1724-1797) written in 1771 in his poem *The English Garden*:<sup>20</sup>

Warm brown and black opaque, vivid green, the foreground bears  
Conspicuous, sober olive coldly marks  
The second distance. Thence the third declines  
In softer blue, or lessening still, is lost in  
Faintest purple.<sup>21</sup>

The description of mountain landscape preceded the depiction of it and landscape poets such as James Thomson (1700-1748) and John Dyer (1700-1758) were among the first to visualise it in poetic verse in the first half of the eighteenth century. Several early descriptions of Welsh mountain scenery occurs in Thomson's poem *The Seasons* published in its complete form in 1730.<sup>22</sup> As Malcolm Andrews has pointed out *The Seasons* proved to be a very popular and accessible work of descriptive poetry and it became so popular that it was published in more than 300 separate editions between 1750 and 1850.<sup>23</sup>

*The Seasons* promoted landscape as a viable vehicle that was both literary and visual and by using the experience of landscape itself Thomson was able to empower a text of description that appealed to the sense of the imagination. Thomson's poetic descriptions in *The Seasons* had its origins in the real experience of landscape.

Thomson expressed this awareness in a letter just before he embarked on a tour to Europe in 1730:

Travelling has always been my fondest wish for the very purpose you recommend. The storing one's imagination with ideas of all beautiful and all perfect Nature: these are the *Pure Materia Poetica*, the light and colours, with which fancy kindles up her whole creation, paints a sentiment, and even embodies an abstracted thought.<sup>24</sup>

It was Thomson's ability, to describe and conjure up images giving a 'mind's eye view of nature' that led to many later artists to select quotes from *The Seasons* to accompany their catalogue entries particularly at venues such as the *Royal Academy*. Turner for example often chose to quote directly from *The Seasons* to enhance the status of his landscapes. At the *Royal Academy* exhibition in 1798 Turner quoted from Thomson four times and from Milton once.<sup>25</sup> These paintings were all landscapes of the north of England. For the painting, *Norham Castle on the Tweed*, Turner quoted from Thomson's *Summer*:

But yonder comes the powerful King of Day  
Rejoicing in the East; the lessening cloud  
The kindling azure and the mountains brow  
Illumined - his near approach betoken glad.<sup>26</sup>

Thomson's capacity to describe a mountain landscape as a complete image, complete in the sense that it can supply an overview of nature combined with his ability to describe the colours found in nature that are themselves derived from light can be seen in the following lines from *Spring*:

Till in the western sky, the downward sun  
Looks out effulgent, from amid the flush  
Of broken clouds, gay shifting to his beam,  
The rapid radiance instantaneous strikes  
Th' illumin'd mountain, thro' the forest streams.<sup>27</sup>

This was the type of visual description that would attract an artist, such as Wilson and Turner as artists deal with form, colour and light. Thomson, a few lines further on in *Spring* provides a vivid description of coloured light that is derived from his understanding of Isaac Newton's (1642-1727) colour theories:

...and every hue unfolds,

In fair proportion running from the red  
 To where the violet fades into the sky  
 How awful NEWTON, the dissolving clouds  
 Form, fronting the sun, the showery prism  
 And to the sage instructed eye unfold  
 The various twine of light, by thee disclos'd  
 From the white mingling maze.<sup>28</sup>

Newton the colour scientist, died in March 1727 and a month later Thomson published his, *A POEM, Sacred to the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton* which was a memorial tribute poem. In this poem Thomson describes Newton's prismatic theories of light and colour. These are the same theories of light and colour that Thomson used in his own poetry, particularly in *The Seasons*. In his tribute poem to Newton, Thomson describes the colour discoveries that the scientist had revealed to the world:

Even light itself, which every thing display  
 Shone undiscover'd, till his higher mind  
 Untwisted all the shinning robe of day;  
 And, from the whitening undistinguish'd blaze,  
 Collected every ray into his kind  
 To the charm'd eye educ'd the gorgeous train  
 Of *Parent-Colours*. First the flaming *Red*  
 Sprung forth : the tawny *Orange* next  
 And next delicious *Yellow*: by whose side  
 Fell the kind beams of all refreshing *Green*  
 Then the pure *Blue*, that swells autumnal skies,  
 Ethereal play'd; and then, of sadder hue  
 Emerg'd the deepen'd *Indigo*, as when  
 The heavy-skirted evening droops with frost,  
 While the last gleamings of refracted light  
 Dy'd in the fainting *Violet* away.<sup>29</sup>

In this poem Thomson has listed the colours of the spectrum in the same order as they appear in nature when they are refracted either by a prism or in a rainbow in the landscape. It was Thomson who introduced Newton's newly named spectral colours to a wider public, particularly through their usage in landscape poems such as *The Seasons*. Turner acknowledged and then highlighted the connections between painting and poetry in a lecture address at the *Royal Academy* in 1812, when he stated:

Painting and Poetry flowing from the same font mutually by vision,  
 constantly comparing Poetic allusions by natural forms in one and  
 applying forms found in nature to the other, meandering into  
 streams by application which reciprocally improved reflect and  
 heightens each others beauties like...mirrors.<sup>30</sup>

Thomson borrowed directly from the visual art of painting and print making when he was constructing *The Seasons*. As Elizabeth Mainwaring has pointed out, 'in *Summer* (1727) there is a gallery of paintings-Claudian sunrises and sunsets, extended views, pastoral scenes'.<sup>31</sup> This part of *Summer* serves equally well as a description of Wilson's own practice as he used in *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) where he applied a Claudian process to his vision of Snowdon. Thomson wrote in *Summer*:

Brown night retires: Young day pours in a pace,  
And opens all the lawny prospect wide  
The dripping rock, the mountain's misty top  
Swell on the sight, and brighten with the dawn.  
Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,  
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow  
Illum'd with fluid gold...<sup>32</sup>

In *The Seasons*, Thomson made a reference to an actual vista of mountains that he had seen from Hagley Park in Worcestershire. This description embraces the Claudian landscape formula, the same compositional formula that Thomson would have seen depicted in the oil paintings on the walls at Hagley Park:

Wide stretching from the *Hall*, in whose kind haunt  
The *Hospitable Genius* lingers still  
To where the landscape, broken by degrees,  
Ascending, roughens into ridge hills;  
O'er which the *Cambrian* mountains, like far clouds  
That skirt the blue horizon, dusky rise.<sup>33</sup>

Later in his landscape poem, in *Summer*, Thomson makes a direct reference to the actual summit peak of Snowdon, in a piece of descriptive prose that was written before the mountain scenery of Snowdonia was considered attractive in its own right. Thomson's narrative predates Wilson's oil painting of *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* by thirty-five years. Thomson describes Snowdonia in six lines of verse:

Amid Carnarvon's mountains rages loud  
The repe cussive roar: with mighty crush  
Into the flashing deep, from the rude rocks  
O'r *Penmanmaur* heap'd hideous to the sky  
Tumble the smitten cliffs; and *Snowden's* peak,  
Dissolving, instant yields his wintry load.<sup>34</sup>

This text presents an idea of place rather than a detailed topographical view of it. The visual imagination is fed by the images that Thomson brings to the reader and in *The Seasons* we are introduced to both the idea of a mountain landscape and the colours that might be used to depict it.

Another influential landscape poet was John Dyer (1700-1758) who was born in the same year as Thomson. Dyer was a trained artist and this gives his poetic descriptions an even stronger visual element than Thomson who looked at paintings but did not make them. He published a revised version of his *Grongar Hill* in 1726, the year that Thomson published *Winter* singly. Dyer's poem uses 158 lines to convey his experience of a mountain landscape. His landscape descriptions also adhere to the Claudian landscape structures used by the visual artists in their constructed landscape compositions. It was the increased reproduction of these pictures in print form in the early eighteenth century that would have contributed to this awareness when artists such as Dughet and Claude were engraved.<sup>35</sup> Although Dyer's *Grongar Hill* retains its classical stance the enhanced power of the prose is derived from Dyer's experience of looking at real views through an artist's eye rather than solely borrowing from an idealised landscape image whether painted or engraved. There are various descriptions of mountain scenery in *Grongar Hill* and Dyer uses the word 'mountain' in seven lines of the poem. The first use of the word occurs early in line 3 and the last in line 153. If these lines are removed from the text and listed in the same order as they occur in the poem they produce a journey through a landscape. From a mountain viewed at a distance to the actual mountain itself. This is structurally similar to the construction of a Claude painting seen in reverse, that is from the distance to a foreground rather than from a foreground to a distance as in a Claude landscape painting. The seven lines when removed from the text read:

On the mountains lonely van	(line 3)
The mountains round, unhappy fate	(line 33)
Now I gain the mountain's brow	(line 41)
On the yellow mountain - heads	(line 54)
See on the mountain's southern side	(line 114)
As on the mountain - turf I lie	(line 138)
On the meads and mountain - heads <sup>36</sup>	(line 153)

These lines mirror the Claudian landscape formula of a perspectival distance composed of structured segments that move the viewer stage by stage from the



foreground to the distant horizon. Dyer uses the word 'prospect' in lines 37 and 115 to suggest a landscape viewed at a distance, 'still the prospect wider spreads' <sup>37</sup> in line 37 and later 'where the prospect opens wide', <sup>38</sup> line 115. Although the initial stimulus for this poem was the real Grongar Hill, located close to Dyer's birthplace at Aberglasney in Carmarthenshire, the poem is much more than a description of a particular location. This poem embraces a wide range of concepts including the vista and the prospect seen. Dyer's *Grongar Hill* can be seen as the first celebration of Welsh mountain scenery in the English language. Dyer's ability to conjure up pictures of mountain scenery can be seen from the following lines from the poem:

The mountains round, unhappy fate!  
Sooner or later, of all height  
Withdraw their summits from the skies  
And less on as others rise  
Still the prospect wider spreads <sup>39</sup>

And later in the poem Dyer writes:

The woody valleys, warm and low;  
The windy summit, wild and high  
Roughly rushing on the sky! <sup>40</sup>

And again, mountain and vista combine:

See on the mountains southern side  
Where the prospect opens wide  
Where the evening gilds the tide  
How close and small the hedges lie. <sup>41</sup>

There are nine references to colour by name in Dyer's *Grongar Hill*. The colours mentioned are 'Purple, (twice) Yellow, (three times) Blue, Sable, Green, and Brown'. <sup>42</sup> Dyer's *Grongar Hill* is a painter's poem. Dyer is using the forms and colours of the artists' palette in his descriptive prose. This can be seen early in the poem when he writes, 'Painting fair the form of things'. <sup>43</sup>

Wilson's painting *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 8) is the embodiment of many of the attitudes that the landscape poets such as Thomson and Dyer had assimilated from Italy in terms of pictorial construction along with an increased awareness of colour and light. Wilson's painting takes on a poetic stance if it is viewed in the same context as the work of the early landscape poets. Wilson is using the same structural

concepts that poets such as Thomson and Dyer used for their classic landscape descriptions in their respective works.

The painting, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) acquired its status early when this subject was issued as an engraving in 1775, ten years after the painting was made.<sup>44</sup> The print version of this subject is titled, *Snowdon Hill and the adjacent country in North Wales* (Figure 10). The title accurately describes its visual content and it was printed in both English and French below the image area. This print was engraved by William Woollett (1735-1785)<sup>45</sup> and published by the London print publisher John Boydell (1719-1804)<sup>46</sup> as the fifth print in a set of six.<sup>47</sup> Engraved prints of Wilson's *Snowdon Hill and the adjacent country in North Wales* became increasingly sought after as the century progressed and the taste for mountain scenery increased. By the early nineteenth century the demand for Wilson's view of *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* was more sought after than ever and this is in spite of the original work being made fifty years earlier and possessing a visual identity that belonged to the mid eighteenth century. By 1813 Edward Pugh was able to report that demand for the print had outstripped supply:

The late Mr Wilson RA, chose this scene for the subject of a picture, which connoisseurs was esteemed one of the most excellent of his performances. The print which was engraved from it by Woollett, is, as I believe, now become scarce.<sup>48</sup>

The issue of this print by Boydell predates the publication of the two volume edition of Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* by almost ten years. In *A Tour in Wales* there is no visual illustration of Wilson's view towards Snowdon from the Llyn Nantlle. Even though this book was the definitive guide to Snowdonia in the eighteenth century. This was due to the availability of the print version of Wilson's painting of Snowdon and Pennant would have been familiar with this subject in its engraved state.<sup>49</sup> In his text Pennant promoted the Wilson viewpoint:

I was tempted here to exceed a little the limits of my *Alpine* tour; For now the mountains descend fast from their majestic heights, growing less and less as they approach the *Irish* sea. My motive was to obtain a sight of two fine lakes, called *Llynnieu Nantlle*, which form two handsome expanses, with a very small distance between each. From hence is a noble view of the *Wyddfa*, which terminates the view through the vido of *Drws y Coed*. It

is from this spot Mr. WILSON has favored us with a view, as magnificent as it is faithful. Few are sensible of this; for few visit the spot.<sup>50</sup>

Following Pennant's example most writers who visited this spot saw this subject through Wilson's eyes and they often referred to Wilson's imagery and vision of Snowdon in their own text descriptions of this location. Many of the written descriptions described the view of Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle as Wilson had originally perceived it. In the nineteenth century this practice continued as this example from 1812 highlights:

Beyond a mountainous pass called Drws y coed, are two fine expanses of water, adjacent to each other, denominated Llinniew Nantlle. From these by the traveller reverting his position, and Looking through the vista, the summits of Snowdon appear full in view; and from these Wilson sketched his grand and inimitable painting, of that prince of mountains.<sup>51</sup>

Apart from the obvious similarities to Pennant's description of place, Wilson's picture has now become elevated to the status of a 'grand and inimitable painting' in the Reverend Evan's guide to *North Wales*. Although this book is illustrated with engravings of mountain scenery originally drawn by John Preston Neale (1780-1847) the view of Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle is not represented.

When the Reverend William Bingley (1774-1823) came to this viewpoint he described the view of Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle in such a visual way that it is hard to imagine that he was not looking at Wilson's picture at the time he wrote his description down. Although Bingley does not mention any connection with Wilson it is unlikely that he was ignorant of the engraved version. Bingley's text describes the view of Snowdon seen from a point further to the right and from a more elevated position to where Wilson had taken his view.

I again turned round to look along the vale in the direction I had come, and was surprised by a view so elegantly picturesque, that even my fancy had scarcely ever led me to imagine one equal to it. The dense clouds that had enveloped all the higher regions of Snowdon, were in a great measure driven away, and those that I Now saw, floated below the pointed summit of the mountain, which was now visible above. It bounded the end of the vale, and I never before observed this mountain in so much grandeur. A dusky haziness about it, threw it to appearance very distant, and

added greatly to its effect in height. A gleam of sun - shine, passing the valley by Llyn Cwellyn, that crossed by its foot, and softening upwards, formed a fine light in the middle of the scene. The steep black rocks of Mynydd Mawr, on the left, and the craggy summits the elegant and varied range of the Drws y Coed mountains, on the right of the vale, on whose side I now stood, and appearing even still darker than usual, from the light on the mountain beyond them, formed a truly elegant middle distance. The expanse of the water of the two lakes, intersected by a narrow isthmus, appeared in the bosom of the vale. The rude trunks, and weather - beaten limbs of the old oaks around not only added beauty to the foreground, but varied, by their intervention, the otherwise too uniform appearance of the meadows of the vale and of some parts of the mountains' sides. This landscape is not exceeded in beauty by any in North Wales.<sup>52</sup>

Bingley's description is as much a description of Wilson's painting as it is a description of the actual view itself. In the painting, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) there are clouds gathered around and below the summit peak of the mountain. Bingley in his text described clouds that 'floated below the pointed summit' of Snowdon. The next section of Bingley's text described the mountain's 'grandeur', its 'dusky haziness' and the effect of this in exaggerating the height of the mountain. All these features are present in the painted and engraved version of this scene. Then Bingley describes the 'gleam of sun-shine,' and the 'fine light in the middle of the scene'. Wilson had depicted the same qualities of light in his painting that Bingley described. The rest of Bingley's text also gives identity to the visual aspects applied by Wilson to his vision of Snowdonia in, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle*. It is Wilson's classic representation of Snowdonia that is the precursor image for the region and that this view is, as Bingley stated, 'not exceeded in beauty by any in North Wales.'

The Reverend G.J. Freeman visited the Nantlle lakes during his third excursion to north Wales in 1825. He acknowledged Wilson's prior visual claim to the site when he wrote:

Wilson took his celebrated and most accurate view of *Snowdon*. No scene is finer that I know. There are wood and water in the foreground. The sides are the two mountains I have mentioned above, than which imagination cannot conceive any more beautiful for outline, or more bold and imposing for bulk; while in the centre, *Snowdon* itself rises up with inimitable grandeur... I think there can be no approach to the Alpine scenery of this country more striking to a stranger than this; and if I were to

*chaperone* a friend who had never been in the country, I would bring him from *Caernarfon* into *Nantlle*.<sup>53</sup>

Freeman was enthusiastic for Wilson's vision of Snowdon, which he declared, was a 'celebrated and most accurate view of Snowdon'. Freeman announced that if he brought a friend to Snowdonia he would rather approach the region via the Nantlle lakes and its famed vista of Snowdon. In Freeman's *Sketches in Wales* there is a full-page lithographic print adjacent to the text description of this location. This work drawn by Thomas Mann Baynes is titled, *Snowdon from Nantlle* (Figure 11). It has been taken from a point further up the vale on the left and closer to the top of the first lake than in Wilson's view that has been taken from a centralised viewpoint. In Baynes print there is no foreground from which to enter this landscape. The picture is set high and the viewer is suspended above an invisible foreground and this produces a feeling of disquiet in an otherwise placid and sunlit scene. The composition is dominated by the jagged profiles of the enclosing Drws y Coed on the right and the more threatening Mynydd Mawr on the left, through the gap in the middle Snowdon rises in a softer tone skywards. At Snowdon's summit a cloud obscures part of the summit peak, a pictorial device that Wilson also used in his version of this subject.

The lack of reproduction of Wilson's view continued into the second half of the nineteenth century. In *The Gossiping Guide* the Wilson's view is described but not depicted. Askew Roberts wrote:

...we pass two beautiful lakes, where the valley is a narrow amphitheatre, almost entirely by the lakes, and the hills rise frowning in precipices on each side. We soon get a wonderfully fine - some think the finest - view of Snowdon; and so thought the Cambrian painter Wilson, for it was from this valley that he took his celebrated picture.<sup>54</sup>

The image generated via Roberts' written description is pictorial, that is, it forms in the reader's imagination rather than being a retinal image that is derived direct from the artist's vision of place. In his narrative Roberts combines the merits of the actual view of Snowdon from the lake with Wilson's status as a painter and his vision that he applied to it. In *Black's Picturesque Guide to North Wales* a similar narrative is used that describes the view of Snowdon from the Nantlle lakes. This text also highlights the lack of any facilities at the viewpoint for the enjoyment of visitors such as an inn

and implies that this could account for a lack of visitors to this part of north Wales.

This guide stated:

...and to the two beautiful lakes, called Llyniau-Nant-y-Iilef. A narrow isthmus between these lakes affords an advantageous view of Snowdon; and this is the spot at which Wilson sketched his admired picture of the mountain. The valley of Nantlle is very picturesque, and deserves to be more generally known, and more frequented by tourists. If a good Inn were erected here it might, ere long, be as attractive as Lanberis or Beddgelert.<sup>55</sup>

Apart from the error in the actual placing of the Wilson viewpoint which is on the lower lake this text also makes a clear reference to an idea of place that functions as a concept rather than any particular rendering of topographical fact in this description of the view. The lack of pictorial representation in many guides to the area would have contributed to the mystic of the Wilson image that was referred to in the narrative text only. This has led today to many photographs of Wilson's view being reproduced in the contemporary tourist's literature with no acknowledgement of either Snowdon or Wilson in the titles. The spectator is left solely with a picture of Snowdonia that does not acknowledge its history, or identity, yet it is these ingredients that give this representation its status and power. This is the case in the photograph from 1997, *Nantlle Lake* (Figure 6) and the photograph from 1995, *Llyn Nantlle, Snowdonia* (Figure 7). In both examples all written reference to Snowdon and Wilson are unacknowledged. This lack of acknowledgement applies even when the actual painting is reproduced as, for example, on the front cover of the 1973 guide, *Snowdonia National Park* (Figure 8). Wilson's painting was also reproduced on the front cover of Luke Herrmann's seminal book, *British Landscape Painting of the 18th century* (Figure 12).<sup>56</sup> This representation has been selected for its symbolic power and status in the history of British landscape painting in the eighteenth century and it is reproduced on the cover without a caption. John Ruskin alluded to this status in the nineteenth century when he stated in his sixth Oxford lecture in 1883, *The Hillside*, his revised assessment of Wilson's importance as a painter of landscape and commented that:

...with the name of Richard Wilson, the history of sincere landscape art, founded on a meditative love of nature, begins for England.<sup>57</sup>

Wilson painted another oil of Snowdonia mountain scenery in the mid 1760s, titled, *Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* (Figure 13). It is a companion piece to *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9). *Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* also features a lake with a vertical mountain backdrop and this forms an integral part of the paintings' compositional structure. Again Wilson depicts a range of contemporary activities taking place within the landscape and these are also disguised by the classical treatment he has applied. In *Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* (Figure 13) the viewer is presented with a rugged mountain vista observed from the slopes of the Mynydd Moel on the shoulder of Cader Idris. Wilson's viewpoint is a mile east of the main summit peak of Pen-y-Gader, 2,927 feet and is 150 feet lower than this summit and 150 yards east of the ridge path on Mynydd Moel. Wilson would have arrived at this location in the eighteenth century by pony, coming up the mountain from the east side. In the eighteenth century this was a comparatively easy ascent of the mountain that could be made from Dolgellau. William Bingley who had ascended the mountain from the north recorded his return down the eastern route and he refers to the use of ponies on this path:

In descending I took a direction eastward of that in which I had gone up and proceeded along that part of the mountain called Mynydd Moel. The path in this direction is sufficiently sloping to allow a person to ride even to the summit. A gentleman, mounted on a little, Welsh pony had done this a few days before I was here.<sup>58</sup>

It is five miles to the summit of Cader Idris using this route but this route is little used today. At the end of the nineteenth century it was still possible to hire and ride a pony to within two hundred yards of the summit of Cader Idris.<sup>59</sup> The Mynydd Moel is one of the distinctive summit peaks that make up the profile of the mountain particularly when it is viewed from the north. Bingley hired a guide for his ascent of Cader Idris and this was a common feature on ascents of Snowdon as well. The guides not only knew the way; they often carried provisions as well and were knowledgeable about local weather conditions. These guides had other occupations and in the case of Bingley's guide he had several, as he recorded:

The landlord of the Blue Lion, if I may dignify him with that appellation, is a schoolmaster, a guide, and a cutter of grave-stones, and to his various other qualifications, he adds a very considerable taste for - ale, as the following memoranda of my cheap living at this house will shew:

	s. d.
Two dinners ( N.B. bread and butter),	1 6
Tea, supper, and breakfast,	1 0
<i>Ale</i>	<u>2 6</u>
	<u>5 0</u>

This man, whose name is Edward Jones. I found somewhat too talkative, particularly on the subject of his own qualifications. I obtained from him much of the news of the neighbourhood, but little information on which could rely, respecting the country.<sup>60</sup>

Edward Pugh (1763-1813) reproduced an aquatint in *Cambria Depicta* that illustrates a touring party making an ascent up the mountain. This print is titled, *A Visit to Cader Idris* (Figure 14) and it shows how popular and crowded this activity had become by 1814, the year the print was produced. In the left foreground a visitor is depicted perched on a rock. The centre foreground area contains a party of six on ponies who are engaged in ascending the mountain. Beyond this group in the distance are three walkers and a single figure on horseback. At the bottom left two people are depicted exploring the mountainside on foot. A total of twelve figures can be seen in this restricted view towards the summit peaks. Directing the party from his pony can be seen Robert Edwards, another guide to the mountain. He advertised his services as follows:

...conductor to and over the most tremendous mountain, Cader Idris- to the stupendous cataracts of Caen and Mowddach; and to the enchanting cascades of Dolymelynlyn, with all their beautiful romantic scenery; Guide General and Magnificent Expounder of all the natural and artificial curiosities of North Wales.<sup>61</sup>

In his painting of the mountain *Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* (Figure 13) Wilson retains enough of the classicising light to allow one of the most desolate and potentially sublime locations in north Wales to be immediately accessible and non-threatening. As suggested, these oil paintings by Wilson, *Snowdon* (Figure 9) and *Cader Idris* (Figure 13) are a complementary pair and they are interrelated in a number of ways. Both paintings feature an enclosed lake surrounded by high and lofty mountains and both works contain a sheer rock face that rises vertically out of a lake. This feature is replicated in both compositions where they occupy the same relative positions in each painting and their pyramidal profile outlines are interchangeable. In both paintings the



summit peaks are the focal point of the composition and both of these features possess similar angles of incline and these also occupy relative positions within each painting. A feature, is the strongly perceived elliptical shape that exists as a tonal crescent arc just above the foreground strip. This effect relies on the contrast values between the shadows and the early morning sunshine that Wilson has depicted. In *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) this crescent arc illuminates the lake and the foreground group of figures are seen contrasted against the lighter reflective surface of the water on which the adjacent mountains are also seen reflected. In *Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* (Figure 13) the same compositional device has been used, only this time it is solid ground against which a figure holding a telescope can be seen contrasted against the lighter tone. Both paintings depict the landscape from a fixed one-point perspective position and in both examples this is from a position to the left of the centre. Both paintings have an elevated viewpoint, in the *Snowdon* (Figure 9) painting we are higher than the three main figures by the lakeshore. In the *Cader Idris* (Figure 13) painting Wilson has deliberately elevated our viewpoint so that the spectator can enter the painting with as little foreground interruption as possible. This allows the viewer to be above a deep space that rapidly falls away to the plunging depths of the Dysynni Valley on the extreme left. Alternatively the eye is lead straight ahead to contemplate the lake and beyond this the summit ridge of the Mynydd Pen'coed, part of Cader Idris, can be seen. Beyond, on the horizon, can be seen the sea of Cardigan Bay. Another feature is that both paintings adhere to the tripartite formula of foreground, middle distance and background. Wilson has deliberately organised these stages through which the viewer is taken and both views depict a topography that reinforces this concept. Lastly, both paintings depict a landscape that is being utilised for the enjoyment of mountain scenery.

In *Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* (Figure 13) the figures are more than classical staffage and they can be seen carrying out their respective roles within this landscape. Wilson is presenting this spectacular view of mountain scenery in his painting as accessible and under the control and ownership of man. A party of visitors have made an ascent of the mountain and they are engaged in various activities of visioning. In the near foreground a figure with a telescope <sup>62</sup> can be seen scanning the landscape. This visitor is using the latest portable optical technology that had recently become available in London.<sup>63</sup> Through the lens the visitor is looking south and will see magnified the

heights of Plynlimon Fawr, 2,467 feet that occupies the distant horizon. His long shadow indicates that an early morning ascent has been made. This figure has the dress code of a gentleman and his optical gadget confirms his affluence. He is a member of the party that has made the ascent and they are now scattered across the mountain. One of these, on the opposite side of the crescent shape to the figure holding the telescope, is a seated figure sketching.<sup>64</sup> This person is partly obscured by the slope of the ground, his direction of view, like the figure with the telescope is beyond and outside the picture frame. In his line of view is the summit peak of Pen-y-Gader and he is engaged in the process of drawing the rocky summit. Two other members of the ascent party are shown contemplating the view much closer to the lake and they are depicted in sunlight in contrast to the darker tones of the mountain and the lake's deeper shadow. Both figures are dwarfed by the scale of the mountains ahead and around them. Two further figures appear on the lakeshore to the right and adjacent to the figures above the lake. Their compositional relationship is the same as Wilson used for the foreground figures.

Wilson in *Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* (Figure 13) shows three ways in which a visitor to Snowdonia can enjoy mountain scenery and the spectacle that it provides. Firstly two figures are depicted in the middle distance above the lake enjoying the experience of mountain scenery as they sit and stand on the edge of a precipice which hides a deep drop into space that we cannot see but can sense. Secondly an artist is depicted sketching the mountain scenery. Thirdly a gentleman is shown looking through a telescope that is bringing further mountains into view. Wilson has presented three ways that the spectacle of mountain scenery can be visualised. These are by vision, by drawing and by optical magnification. There is a figure present close to the sketching artist on the right of the picture that is not a member of the visiting party but is standing with a grazing cow.<sup>65</sup> The use of a temporary summer pasture at this altitude was not an uncommon sight in the eighteenth century as Edward Pugh observed:

...a person, who, like my guide and a few others, make a livelihood by looking after sheep and horned cattle, sent to them from different places to graze on the mountains during the summer seasons at three pence per head for sheep, and a shilling for cattle.<sup>66</sup>

This activity portrayed by Wilson in his landscape enhances the economic aspect of land use that the landed gentry were responsible for and controlled. Wilson is meeting

his patron's requirements when he depicts such economic activity in a favourable light. In *Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* (Figure 13) as in *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) we are presented with more than a picture of a lake and mountain. In these paintings we are not presented with desolate mountain landscapes but ones that are filled with a range of human activities connected with visiting this mountain scenery.

In the travel literature Wilson's painting of *Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* (Figure 13) is often described but like *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) it is rarely depicted. Pennant in *A Tour in Wales*, on an ascent of Cader Idris, referred his readers directly to the Wilson image in preference to a written description or any visual depiction:

I saw *Craig Cay*, a great rock with a lake beneath, lodged in a deep hollow possibly the crater of an ancient *volcano*. This is so excellently expressed by the admirable pencil of my kinsman, Mr. *Wilson* that I shall not attempt the description.<sup>67</sup>

The lack of any visual representation in the guidebooks of Wilson's view of *Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* (Figure 13) continued and subsequent authors often replicated Pennant's original text when they came to write about this subject:

...we now came to a second and more elevated lake, clear as glass and over looked by steep cliffs in such a manner as to resemble the crater of a volcano, of which a most accurate representation is to be seen in Wilson's excellent view of Cader Idris.<sup>68</sup>

Edward Pugh refers to the publication of the print version of the Wilson painting that depicts the Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris in his text description of the view. However Pugh was uncertain exactly where Wilson's viewpoint was located. He wrote:

I stood upon the spot where I thought Mr. Wilson must have sat, to sketch for that fine picture of his, a subject which he afterwards published.<sup>69</sup>

Robert Hasell Newell (1778-1852) also highlighted the merits of the Wilson picture of Cader Idris; this was in connection with a written description of a route over the mountain from Tal-y-Llyn to Dolgellau. In his guidebook Newell did not reproduce a picture of this location, preferring instead to rely on the Wilson association. In *Letters on the Scenery of Wales: including a Series of Subjects for the pencil, with their*

*Stations determined on a General Principal; and Instructions to Pedestrian Tourists*, published in 1821,<sup>70</sup> Newell wrote:

I met an artist in Dolgelle, who showed me some sketches made in the recesses of the mountain, strikingly wild and uncommon, and you have probably seen Wilson's fine view of Cader Idris taken from that part called Llyn-y-Cau (the enclosed pool).<sup>71</sup>

By the second half of the nineteenth century, guidebooks such as *The Gossiping Guide* and *Black's Guide to North Wales* no longer contained written references to the Wilson viewpoint of Cader Idris and there was no pictorial representation of this view in either guide.

This subject was almost totally absent from the London exhibitions during the nineteenth century. An exception to this was a watercolour drawing of the Llyn-y-Cau by Francis Nicholson (1753-1844)<sup>72</sup> exhibited at the first *Society of Painters in Water-Colours* exhibition at 20 Lower Brook Street, London, in 1805. In *Cambria Depicta* Edward Pugh mentioned this picture, 'Mr Nicholson's drawing of this cliff, was a fine specimen of his abilities'.<sup>73</sup> The picture that Nicholson made is not from the high vantage point that Wilson had chosen for his picture but depicts the view from the cwm. This view can be seen in Thomas Webster's (1772-1844)<sup>74</sup> watercolour of 1804, titled, *Llyn-y-Cau Tarn, near the Summit of Cader Idris* (Figure 15). This work depicts the same subject that Wilson painted in 1765 but it has been taken from a position a thousand feet lower. It shows a topographically accurate view of the lake and the summit peaks of Cader Idris. This watercolour captures the remoteness of this particular location and this is reinforced by the dramatic sky that Webster has portrayed. Another artist who depicted the scenery around the lake was William Hughes (fl.1830-1853)<sup>75</sup> who showed two works connected with this subject at the *British Institution* in 1831. These were, *A view from the lake in the crater, Cader Idris* (no.540) and *Summit of the crater, Cader Idris, clouds clearing off, morning* (no.430). In both of these works there is no reference to the Wilson view of Cader Idris in either of their titles. The Llyn-y-Cau lake that Webster depicted was sometimes referred to as Wilson's pool by artists making their way past the lake on their ascent of the mountain. When Cornelius Varley (1781-1873)<sup>76</sup> ascended the mountain on his tour to north Wales in 1803 he visited the actual viewpoint that Wilson had chosen for his painting *Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* (Figure 13). From here Varley made a watercolour

sketch of the Wilson view. Varley's picture is free of any association with the classical vision of landscape that Wilson had applied to his picture. Varley's drawing is titled, *Wilson's Pool, Cader Idris* (Figure 16). This watercolour is the only example that I am aware of where a visiting artist has detoured to locate the Wilson viewpoint and then to produce an image from the same place where Wilson took his viewpoint. The picture that Varley presents is truthful to the actual experience of place with the enveloping clouds gathering around the summit of the mountain. In this watercolour Varley presents an analytical study of mountain terrain that is free from the picturesque conventions of his day. In this work Varley, as well as capturing the airy spaciousness of a high viewpoint, depicted the meteorological conditions that can be experienced on the mountain. Varley often inscribed pertinent facts on his drawings and in this example under the name 'Llyn-y-Cau' Varley wrote the title, '*Wilson's Pool, Cader Idris*'. The term *Wilson's Pool* was in current usage when Varley visited Cader Idris in the summer of 1803.

In the *Royal Academy* exhibitions no pictures with the title, *Llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* were exhibited during the whole of the nineteenth century. There were 27 works exhibited at the *Royal Academy* having a reference to Cader Idris by name but none were shown that had a connection with the named Wilson viewpoint.<sup>77</sup> The *British Institution* also did not show a named version of this subject in its sixty-one year history.<sup>78</sup> The *British Institution* showed 16 pictures with a reference to Cader Idris in the title but Wilson's view is not among them.<sup>79</sup> This lack of revision by artists of Wilson's viewpoint was as prevalent at the Cader Idris location as it was at the site of Wilson's other work that depicted Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle.

The lack of duplication of either of Wilson's classic views of Snowdon and Cader Idris by other artists can be attributed to several factors. Firstly the Wilson viewpoints that were referred to in the travel literature were only described in text form, the actual work, either by Wilson or a revised version of it, were not reproduced in pictorial form in these guides. With no picture to guide them prior to making a journey to the viewpoint artists did not possess the visual incentive to visit these particular viewpoints. At other viewpoints such as the view of *Snowdon from Capel Curig* or the view at the *Pont Aberglaslyn* there is a history of replication in the guide book literature from Pennant onwards and in the works exhibited at the *Royal*

*Academy* and at other exhibition venues. Secondly many artists were directed to the published prints of the Wilson views in the guide book literature. These prints of Snowdon and Cader Idris which had originally been published on the 17th July 1775 by Boydell in a portfolio of six engravings had by the nineteenth century become difficult to acquire. Thirdly the Wilson paintings, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) and *llyn-y-Cau, Cader Idris* (Figure 13) represent the epitome of mid eighteenth century classical elegance and it was this emphasis on the classical that Wilson had applied that correspondingly negated their subsequent replication by later artists. Artists applied their own visual criteria to the mountains of north Wales and they did not replicate Wilson's classicism into their own representations of mountain scenery. These factors, offer some explanations, as to why there are so few interpretations by other artists of these significant views of Snowdon and Cader Idris. There is an unexpected contradiction in the appropriation of the view that Wilson instigated depicting Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle in that it has been used extensively in the promotion of Snowdonia in recent tourist board brochures. As discussed earlier, there is no acknowledgement of either, Snowdon or Wilson in the titles that have been applied to these photographic pictures. The photographs of the Nantlle lake that are reproduced in full colour in contemporary tourist promotional guides to the region represent a viewpoint which does not actually physically exist on the ground. The earlier descriptions of Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle in the tour guide literature were equally abstract in that there was no accompanying illustration to visualise and confirm the narrative description that the authors supplied.

A direct result of this situation was the non-appearance of this subject in the London exhibitions. Not a single picture with the same title, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* was exhibited at the *Society of Artists* during its entire existence. William Byrne (fl.1766-1780) exhibited two paintings at the *Society of Artists* with the title *A View of Carnarvon Castle, After Mr. Wilson* one in 1766 (no.232) and one in 1768 (no.171).<sup>80</sup> In this example by Byrne, Wilson's view of Carnarvon Castle has been replicated and this has also been acknowledged in the titles of the works. Wilson painted many versions of this subject throughout his career and this subject was engraved by Boydell in 1749. A later version of this subject, a picture titled, *Carnarvon Castle* (no.190) was exhibited by Wilson at the *Society of Artists* in 1766, the same year as Byrne's *A View of Carnarvon Castle, After Mr. Wilson* was shown. At the *Royal*

*Academy* from 1769 to 1800 and during the whole of the 19th century there were no named works exhibited that had the title *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle*. There were thirty works shown there between 1787 and 1883 that contain a direct reference to Snowdon in the title of the work that was exhibited. There are eleven works with a general title such as *Snowdon, North Wales* or simply *Snowdon*. There are eight works that have a reference to Capel Curig in their titles. Five works contain a reference to weather conditions in their title, for example, *Early Snowstorm passing over Snowdon*. Three pictures depict the view of Snowdon from the Llanberis side of the mountain and one title refers to Dolbardarn Castle. This castle is often present in views of the mountain and this view is discussed in the next chapter in relation to the topographical treatment of mountain landscape.<sup>81</sup> In the exhibitions held at the *British Institution* between 1806 and 1867 there were 29 pictures shown that have a reference to 'Snowdon' in their title, of these, not a single exhibit has a reference to the Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle viewpoint or to Wilson in any of the titles.<sup>82</sup> Seven works made a reference to Capel Curig in their titles and six were simply titled, *Snowdon*. Four titles referred to the time of day or the weather conditions. The remaining titles that allude to Snowdon are individual and do not form any distinct categories of their own.

In this chapter I have examined Wilson's imagery of Snowdon and Cader Idris. I have deconstructed the content of both paintings in relation to the travel literature and I have examined their relationships to other works of the same subject. I discussed how the particular imagery in Wilson's, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) has been appropriated and ignored and how this motif has satisfied the various demands that have been placed on it over its two hundred and twenty-five-year history. This painting was originally intended for the landed gentry of north Wales who were Wilson's potential clients and to whom he was related. Although this painting and its companion were highlighted in the travel literature from Pennant onwards it was not illustrated and consequently there was very little replication of Wilson's mountain views of Snowdonia by visiting artists. Instead, at the Llyn Nantlle site, it was photographers who later replicated the viewpoint that Wilson had established. The tourist board photographs, *Llyn Nantlle / Nantlle Lake* (Figure 6) and *Llyn Nantlle, Snowdonia* (Figure 7) replicate Wilson's imagery of *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle*

(Figure 9) yet this visual connection with Wilson is not acknowledged in the captions that accompany the photographs.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>This colour photograph is reproduced in, Roger Thomas, ed., *Snowdonia Mountains and Coast*, Conway Borough Council, Conway, 1997, p.32.

<sup>2</sup> This full-page colour photograph is reproduced in, Roger Thomas, ed., *Wales, Holidays & Short breaks all year round*, Wales Tourist Board, Cardiff, 1995, inside front cover.

<sup>3</sup> The road that runs across the bottom of the Nantlle lake is the B 4418. There is no lay-by on this road or evidence of an unofficial one at any point on the road from where the view of Snowdon can be seen. There is a field that separates the road from the lake. In the eighteenth century there were two lakes at this location and the lower lake was subsequently filled in due to quarrying activities. In Wilson's two oil paintings of this subject, two lakes can be seen, and his viewpoint was from the lower lake. Given the distance of ten miles that separates the viewpoint from the summit of Snowdon this is not a factor in any subsequent revisions that followed of this view.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Wilson (1713-1782) a professional portrait and landscape painter in oils. Born in mid-Wales at Penegoes, Montgomeryshire, and the son of a clergyman. He was related through his mother Alice Wynne, to some of the richest landed gentry families in north Wales including the Vaughan's and the Wynns of Wynnstay. Wilson studied in London in the studio of the portrait painter Thomas Wright. He was in Italy from 1750-1757 where he met Zuccarelli who introduced him to landscape painting. Wilson painted his portrait in 1771, now in Tate Britain, London. From 1752 he probably knew C.J.Vernet and painted landscapes that owe much to the persuasive influence of Claude and Poussin. Returned to London and painted mostly landscape subjects and taught many artists including William Hodges and the Welsh painter Thomas Jones. Wilson also taught Joseph Farrington. Founder member of the Society of Artists London in 1757 and the Royal Academy in 1769. The mid 1760's saw three pairs of Welsh landscapes produced and these were, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool & Castle Museum, Nottingham, *Llyn-y-Cau Cader Idris*, Tate Britain, London & Moystyn collection and *A view of Cader Idris Mountain, North Wales*, Yale Centre for British Art & Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. In the 1770's he produced a number of estate views for wealthy gentlemen and returned to live in Wales due to ill health and financial problems in 1781. For further information, see, David H Solkin, *Richard Wilson, The landscape of Reaction*, exhibition catalogue. Tate Gallery Publications, London, 1982.

<sup>5</sup> Source, Society of Artists, database, see also chapter four, note no. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Wilson's exhibits at the *Society of Artists* in 1766 were, 'North-west view of Snowdon and its environs' (189), 'Carnarvon Castle' (190), 'Banks of the Tiber' (191) and 'A landscape with figures' (192).

<sup>7</sup> The guide was first published in 1958 under the editorship of Edmund Vale and it was reprinted several times. It was revised in 1973 under the editorship of G. Rhys Edwards and changes were made to the content and a new cover was instigated.

<sup>8</sup> G. Rhys Edwards, ed., *Snowdonia National Park Guide Number 2*, HMSO, London, 1973. The Wilson painting *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle*, Walker Art Gallery, that is reproduced on the front cover of this guide is only referred to as a photographic credit at the end of the Acknowledgment section on p. ix.

<sup>9</sup> G. Rhys Edwards, *Snowdonia National Park Guide*, plate XII (b), *Llyn Nantlle Uchaf, Hebog Range*, pp.62-63.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Wilson was related on his mother's side (Alice Wynne of Leeswood) to Sir George Wynne of Leeswood who paid for his apprenticeship to the portrait painter Thomas Wright in London. Later through these family connections the young Wilson was able to secure commissions from the Welsh landed gentry. In 1738 at the age of twenty-five Wilson was paid 6gns for a portrait of Robert Myddleton of Chirk Castle and at this time he also painted Richard Owen of Merioneth. After his return from Italy Wilson was able to renew these connections with the Welsh landed gentry. He was commissioned by patrons, such as Sir William Watkins-Wynn of Wynnstay, to paint the landscapes that they owned. Wilson, via these connections, was able to form links with the Mostyns and the Vaughans to whom he was also related and they both purchased paintings of mountain scenery. Sir Robert Mostyn purchased *Cader Idris, Llyn-y-Cau* and it is still in the possession of the family.



William Vaughan purchased the first version of *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

<sup>11</sup> Wilson was commissioned by the eminent landowner Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, fourth Bart. (1748-1789) to paint his estate in the Vale of Llangollen, this includes the ancient site of Castle Dinas Bran, which is a landmark in the valley. The commissioned paintings are, *View near Wynnstay, the seat of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, Bt*, 1770-71, oil on canvas, 71"x 90" (180.4 x 244.7 cm.) Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven, and *Dinas Bran from Llangollen*, 1770-1771, oil on canvas, 71"x 90" (180.4 - 229.6 cm.) Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven.

<sup>12</sup> Wilson's painting, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* was in the possession of the Vaughan family twenty-five years after William Vaughan's death in 1775. See, David Solkin, *Richard Wilson, The landscape of Reaction*, exhibition catalogue, Tate Gallery Publications, London, 1982 p.139, note 32. This painting was still in the ownership of the Vaughan family when it was sold at Christie's on the 20th June 1930, lot number 114.

<sup>13</sup> William Vaughan (1707-1775). A wealthy landowner who improved his estate at Nannau near Dolgellau in north Wales. The original family seat was at Corsygedol near Barmouth. He purchased Wilson's, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* and is likely to have acquired Wilson's oil painting, *The Valley of the Mawddach, with Cader Idris beyond*, again there are two versions, in The Cleveland Museum of Art, and in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. A version of this subject was exhibited at the RA in 1774 titled, *View of Cader Idris Mountains in North Wales* (no.316). The viewpoint Wilson used for this view of Cader Idris was from the Vaughan estate close to Nannau, north east of Dolgellau. This estate and its elevated position are described in Pennant's *A Tour in Wales*, vol. 2, pp. 106-107.

<sup>14</sup> The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion was founded in 1751 by a group of wealthy landowners to promote Welshness. For further information see, R.T.Jenkins and H.Ramage, 'The History of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion and of the Gwyneddigion and Cymreigyddion Societies (1751-1951)', *Y Cymmrodor* L, 1951.

<sup>15</sup> William Cowper 'The Task' (1785) quoted in, Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque Studies in a Point of View*, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, London, 1927, p.49.

<sup>16</sup> John Barrell, *The dark side of the landscape - The rural poor in English painting 1730-1840*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980, p.6.

<sup>17</sup> Clive Gregory, ed., *The Great Artists, Their lives, works and inspiration*, Wilson, part 58, volume 3, Marshall Cavendish Partworks Ltd, London, 1991, p.1836.

<sup>18</sup> 'In the middle lie two lakes, the Llyniau Nantlle, which receive the waters of Llyn Tywarchen, which is suspended on the side of Drws-y-Coed, and is so named from a congeries of turf floating about it...' in, Edmund Hyde Hall, *A Description of Caernarvonshire 1809 - 1811*, Caernarvonshire Historical Society, Caernarvon, 1952, p.211.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, 2 vols., Benjamin White at Horace's Head, London, 1784, vol. 2. p.188.

<sup>20</sup> William Mason's poem 'The English Garden' was published in 1779.

<sup>21</sup> William Mason, 'The English Garden' quoted in, Rev. J. Evans, *The Beauties of England and Wales or Original Delineations Topographical, Historical, and Descriptive, of each County, Col. XVII, North Wales*, Vernor Hood and Sharpe, Longman & Co, London, 1812, p.408.

<sup>22</sup> James Thomson, *The Seasons*, (1730) A Manson, R Williams, J Hammond, H Newton, P Thomson, and S Bland, London, 1780.

<sup>23</sup> Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1989, pp. 9-10.

<sup>24</sup> James Thomson letter to Bubb Dodington, quoted in, Douglas Grant, *James Thomson Poet of 'The Seasons'*, The Casset Press, London, 1951, p.117.

<sup>25</sup> Turner exhibited a total of ten works in the Royal Academy in 1798. Five of these landscapes were ascribed a poetic quote in the catalogue, these are,

(1) *Morning amongst the Coniston Fells Cumberland*, from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book V.

(2) *Dunstanborough Castle N.E. Coast of Northumberland, sunrise after a squally night*, from Thomson, *The Seasons*.

(3) *Norham Castle on the Tweed - Summer morn*, from Thomson, *The Seasons*.

(4) *Buttermere lake, with part of Cromachwater, Cumberland - a Shower*, from Thomson, *The Seasons*. The other work to with a quote from *The Seasons* was, *Dormitory and Transcript of Fountains Abbey - Evening*.

<sup>26</sup> Quote from Thomson, *The Seasons*, cited with Turner's exhibit, *Norham Castle on the Tweed-summer morn*, exhibited at the Royal Academy 1798 in, Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts*.

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*A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904*, Henry Graves & Co Ltd & George Bell & Sons, London, 1905.

<sup>27</sup> James Thomson, *The Seasons*, p.10, lines 188-192.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10, lines 204-211.

<sup>29</sup> James Thomson, *A POEM, Sacred to the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton*, in Douglas Grant, *James Thomson Poet of 'The Seasons'*, The Cresset Press, London, 1951, p.71.

<sup>30</sup> J.M.W.Turner, Royal Academy lecture, 1812, quoted in, Andrew Wilton, *Painting and Poetry, Turner's Verse Book and his Work of 1804 - 1812*, Tate Gallery Publications, London 1990, p.10.

<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Wheeler Mainwaring, *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England. A study chiefly of the Influence of Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa on English taste 1700 - 1800*, (1925), Frank Cass & Co Ltd, London, 1965, p.102.

<sup>32</sup> James Thomson, *The Seasons*, p.49, lines 51-54, & p.50, lines 82-84.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37 lines 954-959.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90 lines 1161-1166.

<sup>35</sup> 'Between 1741 and 1745 Arthur Dodd and Charles Knapton published forty-two engravings from 'Old Master Landscapes', amongst which were thirty Dughet's and eight Claudes,' quoted in, Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, p.26.

<sup>36</sup> John Dyer, *Grongar Hill*, (1726) in, Roger Lonsdale, ed., *The New Oxford book of Eighteenth Century Verse*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984, pp. 167-170.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p.168, line 37.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p.169, line 115.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p 168 lines 33-38.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.169 lines 106-108.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p.169 lines 114-117.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.167-170.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.167, line 5.

<sup>44</sup> Wilson had tried to publish these prints earlier but had been unsuccessful in this venture.

<sup>45</sup> William Woollett (1735-1785) was a professional copper plate engraver and etcher who did much to raise the standard of his craft. He was apprenticed to John Tinney who ran a print workshop. Woollett engraved Wilson's, *The Destruction of the children of Niobe*. This work was a commissioned print from John Boydell who had started his print publication business. This print was popular and Boydell made £2,000 from this venture alone. This particular print was admired in the eighteenth century for its technical skill and Woollett was commissioned to engrave further examples of Wilson's work.

<sup>46</sup> John Boydell 1719-1804 was an engraver and print publisher. For further information on Boydell's career see, H.A.Brunstjen, *John Boydell (1719-1804): a study of Art Patronage and Publishing in Georgian London*, PhD thesis, Stanford University, USA.

<sup>47</sup> The set of six engraved prints issued by John Boydell bear a publication date of the 17th July 1775. The set consists of three images of South Wales, Taafe, Pembroke, Kilgarran and three images of north Wales, Caernarvon Castle, Snowdon and Cader Idris. The picture area of these prints measures 161/2" x 21" (41x54.4).

<sup>48</sup> Edward Pugh, *Cambria Depicta: A Tour through North Wales Illustrated with Picturesque Views*. E Williams, London, 1816, p.136.

<sup>49</sup> Wilson's, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle and Cader Idris, Llyn-y-Cau* were both known pictorially via their engraved state. The original oil paintings and their duplicates were hidden from view in the landed gentry's collections.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, p.188.

<sup>51</sup> Rev. J Evans, *The Beauties of England and Wales or Original Delineations, Topographical, Historical, and Descriptive, of each county*, vol. XVII, *North Wales*, Vernor Hood and Sharpe, Longman & Co, London, 1812, p.407.

<sup>52</sup> William Bingley, *North Wales delineated from Two Excursions through that Highly Beautiful and Romantic Country and intended as a Guide to Future Tourists*, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London, 1814, p. 268.

<sup>53</sup> G.J.Freeman, *Sketches in Wales or a Diary of Three Walking Excursions in that Principality in the Years 1823, 1824, 1825*, Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, London, 1826, p.216.

<sup>54</sup> Askew Roberts, *The Gossipping Guide to Wales; Pictorial Itinerary and Snowdon Panorama*, Hodder and Stoughton & Woodhall and Co, London and Owestry, 1883, p.191.

<sup>55</sup> Adam & Charles Black, eds., *Black's Picturesque Guide to North Wales*, (1868) Adam & Charles Black, Edinburgh, 1886, p.126.

<sup>56</sup> Luke Herrmann, *British Landscape Painting of the 18th Century*, Faber & Faber, London, 1973. The front dust cover of this edition consists of a large colour photograph which depicts Richard Wilson's, *Snowdon from Llyn Nanllyn*, 1765, oil on canvas, 40.1/2' x 49" (103 x 124.7), Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Nottingham.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Luke Herrmann, *British Landscape Painting of the 18th Century*, Faber & Faber, London 1973, p. 56.

<sup>58</sup> William Bingley, *North Wales delineated from Two Excursions through that Highly Beautiful and Romantic Country and intended as a Guide to Future Tourists*, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London, 1814, pp.350-351.

<sup>59</sup> Askew Roberts, *Gossiping Guide*, p. 184.

<sup>60</sup> William Bingley, *North Wales*, pp. 346-347

<sup>61</sup> Edward Pugh, *Cambria Depicta*, p. 207.

<sup>62</sup> This telescope is often mistakenly identified as a horn. A recent example of this error was made by Dr Patsy Campbell who also mistook this figure for a shepherd in her contribution to an article by Rebecca Ford, 'Excuse me, Constable' in, *Country Walking*, March 1998, p.89. Article, pp.82-89.

<sup>63</sup> This short refractor telescope with its achromatic lens was the invention in 1758 of the London based optician James Dollond (1707-1761). Dollond was able to market his telescope to the limited audience who could afford to own it. Its reduced length, portability and good optical magnification made it the ultimate gadget and accessory for a picturesque tour particularly one that embraced mountain scenery.

<sup>64</sup> This figure has proved impossible to identify but it could be a member of the touring party or Wilson himself.

<sup>65</sup> Pete Davis has identified this animal as a lowland cow and he has described the use of the 'Hafod Hendre' system of summer pasture in north Wales. See, Pete Davis, 'Richard Wilson and Cader Idris', in, *Cader Idris. Soul of a Lonely Place*, exhibition catalogue, University of Wales Press, School of Art, Aberystwyth, 1997, essay, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> Edward Pugh, *Cambria Depicta*, p.228.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, vol. 2., p.98.

<sup>68</sup> Rev. J Evans, *The Beauties of England and Wales or Original Delineations, Topographical, Historical, and Descriptive, of each county, Vol. XVII, North Wales*, London: Vernor, Hood and Sharpe, Longman & Co, London, 1812, p.920.

<sup>69</sup> Edward Pugh, *Cambria Depicta*, p.204.

<sup>70</sup> The Rev. Robert Hasell Newell (1778-1852) had taken drawing lessons from William Payne intended, *Letters on the Scenery of Wales* to be used by tourists who intended to make sketches of the landscape scenery. In this guide he offered precise instructions on where to stand to make a drawing. These instructions were derived from nautical measurements designed to fix a point at sea. The etched illustrations that Newell published in this book have no direct connection with the text narrative and are independent from it.

<sup>71</sup> Rev. Robert Hasell Newell, *Letters on the Scenery of Wales: including a Series of Subjects for the pencil, with their Stations determined on a General Principle; and Instructions to Pedestrian Tourists*, Baldwin Cradock & Joy, London, 1821, p. 115.

<sup>72</sup> Francis Nicholson (1753-1844) a professional painter of portraits and landscape subjects. Taught by the portrait painter Thomas Beckwith in Yorkshire then came to London where he was taught by Conrad Martin Metz and established himself as a drawing master. He was a founder member of the Old Water-Colour Society and published *The Practice of Drawing* in 1820. Nicholson showed a total of 318 works in the London exhibitions including 279 at the OWCS. He made several visits to north Wales.

<sup>73</sup> Edward Pugh, *Cambria Depicta*, p. 204.

<sup>74</sup> Thomas Webster (1772-1844) an architect and non-professional watercolour painter of landscape scenes. He did not exhibit in the London exhibitions. He made an extensive tour to north Wales in 1802 with the artists Joshua Cristill, William Havell and the brothers Cornelius and John Varley. He made a tour to South Wales in 1803. He designed the Royal Institution lecture theatre and later became a prominent member of the Geological Society of London.

<sup>75</sup> William Hughes (fl.1830-1853) a landscape painter based in London where he showed a total of 22 works in the London exhibitions between 1830 and 1853. These were, 11 at Suffolk Street, 7 at the RA and 3 at the B I.

<sup>76</sup> Cornelius Varley (1781-1873) was the brother of the artist John Varley (1778-1841). Painter of landscapes in watercolour and a prolific draughtsman. He made an extensive tour to north Wales in 1802 and he came again in 1803 with his brother John, and the artists Joshua Cristall and William Havell. Varley was a founder member of the Old Watercolour Society in 1804. In 1805 he made a visit

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to north Wales on his own. In 1811 he invented the 'Patent Graphic' telescope, a drawing device and aid that John Sell Cotman (1782-1842) used for his architectural line drawings of Normandy.

<sup>77</sup> Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>78</sup> Source, British Institution database.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>80</sup> Source, Society of Artists database.

<sup>81</sup> Chapter three discusses the viewpoint of Snowdon and Dolbadarn Castle as seen from the Llanberis lakeside in relation to the topographical. Also see, Paul Joyner, *Dolbadarn: Studies on a Theme*, exhibition catalogue, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1990.

<sup>82</sup> Source, British Institution database.

## Topographical Snowdonia: A View in Nant Beris.

A topographical print by Moses Griffith (1747-1819), *A View in Nant Beris* (Figure 17) was reproduced in volume two of Thomas Pennant's (1726-1798), *A Tour in Wales* in 1784.<sup>1</sup> This illustration depicts Llanberis Lake and Dolbardarn Castle with Snowdon beyond. In the immediate foreground two figures are shown strolling by the lakeshore one carrying a pair of oars and the other a knapsack. They are about to set out in the boat that is moored close to the foreshore. The composition adheres to a classical structure of recessionary planes. The whole landscape is delineated in the sharp and clear focused light that is characteristic of this particular form of realism.

Griffith was not the first artist to record the lake and castle. Samuel Buck (1696-1779) and Nathaniel Buck (active 1727-1753) published an engraving in 1742 and although topographical it does not present as comprehensive a picture of the location as Griffith drew in the 1770s.<sup>2</sup> The Buck print, *The West View of Dolbadarn Castle in the County of Caernarvon* (Figure 18) as the title implies, focuses on the castle rather than the landscape in which it is situated. Richard Wilson (1713-1782) painted several oils of this subject appropriating the status that the castle possessed as a significant historical site in the early 1760s.<sup>3</sup> The Wilson paintings are not topographical as they do not present a factual account of place, rather they are Italianate composites of idealised beauty. An example is *Dolbadarn Castle* (Figure 19) painted between 1762 and 1764 with figures reminiscent of Claude Lorrain and a compositional structure akin to Gaspard Dughet. In all versions of this subject by Wilson the round castle tower is placed on the golden section on the right and in the distance the mountain pass of Llanberis is removed. Instead a flat vista is substituted which is bathed in an Italian light with Snowdon seen from a great distance inserted behind the castle.<sup>4</sup> The lake of Llyn Padarn now functions as a substitute Lake Nemi.

Paul Sandby painted a watercolour of the castle and its mountain landscape in 1764 before his first visit to north Wales.<sup>5</sup> *Dolbadarn Castle and Llanberis Valley* (Figure 20) depicts a rugged landscape with some well-to-do visitors contemplating the castle and its dramatic situation. Sandby's compositional source was a topographical print

drawn, engraved and published in 1750 in London by John Boydell (1719-1804). A feature common to both versions is the replication of a small boat shown near the rocky outcrop but with one less figure in Sandby's picture. Boydell's *A View of Snowdon in the Vale of Llanberis in Caernarvonshire* (Figure 21) establishes the viewpoint that the majority of subsequent artists and visitors to the location would replicate with the castle on the right and the lake occupying the foreground and middle distance. It is probable that Richard Wilson's *Dolbadarn Castle* (Figure 19) was also based on the Boydell engraving with a similar replication of a boat close to a rocky outcrop. Unlike Wilson's view Boydell's print shows a topographical view up the steeply sided Llanberis pass with Snowdon appearing on the right. The Boydell print depicts a number of travellers making their way along the rough pony path beyond the site of the castle that Boydell has omitted from his landscape view. The path Boydell depicted was improved by the time Pennant wrote *A Tour in Wales* and was further improved in the early eighteenth century for mail coaches and travellers alike.

A topographical print similar in composition to Griffith's *A View in Nantr Beris* (Figure 17) was published in the 1781 edition of Henry Penruddocke Wyndham's (1736-1819) *A Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales*. Samuel Hieronymus Grimm (1733-1794) a topographical artist provided the illustrations for Wyndham's second book on Wales. Grimm had drawn Dolbadarn castle on an earlier tour with Wyndham in 1777 and the print is a reworking of the earlier watercolour.<sup>6</sup> In the engraving *Dolbadarn Castle* (Figure 22) published in 1780 Grimm depicts the castle on the right with mountains filling the remainder of the landscape. It is rendered in sharp focus with a pale sky that occupies at least fifty per cent of the remaining picture area. In this topographical view two figures are depicted in the same relative position as Griffith's depicted on the shore of Llyn Padarn in *A View in Nant Beris* (Figure 17). In Grimm's *Dolbadarn Castle* (Figure 22) the figures are shown herding cattle along the lakeshore and this also adds human scale to the depicted landscape of lake, castle and mountain. Wyndham in his text adjacent to the engraving of *Dolbadarn Castle* (Figure 22) refers to John Leland (c.1502-1552) who had visited Wales in the late 1530s and was the author of *Itinerary of Wales* published in 1710.<sup>7</sup> Following a description of the location and the fabric of the castle, Wyndham referred to the castle's history<sup>8</sup>:

Leland indeed informs us, that Owen Goch, after being defeated by his brother Llewelyn, last prince of Wales of the British blood, was confined to the castle... he remained a prisoner here, for more than twenty years.<sup>9</sup>

The two topographical views by Grimm (Figure 22) and Griffith (Figure 17) were published in their respective patron's travel books. By being reproduced they helped to establish the topographical viability and identity of the Dolbadarn site. This influence applied particularly to the Griffith views reproduced in *A Tour in Wales*.

The antiquary and naturalist Thomas Pennant employed Moses Griffith as his topographical draughtsman and in this role Griffith contributed a large number of drawings and watercolours for Pennant's books on topography and zoology.<sup>10</sup> Pennant born on 14th June 1726 into a prosperous Welsh family knew and spoke little Welsh as befitted his social status.<sup>11</sup> As a result he wrote and published his books in English. His first book was published in 1761 and his last posthumously in 1801.<sup>12</sup> As a writer on British Zoology Pennant was a pioneer, soon achieving an international reputation for his scholarship with its scientific bias. Major works in this genre include *British Zoology* published in 1761 and then reissued in 1770 with 103 additional plates. By 1777 it had developed into a four-volume work with a total of 284 plates, illustrating a range of subjects including quadrupeds, birds, fish and shells. Pennant's *History of Quadrupeds* published in two volumes with 52 plates became a standard work of reference. Pennant's interest in travel derived from his need to collect specimens, conduct research and seek out material such as fossils for his own collection. It was to collect such material and to observe the flora and fauna that Pennant made his first excursions into the mountains of Snowdonia. Pennant also visited the continent in 1764 and undertook extensive tours to Scotland in 1769 and 1772. The Scottish tours were published in 1771 and 1774 respectively, as Maurice Lindsay has pointed out, the importance of these early Scottish books was that these:

...journeys were assiduously read by most of the travellers who came after him for almost half a century.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of the eighteenth century William Bingley was able to observe that Pennant had:

...published an account of his journey, which proved that the northern parts of Great Britain might be visited with safety and even pleasure; and from this time Scotland has formed one of the fashionable British tours. A candid account of this country was so great a novelty, that the impression was instantly bought up, and the following year another was printed, and as soon sold.<sup>14</sup>

Pennant was able to follow a *Tour in Scotland* with a similar book on north Wales. Pennant lived at Downing in Flintshire and he had acquired an extensive knowledge of the region and its history. Pennant had also made many excursions on horseback into the mountains of Snowdonia in search of fossils, flora and fauna. As he stated:

My frequent journeys through them render me a tolerable master of their topography.<sup>15</sup>

*A Tour in Wales* concentrates solely on north Wales. It was not based on a single tour as the title implies but was derived from three separate journeys into Snowdonia made between 1773 and 1776:

After several journeys over the six counties of North Wales, in which I collected ample material for their history. I flung them into the form of a tour.<sup>16</sup>

The two-volume edition of 1784 consists of 986 pages and is far more substantial publication than the slim tour guides published by English visitors such as Wyndham after their often hasty progress through Snowdonia.<sup>17</sup> Writers such as Arthur Aiken (untraced). Joseph Hucks (1772-1800), Henry Skrine (1755-1803) and others quoted liberally from Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* in their publications and this reflects the superiority and depth of Pennant's book. As W. J. Hughes concluded in his important study, *Wales and the Welsh in English Literature*:

It is no exaggeration to add that there is hardly one writer after Pennant who does not acknowledge his obligations to him.<sup>18</sup>

In his text Pennant uses the landscape term *picturesque* several times. For example his description of a landscape at Tal-y-Llyn, Cader Idris, looking westwards, he states:



Its termination is very picturesque; for it contracts gradually into the form of a river, and rushes through a good stone arch into a narrow pass, having on one side the church...<sup>19</sup>

Another use is cited in relation to a restricted composition at a waterfall site near Dolgellau: 'A noble birch, placed above, finely finishes this picturesque scene'.<sup>20</sup> Pennant also used the term in relation to scenery as observed from horseback near Barmouth:

I kept on the side of the hill, above the valley which leads to Barmouth. The ride is very picturesque.<sup>21</sup>

Pennant's use of the word *picturesque* shows his capacity to describe visual subjects that were either like a picture or were capable of being pictured. Pennant travelled through Snowdonia aware of its potential visual status and this is reflected in the large number of landscape views he reproduced in *A Tour in Wales*.

Thomas Pennant employed Moses Griffith from 1772 onwards. Griffith was an ideal choice of artists for Pennant's needs, well able to work from natural, antiquarian and topographical subjects with ease, as Pennant recorded in *A Tour in Wales*:

The drawings marked MOSES GRIFFITH, are the performances of a worthy servant whom I keep for that purpose. The candid will excuse any little imperfections they may find on them; as they are the work of an untaught genius, drawn from the most remote and obscure parts of North Wales.<sup>22</sup>

*A Tour in Wales* was illustrated with fifty-seven copper plate engravings. The majority of these are from Griffith's own watercolour drawings made under Pennant's direction. The two-volume edition of 1784 contains a further ten etchings drawn and printed by Griffith, these were inserted at the end of volume two.

Topographical views of mountain scenery appear in *The Journey to Snowdon* section of volume two. The additional *Supplemental Plates* contain ten etchings, which are independent of the main text. Two of these prints are vertical pictures of mountain scenery and they contain ingredients of the sublime in their topographical treatment of the mountain terrain. The mountain scenes reproduced in *A Tour in Wales* by Griffith are discussed in the appropriate viewpoint chapters. Although the mountain prints are

all broadly topographical in appearance other visual aesthetics appear in their imagery. *A View in Nant Beris* (Figure 17) is primarily topographical but with a classical structure and light. Griffith's print, *The Summit of Snowdon from Capel Curig* (Figure 39) is discussed in chapter four, Classical Snowdonia: *Snowdon from Capel Curig*. The small print, *Pont Aber Glas Llyn* (Figure 66) is discussed in chapter five, Picturesque Snowdonia: *Pont Aberglaslyn*. The two etchings, *On Glyder Fach* and *Trevaen from Glyder Bach* were not replicated by artists, but the associated text is discussed in chapter six, Sublime Snowdonia: *Llyn Idwal*. Thomas Pennant also referred to Richard Wilson's *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) and *Llyn-y-Cau Cader Idris* (Figure 13) in *The Journey to Snowdon*. Griffith did not depict these landscapes in *A Tour in Wales* and this was discussed in chapter two, Wilson: *Snowdon and Cader Idris*.

Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* had a considerable influence on artists in determining their choice of mountain viewpoints in Snowdonia. It not only provided a written description of the country but also illustrated it in engravings that depicted the finest mountain scenery of the region. Visiting artists replicated the mountain viewpoints that Griffith had presented in a *Tour in Wales*. It remained the first choice guidebook for visitors to Snowdonia for over fifty years and was still being consulted well into the nineteenth century. Many subsequent authors borrowed from it and many of their illustrations were derived from the same locations that Griffith had drawn. All the viewpoints discussed in this study are illustrated or described in Pennant's book. Pennant also promoted Paul Sandby's (1730-1809) three sets of Welsh prints in the advertisement section of *A Tour in Wales*:

Those that wish to anticipate the views in the intended progress  
I am to make through the remaining counties, may satisfy  
themselves by the purchase of the late publications of the  
admirable Mr. PAUL SANDBY, in whose labours fidelity and  
elegance are united.<sup>23</sup>

Peter Hughes has researched Paul Sandby's published sets of prints that were derived from his tours with patrons through Wales.<sup>24</sup> Sandby intended to include a view of Dolbardarn and Snowdon in *XII Views in North Wales* issued in 1776 but due to technical difficulties it had to be withdrawn and was replaced with a substitute print.<sup>25</sup> The withdrawn aquatint *Llanberis Lake, Castle Dolbadarn and the Great Mountain*

*Snowdon* is from the same viewpoint as Griffith used.<sup>26</sup> A copper plate engraving *Snowdon in Caernarvonshire* drawn by Sandby with the title forming the central panel of a decorative border that also contained two Welsh figures on the left and a Harper on the right was issued in 1779 as part of *The Virtuosi's Museum*. This contained 108 engravings after Sandby and was published in tripartite parts between 1778 and 1781.<sup>27</sup> Pennant actively promoted the visual potential of Snowdonia in highlighting Sandby's published scenes and by illustrating his own text he was able to provide a visual guide to the finest viewpoints of mountain scenery in north Wales.<sup>28</sup>

Pennant provided an accurate written description of the view at *Nant Beris*, focussing on the visual attributes of the scene, adjacent to plate eight, *A View in Nant Beris* (Figure 17), he wrote:

This is a very picturesque vale, bounded by the base of *Snowdon*, *Cefn Cwm Gafr*, the two *Glyders*, and two *Lliders*, each of them first-rate mountains. It is strait, and of nearly an equal breadth, filled by some meadows, and two magnificent lakes, which communicate to each other by means of a river... A road, once a succession of rude and stony stairs, made with much labour, ran on one side, high above the lake, and was often cut out of the rock, to form the way... On the loftiest part, over one of the lakes, stand the remains of *Castell Dolbadern*, consisting of a round tower, and a few fragments of walls.<sup>29</sup>

Many artists making a visit to this location were aware of the engraved print, *A View in Nant Beris* (Figure 17) and took their views from a similar viewpoint to that illustrated by Griffith. This process can be seen in a sketchbook drawing by Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) made in the summer of 1799. Turner's topographical line drawing, identified by Gerald Wilkinson as, *Lake of Llanberis* (Figure 23) appears in Turner's *Dolbadarn Sketchbook*.<sup>30</sup> It closely resembles the Griffith's print in both composition and spatial proportion. It is possible that Turner transcribed this picture directly from the print, or that he drew it on site aware of the Griffith version reproduced in *A Tour in Wales*. In this sketchbook and in his *Lancashire and North Wales* book Turner wrote two abstracts from *The Journey to Snowdon* section in Pennant's *A Tour in Wales*.<sup>31</sup> This suggests that Turner had access to a copy of Pennant's book and he would have been familiar with its pictorial content. From *Lake of Llanberis* (Figure 23) and other studies Turner was able to

work up a series of large sublime watercolours featuring lake, castle and mountain.<sup>32</sup> Turner partly based his *Royal Academy* Diploma work depicting the historical sublime on a series of vertical pastel drawings of Dolbadarn Castle.<sup>33</sup> Turner's oil painting, *Dolbadarn Castle, North Wales* was originally exhibited at the *Royal Academy* in 1800 where it still hangs. John Gage has recently analysed this painting's meaning and content.<sup>34</sup>

John Varley (1778-1842) exhibited an interpretation of the Griffith viewpoint in the 1805 Old Watercolour Society exhibition. Varley's *Llanberis Lake with Dolbadarn Castle* (Figure 24) was painted the previous year and is compositionally close to the Griffith picture with a similar proportion of landscape sky and water. Mountain views of Snowdonia were sought after and Varley sold this exhibition watercolour for eight guineas along with a companion picture *Snowdon from Moel Hebog* for ten guineas to the patron William Ord of Whitfield in Northumberland. As C.M. Kauffmann has pointed out, the 1805 exhibition consisted of 275 exhibits and Varley sold 30 out of the 42 works he showed there for a total of £139 13s 0d.<sup>35</sup> Over half of these exhibits were Welsh pictures with 25 identifiable subjects ranging from castles, Harlech, Caernarvon, Denbigh, Dolbadarn, to mountain scenery, Aberglaslyn, Moel Hebog, and Snowdon.<sup>36</sup> Another exhibitor at the OWCS who painted this view was Anthony Van Dyke Copley Fielding (1787-1855). He made several tours to north Wales the first in 1808 at the age of twenty-one and he visited the area again in 1810. That year he painted the watercolour *Llanberis* which depicts the whole vista of lake, castle and mountains delineated in a topographical style.<sup>37</sup>

Peter Bicknell has assembled a reference collection of photographic images of British mountain scenery and he found that the Dolbadarn site contained the greatest number of representations. The site's suitability as a location for the topographical treatment of mountain scenery was apparent in the collected pictures.<sup>38</sup> The site's popularity is also evident in the number of exhibits that featured this viewpoint that appeared in the *Royal Academy* exhibitions during a hundred-year period from 1776 to 1876. In the following list, views bearing the title *Llanberis Pass* have been omitted. There were twenty works exhibited at the *Royal Academy* from or near the Griffith viewpoint, they are:

- (1) Llanberis Pool, in the Mountains of Snowdon (1776) George Barret
- (2) A Storm, the scene, Llanberis Pool in the Mountains of Wales (1777) George Barret
- (3) View pf Dolbaddern Castle, on Llanberis Lake, near Snowdon, North Wales (1786) James Barret
- (4) View of Snowdon, from Llyn Beris Lake, with the Castle of Dolbadarn (1787) Philippe Jacques De Loutherbourg.
- (5) Part of Snowdon from Llanberis Lake Starlet Castle (1798) William F Wells
- (6) Dolbadarn Castle (1800) Joseph M W Turner
- (7) Llanberis Lake, Carnarvonshire (1802) John Laporte
- (8) View of Snowdon, Llanberis, North Wales (1804) William Delamotte
- (10) Part of Llanberis Lake, with Dolbardarn Tower (1809) J De Fleury
- (11) Dolbadarn Castle, Llanberis Lake, N Wales (1809) E W Foster
- (12) Snowdon, Dolbadarn Castle and part of Llanberis Lake (1810) J O Tudor
- (13) Dolbadarn Castle (1815) Thomas M Baynes+
- (14) View on Llanberis lake (1817) E W Foster
- (15) Scene at Llanberis, North Wales, Dolbadarn Castle in the Distance (1828) Philip Browne
- (16) Dolbardern Castle, North Wales (1831) James Baynes
- (17) Dolbadarn Castle, and Llanberis Lake, North Wales (1838) Philip Browne
- (18) The Llanberis side of Snowdon, North Wales (1840) Philip Browne
- (19) Dolbadarn Tower (1869) Thomas Danby
- (20) The pass of Llanberis from the lower lake-early morning (1876) William J Roffe <sup>39</sup>

At the *British Institution*, operational between 1806 and 1867, eight works linked to the Dolbadarn viewpoints are recorded. Works bearing the title *Llanberis Pass* have been omitted, these are:

- (1) Dolbaddern Castle (1812) Anthony V C Fielding
- (2) Scene at Llanberis, Dolbadarn Castle in the distance, North Wales (1822) J Belay
- (3) Dolbadaen Castle (1828) Alfred Clint
- (4) Dolbarden Castle (1829) George Hilditch
- (5) Llanberis Lake (1829) George Hilditch
- (6) Llanberis Lake (1838) George Hilditch
- (7) On the Llanberis Lake (1854) W Noy Wilkins
- (8) Evening on Lake Llanberis (1866) Francis Muschamp <sup>40</sup>

At the *Society of Artists of Great Britain* which flourished between 1760 and 1791 two works connected with the Dolbadarn viewpoint site were shown:

- (1) A View of part of Snowden Hill in North Wales, with the remains of Dolbadarn Castle (1768) Joseph Farrington RA

(2) A View of Clanberries Pools, in the mountains of Snowden, in North Wales  
(1771) John Hamilton <sup>41</sup>

The *Royal Academy* provides an unbroken record of exhibits annually since 1769. The last picture of the Dolbadarn viewpoint was exhibited at the *Royal Academy* in 1876 and since then to the end of the twentieth century no named paintings of this topographical viewpoint have been exhibited in the Academy's annual summer exhibitions. Dolbadarn as a historical landscape site had less appeal to the later Victorian and twentieth century landscape painters. Many of these artists painting Snowdonia's mountain scenery no longer required a topographical subject to record instead they were able to visit more imposing and dramatic mountain sites in the region to meet their own visual requirements. Another factor in the decline of this topographical view is that by the end of nineteenth century photography was capable of supplying the realism associated with the portrayal of the site. By the very end of the nineteenth century photographic reproduction had largely replaced the engraved print in the travel and tourist literature.

An engraved version of this view was published in Thomas Roscoe's 1836 guidebook *Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales*. Drawn by Thomas Creswick (1811-1869) one of the commissioned artists for the book it depicts the familiar viewpoint of lake, castle and mountain. The print *Dolbadarn Tower* (Figure 25) was engraved by William Radclyffe (1780-1855) and is of the finest quality. In his print Creswick has placed the castle nearer to the centre of the composition and he has included two figures in a boat who stare directly out of the picture. <sup>42</sup> Many visitors to this location took a boat trip on the lower lake and gained an expansive panorama of lake, castle and mountain, as William Bingley (1774-1823) had recorded at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

Seated as we were in the boat, nearly on a level with the surface of  
The water, the lake, on looking along its whole extent, had the  
appearance of being large and expansive. The mountains arranged  
in the most beautiful manner imaginable... Snowdon, with its deep  
and perpendicular precipice, and two summits, forms an immense  
mass of mountain; which constitutes the principal feature. The lake,  
the round tower of Dolbadarn, the distant vale and mountains, and,  
on the other side, the huge rock of Glyder Vawr, lend each its  
character to heighten the effect of the whole. <sup>43</sup>

Roscoe cited Pennant on the castle's history and described the appearance of the actual view as illustrated in *Dolbadarn Tower* (Figure 25):

It was soon moonlight, and I beheld a prospect mirrored in the silvery waters softer and more serenely fair than is seen in the glare of day. Vaster from their dimness, on both sides rose the rocky hills on which the moon shed a passing radiance,...<sup>44</sup>

Roscoe also described a moonlit trip he made on the lake and the print *Dolbadarn Tower* (Figure 25) illustrates a moonlit scene with Roscoe presumably the figure sitting on the left in the boat.

A picture was reproduced in *Black's Guide to North Wales* in 1858 based on the Griffith viewpoint that greatly exaggerated the height of the surrounding mountains seen beyond Dolbadarn castle. Apart from this change, the proportion of lake, and castle are similar to the Griffith print (Figure 17). Drawn by Myles Birket Foster (1825-1899) *Llanberis Lake* (Figure 26) retains the topographical realism typical of the site while possessing a picturesque quality. This combined with an element of the sublime, which is generated by the height of the mountains and the small proportion of sky allowed in the frame. As illustrated in *Llanberis Lake* (Figure 26) some visitors enjoyed the visual spectacle from a boat on the lake as the guide recommended:

The best view of the ruins is from a boat on the adjacent lake, and, when reflected in the smooth waters beneath, it is particularly beautiful.<sup>45</sup>

The accompanying text also describes the hotels at Llanberis such as the Royal Victoria located close to the castle from where carriages, ponies and guides could be hired.

The Royal Victoria Hotel is depicted in a lithograph dating from the early 1840s, *The Victoria Hotel, Llanberis, North Wales* (Figure 27). Behind the hotel, which obscures Dolbadarn castle, can be seen the same mountains as in Griffith's view. This lithograph illustrates the various forms of transport available to the tourists. Shown arriving at the hotel are pedestrians, a couple on horseback, a two-horse chaise and a

coach and four. On the gate pillar is a reminder that guides were available for hire to Snowdon and the Waterfalls and depicted to the left of the hotel are two figures admiring the mountain scenery. By the 1840s the majority of visitors in search of mountain scenery were using hotels as a base from which to make excursions into the mountains rather than as overnight accommodation on a tour. The artist David Cox for example adopted this practice from 1846 to 1856, making the Royal Oak Inn at Bettws-y-Coed his primary summer base.<sup>46</sup> The image of *The Royal Victoria Hotel, Llanberis, North Wales* (Figure 27) was redrawn by the 1880s when it appeared as an advertisement in Askew Roberts' *Gossiping Guide to Wales*. In the advertisement *Royal Victoria Hotel* (Figure 28) the hotel has been extended on the left, where, in the earlier version the admirers of the scenery had stood. In this revised view the number of transport features have also been reduced.<sup>47</sup> By this date the hotel had forty bedrooms, extensive grounds, was under new management and advertised 'Ponies and Guides to Snowdon. Boats on the Lakes.'<sup>48</sup>

Askew Roberts published a pictorial itinerary in the *Gossiping Guide to Wales* that related the scenery of north Wales to the railway network run by the various railway companies. A diagrammatic line drawing in the section *Bangor to Carnarvon and Llanberis* illustrates the view across Llyn Padarn towards the castle depicted on the right with boats on the lake and mountains filling the horizon. The illustration by George Lowthian Hall (1825-1888)<sup>49</sup> is captioned *View Coming Out of Tunnel upon Llyn Padarn* (Figure 29). This print is compositionally similar to Griffith's *View in Nant Beris* (Figure 17) apart from the addition on the right side of the railway track disappearing into the distance. Adjacent to this wide format picture Roberts supplied a short informative synopsis:

...the train passes through a short tunnel and comes out on the shores of the larger of the Llanberis lakes, Llyn Padarn, which is two miles long. The summit of Snowdon is seen to the right, Dolbadarn Castle and the Pass of Llanberis are in front, Elidyr with the quarries on its slopes, is on the left, and Glyder Fawr beyond it. The train runs the whole length of the lake, and then reaches the beautifully situated village of Llanberis.<sup>50</sup>

Following this short description is a list of features connected with Llanberis. Inserted into the sky of *View Coming Out of Tunnel upon Llyn Padarn* (Figure 29) are the



names of the principal mountain peaks visible beyond the lake. Dolbadarn Castle is also noted. This labelling provides further information associated with the location adding to the existing topographical components that record an accurate representation of place.

Photography at the end of the nineteenth century was technically advanced enough to provide an accurate view of a landscape. A photograph dating from 1915 depicting the Dolbadarn viewpoint is an example of this. This image published as a postcard captioned *Llyn Padarn* (Figure 30) uses the already established pictorial formula of lake, castle and mountain all faithfully reproduced by *Judges Ltd*. In this monochrome photograph a number of boats occupy the foreground and the castle is shown silhouetted against the diffused light that pervades the scene. The overall effect in the photograph is reminiscent of a Richard Wilson painting such as his view of *Dolbadarn Castle* (Figure 19). In *Llyn Padarn* (Figure 30) the castle becomes a classical motif and its reflection in the lake along with the overall chiaroscuro imitates Wilson's classical formula.<sup>51</sup> The castle is placed at the intersection of the horizontal and vertical planes that form a golden section division of the landscape. The tall tree seen on the right echoes the classical compositions of Wilson and Claude Lorrain. The postcard while being a factual record of place nonetheless adheres to the pictorial conventions that artists had previously applied to this location. The reproduced photographs that followed these artists' pictures and graphics have maintained and added to the site's topographical status.

In 1900 a picture postcard was produced that primarily focuses on the castle. *Dolbadarn Castle* (Figure 31) depicts the castle on the right with a view up the valley on the left. It duplicates an anonymous coloured drawing made in 1872 which also focuses on the castle which is placed on the right of the composition. This forceful pictorial motif was chosen to illustrate the front cover of Paul Joyner's catalogue and essays on *Dolbadarn: Studies on a Theme*, (Figure 32) an exhibition catalogue dating from 1990. As the twentieth century progressed the viewpoint immediately in front of the castle became dominant. A later photograph taken by Peter Sager (b.1945) from the identical spot dating from the mid 1980s was reproduced in Sager's *Wales* a travel guidebook published in 1985.<sup>52</sup> This picture is captioned *Dolbadarn Castle: Llwelelyn the Great's fortress on Llyn Peris, 13th century* (Figure 33). The only differences

between these two topographical views is the vegetation shown on the stairway in the earlier photograph and the disturbance on the far left lakeshore in the later photograph caused by the construction of Europe's largest hydroelectric power station finished in 1984. In the title Sager refers to the site's historical significance rather than to its scenic location. This emphasis on the historic is reflected in the choice of a viewpoint that gives emphasis to the castle rather than its landscape.

In contemporary tourist literature promoting north Wales colour photographs of the Griffith viewpoint rarely appear, instead pictures solely of Dolbadarn Castle are reproduced. When the Buck brothers produced their engraving, *The West View of Dolbadarn Castle in the County of Carnarvon* (Figure 18) the main subject was the castle. In a recent colour photograph reproduced in the tourist board publication *Snowdonia Mountains and Coast* the castle is once again the subject. The photograph is captioned *Castell Dolbadarn / Dolbadarn Castle* (Figure 34) and gives an accurate close up view of the castle tower standing in front of mountains just visible to either side. This picture is devoid of any human presence and this gives the impression that this historical site is quite remote. The castle is adjacent to the Royal Victoria Hotel and also to the beginning of the Snowdon Mountain Railway itself a major attraction for more than a century.<sup>53</sup> In his text Sager summed up the historical attributes and the visual status of Dolbadarn Castle and its landscape:

This is a chronology of a beauty spot: 1255: Llywelyn the Last keeps his brother Owain prisoner in the tower for more than twenty years. In 1762, Richard Wilson paints castle and lake like a piece of classic Italy. 1798-99, Turner comes - twice - and paints Dolbadarn Castle as the apotheosis of his Welsh experience: this work gains him entry to the Royal Academy. In 1832 Princess Victoria visits the romantic lake, and is 'exceedingly struck with the scenery', the result is inevitably a Royal Hotel, and Llanberis becomes the focal point for Snowdon Tourists.<sup>54</sup>

At the time of Queen Victoria's visit the status of this topographical landscape was at its height and the sites popularity can be seen in the number of pictures exhibited of the Griffith landscape of lake, castle and mountain. Four works were exhibited at the *Royal Academy* between 1828 and 1840.<sup>55</sup> At the *British Institution* during the same period four works were exhibited connected with the location.<sup>56</sup> Many other individual pictures were painted at this time and the site's status was powerful enough

for John Glover (1767-1849) to paint a version of it in Tasmania.<sup>57</sup> Glover's oil painting *Snowdon and Dolbadarn Castle, North Wales* (Figure 35) was painted in 1838 just four years after Princess Victoria's visit.<sup>58</sup> It was painted from earlier sketches drawn in north Wales prior to the artist's emigration. Although it is a realist painting with a topographical accuracy in the artist's ability to represent mountain form its overriding aesthetic quality is sublime. This is achieved by using a high vantage point above the left bank of the lake away from the established lakeside viewpoint. Very little sky is shown and the centralised viewpoint with little foreground suggests the sublime; this is further enhanced by the restricted range set of hues that Glover applied to this painting. Glover's painting with its unconventional portrayal of this subject illustrates how the majority of artists adhered to the Griffith viewpoint as depicted in Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* and subsequently applied a topographical technique to their individual rendering of lake, castle and mountain that is the Dolbadarn viewpoint. By the end of the nineteenth century topographical views were in decline as photography took over the topographical role. In the twentieth century the castle once again became the main subject displacing the landscape setting in favour of a close up view usually recorded via the topographical realism of the colour photograph.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This engraving was originally published in Pennant's *The Journey to Snowdon*, issued separately in 1781. It was reissued as the first part of volume two in *A Tour in Wales* in 1783. In 1784 both volumes of *A Tour in Wales* were published as one set. In later editions, *The Journey to Snowdon* section retracts its earlier publication date of 1781.

<sup>2</sup> The majority of Moses Griffith's topographical illustrations that were published in *A Tour in Wales* derive from watercolours made with Thomas Pennant on excursions to north Wales between 1773 and 1776.

<sup>3</sup> For a recent discussion on the history of the castle see, C. J. Spurgeon, 'Dolbardarn: the castle', in *Dolbardarn Studies on a Theme*, ed., Paul Joyner, exhibition catalogue, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1990, pp.65-81.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Wilson painted several versions of this subject, for example, *Llyn Peris and Dolbardarn Castle*, c.1762-64 National Museum of Art, Melbourne. *Dolbardarn Castle*, c.1763-64, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. *The Lake of Nemi with Dolbardarn Castle*, 1764-65, Bristol Art Gallery.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Sandby visited Snowdonia in 1771 while on the first recorded tour of north Wales with Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn who had commissioned the artist to teach him drawing and to record their excursion. See, Peter Hughes, 'Paul Sandby and Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn', *Burlington Magazine*, CXIV, 1972, pp.459-466.

<sup>6</sup> This watercolour is in a private collection. It is reproduced in monochrome in, *Dolbadarn: Studies on a Theme*, ed., Paul Joyner, exhibition catalogue, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1990, p. 79, No.55.

<sup>7</sup> John Leland (c.1502-1552) was appointed by King Henry VIII as the Kings Antiquary and was able to travel throughout Britain recording the literary and artistic treasures to be recorded these were often in the possession of the church. His Welsh visit is recorded as a catalogue list rather than a text narrative, see, John Leland, *Itinerary in Wales*, (1536-39), ed., Lucy Toulmin-Smith, London, 1904.

<sup>8</sup> For a contemporary account of the history of Dolbadarn Castle see, C.J. Spurgeon, 'Dolbadarn: The Castle' in *Dolbadarn Studies on a Theme*, ed., Paul Joyner, exhibition catalogue, The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1990, pp. 65-81.

<sup>9</sup> Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, *A Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales. Made in the months of June, July 1774 and in the months of June, July and August 1777*, Salisbury, 1781, p.129.

<sup>10</sup> The largest collection of Moses Griffith watercolours is in the National Library of Wales. For details of other holdings see, Donald Moore, *Moses Griffith 1747-1819: Artist and Illustrator in the service of Thomas Pennant*, exhibition catalogue, Welsh Arts Council, Cardiff, 1979, p.47.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Pennant's social status was such that he was able to mix with the highest levels of Welsh society. He was related to such important land owning families as the Mostyns. Because of his social status Pennant was able to gain access to old manuscripts in the private libraries of the Welsh gentry. He had similar relationships with the clergy. His income was generated by the profits from a lead mine. At Downing Pennant built a library of more than 5000 books.

<sup>12</sup> Published works by Thomas Pennant with their publication date are, 1761, *British Zoology*. 1771, *Synopsis of Quadrupeds*. 1773, *Genera of Birds*. 1779, *Indian Zoology*. 1784, *Arctic Zoology*. 1771, *Tour in Scotland in 1769*. 1774, *Tour in Scotland in 1772*. 1778, *A Tour in Wales*, vol.1. 1781, *A Tour in Wales*, vol. II part i. *The Journey to Snowdon*. 1781, *History of Quadrupeds*. 1782, *Journey from Chester to London*. 1783, *A Tour in Wales* vol. II part ii. *The Continuation of the Journey and from Downing to Montgomery and Shrewsbury*. 1784, *A Tour in Wales* vol.1 & vol. II. 1790, *Account of London*. 1793, *The Literary Life of Thomas Pennant Esq. by Himself*. 1796, *History of Whitford and Holywell*. 1798, *Outlines of the Globe*. 1798, *Miscellanies* (private press). 1798, *History of Patagonians* (private press). 1801, *Journey from London to Dover*. 1801, *Journey from Dover to the Isle of Wight*.

<sup>13</sup> Maurice Lindsay, *The Discovery of Scotland*, London, 1964, p.122.

<sup>14</sup> William Bingley, *North Wales, Delineated from Two Excursions and Intended as a Guide For Future Tourists*, London, 1814, p.42.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, vol.1., Benjamin White at Horace's Head in Fleet Street, London, 1784, advertisement, p. ii.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Pennant, *The Literary Life of the Late Thomas Pennant Esq.*, London, 1793, p.26.

<sup>17</sup> Other examples include, Arthur Aiken, *Journal of a Tour Through North Wales and Part of Shropshire*, London, 1797. Joseph Craddock, *An Account of Some of the Most Romantic Parts of North Wales*, London, 1777. Joseph Hucks, *A Pedestrian Tour Through North Wales in a Series of Letters*, London, 1795. Henry Skrine, *Tours Through North Wales*, London, 1798. Henry Wyndham, *A Gentleman's Tour Through Monmouthshire and Wales, in the Months of June and July. 1774*, London, 1775. See also the *Bibliography of the Published and Unpublished Tour Accounts and the Guidebook Literature of Snowdonia 1770-1900*.

<sup>18</sup> W.J.Hughes, *Wales and the Welsh in English Literature*, London and Wrexham, 1924, p.99.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, vol., II, 'The Journey to Snowdon', p.104. Pennant also published a list of the twelve prints available in Sandby's three sets, *South Wales*, *North Wales* and *South and North Wales*, pp. v-vi.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.109.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.113.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, vol.1., advertisement, pp. iv-v.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, advertisement, p. v.

<sup>24</sup> See, Peter Hughes, 'Paul Sandby and Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn', *Burlington Magazine*, CXIV, 1972, pp. 459-466., and, Peter Hughes, 'Paul Sandby's Tour of Wales with Joseph Banks', *Burlington Magazine*, CXVII, 1975, pp. 452-457.

<sup>25</sup> This change and the technical difficulties encountered are discussed by David Penn. See, David Penn 'Paul Sandby and Aquatint', in, *Dolbadarn Studies on a Theme*, ed., Paul Joyner, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1990, pp.83-99.

<sup>26</sup> There is a copy of this print in the British Museum. It is in the original set of Sandby's, *XII Views in North Wales* which also contains a copy of *Conwyd Mill near Cowens in Merioneth Shire, between Llangollen and Bala* which was also replaced. The other two sets in the Museum contain the substitute prints *The Abbey of Llan Egnest or Vale Crucis*, and *Castle Dinas Bran and Pengwern Corn and Fulling Mills, with Pont-y-Pandy near Festiniog*. The order of the replaced prints is variable.

- <sup>27</sup> John Boydell reissued this print in, *A Collection of One Hundred and Fifty Select Views in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland*, published in 1781.
- <sup>28</sup> For further information on this topic see, Peter Bishop, *"Rich and Varied Prospects" Mountain Scenery in Snowdonia 1764-1836: Thomas Pennant's "A Tour in Wales" and its Influence*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Central England in Birmingham, 1995. On Pennant see, Ronald Paul Evans, *Thomas Pennant's Writings on North Wales*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Wales, Swansea, 1985. (ref. 1985/806). Ronald Paul Evans, *The life and work of Thomas Pennant (1726-1798)*, PhD thesis, University of Wales, Swansea, 1994. (ref.1994/748). L.F. Powell, 'The Tours of Thomas Pennant', *The Library Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, vol. XIX, part two, September 1938, pp. 131-154. Iolo Williams, 'Thomas Pennant and Moses Griffith, a Welsh Naturalist and his Welsh Artist of the Eighteenth Century', *Country Life*, July 2nd 1938, pp.8-9.
- <sup>29</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, vol. II., p.165.
- <sup>30</sup> Turner's early sketchbooks are discussed in Gerald Wilkinson, *Turner's Early Sketchbooks: Drawings in England, Wales and Scotland from 1789-1802*, Barrie & Jenkins, London, 1972.
- <sup>31</sup> Abstracts from 'The Journey to Snowdon' in Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* written by Turner are recorded in two sketchbooks dating from 1799, *Lancashire and North Wales*, No. XLV, 1799, flyleaf, cited p.169., and *Dolbardarn*, No. XLVI, 1799, end cover, Turner Bequest, Tate Britain, London.
- <sup>32</sup> A number of these are reproduced in Andrew Wilton's authoritative catalogue tracing Turner's five Welsh tours, see, Andrew Wilton, *Turner in Wales*, exhibition catalogue, Llandudno and Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea, 1984.
- <sup>33</sup> These studies have been reproduced in colour see, Gerald Wilkinson, *Turner's Early Sketchbooks: Drawings in England, Wales and Scotland from 1789-1802*, Barrie & Jenkins, London, 1972, pp.94-95.
- <sup>34</sup> See, John Gage, 'Turner's Dolbardarn Castle: Sublimity and Mystery', in *Dolbardarn Castle: Studies on a Theme*, ed., Paul Joyner, exhibition catalogue, The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1990, pp. 39-52.
- <sup>35</sup> C.M. Kauffmann, *John Varley (1778-1842)* exhibition catalogue, B.T. Batsford Ltd and V&A Museum, London, 1985, p.33.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.75. This list of John Varley's exhibited works was compiled by Basil S. Long, from, *OWCS Club Volume*, no. II., 1924-25.
- <sup>37</sup> This watercolour is in the National Library of Wales. It is reproduced in colour in, *Dolbadarn: Studies on a Theme*, ed., Paul Joyner, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1990, colour plate VIII., no pagination.
- <sup>38</sup> Peter Bicknell, 'Dolbadarn and the Picturesque: A comparison with the Lake District', in *Dolbadarn Studies on a Theme*, ed., Paul Joyner, The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1990, p. 28.
- <sup>39</sup> Source, Royal Academy database
- <sup>40</sup> Source, British Institution database
- <sup>41</sup> Source, Society of Artists database
- <sup>42</sup> An oil painting by Creswick of the same subject and with the same title but without the boat and figures is in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. Thomas Creswick's, *Llanberis Lake* is reproduced in monochrome in, *Concise Illustrated Catalogue of British Paintings in the Walker Art Gallery and at Sudley*, ed.. Sandra Penketh, National Museums on Merseyside and Old Roan Press, Bath, 1995, no.321., p. 71.
- <sup>43</sup> William Bingley, *North Wales Delineated from Two Excursions Through the Interesting Parts of that Highly Beautiful and Romantic Country, and Intended as a Guide to Future Tourists*, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London, 1814, p.143
- <sup>44</sup> Thomas Roscoe, *Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales*, C. Tilt, and Simpkin and Co. Wrightson and Webb, London and Birmingham, 1836, p. 128.
- <sup>45</sup> Adam and Charles Black, *Black's Picturesque Guide to North Wales*, (1858) Adam and Charles Black, Edinburgh, 1886, p. 97.
- <sup>46</sup> David Cox made his first trip to north Wales in 1805.
- <sup>47</sup> A reason for this change was the arrival of the railway at Llanberis in July 1869. The *London and North Western Railway* ran a tourist excursion service to Llanberis. This was advertised in 1883 as, *Tours Through Snowdon District, 1883. Tour No. 5*.
- <sup>48</sup> Askew Roberts, *Gossiping Guide to Wales*, Hodder and Stoughton and Woodhall and Co. London and Oswestry, 1883, advertisement section, p.36.
- <sup>49</sup> George Lowthian Hall (1825-1888) showed a total of 118 works in London exhibitions between 1856 and 1878. He exhibited 8 works at Suffolk Street and 7 at the Royal Academy.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

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<sup>51</sup> As Peter Bicknell has pointed out the popularity of the round tower set in the middle distance was greatly enhanced with the publication by Boydell, in 1777, of Richard Earlom's engraved sepia mezzotints from Claude Lorrain's *Liber Veritatis*. Bicknell recorded that a tower appears in almost half of the original Claude drawings and that at least half of these towers were round. See, Peter Bicknell, 'Dolbadarn and the Picturesque: a comparison with the Lake District', in *Dolbadarn: Studies on a Theme*, ed. Paul Joyner, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1990, pp.30-33.

<sup>52</sup> This book was originally written in German by Peter Sager and published there in 1985. An English edition was published in 1991. Peter Sager is a travel writer, critic and art historian. See, Peter Sager, *Pallas Wales*, translated David H Wilson, Pallas Athene, London, 1996.

<sup>53</sup> The Snowdon Mountain Railway was completed in 1896 and opened briefly on 6th April that year, following a mishap with a locomotive and the loss of a passenger's life the line was closed for a year reopening for passengers in 1898.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Sager, *Pallas Wales*, Pallas Athene, London, 1996, pp. 366-67.

<sup>55</sup> The four works shown at the Royal Academy contemporary with Princess Victoria's visit are, *Scene at Llanberis, North Wales* and *Dolbadarn Castle in the Distance* by Philip Browne in 1828. *Dolbadarn Castle, North Wales* by James Baynes in 1831. *Dolbadarn Castle, and Llanberis Lake, North Wales* by Philip Browne in 1838 and *The Llanberis sude of Snowdon, North Wales* by Philip Browne in 1840.

<sup>56</sup> The four works shown at the British Institution contemporary with Princess Victoria's visit are, *Dolbadarn Castle* by Alfred Clint in 1828. *Dolbadarn Castle* by George Hilditch in 1829. *Llanberis Lake* by George Hilditch in 1829 and *Llanberis Lake* by George Hilditch in 1830.

<sup>57</sup> John Glover (1769-1849) was a founder member of the OWCS in 1804 and in 1824 he helped to instigate the Society of British Artists. He made his first sketching tour to north Wales in 1804. After a successful exhibiting career from 1820 onwards in London Glover emigrated to Tasmania in 1831 where he used his wealth to establish himself as a sheep farmer.

<sup>58</sup> Francis McCarthy has researched this rediscovered painting. See, Francis McCarthy, 'John Glover: Snowdon and Dolbadarn Castle', in Paul Joyner, ed., *Dolbadarn: Studies on a Theme*, The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1990, pp. 53-63.

## Classical Snowdonia: Snowdon from Capel Curig.

On arrival at Capel Curig, either by foot, by car, or by coach the visitor to Snowdonia would enter this landscape and look towards Snowdon set on the horizon of the vista. Framing the landscape, either by the use of a camera or by selective vision the tourist will emulate the visioning process used by artists at this particular location. The reproduction of this viewpoint in the form of colour postcards, photographic prints for calendars, picture books and in the promotional literature used by the Welsh and British tourist boards confirms the viability and popularity of this location.

In a contemporary picture postcard reproduction titled, *Snowdon from Capel Curig* (Figure 36) Snowdon is shown in the distance, any threat of danger, imagined or real, is not allowed to intrude into this picture, it is contemplative, rather than demanding of any particular or immediate response from the viewer or spectator. The postcard picture is actually a carefully controlled photograph of the vista that also contains several key ingredients of the visual. These are taken from a number of artistic sources. These lie latently, behind the apparently realist structure of the landscape, that is presented to us. It appears natural, which it is, but all images are artificial in themselves, even photographic ones.

The overall compositional flavour of this view is classical; that is, the sequence the spectator takes through the picture is carefully controlled. There are a number of stages through which the eye is led, firstly from the foreground to the middle distance and then on to the background where the whole panorama of Snowdon fills the horizon. This compositional formula, and more complex versions of it, was used extensively by landscape artists working in Italy in the 17th century. An example by Nicholas Poussin (1593-1665) can be used to illustrate this, his, *Orpheus and Eurydice*<sup>1</sup> (Figure 37) of 1650 closely resembles the constructional integrity of the postcard composition. A comparison of the Poussin (Figure 37) with the postcard (Figure 36) will reveal these connections. For example, note how closely the foreground areas resemble each other in terms of structure, excepting the Poussin tree

on the right and the figures. Even the tonal arrangements of the postcard resemble this Poussin, with a dark left side, a lighter treatment of lake in the middle distance, and a darker area on the right. In the background mountains are shown in a mid tone. Interestingly the sequence of height decreases from right to left in both works. The overall treatment of proportional space is also similar. The use of a tripartite sequence became an established method of rendering the picturesque as suggested by William Gilpin (1724-1803), whose popular guidebooks were published towards the end of the 18th century.<sup>2</sup> These gave to tourists a method of recording their experience via his ‘rules of picturesque beauty’<sup>3</sup> that he had first applied to the River Wye. This image has a cosy reassuring quality, reminiscent of the original meaning of the landscape term, ‘peep’, which by 1480 was ‘To emerge into view’, and a ‘suggestion of looking out, or over something’.<sup>4</sup> What this suggests to me is the idea of a landscape that is controlled, or at least perceived from the security or shelter of trees, or other natural protection from any potentially aggressive threat. In a sense, we perceive Snowdon from a similarly safe position, not far from the car, coach, or a nearby hotel that will give protection if required. This image contains both mountain and lake, two powerful landscape features of Snowdonia. Sometimes Snowdon is seen reflected on the flat surface of the water to give a mirror-like effect, and this characteristic is often present when the lake occupies the immediate foreground. A feature common to many renderings of this picture is that the summit of Snowdon is often shown obscured by cloud and often some of the other peaks are similarly hidden from view. This gives the impression that the mountains are significantly higher than they are in actuality. It also heightens the effects of the sublime, suggesting an element of concealed danger, of awe, contained within this restrained and idyllic setting. Danger is thus hinted at, but not overtly described. This viewpoint also has certain features of topography that reminded visitors and travellers alike of alpine scenery. As Thomas Pennant (1726-1798) observed in the 18th century, on entering this vale at Capel Curig:

*Snowdon* and all his sons, *Crib Goch*, *Crib y Distill*, *Lliwedd yr Aran*, and many others, here burst at once full in view, and make this far the finest approach to our boasted *Alps*.<sup>5</sup>

Pennant is acknowledged as an early authority on Snowdonia and was resident close by in Flintshire. He wrote a comprehensive guide to the region that was published in its complete two volume form in 1784. *A Tour in Wales* was unique, in the number



of engraved illustrations that it contained.<sup>6</sup> These were mostly drawn by Moses Griffith (1747-1819) whom Pennant employed to illustrate his books.<sup>7</sup> The subjects are wide ranging and include a number of mountain landscapes.

An example of a classical treatment being applied directly to this motif can be seen in Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg's (1740-1812)<sup>8</sup> oil painting titled, *View of Snowdon from Capel Curig, a morning*, (Figure 38). It was painted in 1787, just three years after the publication of Pennant's, *A Tour in Wales*. De Loutherbourg may well have been familiar with this picture in its engraved form as it appears in *A Tour in Wales*. Plate VII, titled, *The Summit of Snowdon from Capel Cerig* (Figure 39) is placed adjacent to the text that describes this location in the 'Journey to Snowdon' section of volume two. Moses Griffith's representation is the precursor image for Snowdon as seen from the Capel Curig viewpoint and many artists who subsequently came to this spot were aware of it. De Loutherbourg had visited Snowdonia the previous year while on a tour to Wales and this subject was painted in the studio in London as an exhibition piece and was shown at the *Royal Academy* in 1787 (no.216). Its companion piece that year at the *Royal Academy*, also by De Loutherbourg was another view of Snowdon, titled, *View of Snowdon from Llyn Beris Lake with the castle of Dol Badern* (no.94). This oil has a similar compositional format to the Capel Curig painting and a version of this subject was also reproduced in Pennant as plate VIII, with the title, *A View in Nant Beris* (Figure 17). These two paintings were the only landscape pictures of north Wales shown at the *Royal Academy* that year. This was the first time that a picture depicted a named view of Snowdon from Capel Curig at the *Royal Academy*. De Loutherbourg's other subject had been exhibited there before, in 1776, in 1777, by George Barret (1732-1784) and in 1786 by James Barret (fl.1785-1819). Louis Hawes has suggested that these two oils exhibited at the *Royal Academy* in 1787 represent the picturesque and the sublime respectively in their method of execution.<sup>9</sup> The *View of Snowdon from Capel Curig, a morning* (Figure 38) is a particularly successful rendering of the picturesque within a classical framework, which has added status due to its large size and can be seen as De Loutherbourg's most important painting of mountain landscape. The exposure of these mountain subjects, by an eminent and successful professional artist, on the walls of the Academy in 1787, would have given status to mountain scenery in Snowdonia in general and to the view of Snowdon from Capel Curig in particular. Although De

Loutherbourg's painting of *Snowdon from Capel Curig* (Figure 38) is an idealised picture with Snowdon shown bathed in a light more reminiscent of Italy than north Wales. In conjunction with this classical construction of space, De Loutherbourg has been able to retain a number of observed topographical features. The underlying topography of this landscape is accurately represented and any exaggeration of form, for example, in the Snowdon massif itself, only reinforces and adds to this visual identity. It becomes a composite image, which represents more than merely a picturesque landscape view. It has become a motif, a viable subject for artists and tourist alike, who, if they do not take a photograph, will buy a postcard instead. They will carry away with them an identity of place, a symbol of mountain scenery unique to Snowdonia, such is the timeless power of this image.

Another feature that is faithfully depicted is the small footbridge that crosses the stream that emerges from the eastern end of the Mymbyr lake at a point just before it joins the river Llugwy close to Capel Curig. It is from this viewpoint that many pictures are taken, particularly those that include an expanse of lake in the foreground. They invariably have the same title as the more elevated views that show the lakes in the middle distance. The authenticity of De Loutherbourg's footbridge can be confirmed by its appearance both before and after his view from Capel Curig was painted. It appears earlier in the engraving by Moses Griffith, *The summit of Snowdon from Capel Cerig* (Figure 39). The bridge structure and the number of supporting piers are replicated in De Loutherbourg's picture. Griffith is acknowledged to be an accurate topographer and illustrator. The footbridge in both of these works is set on the golden mean, both horizontally and vertically. In De Loutherbourg's painting this acts as an anchor for the eye as it scans the image, and it also acts as a point of human accessibility, somewhere for us to be, to linger, to pause in this expansive landscape as we contemplate the panoramic vista. This footbridge represents a recognisable reality, an actuality that counterbalances the exaggerations of the mountain forms. These in turn empower the painting's own reality and thus reinforces the perception of this vista, both in terms of seeing it as a tangible image, as in this example, or in other versions of the subject, whether painted, engraved or photographed. This picture can also exist in memory as a composite of the vista, this may be changed by the actual experience of place or confirmed depending on the expectations and circumstances of the spectator. Another topographical work that

shows the footbridge was published in 1792 as an engraved plate by Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1758-1838).<sup>10</sup> This is titled, *Snowdon from Capel Curig* (Figure 40). This plate appeared in Hoare's, *A Collection of 48 Views of Nobleman's and Gentlemen's Seats, Towns, Castles, Monasteries and Romantic Places in North and South Wales*.<sup>11</sup> This print depicts the footbridge on the left, again it is set on the golden mean and the composition adheres to the essential visual ingredients already discussed. Another feature that is also present in the De Louthembourg landscape (figure 38) are a group of buildings that appear on the extreme right of the painting. These buildings include stables for the increasing through traffic from Bettws-y-Coed to Bangor. This route is shown on John Cary's map of north Wales, published in 1787, the same year as De Louthembourg's painting was made.<sup>12</sup> In front of the buildings can be seen one of the smallest churches in the area. The church of *Capel Curig a't fam Julitta* with a nave measuring just over thirty-five feet was replaced by a larger church, nearby, in 1883.<sup>13</sup> This small church provides a sense of scale for the landscape vista and this is further enhanced by the figures that are in transit through it. On the left, a man on a horse, is depicted, pulling a sledge along a dirt road from the direction of Bettws-y-Coed. This was a practical method of moving bulky materials around before improvements to roads were made. It would be these improvements to roads that would enable a greater number of visitors to enjoy the spectacle of mountain scenery in the heart of Snowdonia. As Professor Arthur Dodd has pointed out:

Freed from the menace of ruts, deadly angles and impossible gradients, the highways began to swarm with wheeled vehicles. The packhorse, pack-mule and sledge gave place to the waggon, and degenerate travellers sought the idle discomfort of the stage coach or post- chaise instead of riding their own horses.<sup>14</sup>

An improved route via Capel Curig to Bangor from Bettws-y-Coed was open by 1802. This allowed travellers a more direct route to Holyhead from Shrewsbury and the midlands than the northern coastal route did. Thomas Telford further improved this route from 1815 and completed in 1830.<sup>15</sup> Today the present A5 follows Telford's route and his abilities as an engineer can still be appreciated. In the painting a group of three people can be seen. They form a compositional group in the right foreground below road level. This road emerges into view at the bottom centre of the canvas breaking the composition in half as it vanishes in perspective towards the figure on the horse. The road perspective cuts a 30-degree angle across the foreground and this

is echoed on the right where a thin streak of sunlight illuminates the area immediately in front of the buildings and church. This lighter area is continued towards the lake and is counter balanced by a lighter area above the group of buildings on the right. These patches of sunlight are juxtaposed against the pale, almost serene light that bathes the Snowdon massif itself. These lighter patches are in contrast to the more severe treatment of light and dark that make up the foreground. The foreground figures are shown in deep shadow midway between the two diagonals of sunlight, the road on the left and the area in front of the buildings on the right. They are set on the golden mean on the right side, counterbalanced by the peak of Snowdon rising skywards above them, again placed on the golden mean both vertically and horizontally. The group of figures, two women and a man seem to be engaged in conversation. No one is looking towards Snowdon, the subject of this work, yet the figure with the stick appears to be the recipient of the discussion that is taking place. If this figure is a visitor, then it could be De Louthembourg himself, possibly making enquiries about the mountainous country he is visiting. In 1805 De Louthembourg published a set of 18 prints on romantic and picturesque landscape scenery in England and Wales.<sup>16</sup> One of these prints is a variation on the present composition and depicts the view of Snowdon from Capel Curig. Each plate has an accompanying text that describes his visit to the location that is illustrated. One other figure can be discerned in the 1787 painting. This figure is almost entirely hidden in deep shadow, except for the head and shoulders which are shown in contrast against the light, in an area of sunlight on the right of the painting. This figure is likely to be a local woman, as the two women in the group are. All three women are wearing hats, a common practice out of doors in Wales at this time. This single figure helps to define the relative scale between the foreground and the middle distance. All the figures, from the horse rider on the left, the talking group centre and the single figure on the right, form three stages of recessionary space within the composition. The eye is led from left to right, at each stage, the figures are correspondingly smaller in size, the last figure representing the proportional limits of a readable visual scale for this composition. This gives added strength and power to the mountain scenery that surrounds our figures. The composition is given an element of the sublime by the intrusion of the flank of Moel Siabod that breaks in from the left side. Represented in deep shadow it forms a triangular slab of vertical space. This acts as a foil to the sunlit mountain vista beyond. Simultaneously our eye is led from here to the right side of the painting.

Where visual access can be made, across the lake, continuing up and over the vale to the summit peaks of Snowdon set on the distant horizon. Interestingly this dark triangular area is replicated in the picture postcard discussed earlier and this in turn is related to the classical construction of landscape forms and their tonality as used by Poussin in his painting of *Orpheus and Eurydice* of 1650 (Figure 37). A direct comparison between the postcard (Figure 36) and De Loutherbourg's painting (Figure 38) will reveal these connections. The effect is quite dramatic, how much Poussin is still left in the postcard compared with the De Loutherbourg painting? The same proportion of chiaroscuro can be seen in the same parts of the composition in both of these pictures. The visual connections between Poussin and De Loutherbourg are not in themselves that surprising given De Loutherbourg's classicising treatment of his view of Snowdon, but it is perhaps more unexpected to find so much evidence for the existence of the classical in the postcard picture.

De Loutherbourg's painting, *Snowdon from Capel Curig, a morning* (Figure 38) depicts the mountains of Snowdonia in a favourable light with the last of the mornings cloud clinging to the high peaks and the exaggerations of scale invite us in to revel in the mountain spectacle that he created. Its visual power is still as potent now as it had been in 1787 when it was shown on the walls of the Academy. Hidden within its classical framework is a strong visual motif, an image so powerful that has been used extensively ever since by artists and later by photographers, in a variety of techniques and processes and for a number of audiences.

The mountain photographer Walter Poucher (1891-1988) can be seen as an example of this.<sup>17</sup> His monochrome photograph *Snowdon from the Pinnacles of Capel Curig* (Figure 41) is taken from the same elevated viewpoint that De Loutherbourg used for his picture. In an essay<sup>18</sup> on mountain photography Poucher reproduced four photographs depicting Snowdon, two of which are from Capel Curig, a third depicts the eastern face of Snowdon as seen from the Garth Bridge and the fourth is a close up view of Snowdon as seen from the shore of Llyn Llydaw. In his essay Poucher described the merits of seeing Snowdon from the Capel Curig side of the mountain. He wrote 'It is generally agreed that the eastern aspect of this mountain is the finest and it looks its best up to noon on a sunny morning with cloud drifting overhead'.<sup>19</sup> De Loutherbourg's painting also depicts the eastern aspect of the Snowdon range,

seen in a morning light, with drifting cloud lifting off the highest summit peaks. Certain fundamentals of visual perception are being applied to this view that enable it to be seen by various visioning processes, by eye, by lens or by brush. It is these classic visioning structures that have given a particular sense of identity to the visual ingredients that make up this image. These schemas are not restricted by time. They are equally valid for a contemporary postcard as they were for a De Louthembourg painting. There are numerous other versions of this subject by artists, engravers, printers, photographers, and writers alike. The differences between each one of them can be seen by the methods and techniques used in conjunction with individual expressions of style and quality. Poucher's photograph (Figure 41) can be seen as part of a continuum in the visioning of Snowdon as seen from Capel Curig that will continue into the future. A digital camera may now be the new visioning tool, but the visual elements that make up this image will remain the same, retaining its visual identity whether the user is a photographer, artist, or tourist.

At the time of De Louthembourg's visit to north Wales accommodation for visitors was still to be fully developed and as the roads improved so did the inns and the first hotels were built next to the new coach roads. At Capel Curig these improvements were instigated by Lord Penrhyn (c.1737-1808) whose wealth was based on mineral property. In 1792 he financed the new hotel at Capel Curig. It was specially built to meet the demand created by the increased number of visitors who were now able to travel into the heart of Snowdonia. It was sited close to the Mymbyr lake viewpoint for the Snowdon panorama, at the same location as the buildings seen in De Louthembourg's view. The building often appears in views of the Snowdon range made from the more elevated viewpoint above Capel Curig. As the Rev William Bingley observed on his second visit, made in 1801:

Those tourists, who like myself, have visited this vale some years ago, when the only place of public accommodation was a mean pot-house, considerably allied to those at Llanberis, and who shall now visit it with the present accommodations, (with which for a mountain country, I was greatly surprised), will be able with some justice to appreciate the spirited conduct, and truly patriotic exertions of the noble proprietor, who has not only constructed for them an inn, but who was the first to make this part of the country passable in carriages.<sup>20</sup>

As the numbers of visitors to Capel Curig grew the hotel had to be enlarged further to meet the extra demand. Richard Colt Hoare on a subsequent visit to Capel Curig in 1810 provides the visual evidence of this expansion. *The Inn at Capel Curig* (Figure 42) is a pen and wash drawing that has the look of a topographical drawing made on the spot. Drawn just beyond the footbridge viewpoint for Snowdon and close to the shore of the lake. This view looks back along the footpath, towards the hotel that fills the entire width of the picture. It looks a large building, even by today's standards and was certainly a welcome sight after an excursion into the mountains or after a bumpy ride by coach, chaise or horse back. To this picture Colt Hoare has added some reassuring smoke emerging from the chimney and a fisherman on the bridge.<sup>21</sup>

The Rev. G. J. Freeman visited the inn at Capel Curig while making a pedestrian tour in 1824. After a long day's walk from Llyn Ogwen and over Trivaen, it was nearly nine o'clock before he and his companion arrived at the inn in search of a meal and a room for the night. As he recorded they were well received:

At that excellent inn we found every body ready to serve us. The first thing we did was to swallow a small quantity of hot mutton broth, after which we procured a couple of blankets, and closing our room door, we sat wrapped in these, drying our garments before the fire. It appeared that we occupied the only vacant apartment, for while thus engaged, a petition came from a half-drowned traveller just descended from one of the coaches, praying co-partnership.<sup>22</sup>

The Rev. Freeman did not share their facilities with the stranger that night and as he also observed at this time 'The house was very full of genteel company, and a first-rate harper played select airs in the entrance'.<sup>23</sup> The hotel now dominated the small village of Capel Curig and its scenic position, as Freeman noted:

This little village, whose chief structure is the large and capital Hotel where we now were stands in a spot exceedingly convenient for some of the finest scenery of *Snowdonia*, and from which three vallies of distinct character radiate. We had passed down one of them the evening before. This points to the northward, and conducts to *Llyn ogwen* and *Bangor*. A second is called *Duffryn mymbyr*, and follows the course of the romantic river *Llugwy* to its junction with the *Conway*, near *Bettws-y-coed*. A third leads in an opposite direction towards

*Snowdon.*<sup>24</sup>

The tourist could now enjoy the mountain wilderness from the relative comfort of a hotel in this remote spot and this was a factor at this location and at others in Snowdonia that contributed to the increasing numbers of travellers and tourists visiting north Wales. There were by 1810, many new hotels, and improved coaching inns at all the significant viewpoints, or centres from which excursions into the mountains could be made. At Dolbardarn there was the Royal Victoria Hotel, renamed after a visit by Queen Victoria when she was a princess to the Llanberis pass in 1832. This hotel is located close to the Dolbardarn Castle site and can still be visited. It was also a principal base for ascending the mountain from the Llanberis side, which provided the easiest ascent to the summit available. There were hotels at Beddgelert, Bettws-y-Coed, Llanwrst, and further up the pass from Capel Curig at Pen-y-Gwyrdd. This hotel is sited only a short distance from Snowdon and a short walk from Llyn Llydaw at the head of the scenic Nant Gwynant pass. When William Bingley visited Beddgelert on his second tour in 1801 he was able to stay in the newly opened Beddgelert Hotel, situated a short distance from the village on the Pont Aberglaslyn side where he found ‘excellent accommodations’.<sup>25</sup> This hotel is still trading today under the name of the Royal Goat. These new hotels were built in the heart of Snowdonia at locations which today would not receive planning permission in such sensitive landscapes. The advantage to the visitor was that they could experience mountain scenery from the comfort of the hotel as the Rev. Freeman noticed at the Capel Curig hotel the vista included ‘the bases of *Moel Sheabod*, and on the other, the *Glyders*, *Snowdon* terminates the vale in front, and in fair weather, is seen in great majesty from the *Capel Curig* hotel’.<sup>26</sup>

The rustic footbridge, at the foot of the Mymbyr lake, immediately in front of the hotel is sometimes referred to as the Royal Bridge. Another result of Queen Victoria’s youthful visit to north Wales. Shortly after this, the hotel became known as the Royal Hotel, Capel Curig. The hotel owners, aware of the added status that such connections could bring, welcomed this Royal visit. Merely adding the word ‘royal’ to their name was an inexpensive way of enhancing a hotel’s status particularly outside Wales. An advertisement for the Royal Hotel, titled, *Royal Hotel, Capel Curig* (Figure 43) makes use of the visual iconography of the viewpoint rather than present a literal



transcription of the hotel, as seen, for example, in Colt Hoare's watercolour drawing of 1810 (Figure 42). This advertisement dates from the 1880s and contains both picture and text.<sup>27</sup> The picture is sub-titled, 'Snowdon from the Royal Hotel Gardens Capel Curig' (Figure 43) and shows the Snowdon range in much closer focus than the ten miles it is in actuality. The lakes have also been greatly exaggerated in size with the Royal Bridge (in reality a little rustic affair) occupying an important part of the picture at the centre of the composition, and it has been placed on the golden mean. From the bridge the eye is led to the right and the hotel can be seen clearly, in a lighter tone against the dark, in the same place as the groups of buildings are in De Louthembourg's view (Figure 38). Various figures have been inserted into this advertisement (Figure 43) pursuing their respective activities and they are minute in scale and are shown in silhouette. A single figure is shown fishing from the riverbank. Two figures are fishing from a small boat on the first lake close to the hotel. Two additional figures are shown contemplating the Snowdon panorama from just beyond the Royal Bridge. The advertisement promised prospective visitors 'Good Fishing on all the Lakes, Free of Charge, to Visitors staying at the Hotel'.<sup>28</sup> Also advertised are 'Guides and Ponies. To Snowdon, Glyders, Moel Siabod, and Carnedd Llewelyn'.<sup>29</sup> The advertisement contained information on the hire of carriages and the availability of coach services to Bettws-y-Coed. This service was also to the station at Bettws-y-Coed on the London and NorthWestern Railway, which ran from Llandudno to Blaenau Ffestiniog. The line to Bettws-y-Coed was opened in 1869 some ten years after the death of David Cox (1783-1859) who was the village's most celebrated artist. This line is still in use today. The arrival of the railway enabled increasing numbers of travellers to enter Snowdonia by train.

The Royal Hotel advertised that it had the 'Best Views in Wales',<sup>30</sup> and was popular with artists. This was partly due to its proximity to the Capel Curig viewpoint. A large number of pictures have their origins at this site, these include works by both professional and amateur practitioners.<sup>31</sup> Many artists who were not resident at the hotel came to Capel Curig for the day from nearby Bettws-y-Coed. Those who came to the Snowdon viewpoint near the footbridge had to contend with weather conditions that were not always favourable for a view of Snowdon to be made. The real atmospheric conditions of the mountains did not always allow the visual criteria for

this view of Snowdon as seen from Capel Curig to be met. As this incident involving an amateur artist highlights:

...we noticed a lady of decision promptly seat herself under the wall of the garden attached to the hotel, as soon as the coach stopped, and at once go to work on a water-colour drawing of Snowdon. And from the banks of the Capel Curig lakes, let us say, the view of the monarch of Welsh mountains is an almost unsurpassed one. Only (and this is important) be sure that Y Wyddfa *is* included in the view on the day of your visit. True, the highest peak of Snowdon is called Y Wyddfa, 'the conspicuous' - conspicuous by its absence, some say, for it is the seldomest seen of all the Snowdonian heights, simply because the mists are so fond of settling round its magnificent head. To return to the lady. On the homeward journey she showed her coach companions in triumph the work she had accomplished 'But,' we ventured to ask, where is 'Snowdon?' The lady gave a look of mingled pity and surprise as she pointed to the highest peak in her picture, which was a very fair representation of Crib Coch; where Y Wyddfa should have been there was nothing but cloud. In fact, the fair artist had unconsciously added another to the thousand-and-one illustrations of the play of Hamlet with the Prince of Denmark left out.<sup>32</sup>

The increasing number of visitors to this viewpoint was matched by a corresponding increase in the number of representations of this motif. These occurred in both painting and print reproduction. This process began in the early 19th century and this motif has produced a steady flow of pictures since. These pictures maintain the iconography that De Loutherbrough established for this vista.

An analysis of this subject appearing at the *Royal Academy* in the 19th century confirms this.<sup>33</sup> Even if only named pictures of this view are chosen,<sup>34</sup> the subject appeared on the walls of the *Royal Academy* consistently to 1868. Starting in 1807, this named subject appears again in the following years, 1820, 1827, 1829, 1839, 1848, 1853, 1861 and 1868, giving a total of eight views. The longest interval between exhibits is thirteen years. Exhibited works at the *Royal Academy* with titles referring to Capel Curig, and which may have depicted Snowdon, are numerous. Some twenty-two exhibited works meet these criteria. These works begin in 1811 and finish in 1867, a span of some fifty-six years. The longest interval between them is fourteen years.

An analysis of the *British Institution* during its existence between 1806 and 1867 produced the following results.<sup>35</sup> There were seven named views of Snowdon as seen from Capel Curig. These were shown in, 1834, 1841, 1846, 1848, 1854, (twice) and 1867. The longest interval between exhibits is thirteen years. There were twelve works exhibited at the *British Institution* that contain a reference to Capel Curig by name. These begin in 1810 and finish in 1865. The longest interval between any exhibited work is thirteen years.

The combined total of *Royal Academy* and *British Institution* exhibits of named views of Snowdon from Capel Curig for the duration of the *British Institution* exhibitions (1806-1867) are fourteen. The longest gap between any exhibited work is now only seven years. The combined totals of works that include a reference to Capel Curig by name during this period number twenty-three. The longest gap between these exhibited works is eleven years. However the mean gap between these exhibits is only three and a half years. Other exhibition venues available during this period include the various watercolour societies, the *Society of British Artists*, (Suffolk Street) founded in 1826 and other exhibiting societies.<sup>36</sup> To these numbers we can add any unexhibited work by both professional and amateur artists. Taking all these representations into account, an idea of the large numbers of works that bear the title Snowdon from Capel Curig or a version of it can be ascertained. The evolution of this viewpoint in London exhibitions after De Loutherbourg's initial exposure at the R.A. was a gradual process. An earlier exhibiting society, *The Society of Artists of Great Britain*, which operated in London between 1760 and 1791 never exhibited a named view of Snowdon from Capel Curig.<sup>37</sup> Although it did show three different views of Snowdon out of the eighteen landscapes of north Wales that were shown there. The emergence of Snowdon from Capel Curig in later exhibition venues was due in part to the improved access and better accommodation along with the increasing reproduction of this viewpoint in the contemporary tour guide book literature that was now being published. All this helped to give status to the image, especially at a time of visitor expansion in north Wales.

One artist who exploited this subject more than once was John Varley (1778-1842).<sup>38</sup> He made his first visit to north Wales in 1799, accompanied by the painter George Arnold and he returned several times before he made his last visit to Snowdonia with

his younger brother Cornelius in 1802. John Varley exhibited four works that have the same title of *Snowdon from Capel Curig* at the Old Water-Colour Society between 1809 and 1815.<sup>39</sup> The first recorded exhibition of this subject by Varley was at the Old Water-Colour Society exhibition in 1809, (No70). The second version was exhibited there in 1810, (No118), This watercolour, dated 1810, is in the Birmingham Museum. Another work with the same title was exhibited at the Society in 1813, (No55) and again in 1815 (No70).

The Birmingham watercolour of 1810, *Snowdon from Capel Curig* (Figure 44) is a revisionist image, made some years after Varley's last visit to Wales. It depicts Snowdon in a classical guise, a method of depiction that Varley has chosen to use for this particular motif. It is similar to De Loutherbourg's painting (Figure 38) in its use of classical proportion in the treatment of depicted space. The Snowdon Mountains in the Varley picture are painted more truthfully and with less exaggeration of slope, than in De Loutherbourg's view. Varley has inserted an Italianate group of trees on the right of this composition. This gives the watercolour an artificial look that negates the characteristic Welshness of the subject and suggests, (in the imagination), a location somewhere in Italy rather than overtly in north Wales. These trees do offset the panorama of Snowdon effectively in compositional terms and they also provide a sense of scale, especially for the wide format that Varley has used for the depiction of the vale of Capel Curig. Varley's visioning closely parallels De Loutherbourg's use of a classical structure, derived from Italy, that he used for his 1787 exhibit. Varley's artistic assimilation of 17th century Italian landscape imagery was noticed by William Henry Pyne (1769-1843), a founder member of the OWCS, who wrote art criticism and was the editor of the Somerset House Gazette:

There is a classic air pervading his best compositions which savours of the boldness of Poussin, united with the elegance of Claude; a happy combination of mountain, wood, lake, and river, that cannot fail to delight the eye of taste...<sup>40</sup>

Varley's image produces a view of Snowdon that is picturesque and yet also has the potential to generate the sublime, especially around the summit peaks. In this example however, Varley has stopped short of this treatment, due to the overriding need to maintain a classical light rather than depict any true atmospheric conditions. Varley's view contains a landscape structure, an arrangement of spatial planes which combine

together uniting ‘mountain, wood, lake and river’ to form a composite picture. The ‘happy combination’ to which Pyne refers, comes together here, uniting the strictures of classicism with the reality of a Welsh mountain landscape that, then as now, ‘can not fail to delight the eye of taste’.

Varley’s association with this subject is a long one; there is a watercolour dated 1836, and titled, *Snowdon from Capel Curig* which is in the collection of the Newport Museum and Art Gallery. In spite of making his last visit to north Wales thirty-four years earlier Varley had no need to return to north Wales to gather topographical information that he already possessed. All the subject needed was revisioning, and this could easily be accomplished in London. This reworking was based on Varley’s awareness of the visual power of the motif, a motif that contained all the ingredients of an apparently authentic vision of Snowdon as seen from the Capel Curig viewpoint. Sometimes Varley’s treatment of this motif comes close to a recipe technique and when this occurs an element of authenticity is denied in the picture that is left.

A watercolour of the same subject, painted at least twenty-five years earlier depicts the same view and has the same title (Figure 45). This picture, in its unfinished state, gives an insight into Varley’s working methods and his visioning process. The structural elements are carefully drawn in pencil. The contour lines are drawn lightly, so as not to intrude into the watercolour washes. The broad masses of Snowdon are shown in deep shadow and Varley has used a particularly cold looking blue-grey tint to achieve a visual equivalent for the vista within which, in reality, Snowdon makes an appearance. Two trees reminiscent of Italy dominate the right of the image. Below, two figures are shown, walking towards us in the immediate foreground. They are placed on the crest of the hill in front of our viewpoint from which the vista opens up. At the bottom left, on the golden mean can be seen the Royal Bridge delineated in a single pale watercolour tint. To the right of the footbridge is the unpainted part that makes up the Mymbyr lakes. The salient features, mountain, lake, river, and the footbridge have retained their authenticity in spite of the classicising treatment that Varley has applied to this image of Snowdonia.

Some of his images that are based on this viewpoint are not explicit in their title that they derive from this particular location. A number of works are simply referred to as ‘Snowdon’. Such a work is a watercolour titled, *Snowdon* (Figure 46) that is in the

collection of the Walker Art Gallery. It depicts the same viewpoint as before with the highest peaks conforming to the requirements of classical composition both vertically and horizontally.

This lack of identification of the viewpoint in the title also applies to many other artist's 'Snowdons' that actually depict the mountain vista as seen from Capel Curig. A number of paintings that depict Snowdon from Capel Curig can be re-identified by comparison with other known examples. Also by this process the majority of views titled, *Snowdon* can have their viewpoints traced. This can be done by matching their visual profiles with known representations. This procedure can be applied to trace unknown picture locations, it can also be used for mountain attribution, or to identify viewpoints from which the view has been taken within Snowdonia's mountain terrain.<sup>41</sup>

Among the exhibited works at the *Royal Academy* and the *British Institution* that refer to the view of Snowdon from Capel Curig there is a quite remarkable variation of title used by the various artist depicting what is in essence the same image. One reason for this diversity could be the need by artists to mark their work out from the rest and one way of achieving this was by the use of a more individual title. Variations printed in the *Royal Academy* exhibition catalogues between 1807 and 1868 include the following:

- (1) View of Snowdon and the Vale of Capel Curig, North Wales, (1807).
- (2) Snowdon from the lake near Capel Cerig, (1820).
- (3) Snowdon from Capel Kerrig, North Wales cloudy weather, (1827).
- (4) Snowdon from above Capel Curig, (1861).
- (5) Capel Curig, looking towards Snowdon, (1868).

The remaining four titles, 1829,1838,1848,1853, adhere to the generic title of Snowdon from Capel Curig, the only variance appearing in the spelling of Curig.<sup>42</sup>

The variations of title of exhibited works shown at the *British Institution* between 1806 and 1867 are as follows:

- (1) Snowdon from near Capel Curig, (1841).
- (2) Scene below Capel Curig, Snowdon in the distance, (1846).
- (3) View of Snowdon, seen from Capel Curig, (1848).
- (4) Snowdon from Llyn Mymbyr, showery weather, (1854).

(5) From Capel Curig, looking towards Snowdon, (1854).

The remaining two works shown there are titled, Snowdon from Capel Curig and are dated 1834 and 1867 respectively.<sup>43</sup> Together, The *Royal Academy* and the *British Institution* exhibits reveal a wide variation of title, as artists attempted to make their own works appear more unique in the competitive world of the public exhibitions in London. The diversity of spellings not only associated with this subject, but with many other mountain viewpoints in Snowdonia can be attributed to the difficulty of precise identification at a later date whether the work was drawn on the spot or manufactured in the studio many miles away from the original source, for example in London, Birmingham, or Liverpool.

Another difficulty was the Welsh language itself especially the correct spelling of it. One of the most problematic of all was the correct spelling of Moel Siabod a mountain not far from Capel Curig itself. Here is a sample of the more extreme spellings as published in the exhibition catalogues of the day. These are taken from the same exhibition sources as before. The *Royal Academy* first:

- (1) Moel Siabodd, in Wales, (1804).
- (2) Entrance to the Vale of Llanwrst, North Wales, Moelthabud in the distance, (1828).
- (3) View of Moel Shabod, North Wales, (1847).
- (4) Moel Shabad, Dolwyddelan Valley, North Wales, (1848).
- (5) Near Capel Curig, North Wales, Moel Shabod in the distance, (1849).
- (6) Scene in Dollyddedelen Vale with Moel ad Nogen in the distance, (1859).<sup>44</sup>

The *British Institution* can supply another variation of spelling, the rather curious:

- (1) Moel Shaboed, from the Old Holyhead Road, (1849).<sup>45</sup>

These examples highlight some of the difficulties that the visiting artists had to contend with, not only in terms of what they had actually seen and recorded or where they had been but how it was to be spelt in the all important title that would accompany the work in an exhibition venue. They were also aware of the status that a carefully chosen title could bring to the work. An example of this can be seen in the status that the title Snowdon from Capel Curig quickly acquired, hence the many versions of the title that were applied to this subject. The title provides a descriptive

narrative that suggests, by association, the potential visual power of the site. This is still as potent today as it was in the 19th century. The image of Snowdon from Capel Curig whether a photograph or a graphic illustration of the view are repeatedly reproduced in contemporary marketing material produced by the Tourist Boards of Wales and Great Britain. On the first inside page of the Official Wales Tourist Board Brochure for 1995, under the heading 'Wales, Land of Inspiration' is the classic view of the Snowdonian massif (Figure 47). This watercolour illustration is left uncaptioned relying on its visual status alone. Adjacent to this, is a full-page colour photographic reproduction of Richard Wilson's (1713-1782) viewpoint now captioned as *Llyn Nantlle, Snowdonia* (Figure 7). This photograph actually depicts Snowdon with a wisp of obscuring cloud around the highest peaks. This feature is also present in Richard Wilson's original oil painting of this site *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (Figure 9) painted in the 1760s.<sup>46</sup>

This is another viewpoint towards Snowdon that has become appropriated to serve the Welsh economy via the promotion of tourism. These visualised elements connect the early visitors and artists of the past with their capacity to establish visual emblems of identity that now signify Snowdonia and its mountain scenery for a potential audience outside Wales. Hence their use today by the tourist boards of Wales to promote an idea of Snowdonia that is more of a concept than an explicit truth. These images are generally depopulated landscapes and they appeal subconsciously to our sense of longing for a wilderness. There are no figures present, for example, in the untitled view of Snowdon from Capel Curig, (Figure 47). In the photograph from the Wilson viewpoint, (Figure 7) two happy looking tourists are having a picnic complete with hamper. These figures replicate the figures in Wilson's painting of the 1760s who are depicted close to the lakeshore in the centre of the composition. Pictures of course can be contrived and so can photographic ones; at this particular location the land is clearly marked 'Private', with no access to the lakeshore unless in possession of a valid fishing permit.<sup>47</sup>

The view of Snowdon from Capel Curig was reproduced using copper plate engraving and later by steel faced engraving, in aquatint and in lithography in the gentlemen's tour accounts and in the guide books that were published from the mid 1770s to the 1840's. Also from about 1800 onwards, numerous guidebooks were published that



offered a more thorough study of routes and advice for the would-be tourist; these were also illustrated with prints. In most cases the illustrations that were used for these publications were commissioned by the author or publisher and a proportion of these books were a mixture of tour account and guide book. The majority of the tour accounts are fairly slim volumes when compared with Thomas Pennant's large two-volume work. Many of the authors made reference to Pennant in their accounts, especially concerning details that were beyond the easy reach of a summer visitor on a tour. Both types of publication quoted freely from each other, particularly if the weather had proved toilsome and the mountain scenery could not be seen. The tours usually lasted between two weeks and up to three months and were mostly made in the months between June and September.

As suggested earlier it is likely that De Louthembourg was aware of the engraved version of the view of Snowdon that was reproduced in Pennant's book, *A Tour in Wales* prior to painting his own version of the subject. Griffith's engraving represents the first public exposure of the motif. When the two-volume edition was published in 1784 it was priced at two pounds and six shillings for the two volumes, so its availability was limited, but then, by the same token, so was the demand. Pennant's book was the first choice guidebook among the wealthy and the educated elite including artists who made visits to Snowdonia. Sometimes artists were in the employ of the gentlemen tourists, their role was to instruct or to record the experience, sometimes both duties were expected. A reference to Pennant's text and Griffiths engravings would have increased their knowledge of the area. J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851) travelled independently on his Welsh tours.<sup>48</sup> The young Turner transcribed notes from Pennant into his sketchbooks that he used on his 1799 tour to north Wales.<sup>49</sup> As the readership of Pennant's book increased it was re-issued to meet this continued demand a three-volume edition was issued in 1810. This was twenty-six years after the original two-volume edition was published. During this period the viewpoint for Snowdon from Capel Curig and several other mountain subjects that were reproduced became increasingly well known among visitors in search of picturesque scenery in Snowdonia. There is evidence that artists such as Turner were consulting Pennant's book. There exist a large number of written references by writers who quoted liberally from the text and artists did the equivalent when they were looking at the plates. This visual influence can be seen in the increasing number

of Views of Snowdon from Capel Curig that were, after 1784, being reproduced in the tour guide literature as well as being painted in water-colour and oil. Pennant's, *A Tour in Wales* played a significant part in this visual development that established a number of mountain viewpoints.

Three years earlier the second edition of Henry Wyndham's, *A Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales* was published. Unlike the first edition of 1775 it was illustrated from drawings made on the spot in 1777 by the Swiss born artist, Samuel Hieronymous Grimm (1733-1794).<sup>50</sup> It contains sixteen engraved plates, a mixture of Abbeys, Castles, Bridges, Waterfalls and Lakes. There is no view of Snowdon from Capel Curig illustrated and with the exception of the Pont Aberglaslyn plates, no mountain subjects that were to appear in Pennant's book are reproduced. This is in spite of Wyndham's claim that:

The author has endeavoured to confine his observations to those things only, which, he thought, most necessary to be known, or most deserving to be seen.<sup>51</sup>

It is clear from Wyndham's detailed route of the tour that he did not visit Capel Curig.<sup>52</sup> Therefore he never saw the Snowdon vista at first hand. If he had he may not have been so assertive when he wrote:

...the author has not attempted to describe every pleasing spot, or prospect, which occurred to him in his tours; though he will venture to assert, that he has left nothing undescribed, which was uncommonly grand or beautiful, or which deserved to be pointed out to the attention of a stranger.<sup>53</sup>

Three years later Pennant's book contained the many mountain views that Wyndham's illustrated book did not. One image in particular that Wyndham omitted was the view of Snowdon from Capel Curig, a view that fitted his own criteria of worthiness. Moses Griffith's engraved picture *The Summit of Snowdon from Capel Cerig* (Figure 39) established the motif and acts as the precursor image for the many variations in print form that were made and published in travel books in the following century. This image, as painted by De Louthembourg, Varley and others, allowed for a more universal identity to come to the fore. This became an established visioning process, a classicising, that could be applied at this location to the visual treatment of the motif.

The result of this process can be seen in Edward Pugh's (1763-1812) aquatint print titled, *North- East View of Snowdon* (Figure 48) which depicts the view of Snowdon as seen from above Capel Curig. The print is dated the 15th November 1813 and is one of seventy-one aquatints that were based on drawings made by the author.<sup>54</sup> Pugh's book was published posthumously in 1816. *Cambria Depicta: A Tour through North Wales Illustrated with Picturesque Views*, as the title suggests contains many views of mountain scenery. Pugh claimed, that as a native artist he had a first hand knowledge of the area, as Pennant did before him. Pugh began the task of recording the scenery of north Wales in 1804, as he explained:

..from the moderate talent as an artist, which I possess, I may be thought in some degree to have attained the end which I proposed to myself, I shall feel amply recompensed for the fatigue which I experienced for many months, in travelling as a pedestrian, between two and three thousand miles, over one of the roughest districts of Great Britain.<sup>55</sup>

Pugh intended his book to be an updated version of Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* as the similarities between the two titles suggests. Pugh by drawing attention to north Wales in his title along with the phrase 'Cambria Depicta' he is making an explicit and unambiguous statement in promoting north Wales and its picturesque scenery. Pugh also had artists in mind as potential readers of his book. The aquatints visualised the potential viewpoints that a visiting artist could locate and work from. As Pugh stated:

The following volume, I have the presumption to hope, will lead the painter to numberless objects, well worthy of his exertions, in representing them on his canvass; whether his genius incline him to the mountains craggy side, the cwm's solemn profundity, the frightful brink of the cataract, and the rocky margin of the sea: or to the milder features of Nature, observable in the shadowy recesses of the grove, the cultivation of the expanded valley, and the tufted banks of the serpentine *afon*, he will here find frequent and tempting opportunities of indulging and exercising it.<sup>56</sup>

Pugh suggests in the preface of *Cambria Depicta*, that, with only two exceptions,<sup>57</sup> all the landscape views that he has chosen to reproduce are being introduced to the public for the first time. His selection of views that were reproduced in his book is an artist's

choice, a carefully chosen set of images that highlighted the mountain scenery of north Wales above any other item. As he explained:

In my choice of views, I have abandoned the common practice of giving portraits of towns, castles, etc, which have been so often repeated that they now fill every portfolio. The picturesque embellishments of the following volume, are all of them (as far as I know) new to the public, and they describe very striking contrasts in the features of the six counties.<sup>58</sup>

Although Pugh has depicted a number of original views of mountain scenery in his publication many of the other images are replicas of already established views. He can not claim credit for introducing these views to the public for the first time as many had been reproduced before, first in Pennant and then in other guidebooks that were published prior to Pugh's book. In some examples Pugh has appropriated an image wholesale and by re-naming it he can claim credit for establishing its visual identity. This can be seen in his replication and re-identification of the view of Snowdon from Capel Curig. Pugh gave his picture the title *North-East View of Snowdon* (Figure 48). There is no indication, or mention of Capel Curig by Pugh in the title of his aquatint of the view. Any mention of Capel Curig would have immediately have identified the viewpoint and Pugh would not have been able to have made any claims of originality in his imaging of Snowdonia.

This print adheres to the visual ingredients that are to be found in De Loutherbrough's version of the view of *Snowdon from Capel Curig* (Figure 38). If the two images are compared these visual connections can be traced. For example Pugh's picture (Figure 48) replicates the dark silhouetted area of mountain that is depicted in deep shadow, at centre left, in De Loutherbrough's painting (Figure 38). Similarly the other foreground arrangements of tone are also replicated. The lake in Pugh's version is shown in a light tone as it is in De Loutherbrough's view. The summit peaks of the Snowdon range are set proportionally at the same point in recessionary space as De Loutherbrough chose to use. Pugh has given more prominence to his clouds than De Loutherbrough and this may be partly the result of the requirements of the aquatint process which is reliant on flat areas of tone for effect; or he may have wanted to depict the characteristic cloud obscured peak, which is in reality a feature of this

location! Moses Griffith in the earlier version of this subject published in 1784 (Figure 39) depicts the summit peaks of Snowdon partly obscured by clouds.

I do not doubt that Pugh's image is authentic and that it was originally drawn on the spot in front of the motif. The cottage depicted at the bottom left of the picture is compositionally chopped at a rather awkward position with only part of the roof visible. Pugh has focussed on the mountain panorama ahead framing the vista. This gives the image a sense of actuality, a tangible reality that has been recorded rather than one that has been imagined. Pugh on this visit to Capel Curig stayed at the refurbished inn close to the viewpoint. Arriving here, from the direction of the Nant Ffrancon Pass and the Ogwen lake, after three and a half miles of relatively uninteresting scenery he arrived at Capel Curig. As Pugh later recounted in *Cambria Depicta*:

This small interruption gave me a relish for the sublime scene, which, on turning down to the new inn, suddenly burst upon my sight. The evening being fine, I enjoyed from hence a delightful view of Snowdon, uninterrupted by clouds or vapours.<sup>59</sup>

Pugh had intended to make an ascent to the summit of Snowdon the following day and had secured a guide at the hotel ready for an early morning departure. The weather however had deteriorated all day. On his second day, after a night of rain Pugh visited a nearby waterfall known as Rhaidr-Wennol situated midway between Capel Curig and Bettws-y-Coed. An aquatint plate of this subject precedes the *North East View of Snowdon* in the book. That evening the weather cleared and Pugh made an ascent of Moel Siabod and was rewarded with a view, as he recalled:

It was a grand and novel sight, the sun strongly shining upon those distant objects, and on most of the intermediate varieties of hills, rocks and water; with a dark cloud forming a gloomy canopy above me, throwing a shade and obscurity all around, which contrasted admirably with the splendour of the eastern distance. Snowdon itself was likewise involved in an almost impenetrable cloud, from the body of vapours that sluggishly moved along. It was altogether, to me, awfully fine. The sun was now sinking towards the horizon, and tinged the whole atmosphere with his setting colour...

In about half an hour the whole had attained a depth of red, that must be incredible to any, but to those who have been eye-

witnesses. Snowdon seemed a dreadful mass of fire, and clouds which hovered upon his top, and about his base, (barring the ill effects of it) could never have displayed a scene more sublime.<sup>60</sup>

This is a written description by Pugh of a real experience of place and it highlights the effects of nature that can be witnessed from the summit of a Welsh mountain. After staying a third night at Capel Curig, he abandoned this location due to the stormy weather that made any ascent of Snowdon impracticable and headed towards Caernarvon. This aquatinted plate of the Snowdon vista does not comply with any of the conditions that Pugh encountered on his visit. It is not a topographical transcription of observed facts, instead Pugh's print conforms to the established format that had already become established for this subject by this date. De Loutherbourg's classical visioning is reasserted in Pugh's version of the view. In Pugh's aquatint print (Figure 48) the visual similarities with De Loutherbourg's painting (Figure 38) can be seen, especially in the overall construction of space. In addition to this Pugh has added obscured cloud around the summit peaks, a formula which gives this picture of Snowdon its own unique status. Pugh was familiar with De Loutherbourg's work and after mentioning an exhibit of 1804 in his text goes on to praise De Loutherbourg's particular ability to capture atmospheric conditions in his oil paintings. In this context Pugh acknowledges De Loutherbourg's own visits to Wales. He writes:

This gentleman having made several excursions into these parts, is intimately acquainted with the effects produced by a luminous sun-set, in a country whose mountains are so frequently charged with moisture, which at particular times flies off in evaporation, and causes an uncommon glow of colour.<sup>61</sup>

Pugh's aquatint (Figure 48) retains a classical construction, a particular feature of the real vista as well as the artificial one; this allows both aspects of pictorial space to be combined. The landscape forms in nature fitting conveniently with the classical requirements of picture making. Thus producing a strong and viable image. It also corroborates the visual criteria established for this vista. Its reproduction in *Cambria Depicta* helped to promote this particular motif in spite of Pugh's ambiguous title that makes no reference to Capel Curig itself. Pugh in his descriptive narrative of the tour arrives at Capel Curig a few pages before the aquatint plate is reproduced in the book

and finishes adjacent to the plate. Therefore his picture can be identified in the text if not overtly in the title he gave for the *North-East View of Snowdon*.<sup>62</sup>

Pugh's *Cambria Depicta*, printed on hand-made paper along with its hand-printed aquatints was a lavish production compared with the many guidebooks of north Wales that were produced in the last half of the 19th century. One of these, first published in 1869, had already attained a production run of 46,000 copies by 1883.<sup>63</sup> This was Askew Roberts' *Gossiping Guide to Wales*. It was published on machine-made paper using the automated printing presses that had been developed by this date. One important aspect of this guide was that it was designed for the visitor to Snowdonia who travelled by train. The main aims of this guide were essentially the same as previous ones that it had extolled the virtues of Welsh scenery. Roberts states in the preface:

My object in preparing this book has been to give Tourists a readable as well as practical Guide to the chief scenes of interest in North Wales—something to talk about at every station they pass, when on the railways, and where they go off, a description of the objects they must by no means miss seeing...the very latest routes opened up by railway enterprise, and the very latest objects of interest developed in North Wales, have been duly described.<sup>64</sup>

After due acknowledgements Roberts describes the visual itinerary that accompanies the Traveller's Edition of this book which contains a mixture of railway routes and coach roads. The line illustrations, which are mostly mountain views, are placed on the right, left or at the centre of a page depending from which side of a carriage window the view can be seen in actuality. The itinerary's purpose was to enable the visitor to enjoy the finest scenery:

Tourists often wish to know what mountains they can see from accessible points, where glorious peeps are to be obtained. Our Itinerary will show them; as in number the illustrations exceed a hundred, there are few places where Tourists go that are not represented.<sup>65</sup>

At the end of his preface Roberts gives some advice for the potential visitor to north Wales especially to those who have either neglected, or were unaware of the beauties of its mountain scenery, he continued:

...and to any who are really desirous of enjoying Wales to perfection, let me recommend a visit at the end of Spring. Those who go at that season, and have fine weather, will be rewarded. It is pleasant enough to be one of the crowd on the beach during the warm evenings in Summer, but to enjoy the mountains to perfection there is nothing like a fine Spring morning.<sup>66</sup>

It was De Loutherbourg's painting, *Snowdon from Capel Curig, a morning* (Figure 38) that drew attention to a particular time of day. This aspect can be seen in both the painting and in the carefully worded title that accompanied this work when it was exhibited at the *Royal Academy* in 1787. De Loutherbourg set a precedent in his interpretation of Snowdon as seen from Capel Curig. It has maintained and retained its visual integrity and identity ever since.

In the *Pictorial Itinerary* of the Roberts guide, he reproduces a line drawing depicting the view of Snowdon as seen from Capel Curig (Figure 49). This uncaptioned drawing is reproduced in the *Snowdonian Coach Roads* section of the itinerary.<sup>67</sup> This picture has many of the visual ingredients that have combined together to produce a powerful motif for this vista. This diagrammatic sketch still retains its authority and its visual power in spite of any artistic shortcomings that it may possess as a drawing. In its diagrammatic form it shows the whole of the Snowdonian panorama seen above the lakes with the footbridge in the middle distance. This forms a link with the mountains that break in from the left and right sides; these compositional structures are similar to those found in De Loutherbourg's original oil painting of this vista. Above the mountain peaks the names of the principal summits have been printed, along with other categorising features pertinent to this view. The Royal Hotel has been carefully drawn in the correct position, although the space in front of it has been exaggerated. This diagrammatic sketch served its purpose, it identified one of the finest vistas of Snowdon available for the visiting tourist.

The Edinburgh firm of Adam and Charles Black also produced guidebooks and by 1886 they were publishing forty-one separate guides to all parts of Britain. In their guide to north Wales, in its nineteenth edition by 1886, there is a reproduction of a vignette that depicts the view of Snowdon as seen from Capel Curig in moonlight. This monochrome picture, drawn by Myles Birket Foster (1828-1899)<sup>68</sup> is titled,



*Snowdon from near Capel Curig* (Figure 50). It shows a somewhat exaggerated Snowdon especially in its height. It is a slightly sentimental representation, with a Heron shown silhouetted in the foreground against a pool of reflected light from the moon, now temporarily obscured by the night's cloud. Although the title is vague, it refers to being near Capel Curig; this view can be identified. It is taken from just below the Hotel at Capel Curig, with the wooden footbridge clearly visible towards the left centre, even though it is partially hidden within a large area of shadow. Although this picture does not allude to any status, being inserted into the text description that describes this location, it does however retain, those elements of visioning that are pertinent to this site. This representation accompanies the following narrative:

At a short distance westward from the hotel there are two Lakes named Mymbyr, connected by a small river, and on these boats are kept for the use of visitors in angling or other aquatic excursions. Across the stream, which flows near the gardens of the hotel, is a rustic bridge, whence is a remarkably fine view of Snowdon, perhaps the very best single view of the biforked summit of the majestic mountain.<sup>69</sup>

The pre-eminence of the Capel Curig viewpoint is enhanced by the simultaneous use of the image that registers the pictorial and the text description that describes it. This treatment is a feature in many of the guides to Snowdonia and can be traced back to Thomas Pennant's *A Tour in Wales*. This contains the reproduction of Moses Griffith's engraving, *The Summit of Snowdon from Capel Cerig* (Figure 39) and the accompanying text description by Pennant is printed on the adjoining page.<sup>70</sup>

There were eleven paintings shown at the *Royal Academy* and seven at the *British Institution* that refer to Snowdon and Capel Curig explicitly in their titles during the 19th century. These were discussed earlier. There were many other paintings exhibited at both these venues that depict this vista but their titles do not refer to either Snowdon or Capel Curig by name. Instead they have a more generalised title - one that does not signify the picture. Many views of this subject were exhibited in other exhibition societies in London and at other exhibition venues. Throughout the 19th century and the 20th century this theme has remained a viable subject and this motif is still puissant today. It maintains a tradition of portrayal and depiction that began with Pennant and De Louthembourg and this ocular formula has remained intact ever since.

An example of this treatment applied in the twentieth century can be seen in George Grainger Smith's (1892-1961)<sup>71</sup> *Snowdon from Capel Curig* (Figure 51). This oil was painted in the late 1930s and was exhibited in Liverpool in the winter of 1939-40.<sup>72</sup> In this painting the footbridge and the Royal Hotel are still present and Smith presents a naturalistic vision of the view towards Snowdon. It retains the structural strengths of the scene without becoming harsh and the light conforms to the normal pattern of light and dark established for this vista. The distant mountain mass is once again shown in a neutral light and this is depicted as the lightest tone in the painting along with the understated sky. The sky consists of groups of thin clouds that form recessionary bands that reinforce the classically grand space the artist has constructed. Smith's *Snowdon from Capel Curig* (Figure 51) adheres to a compositional formula that had long been established for this motif.

A topographical watercolour drawn by Amos Green (1735-1807) in 1801,<sup>73</sup> some 140 years earlier than Smith's oil painting was made, depicts the Snowdon panorama from exactly the same viewpoint. Its title is almost identical as well, *Snowdon and Capel Curig* (Figure 52). It has been delineated in pencil, pen, grey ink and watercolour washes and was almost certainly drawn on the spot. Sometimes these works that were started out of doors were later finished in the studio. This was a common practice among artists undertaking a Welsh tour during this period. A number of landscape features are present in this picture of Snowdon that requires no further explanation. As a comparison between the two works will demonstrate. The Amos Green watercolour forms a visual link between De Louthembourg's early identity and Smith's later 20th century reality. One feature that Green has changed is the bridge. This is located on the golden mean and it has (temporally) lost its rustic form and become a more graceful structure and consequently more classical. This suggests a landscape picture that reminded the spectator of Italy. A number of oil paintings by classical landscape artists that depicted Italian views were in the collections of potential patrons by the beginning of the 19th century. Amos Green may have taken this into account when he drew this scene or less likely, he may have made an error in his artistic judgement and consequently depicted a different bridge to remedy this.

A watercolour of the same view by another artist making a tour through north Wales that has the feel and look of a work drawn on the spot is Thomas Leeson

Rowbottom's (1783-1853) watercolour, identified as *Capel Curig, North Wales* (Figure 53).<sup>74</sup> It measures just over five inches by eight inches and this suggests that it was originally a page from a sketchbook. Thomas Leeson Rowbottom visited north Wales in 1825. There is no reference in this title to Snowdon itself, which is the actual subject of this work. One noticeable feature of this particular painting is the accurate and solid depiction of all the mountain profiles. There is no generalisation of these forms and they appear authentic, as seen for the first time, rather than, as is so often the case with artists such as John Varley, a smoothing out or a more generalised appropriation of defiles. Rowbottom has refocused the scale in this composition, allowing it to be cropped, this permits the distant Snowdon to appear larger than it would normally be in actuality, this is in contrast to the more classical paintings of this vista, with their emphasis on space and distance. This cropped format is not particularly noticeable in the construction of space; rather it conforms to the established criteria associated with the transcription of Snowdon as seen from Capel Curig. The robust handling of form and structure in this rendering further enhances the realism while simultaneously negating the viewfinder format and we perceive the reassuring visual attributes that make up the visual ingredients of this representation.

David Cox <sup>75</sup> is among the many artists who visited this part of Snowdonia more than once. He made his first visit to Wales in 1805, returning again in 1816 and 1818. In 1836 he toured north Wales to make a record especially for Thomas Roscoes's book (31 works in total) published that year. After a number of intermittent visits to Snowdonia, Cox stayed each summer at Bettws-y-Coed from where he was able to make excursions into the mountains. These annual residential visits began in 1844 and ended in 1856 due to Cox's failing health. He made his base at the Royal Oak Hotel later moving to a farmhouse close by owned by the hotel. This was later demolished to make way for the railway that arrived in 1869. The present building with its heavy gabled elevations, is a replacement structure dating from 1861. Inside the original sign board painted by Cox in 1847 may still be seen above the fireplace of the main lounge. Cox arrived in north Wales by train, but in his day the railway stopped short of Bettws-y-Coed, as Solly, Cox's biographer recalled:

He used to leave Birmingham in July or at the beginning of August by the old Grand Junction Railway (the Stour Valley

line did not exist in those days) and travel by way of Chester and Rhyl to Conway. At the latter place he was generally met by an open Welsh car sent down on purpose from the Royal Oak, and in this he proceeded up the valley of the Conway. Whenever the opportunity offered, Cox preferred these Welsh jaunting cars to any other mode of conveyance, as the scenery could be seen so well whilst driving along the road, and he could stop when he wished to admire a view or make memoranda.<sup>76</sup>

Cox made a number of works at nearby Capel Curig, a pleasant five-mile excursion up the Llugwy valley by carriage from the Royal Oak. Capel Curig was one of the locations that Cox recommended to his friend and patron William Roberts who was about to undertake a tour to north Wales in 1843.<sup>77</sup> Cox painted a number of works at the Capel Curig viewpoint for Snowdon; many of these pictures do not have explicate titles and they could depict the panorama. A number of watercolours drawn by Cox in his later years were exhibited at the Society of Painters in Water Colours with the title, *Snowdon, from Capel Curig* this was in 1855 and 1858. A work titled, *Snowdon, from near Capel Curig* was shown in 1854. Works referred to as, *Near Capel Curig* were shown in 1854, 1857, (three) and 1858. Cox had a range of styles and methods of working, from the vigorous breadth of handling characteristic of his later watercolour to a more refined and detailed approach that he particularly liked to apply to his oils and sometimes to his watercolours also. A contemporary account of the 1855 exhibition at the Society in which Cox was exhibiting *Snowdon, from Capel Curig* was published in the Spectator:

How far the contributions of Cox may be the doings of the past year, we are unable to say. We recognise one or two of the designs of former seasons. We only hope that any of the remainder belong to the present; for if they do this noble veteran of art is still in the vigour which has long rendered him a king of water-colour landscape. There is the same deep grand gloom as ever, the same penetration beneath the surface of things to their meaning and life, the same impatient power, whose play and carelessness throws off in a twist, or a spirit of the brush, that which talent, age, and faultlessly educated talent, shall strive for its life long with all labour and appliance, and *never attain* ...'Snowdon'... are conspicuously fine, where every one bears the mint-mark of genius.<sup>78</sup>

The 'deep grand gloom' referred to in the Spectator review can be seen in a watercolour drawn on the spot by Cox at Capel Curig. It was drawn in 1845 during

Cox's first extended stay at Bettws-y-Coed. This watercolour is titled, *Capel Curig* (Figure 54) and it has been made at the same viewpoint that Smith, (Figure 51) Green (Figure 52) and Rowbottom (Figure 53) used for their pictures of Snowdon, as seen from Capel Curig. Cox depicts wet weather that conceals the mountain landscape from view. The picture describes a squall of heavy rain that is sweeping across the vista so that it now obscures the prospect towards Snowdon. The mountain mass is hinted at through the darker tones that emerge and dissolve in the restricted distance seen beyond Capel Curig itself. Cox has captured this phenomenon with commiserate skill using thin washes and by using a restricted palette of muted hues that match the sublime ingredients that nature has generated. The gable end of the Royal Hotel is shown as a light white tone that in turn is reflecting the light back to the perceiving eye. Even allowing for the sublime and obscuring treatment that Cox chose to use on this occasion the essential visual structures that signify this viewpoint can still be ascertained.

A work that combines the classical features of De Loutherbourg's representation with the more subliminal aspects of Cox's treatment of this subject can be seen in an oil painting by John Finnie (1829-1907) <sup>79</sup> titled, *Snowdon from Capel Curig* (Figure 55). This painting was exhibited at the *Royal Academy* in 1870, as *Snowdon* (no.911). This is another example of a singular, more universal title being applied to this subject. This short title denies any reference to the viewpoint and it becomes a powerful symbol that gives status to Snowdonia and its mountainous landscape. Finnie's prospect is from a slightly elevated position and it represents the same vista that De Loutherbourg painted eighty-three years earlier. The classical ingredients present in De Loutherbourg's painting (Figure 38) are still present in Finnie's picture. To this framework Finnie has added the dissolving light of the sublime. The peaks of the mountains are now partially obscured by the circling and encroaching cloud allowing the natural sublime to dominate the work. This produces an image of relative obscurity, a subliminal presence that has been applied to the view of Snowdon from Capel Curig. This motif with its underlying and inherent classical structure retains its identity even when it is obscured by the subliminal manipulation of the motif by artists such as Cox and Finnie. In Finnie's oil painting (Figure 55) the introduction of a subliminal atmosphere does not impair certain readings of the picture to be made. It is only Snowdon and the distant mountain range that is partially concealed by the

swirling cloud. A salient feature that is still clearly visible is the rustic bridge that is in the centre of the composition, set vertically on the golden mean. The landscape forms around the lakes replicate De Loutherbrough's earlier description and the mountain profiles that cut into the middle distance from the left-hand side have very similar proportions. This vertical area is represented in deep shadow, as it is in De Loutherbrough's version. In Finnie's revisioning of this subject, his chosen visual identity is integrated into and empowers the picture. The underlying compositional structure inherent in the landscape forms that this work possesses allows this revisioning treatment to take place. The understated classical structure of this viewpoint enables many different interpretations of this view to exist. A visual concept that enables the sublime to be present. A typical device that is often used is to depict the major peaks of the Snowdon range in this view as partially obscured. This can be seen in Finnie's painting where the cloud is hugging the slopes of the peaks but the actual summits are free of obscuring cloud. This has been carefully calculated by the artist to produce a subliminal effect. This sublime effect, produced by clouds gathered around the summit peaks is also to be found in Pugh's 1816 aquatint (Figure 48) of this view and in the colour postcard from the 1990s (Figure 36). There are many other examples both in painting and photography where this symbolism has been applied to this vista. When applied it increases the apparent scale of the view to that of an equivalent Alpine vista such as the approach to Mont Blanc as seen from the Arve valley south of Sallanches. In both cases the mountains form a barrier from left to right and in pictorial terms they have the same proportions, yet in reality Mont Blanc is over fifteen thousand feet in height to Snowdon's three and a half thousand feet. As noted this view of Snowdon is often described as an Alpine prospect because of its similarities to some Alpine vistas.<sup>80</sup>

A painting that is opposite to Finnie's wilder treatment of this vista is Alfred De Breakenski's (1852-1928)<sup>81</sup> oil painting, titled, *Snowdon, North Wales* (Figure 56). This painting depicts the Capel Curig vista as seen from the shore of the Llyn Mymbyr. This oil represents the summit peak of Snowdon and this feature dominates the composition. There is an exaggeration of the mountain profiles in this painting that are close to De Loutherbrough's distortion of his slopes. This distortion gives De Breakenski's painting a classical look, which is reinforced by a clear solid light that bathes the whole composition in a harmony of golden colour. This mellifluous light is

as crystal clear as the surface of the lake that reflects the colours back towards the hues of the mountain. The general landscape forms of De Breakenski's *Snowdon, North Wales* (Figure 56) are close to De Loutherbrough's proportional treatment of mountain forms in his *Royal Academy* exhibit of 1787 (Figure 38), except that De Breakenski's version enlarges Snowdon by moving it closer to our viewpoint. This realignment enhances the presence of the mountain permitting it to function as a realist picture and as a symbol simultaneously. De Breakenski was a successful professional artist and he made several versions of the view from Capel Curig. These works are as in demand today as when they were first painted.<sup>82</sup>

The view of Snowdon from Caple Curig has maintained a remarkable and consistent visual integrity over the last two hundred years since De Loutherbrough's first public exposure of his classic view of the vista. De Loutherbrough's classical proportion, his use of pictorial space combined with his treatment distinguish his picture as belonging more to the Italian classical tradition of landscape construction than to any other method of visioning. However as I have shown this classic motif was, and still is, adaptable to many other methods of visioning. This transformation is not restricted only to painting but it also applies to photography and commercial imagery as well.

An example of this motif's continued use both photographically and commercially can be seen in its appropriation and use on the front cover of a calendar titled, *North Wales Salmon Calendar 2000* (Figure 57). This picture presents this classic view of north Wales to the public and the title, *North Wales* is over printed in red lettering across and above the mountain peaks in the pale, diffused and classical looking sky that pervades the photograph.<sup>83</sup> On the reverse side of this calendar the title of this photograph is given as *Snowdon from Llyn Mymbyr, Gwynedd*.<sup>84</sup> Inside the calendar this picture appears for the month of August, a month that is very popular today for holidays and for visiting Snowdonia. The caption that is printed inside the calendar underneath the same picture that is depicted on the cover is described in both English and Welsh. It reads as follows:

Situating in a broad U-shaped valley near Capel Curig, beautiful Llyn Mymbyr offers superb views of Snowdon. The highest mountains in Wales, Snowdon's loftiest peak reaches 3,560 feet.<sup>85</sup>

This title is a full and descriptive narrative that offers a range of information of a factual nature and it also makes a reference to Capel Curig by name. In a Welsh Tourist publication which I purchased in 1999 that was first issued in 1990 and bearing a publication date of 1996 there is a colour photograph that reproduces a similar view to the one that appeared in the calendar with the same rocks appearing in the foreground. This version does not acknowledge the site's specific credentials as a view of Snowdon from Capel Curig; instead the caption refers to the time of day and is simply titled, *Sunset over Snowdonia*<sup>86</sup> (Figure 58). This photograph, which is reproduced in *A journey through Wales* has the visual power to stand on its own as a symbolic emblem for Snowdonia and the mountain scenery of north Wales. Also in this publication of ninety colour photographs there is a large colour photograph taken on a quiet day in high summer that depicts the same vista towards Snowdon that De Louthembourg had selected for his vision of Snowdonia. This is titled, *Looking towards Snowdon from Capel Curig* (Figure 59). The caption also states that:

The mountain gives its name to the 845-square mile Snowdonia National Park, a huge expanse of upland extending southwards into the heart of Mid Wales.<sup>87</sup>

The slightly elevated viewpoint that has been used for this colour photograph allows the visual ingredients that make up a 18th century classical landscape painting to be present in this photographic replica of the vista of Snowdon from Capel Curig that refers back to De Louthembourg's earlier vision of this mountain. The contrasts between all three of these photographs is quite remarkable in the variation of effect which has been applied to each separately in order to promote a certain message that is appropriate to the particular vision that is required. The first photograph (Figure 57) on the front of the calendar promotes a meditative and contemplative view. The second photograph (Figure 58) using a vertical format promotes a dramatic almost subliminal picture of mountain scenery. In the same publication the third photograph (Figure 59) generates a warm contemplative and pastoral effect from the elevated viewpoint that opens up the expansive vista towards Snowdon. In almost every case, whatever the treatment that has been applied to this motif the visionary power of De Louthembourg's original classical composition is still present. It nearly always survives this reconstruction. This reconstruction depends on the treatment that is



applied to this vista, which in turn determines the amount of classicism that is pictorially retained

A postcard that dates from the 1950s titled, *Snowdon from Capel Curig* (Figure 60) demonstrates how much of De Loutherbrough's classicism can be retained in the picture. When I first saw this coloured photograph I mistook it for a painting and a classical one at that. After a closer examination I could see that it was a very carefully composed and controlled photographic image. It conformed to the essential ingredients that De Loutherbrough had established as viable in terms of a visual identity for this vista. The colour of the sky is reminiscent of a Poussin painting and this yellow tint gives an impression of an Italian light rather than a Welsh sky. The original photograph used by Judges' Ltd of Hastings was in monochrome and the colour has been applied by hand to produce a coloured version.

This perceived classical identity has signified and marked out the viewpoint today as a place from where the Snowdon panorama can be observed (if you can see it). The contemporary tourists can disembark from their coaches and cars nearby and assemble at this viewpoint for a view of Snowdon. They can stand near the edge of the lake, close to the rustic footbridge with their camera. This view has not changed since De Loutherbrough's visit over two centuries ago and it is his vision and the many revisions since that the tourist is framing through the viewfinder. The coloured postcard (Figure 60) has assumed the identity of art and in the future, as the tourist clicks their digital camera and prints a picture from the computer, they will have generated an identity that fits the established ingredients for this viewpoint.

Whatever the visual treatments have been applied to this vista the inherent qualities of De Loutherbrough's use of classicism are forever present. The percentage of this varies depending on the visualising that is taking place. The original viewpoint was established by Pennant and depicted by Griffith. De Loutherbrough's painting was exhibited at the *Royal Academy* in 1787 and this helped to generate its visual status. The viewpoint became established when Penrhyn constructed the access and the accommodation for overnight travellers that later became a hotel. Visiting artists both professional and amateur increasingly depicted the Snowdon vista. Artists have used a range of titles other than *Snowdon from Capel Curig*, some of these are individual

while others are more general titles. Therefore the actual number of representations of this subject is much greater than the actual number of named works suggest.

In this chapter I have discussed the visualisation by artists, illustrators and photographers of the mountain viewpoint of Snowdon from Capel Curig. In connection with this site I examined the tour and guidebook literature and highlighted the relationships between image and text in these publications. I have revealed how many of the visual interpretations of this vista have retained De Louthembourg's original preference for a classical construction of space, proportion and light and how this factor is evident in the extensive revisions of Snowdon from Capel Curig made since 1787.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The theme is from Virgil, *Georgics*. It depicts Orpheus who is returning from the lower world with his wife on the condition that she does not look back, however she does, and she is lost forever. This canvas was acquired by Louis XIV in 1685 and is now in the Louvre, Paris. Poussin used a similar composition in his *Landscape with a Man killed by a Snake*, National Gallery, London, painted about the same time circa, 1650-51.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. William Gilpin (1724-1804) was a country clergyman and teacher who became a leading advocate on the theory of picturesque landscape. He made many picturesque tours around Britain, which he recorded, in manuscript and his own wash drawings. Many were circulated in manuscript form prior to their publication and Gilpin was encouraged to publish them due to the enthusiastic support of his many friends and admirers who emulated his theories of landscape, particularly his schemas for landscape composition. These were based on a compositional formula that consists of two side screens and three recessionary planes. These were applied to subjects that were suitable for picturesque treatment. These were mainly drawn in watercolour, often by amateurs, and made on 'picturesque' tours. The last guide was published posthumously in 1809, although it does in part refer to north Wales, and was based on a visit he made in 1773; it is less influential due to its late publication date. There were nine books published altogether on 'picturesque beauty' by Cadell and Davies of London. For further reference see, Carl Paul Barbier, *William Gilpin, His Drawings, Teachings, and Theory of the Picturesque*, Oxford, 1963.

<sup>3</sup> This was the Rev. William Gilpin's own term which he used on p. 8 of his published guide to the River Wye in 1783. A version of it appears in the full title, *Observations on the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales etc., Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; Made in the Summer of the Year 1770*, London, 1783. The original manuscript journal of this tour is in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth (NLW, MS. 21630B).

<sup>4</sup> C.T. Onions ed., *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary on Historical Principles*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1968.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, 2 vols., Benjamin White at Horace's Head, London, 1784, vol. 2., p.159.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., These two volumes contain over sixty engraved plates, the majority were drawn by Moses Griffith (1747-1819) and engraved by Peter Mazel (fl.1760-1795).

<sup>7</sup> For further information on Thomas Pennant's contribution to both written description and the visual depiction of Snowdonia, see this thesis, chapter three, pp. 57-61 and note number 28.

<sup>8</sup> Philippe Jacques de Louthembourg (1740-1812) was an oil painter of picturesque and sublime landscapes along with other genre, history and marine subjects. De Louthembourg began to exhibit landscape subjects at the Royal Academy from 1772, a year after his arrival in London. He became a

successful scene painter at the Garrick Theatre and was the inventor of the Eidophusikon, a device that enabled small-scale optical effects to be made, which opened to the public in 1781. De Louthembourg had visited Derbyshire in 1778 to make preparatory sketches for stage sets for a Drury Lane pantomime. In 1783 De Louthembourg made a 'picturesque tour' of Derbyshire and the Lake District from which a series of landscapes in oil were made. De Louthembourg visited Wales in 1786 to make landscape studies influenced by Gilpin's example and these include a wide range of subjects ranging from picturesque ruins such as Tintern Abbey to studies of castles such as Conway and Harlech along with views of mountain scenery. Two paintings of Snowdon, the result of this tour, were exhibited at the Royal Academy the following year. These were *View of Snowdon, from Llyn Beris lake, with the castle of Dolbardon* (no94) and *View of Snowdon from Capel Curig, a morning* (no216). Sixty-nine sketches from this Welsh tour are in the collection of the National Library Wales, Aberystwyth. The various watercolour studies made on location and on these tours which included industrial subjects along with landscape views of dramatic scenery together formed the basis of De Louthembourg's set of aquatint prints that were published in 1805. De Louthembourg's set of 18 prints were engraved by W Pickett and hand coloured by John Clark and the set was published as *The Romantic and Picturesque Scenery in England and Wales* and was unusual in that the accompanying text was in both English and French. For further information see, Rudiger Joppien, *Phillipe Jacques de Louthembourg*, exhibition catalogue, Kenwood, London, 1973.

<sup>9</sup> Louis Hawes, *Presences of Nature, British Landscape 1780-1830*, exhibition catalogue, Yale University Press & Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven, 1982, p.116., note to plate 7.

<sup>10</sup> Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1758-1838) an antiquarian, author, artist and traveller, who made numerous tours both in Britain and abroad. He edited and translated from the Latin, Giraldus Cambrensis, *Descriptio Cambriae*, the 12th century book on Wales, to which he added a life of Geraldus and illustrations. This was published in two volumes in 1804. He recorded his travels in monochrome wash drawings often delineated in sepia over pen. He visited Wales many times and his work was engraved by a range of professional engravers. His images are topographical and wide ranging in terms of subject embracing both landscape views and industrial subjects. His position as the owner of the Stourhead estate in Wiltshire, whose garden he helped to create, enabled him to be a patron of the arts. There are examples of his recorded tours in manuscript form in the Central Library, Cardiff, 'Tour in the Summer 1797', (C.L.C., MS.3.127.6/6). 'Tour in South Wales or rather Monmouthshire-August 1798', (C.L.C., MS.3.127.6/6). 'Journal of a Tour in 1800', (C.L.C., MS. 3.127.5/6).

<sup>11</sup> A collection of Welsh pictures by Sir Richard Colt Hoare were published in book form as, *A Collection of 48 Views of Noblemen's and Gentlemen's Seats, Towns, Castles, Monasteries and Romantic Places in North and South Wales*, (1792), William Miller, London, 1806.

<sup>12</sup> John Cary (1754-1834) was a map maker, engraver and publisher. In 1787 Cary issued this pocket map of north Wales along with South Wales for use by travellers. They were inexpensive and showed all the principal roads in reasonable detail and scale. These atlases became the standard road reference tools. They were in use throughout the 19th century, partly due to their clean design, which avoided unnecessary detail and Cary's superb engraving of the plates. There is a copy of this map in the Glamorgan Archive Office, Gwent.

<sup>13</sup> Harold Hughes and Herbert L North, *The Old Churches of Snowdonia*, (1924) Limited Edition Reprint, Snowdonia National Park Society Capel Curig, Bangor, 1984, p.36, and notes, p.293.

<sup>14</sup> A. H. Dodd, *The Industrial Revolution in North Wales*, (1933) reprint, University of Wales Press, Wrexham, 1990, p. 97.

<sup>15</sup> For further information, pertinent to road building in north Wales in the 18th century and early 19th century see, A.H. Dodd, *The Industrial Revolution in North Wales*, (1933) Reprint, University of Wales Press, Wrexham, 1990, chapter IV, pp. 89-100.

A.H.Dodd, 'The Roads of North Wales 1750-1850', in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, vol. LXXX, 1925, pp. 121-148.

Charles G Harper, *The Holyhead Road*, 2 vols. London, 1902.

Mervyn Hughes, *The Holyhead Road 1810-42. A study in Highway Administration*, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Wales, 1963.

Mervyn Hughes, 'Thomas Telford in North Wales', 1815-1830', in Donald Moore ed. *Wales in the Eighteenth Century*, Swansea, 1976, Chapter 9, pp.152-167.

Sir Henry Brooke Parnell, *A Treatise on Roads; wherein the Principles on which Roads should be made are explained and illustrated, by the Plans, Specifications, and Contracts made use of by Thomas Telford, Esq., on the Holyhead Road*. London, 1833.

R.T.Pritchard, 'The post road in Caernarvonshire', *Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society*, XIII, 1952.

<sup>16</sup> Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg, *The Romantic Scenery of England and Wales*, 18 aquatint plates, published, R. Bowyer, London, 1805. These plates engraved by W. Pickett. The text is in English and French and the prints were hand coloured by John Clark.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Arthur Poucher, (1891-1988) was a perfumer at Yardleys for over thirty years and was a director of the firm. His three-volume work, *Perfumes, Cosmetics, and Soaps*, published in 1923, became a standard reference work. His passion for hill walking and mountain scenery coincided with his other passion photography. His mountain photographs were taken using a lightweight 35mm Leica. In mountain terrain he photographed mainly in May, June, September and October, missing July and August as the sun was too high and the light therefore lacked drama. He took his mountain photographs between 10am and 4pm a practice he recommended. He also recommended that the best viewpoints in mountain photography were to be seen from half way up an adjacent mountain. In Britain this was at about 1,700 feet and in the Alps, 5,000 feet. Poucher used many of these photographs in his published guides to hill and mountain walking in Britain, Ireland and the Alps. The London publisher, Constable, produced these guides under his authorship. He was an honorary member of the Royal Photographic Society and he donated an archive of his own work to the Society. This consisted of 750 rolls of film, 18,500 prints, 50 exhibition prints and 15 notebooks along with other related material. His Obituary was published in the Daily Telegraph on the 13th August 1988 and in The Guardian on the 15th August 1988. For further information consult, the Librarian, (Jill Thompson), The Royal Photographic Society, The Octagon, Milson Street, Bath, BA1 1DN. (e-mail rps@rps.org).

<sup>18</sup> Walter Arthur Poucher, 'Mountain Photography' in, William Arthur Poucher, *The Welsh Peaks, A Pictorial Guide to walking in this Region and the safe ascent of its principal mountain groups*, Constable and Co. Ltd, London, 1987, pp.42-54.

<sup>19</sup> Walter Arthur Poucher, *The Welsh Peaks, A Pictorial Guide to walking in this Region and to the safe ascent of its principal mountain groups*, Constable and Co. Ltd, London, 1987, p.49.

<sup>20</sup> William Bingley, *North Wales delineated from Two Excursions through that Highly Beautiful and Romantic Country and intended as a Guide to Future Tourists*, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, London, 1814, p. 293.

<sup>21</sup> A later monochrome wash drawing by Richard Colt Hoare, titled, *Snowdon Mountain from Capel Curig and its lakes*, 1824, watercolour, 10 ¼ x 17 ½ (26.5 x 45), National Library of Wales, depicts the Capel Curig hotel on the right side of the picture with the Snowdon panorama seen beyond. In this image the Royal Bridge is also shown on the left and a figure on horseback is located in the right foreground on the golden mean. This drawing is number 28 in a bound folio, titled, *R. C. Hoare: Views in North Wales* (NLW). The title of this picture is inscribed below the picture.

<sup>22</sup> G.J. Freeman, *Sketches in Wales, or a Diary of Three Walking Excursions in that Principality, in 1823, 1824, 1825*, Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, London, 1826, pp.116-17.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>25</sup> Bingley, *North Wales*, p. 250.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp.118-19.

<sup>27</sup> Askew Roberts, *The Gossiping Guide to Wales; Pictorial Itinerary and Snowdon Panorama*, Hodder and Stoughton, London & Woodall and Co. Oswestry, London & Oswestry, 1883, advertisement, p.19.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., advertisement, p.19, line 4 -5.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., advertisement, p.19, line 9 -10.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., advertisement, p.19, line 3.

<sup>31</sup> An amateur drawing sketched at this location by Edith Hobson is in the National Library of Wales. See, Edith Hobson, *A peep to Snowdon, N. Wales from the garden at Capel Curig. Aug 15 / 27, 1827*, 8 ¾ "x 11 ¾ " (22.4 x 30 cm.), National Library of Wales. Aberystwyth.

<sup>32</sup> Roberts, *The Gossiping Guide*, pp. 146-147.

<sup>33</sup> Royal Academy computer database of north Wales landscape subjects exhibited at the Royal Academy 1769-1900, compiled from Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts. A Complete Dictionary of Contributors And their work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904*, Henry Graves & Co Ltd & George Bell & Sons, London, 1905. This database is comprehensive and includes (1) artist name, (2) title of work, (3) exhibition date (4) exhibition number (5) subject, with sub categories of subject (6) location, with sub categories of place (7) venue (8) price (9) source.

<sup>34</sup> I have restricted this analysis to only those works exhibited at the Royal Academy that state both Snowdon and Capel Curig in their titles. Some views of this subject were simply titled, Snowdon. This title can apply to other views towards the mountain and is consequently to be generalised to be used in connection with a specific view such as Snowdon from Capel Curig. A number of these 'Snowdon's'

will depict the view of Snowdon from the Capel Curig viewpoint towards the mountain. There were thirteen 'Snowdons' exhibited at the Royal Academy in the nineteenth century.

<sup>35</sup> British Institution computer database of north Wales landscape subjects exhibited at the British Institution 1806-1867 compiled from Algernon Graves, *The British Institution 1806-1867. A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from the Foundation of the Institution*, (1875) Kingsmead Reprints, Bath, 1969. This database uses the same 9 categories as the Royal Academy database, see note no.33.

<sup>36</sup> The principal London exhibition societies and galleries that exhibited landscape subjects include,

- (1) *Society of Artists, (Suffolk Street)* 1760 - 1791
- (2) *Free Society of Artists*, 1761 - 1783
- (3) *Royal Academy of Art*, 1769 - existing .
- (4) *Society of Painters in Water-Colours, (Old Water-Colour Society, OWCS,)* 1804 - existing
- (5) *Associated Artists in Water-Colours*, 1808 - 1810 then renamed the *Associated Painters in Water-Colours*, 1810 - 1815
- (6) *New Society of Painters in Water-Colours*, (later renamed, *Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours*) 1832 - existing
- (7) *British Institution*, 1806 - 1867
- (8) *Society of British Artists*, 1824 - existing
- (9) *Royal Institute (New Water-colour Society)*, 1832 -
- (10) *Grosvenor Gallery*, 1878 -
- (11) *New Gallery*, 1888 -
- (12) *Portland Gallery*, 1848 - 1861
- (13) *Dudley Gallery, (Water-Colour)*, 1865 - 1882
- (14) *Dudley Gallery, (Oil-colour)*, 1867 - 1882

<sup>37</sup> Society of Artists computer database of north Wales landscape subjects exhibited at the Society of Artists of Great Britain, compiled from Algernon Graves, *The Society of Artists of Great Britain 1760-1791, The Free Society of Artists 1761-1783. A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from the Foundations of the Societies to 1791*, (1907) Kingsmead Reprints, Bath, 1969. This database uses the same 9 categories as the Royal Academy database, see note no. 33.

<sup>38</sup> John Varley (1778-1842). A professional watercolour artist, mostly of landscape views. He exhibited a total of 786 works in the London exhibitions between 1798-1843 including 739 at the OWCS and 41 at the Royal Academy. Visited north Wales 1799 with the landscape painter George Arnold (1763-1841). He went again in 1800. In 1802 he toured Snowdonia with his younger brother Cornelius and they met up with Joshua Cristall (1768-1847), William Havell (1782-1857) and Thomas Webster (1772-1844) who were also visiting north Wales. This was Varley's last documented tour to north Wales although many of his Welsh subjects were made after this date. See, C.M.Kaufmann, *John Varley 1778-1842*, B.T. Batsford Ltd & Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 1984. Cornelius Varley (1781-1873) was also a professional landscape artist. He showed 129 works in the London exhibitions between 1803-1869, including 59 at the OWCS and 29 at the Royal Academy. He patented his drawing aide, a Graphic Telescope in 1811. See, A.W Somerville, *Cornelius Varley*, exhibition catalogue, Colnaghi Ltd, London, 1973.

<sup>39</sup> I have used the 'List of works exhibited by John Varley', compiled by Basil Long at the V&A, reprinted from 'OWCS Club Volume, II, 1924-5', in C.M.Kauffman, *John Varley 1778-1842*, B.T. Batsford Ltd & Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 1984, pp.75-85.

<sup>40</sup> *Somerset House Gazette*, October 11th, 1823.

<sup>41</sup> Image Bank. I have constructed an image bank of artist's pictures and illustrations. This contains all the viewpoints in Snowdonia along with representations of the mountain groups to which are added certain pertinent subjects, for example the Welsh funeral. This image bank contains over 1500 images, assembled in folders, by location or theme, and it is continually being added to.

<sup>42</sup> Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>43</sup> Source, British Institution database.

<sup>44</sup> Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>45</sup> Source, British Institution database.

<sup>46</sup> Richard Wilson, *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle*, 1765-6, oil on canvas, 101 x 107cm, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, a version is in Nottingham Castle Museum. This painting is discussed in chapter 2.

<sup>47</sup> This evidence was gained by a personal visit to the site to photograph and research the Wilson viewpoint during 1995. I was surprised to find no evidence for this spectacular viewpoint towards Snowdon on the ground, there was no lay-by or even an unofficial pull off from the B4418 at the viewpoint. I had to trespass on private land to obtain my photographs, crossing a field to get close to

the lakeshore of Llyn Nantlle which is about a hundred yards from the road that runs parallel to it. To do this I chose to ignore several signs that clearly stated that the land was private and that there was no access to the lake. In Wilson's day there were two lakes at this location and his view was actually taken from the same relative position on the lower lake. Due to quarrying activity in the past, the lower lake is now filled in.

<sup>48</sup> I refer the reader to Andrew Wilton's authoritative account of Turner's five tours to Wales. These tours were made between 1792 and 1799 and Wilton included route maps for each tour. See, Andrew Wilton, *Turner in Wales*, exhibition catalogue, Mostyn Art Gallery & Welsh Arts Council, Llandudno, 1984. An English and Welsh edition of this catalogue was published.

<sup>49</sup> There are two abstracts written in Turner's hand from Thomas Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* in his sketchbooks from the 1799 tour of north Wales. These sketchbooks are, No. XLV, *Lancashire and North Wales*, flyleaf, and No. XLVI *Dolbadarn* end cover, Turner Bequest, Tate Britain, London.

<sup>50</sup> Samuel Hieronymous Grimm (1733-1794) was born at Burgdorf, Switzerland. Resident in England from 1769. Professional artist and topographical illustrator typically in pen and wash who showed at the Royal Academy 1769-1793. In 1777 he was employed by Henry P. Wyndham on his second tour to Wales specifically to make drawings under Wyndham's direction. He contributed to many other publications, including, Gilbert White, *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne*, published in 1789. For further information on Grimm's Welsh imagery, see, Paul Joyner, *Samuel Hieronymous Grimm, Views in Wales*, exhibition catalogue, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1983.

<sup>51</sup> Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, *A Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales, Made in the Months of June and July 1774, and in the Months of June, July, and August 1777*, Salisbury, 1781, preface, p. v.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., preface pp.ix-xii

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., preface p. vi.

<sup>54</sup> Edward Pugh (1763-1813) a Welshman who worked in watercolour and lived in London where he met John Boydell (1719-1804) the print publisher. It was Boydell who suggested to Pugh the original idea for an illustrated book on north Wales. Pugh left London in 1800 and moved to north Wales, residing at Ruthin until his death in June 1813. He spent nearly ten years collecting the material for his illustrated book on north Wales: Edward Pugh *Cambria Depicta: A Tour through North Wales, Illustrated with Picturesque Views, By a Native Artist*, E Williams, London, 1816. This volume contains seventy-one aquatinted plates, including over ten plates of mountain scenery. There is a sketchbook by Edward Pugh in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

<sup>55</sup> Edward Pugh, *Cambria Depicta: A Tour through North Wales Illustrated with Picturesque Views*, E Williams, London, 1816, preface pp. vii-viii.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., preface, pp. iv-v.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., preface, p. vii. These two exceptions are described by Pugh, '...I must except St. Winefred's-Well, published in Mr. Pennant's Tour, and the monument at Maes Garmon, etched many years ago by an artist in the country, both of which had sufficient interest with me to obtain admission into my work; but even of these I have varied the points of view'.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., preface, p. vii.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp. 110-11. For the complete text that describes Capel Curig, the hotel and the mountain scenery, see, pp.110-114.

<sup>63</sup> Roberts, *The Gossiping Guide*, preface, line 7.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., preface, line 1-4 & line 15-16.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., preface, line 30-33.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., preface, line 36-41.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.302.

<sup>68</sup> Myles Birket Foster (1828-1899) trained as a wood engraver and then produced illustrations for various publications, particularly poetic works. Apart from his illustrations for *Black's Picturesque Guide to North Wales* he also supplied additional illustrations for the 15th edition of *Black's Picturesque Guide to the English Lakes*. From the early 1860's Foster became a successful landscape artist working mostly in watercolour. He exhibited 353 works in the London exhibitions between 1859-1893, showing 332 works at the OWCS and 16 at the Royal Academy. As Queen Victoria's favourite artist much of his work is seen as too sentimental to have much artistic merit beyond its technical skill. However Foster is often seen as the epitome of Victorian picturesque taste. For further information see, Frederick Lewis, *Myles Birket Foster 1825-1899*, F. Lewis, Leigh on Sea, 1973, and Jan Reynolds, *Birket Foster*, London, 1984.

<sup>69</sup> *Black's Picturesque Guide to North Wales*, (1868) eds., Adam and Charles Black, Adam & Charles Black, Edinburgh, 1886, p. 117-18.

<sup>70</sup> Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, p. 159.

<sup>71</sup> George Grainger Smith, (1892-1961) a painter and engraver. Born in Hull, but resident in Liverpool from 1895. He studied at the Liverpool School of Art and he was later a member of the Liverpool Academy and was Art master at Liverpool College. Smith became a member of the Royal Cambrian Academy and was its President in 1960.

<sup>72</sup> George Grainger Smith, *Snowdon from Capel Curig*, oil on hardboard, c.1938-39, 25.¼ x 30.¼ inches, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. (no.2684). This painting was exhibited at the Bluecoat Chambers, Liverpool, Dec 1939-Jan 1940. And later at the Liverpool Artists Association, Southport, 1956, (no56). It was exhibited again in, *Paintings selected from the annual exhibitions of The Royal Cambrian Academy of Art held in Wales 1882-1982: A Centenary Celebration*. Royal Cambrian Academy, in association with the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum, Birkenhead, (no41). Smith exhibited two works of Snowdonia at the Royal Academy in 1941, *Snowden from Capel Curig* (no.171) and in 1948, *Llyn Gwynant* (no.987).

<sup>73</sup> Amos Green (1735-1807) a painter in oils and watercolour and his brothers, James Green (1729-1759) and Benjamin Green (1738-1798) were accomplished engravers. He studied under Alexander Cozens. Subjects range from landscape to studies of fruit and flowers. He showed five works at the Society of Artist between 1760 and 1765. He married a former pupil in 1796, Harriet Lister and her watercolours can easily be mistaken for his. Green made several tours towards the end of his life, to the Lake District, Scotland and to north Wales. The work discussed is, *Snowdon and Capel Curig*, pencil, pen and grey ink with watercolour, 24.5 x 39.9 cm, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, Manchester. (D.1963.31.111).

<sup>74</sup> Thomas Leeson Rowbottom, (1783-1853) was a painter, based in Bristol from where he made a tour to north Wales in 1825. The Victoria & Albert Museum have identified this watercolour as, *Capel Curig, North Wales*, watercolour, 5.5/8" x 8.7/8" (14.4 x 22.6 cm.) (no 38-1873). His son Thomas Leeson Rowbottom II (1823-1875) is also an artist and he is more widely known. Like his father he painted views of north Wales.

<sup>75</sup> David Cox (1783-1859) a painter in watercolour and oil. He exhibited a total of 973 works in the London exhibitions, including 849 exhibits at the Old Watercolour Society. He was also a teacher and author of *A Series of Lessons intended to elucidate the Art of Painting in Water Colours*, T Clay: London, 1812. Cox also produced *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours*, S & J Fuller, London, 1813-1814, the first edition issued in twelve equal monthly instalments. This was reissued with changes in 1840-1841. Other publications by Cox were aimed at young artists, for example, *Progressive Lessons on Landscape for Young Beginners*, S & J Fuller, London, 1816. Issued in six instalments. An expanded version was reissued in 1819-20 and 1825. His son David Cox Junior (1809-1883) was also a prolific artist who specialised in Welsh mountain subjects. The senior Cox was based largely in Birmingham from 1845, previously he resided in Hereford and London. For further information see, Nathaniel Neal Solly, *Memoir of the life of David Cox, with selections from his correspondence, and some account of his works*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1873. Stephen Wildman, *David Cox 1783-1859*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, 1983, This catalogue contains a complete bibliography on Cox.

<sup>76</sup> Nathaniel Neil Solly, *Memoir of the life of David Cox, with selections from his correspondence, and some account of his works*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1873, pp. 162-63.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>78</sup> *Spectator*, May 1855, quoted in Solly, op cit., p. 233.

<sup>79</sup> John Finnie (1829-1907) was a landscape painter, etcher and mezzotint engraver. He exhibited 107 works in the London exhibitions between 1861-1893, including 36 at the Royal Academy. Studied at the School of Design Marlborough House. Played an active role in the artistic life of Liverpool where he was appointed to the post of Head of the Liverpool School of Art. Exhibited at the Liverpool Academy from 1856 and was its President 1887-8. He was a member of numerous art societies and he exhibited at the Paris Salon. He was a member of the Royal Cambrian Academy from 1894 and later lived in north Wales near Llandudno finally returning to Liverpool in 1905.

<sup>80</sup> Bingley wrote, '*The Vale of Capel Curig ...is bounded by the British Alps, Snowdon and his adjacent mountains, affords some of the most picturesque landscapes of the whole country*', William Bingley, *North Wales*, pp 292-93.

<sup>81</sup> Alfred Fontville De Breanski (1852-1928) was a landscape painter in oils based in London where he exhibited 43 works at the Royal Academy. These were mostly mountain subjects set in Scotland and north Wales. His landscapes often include an expanse of water, a lake, loch or river in the foreground.

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and their style can be formalistic. A canvas size of 24 x 36 inches is typical and his compositional recipe could be applied to any mountain landscape regardless of place.

<sup>82</sup> A painting by Alfred De Breanski, *Capel Curig, North Wales*, oil on canvas, 30 x 50 inches, was at the picture dealers, 'Fine Art of Oakham', 4 High Street, Oakham, Rutland, in January 1997. It depicts the Snowdonian mountains seen across the lake. The guide price for De Breanski's landscape painting c.1998 is in the range £18,000-£20,000.

<sup>83</sup> *North Wales Salmon Calendar 2000*, J Salmon Ltd, Sevenoaks, 1999, Front cover and inside page, no pagination. (Photograph, J Salmon Ltd).

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., outer cover, back.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., caption, *August 2000*, no pagination.

<sup>86</sup> Roger Thomas, *A Journey through Wales*, Jarrold Publishing and Wales Tourist Board, Norwich, 1996, No.68. (Photograph, Mike Cullen).

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., No. 65. (Photograph, Wales Tourist Board).



## Picturesque Snowdonia: Pont Aberglaslyn.

As stated in the previous chapter the viewpoint at Capel Curig became prominent due to the improved access to it and to this region of Snowdonia. Access points are often a crucial element in the establishment of a viewpoint in the mountains of north Wales. Bridges can become stopping places particularly narrow ones and they also function as landmarks in a mountainous country. The bridge becomes a vantage point from which a view can be observed. This usually provides a view either up or down a valley.

In this chapter the relationships between the published text descriptions of the Pont Aberglaslyn site and the visual depictions that accompany them are discussed along with the visual representations which were applied to this solid motif of bridge, river and mountain. Artists and writers at this location applied various modes of visioning of this scene and these included both the concepts of the picturesque and the sublime. The structure of the site fitted William Gilpin's three-stage formula and this structure allowed either a sublime or a picturesque treatment of the subject to be made.

The medieval bridge crossing the river Glaslyn fitted this vision. It is located a mile and a half south of Beddgelert and it became a popular excursion for visitors staying at the hotels there. It was also encountered by visitors travelling en route between Snowdon and Treath Mawr and the Vale of Ffestiniog and vice versa. It was from this road that Robert Price of Foxley (1717-1761) <sup>1</sup> drew his watercolour *A View of the bridge from above the cascade of Aberglaslyn in Merionethshire* (Figure 61) in 1758. This topographical wash drawing depicts the bridge in the centre of the picture with the estuary of Treath Mawr seen beyond. Price's early record highlights the lack of trees that would later mar the openness of the site. However, it is the view upstream from the bridge that is represented by later artists, photographers and illustrators. This restricted vista is described in the text of the many tour accounts that describe a visit to this spot and in the later guidebooks.

In some published books text and image were combined. In Robert Hasell Newell's guide to north Wales published in 1821 he advised potential artists and tourists on the best guidebooks to consult:

The best I am acquainted with are - Pennants Tour through Wales, 2 vols. 4 to. 1784. Wyndhams Tour, 4 to. 1781, Bingley's North Wales 2 vols. 8 ve 1804, (1800).<sup>2</sup>

Two of these recommended guides contain both a written narrative describing the scenic Pont Aberglaslyn and a pictorial representation of it. Bingley's guide was not illustrated in the text but it does contain a vivid pictorial description of the scene in the narrative that describes this location.

The view up stream shows a scene of steeply sided mountains forming a gorge in which the descending river flows. In the eighteenth century there was a salmon leap just up stream from the bridge and this was another point of focus for the traveller or visitor making a picturesque tour. If the sublime was a requirement then this view could supply that ingredient as well. Another way that artists chose to depict this location was to view the scene from a point downstream from the bridge. This gave a more expansive vista that allowed for a more dramatic image to be made. In this view the bridge acts as an anchor point in the composition and it gives a sense of scale for the surrounding mountains that dominate the picture. This treatment of space is not classical and is pictorially opposite to the spaciousness that is to be found in the Capel Curig vista. Some artists chose a vertical format for this especially for pictures close to, or at the bridge. Further away from the bridge a horizontal format was usually preferred, placing the bridge in the left-hand corner. In both cases very little sky is usually shown and this allows a more sublime treatment to be established for this motif. This effect is further enhanced in many pictures by having a viewpoint that is suspended above a deep space. This space has no foreground and it becomes slightly disturbing for the spectator, as there is no immediate foreground upon which to stand or any conventional access point into the painting. This is a feature that reinforces feelings towards the sublime, producing a sense of unease, of imbalance in this beautiful setting. At any time we could slip and this view would be thrown into chaos. This sublime aspect is often hinted at in the picturesque compositions prevalent in a number of paintings and prints that depict the bridge, its river and mountain backdrop.

The majority of the first representations of this subject depict the view from the actual bridge. Others use a viewpoint downstream that looks towards the bridge and Moses Griffiths drew this view. Following its reproduction in Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* in 1784 it helped to establish the lower vantage point as the most viable for this subject. Consequently the majority of subsequent versions of this view were made downstream from the bridge and depict a broader landscape than the view from the bridge allowed.

Among the first artists to stand on the bridge and look upstream was Francis Towne (1740-1816) <sup>3</sup> who drew a vertical watercolour here in 1777. This work is titled, *A View of the Salmon Leap, from Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 62). It depicts the gorge, the river and the salmon leap, in the immediate foreground the top of the stone bridge is visible. On the left the narrow and precarious road to Beddgelert can be seen along with a figure and pack animal. Further up the road can be seen a single figure. Both are drawn in pen outline, their small scale adding to the sense of vastness that the pass could generate to those making their way through it. There is almost no sky present and this along with a denial of recessionary space gives a feeling of sublime grandeur. On the reverse of this drawing Towne recorded the following memoranda:

A view of the Salmon Leap from Pont Aberglaslyn. Drawn  
on the Spot by Francis Towne 1777, Leicester Sqre., London.  
Morning light from the Right Hand. <sup>4</sup>

Towne's methodical approach to documenting his visual experience is evident by the care he took over recording details pertinent to his artistic practice on the back of this drawing. This was an established method of recording that Towne used on the majority of his watercolours made on the spot. Towne's watercolours were a way of recording his travels for himself rather than for any particular audience. This watercolour not only documents the place but also the time of day and the arrangements of light and dark. Towne has used an unconventional approach in the foreground. In normal practice this area would be in shadow but this is reversed. It is the vertical mountainside of the gorge that is in shadow reflecting the actual reality that he perceived on his morning visit. Towne's unorthodox technique consisting of large expansive watercolour areas fit naturally into his tight structure that he has

imposed, now becoming as solid as the mountain forms that he is describing. The lack of any artistic dogma in this picture suggests that it was never intended for public consumption or public exhibition.

This was not the position when Samuel Hieronymus Grimm arrived the same year and drew a watercolour from the same spot. Grimm was being employed by Henry Penruddocke Wyndham to make a record of his second tour to north Wales. The purpose of which was to provide illustrations for the second edition of Wyndham's book.<sup>5</sup> The second edition was published in 1781 and contained two engraved plates of Pont Aberglaslyn. The first plate is based on Grimm's watercolour of 1777. It is dated 1st January 1780 and engraved by C Sparrow titled, *A View from the Pont Aberglaslyn, which divides Merioneth from Caernarvonshire* (Figure 63). It is the frontispiece of *A Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales*. This vertical engraving depicts the view above the bridge and shows the salmon net a lot closer than in Towne's view. Grimm has revised his image so that the salmon leap is in the immediate foreground. The road to Beddgelert is also shown along with a traveller and heavily laden animal. More sky is allowed to intrude into this picture space than in the Towne version and, as a result, Grimm's picture is less sublime than Towne's. Wyndham approached Pont Aberglaslyn from the south and in his book he gives this account of the bridge and the salmon leap that Grimm was asked to draw:

The bridge of Aberglaslyn connects two perpendicular precipices with a semicircular arch of stone, the diameter of which is thirty feet, and the crown of the arch is forty feet above the water level. Just above it, the whole river falls down a craggy break, of the height of about twelve feet. This is called the Salmon Leap, and our attention was many times diverted from the majestic scenery around us, by the dexterity of the salmon's leaping over it...<sup>6</sup>

When Wyndham first visited Pont Aberglaslyn in the summer of 1774 visitors to north Wales were not a common sight. At this time there were few Inns and the hotels had not been built. The roads were still in a poor state and had not been improved. Many roads were still to be constructed for example the route through Capel Curig.<sup>7</sup> As Wyndham observed in the preface to the first edition of his book first published in 1775:

The romantic beauties of nature are so singular and extravagant

In this principality, particularly in the counties of Merioneth and Caernarvon, that they are scarcely to be conceived by those, who have confined their curiosity to other parts of Britain. Notwithstanding this, the Welsh tour has been, hitherto, strangely neglected; for, while the English roads are crowded with travelling parties of pleasure, the Welsh are so rarely visited, that the author did not meet with a single party of pleasure, during his six-weeks' journey through Wales.<sup>8</sup>

This situation soon changed as more visitors came to Snowdonia encouraged by tour books such as those published by Wyndham and Pennant. In his preface Wyndham highlighted the books promotional role in encouraging more visitors to Wales:

The author of the following tour has no other view in the publication of it, than a desire of inducing his countrymen to consider Wales, an object worthy of attention.<sup>9</sup>

The picturesque tour was to become increasingly fashionable. In Snowdonia the standard of accommodation rose to meet the increased demand and the accessibility of the region was improving, therefore the need to venture as far north as the Lake District or Scotland diminished. The visual delights of mountain scenery could now be consumed much closer to home. London, along with Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester were geographically much closer to North Wales than the northern centres were. Wyndham inserted the engraved plate *A View from the Pont Aberglaslyn which divides Merioneth from Caernarvonshire* (Figure 63) adjacent to the first page of his preface in the second edition. By placing this full-page vertical picture on the opposite page of his introductory text Wyndham is using the visual status of the view of Pont Aberglaslyn to support his text narrative. He is also introducing the visual element itself into his publication something he saw as important hence his subsequent return with an artist to make visual what he had previously experienced but could only describe in words.

Later in the book when Wyndham discusses the merits of the Pont Aberglaslyn he again carefully reproduces an engraved plate opposite the text narrative. Plate ten is titled, *A View from below the Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 64). This print depicts the view as seen downstream from the bridge and this view comprises an impressive sweep of mountain landscape. The composition is horizontal, with the bridge placed in the bottom left hand corner. In the book the picture is reproduced sideways on to

the text and it fills the whole of the left-hand page. The version becomes sublime, because there is no foreground upon which to stand or from which to enter the picture. This is a device that J.M.W. Turner used extensively in his sublime Alpine views that he made in the 19th century. Turner himself in 1799 made a vertical monochrome watercolour in his sketchbook from the same viewpoint that Grimm has used here. Turner's, *Pontaberglaslyn, looking up the river* (Figure 65) was drawn on Turner's last tour to north Wales.<sup>10</sup> This rapid sketch retains all the elements associated with this spot, bridge, river and mountains all drawn with the sublime in mind.

Grimm in *A View from below the Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 64) presents a particularly faithful rendering of rock and mountain profiles especially when you consider that the original watercolour was drawn in 1777. This print was cut by W. Walker and has a plate date of 1780. Wyndham described in his text the prospect that Grimm had depicted on the adjacent page:

Here we paused, while the grandeur of the scene before us, impressed a silent admiration on our senses, We, at length, moved slowly onwards, contemplating the wonderful chasm. An impending craggy cliff, at least eight hundred feet high, projects from every part of its broken front, stupendous rocks of the most capricious forms, and shadows a broad, translucent torrent which rages, like a cataract, amid the huge ruins fallen from the mountain. On the opposite declivity, the disjointed fragments, crushing their mouldering props, seem scarcely prevented from overwhelming the narrow ridge, which forms the road on the brink of the flood.<sup>11</sup>

Grimm's picture *A View from below the Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 64) with its complete absence of any foreground produces a precarious feeling of unbalance in the spectator. We are literally suspended above the valley. This heightens the tension between the tripartite compositional structure and the reality of what is depicted. The whole picture is about to collapse inwards taking us with it. Even the bridge looks vulnerable in this context. Wyndham highlighted the subliminal aesthetic potential of this location as well as its suitability for artistic treatment when he wrote:

The eccentric and romantic imagination of Salvator Rosa was never fired with a more tremendous idea, nor has his extravagant pencil ever produced a bolder precipice.<sup>12</sup>

In this statement Wyndham draws attention to the mountain scenery all around the Pont Aberglaslyn and highlights its suitability for a visual treatment cognate with the sublime of Salvator Rosa (1615-1673). This tripartite image, of bridge, river and mountain became a motif that allowed a number of artistic treatments to be applied to it. Artistically the Pont Aberglaslyn site was capable of producing the picturesque as well as the sublime. Artist applied the appropriate visioning process that fitted their working methods and this gave the particular response that they wanted to apply.

This visioning process sometimes combined different proportions of the picturesque with elements of the sublime. A treatment that is quintessentially picturesque is the viewpoint that was reproduced in Pennant's book, *A Tour in Wales* in 1784. This small-engraved plate is inserted at the end of Pennant's *Journey to Snowdon* section in volume two. *A Vignet of Pont Aber Glas Llyn* (Figure 66) has no plate signatures of either Moses Griffith the artist or Peter Mazell the engraver but this horizontal engraving is almost certainly their work. It depicts a view towards the bridge from the level of the river with the bridge on the left and the mountains rising up behind. This is picturesque, the viewpoint is not set high, the composition is conventionally constructed and conforms to the golden mean and there is plenty of sky in the top portion to negate any intrusion of the sublime. Pennant made an excursion to Pont Aberglaslyn from nearby Beddgelert. He travelled south through the narrow pass along the road that runs above the turbulent river Glaslyn. Pennant described the landscape features that he encountered as he emerged at the bridge:

The scenery is the most magnificent that can be imagined. The mountains rise to very uncommon height, and opposite to us nothing but a broken series of precipices, one above the other, as high as the eye can reach.<sup>13</sup>

He then describes the bridge and its attractions:

The bridge terminates the pass; and consists of a single arch, flung over a deep chasm, from rock to rock. Above is a considerable cataract, where the traveller at times may have much amusement, in observing the salmon, in great numbers, make their efforts to surpass the heights.<sup>14</sup>

Pennant, like Wyndham, took care to have this plate placed adjacent to the text describing the bridge at Pont Aberglaslyn, this gives the tour guide narrative a visual status that enabled a visualising to take place prior to a visitor arriving at the location. The pictorial information that these early tour guides and the later guidebooks gave to the visual interpretation of this and many other viewpoints in Snowdonia should not be underestimated. Turner arrived at Pont Aberglaslyn as a direct result of having access to a copy of *A Tour in Wales* and he would have been familiar with the reproduction of this viewpoint that was contained within it. Turner's drawing that he sketched in his sketchbook (Figure 65) is a replica of the engraved plate (Figure 66) except that Turner chose a more elevated viewpoint and a vertical format for his sublime interpretation of the actual view. In both works the bridge is shown on the bottom left.

Francis Towne replicated an earlier representation of the site when he made a watercolour drawing of the view towards the bridge at Pont Aberglaslyn in 1795. This is his watercolour titled, *A River in North Wales* (Figure 67).<sup>15</sup> It depicts the same viewpoint that was reproduced in Pennant's *A Tour in Wales*. One feature that is evident in both this version and the one reproduced in Pennant is the large expanse of water in the foreground. This occupies the whole of the foreground area from left to right and presents a barrier to the spectator's eye that has to be crossed before the Pont Aberglaslyn bridge is reached in the middle distance. This composition is essentially picturesque, although some subliminal characteristics are present. For example, the foreground water prevents access directly into the picture, and the mountain on the left is portrayed as a vertical form that is slightly threatening in its greyness and weighty bulk. Towne's picture uses the tripartite compositional formula that was the favoured pictorial schema for this subject. The large expanse of water present in this work is not present in later versions of this subject and this is due to the construction of Maddock's dyke.<sup>16</sup> Towne's *A River in Wales* (Figure 67) depicts the bridge from the water's edge with an expanse of water in the foreground at high tide. From 1811 onwards, Maddock's dyke caused a major change in land use at this site and this rendered Towne's view obsolete. This, and the resulting change in the climatic environment caused by the departing sea, further favoured the increasing tree growth that would later obscure this view completely.



When Edward Pugh, the author and artist of *Cambria Depicta*, came to the Pont Aberglaslyn site he had decided that as there were so many artistic representations of this subject already that it did not warrant his own treatment. Pugh had sought out a more individual response to the mountain scenery of north Wales for use in his book. An agenda that enabled him to gain status and credit in terms of what he chose to depict along with the idiosyncratic titles that he chose to apply to his aquatint. At the Capel Curig viewpoint, for example, Pugh did not openly acknowledge his images' true visual identity. To this aquatint of Snowdon Pugh gave a title that made no reference to the Capel Curig viewpoint that he used. This was discussed in chapter one.<sup>17</sup> In the text of his tour Pugh did describe the attractions of this scenic spot and Pugh also stated his reasons for not depicting Pont Aberglaslyn with his text, he wrote:

The scenery near and about this bridge, is awfully grand; and The stupendously high precipitous sides of the cliffs, which seem hostilely to approach and frown upon each other, are strongly marked with indentations that still render it, though much hackneyed, a favourite subject of the pencil. Whether it be owing to a wish to avoid the fatigue of climbing the steeps here, or to any other cause, I know not, but it is certain that the numerous prints of this spot, already published, are nothing but mere duplicates; the bridge and the bed of the river, constantly introduced into the foreground.<sup>18</sup>

Pugh did make an ascent of the steeply-sided gorge at Pont Aberglaslyn and from there he enjoyed a more sublime prospect. As he gazed below Pugh experienced 'a downward view of the river from amongst wood and dislodged rocks, to excel any thing that I had yet seen from the bottom'.<sup>19</sup> Instead of reproducing a 'hackneyed' view, Pugh reproduced an aquatint of the nearby Cnicht mountain placing this on the opposite page to his Pont Aberglaslyn text. I believe Pugh's failure to reproduce this location in *Cambria Depicta* was due to his reluctance to assimilate a new version of this scene or to instigate an original picture. Instead he chose to reproduce a picture of the Cnicht, a picture that he was able to make his own and one for which he could claim a degree of visual ownership.

Another visitor to this location was the author and amateur artist William Bingley (1774-1823) who made several extensive tours to north Wales.<sup>20</sup> The first recorded tour dates from 1798 and this was followed by a second in 1800. These tours were

subsequently published as narrative accounts. A further book was published in 1814 combining the tours together in one volume. This book was intended 'as a guide to future tourists'.<sup>21</sup> It contains only two engraved plates and these are placed before the start of the text narrative.

In the preface of *North Wales Delineated from Two Excursions Through all the parts of that highly Beautiful and Romantic Country*, Bingley drew attention to the merits of Snowdonia's mountain scenery in preference to the scenery he found in the north of England. The mountain scenery of north Wales was a major attraction for Bingley as he explained to his readers:

Not satisfied with this single journey, I returned into North Wales, in the year 1801, and resided there four months more; during June, July, August and September. In this latter excursion my time was chiefly occupied in examining the counties of Caernarvon and Merioneth, and the Island of Anglesea, visiting again, in these counties, all the places that I had before seen, ascending most of the principal mountains, and searching around for other, new and interesting, objects.<sup>22</sup>

Bingley chose not to illustrate his narrative account of his travels with the scenic mountain sights of Snowdonia. Instead Bingley has used a very descriptive prose along with poetic stanzas as appropriate to generate mental pictures of Snowdonia's mountain scenery. At the scenic Pont Aberglaslyn Bingley presents the reader with mental images that conjure up pictures in the mind of what was to be found there. Bingley visited the site several times from nearby Beddgelert where he was staying at the Beddgelert Hotel. This hotel is still trading today as the Royal Goat. In his text Bingley describes the narrow pass, through which the traveller must pass and later gives an explanation of the origins of its alternative name. The name Devil's Bridge is sometimes used as an alternative title for the Aberglaslyn Bridge.<sup>23</sup> This name should not be mistaken for the Devil's Bridge near Aberystwyth. Bingley in his text uses sixteen lines of poetry to invoke this sublime spot for the reader. He paints essentially a romantic version of the scene but one that also embodies a wild and atmospheric response to nature along with references to the original creation of the mountains. This generated and imaginary picture retains a proportion of the sublime that counterbalances and limits the picturesque from becoming the dominant pictorial



engraving, *Pont Aberglaslyn, North Wales* (Figure 68) has a plate date of 1814 and the print was originally drawn by John Preston Neale (1780-1847).<sup>29</sup> It was engraved specifically for the book on north Wales written by the Reverend J Evans who was the commissioned author for this volume. The title of Evans' book consisting of 948 pages of text is *The Beauties of England and Wales: or Original Delineations, Topographical, Historical, and Descriptive, Vol XVII, North Wales*.

In his book Evans describes the visual merits to be found at the Pont Aberglaslyn site. First Evans quotes from Wyndham's earlier tour account.<sup>30</sup> Then, following this description he writes:

Nothing is opposed to the eye, but a series of the rudest cliffs, consisting of similar strata, divided by a serpentine chasm, and raised tier upon tier, high piled from earth to heaven, they seem to bid defiance to the traveller's advance, and prohibit all further access to the alpine heights before him.<sup>31</sup>

Evans is seeing and observing the Aberglaslyn bridge and its mountain backdrop here as if he were an artist, applying these visual criteria to his visioning process. Evans uses this aspect to empower his text description of the Pont Aberglaslyn site and also hints at its potential for the sublime. This aspect of a suggested sublime can be seen in the quoted extract where Evans' text refers to the following, 'rudest cliffs, serpentine chasm, tier upon tier, high piled, and alpine heights', words that together combine to produce ideas of the sublime.

Evans described the mountain scenery immediately beyond the bridge as he made his way through the pass towards Beddgelert:

Every step in this sublime, and unrivalled pass, unfolds new scenery, the strata assume all shapes, and all colours, from the lightest grey to the darkest hues of brown and black: and when the sun emerges from behind the enveloping clouds, the variegated summit are enriched with the most brilliant tints of light and gold.<sup>32</sup>

Neale's engraved picture titled, *Pont Aberglaslyn, North Wales* (Figure 68) is reproduced with the Pont Aberglaslyn text. It is the visual equivalent to the descriptive narrative by Evans of this subliminal viewpoint. The combinations of text and image at this location reinforce and empower each other and this gives a coherent

and unambiguous message of status to the significance of this viewpoint and to Welsh mountain scenery in particular. This picture is sublime and it would have been selected for its closeness to the mental images that the Evens text had generated.

In Neale's composition there is very little sky shown and the bridge is placed in the foreground towards the left corner. On the bridge are two figures, one on horseback and one is observing the salmon leap. There is no foreground on which to stand or conventionally enter the picture space. Instead the viewer is presented with a void above which the spectator hovers before entering the picture like a bird. This is a key device for generating feelings of the sublime at this particular spot. It is impossible to stand at this viewpoint in actuality yet we read this picture as true. This composition uses a tripartite formula. A foreground that comprises a bridge and an invisible void that spans the work from left to right. In the middle distance a steep bulky mountain intrudes from the left around the river Glaslyn to the full height of the picture. The background seen beyond the bend of the river consists of a spread of high mountains. In addition to this subliminal structure that Neale has imposed the engraving process has added to the sublime effect. The print is made up of a range of deep velvety blacks that in turn generate feelings of obscurity in their suggestion of blackness. These areas of vast dimness are enlivened by a range of lighter tonal highlights. It is the combination of all of these visual elements that make it sublime rather than one aspect alone.

This picture can be seen as complementary to the text that Evans wrote describing the Pont Aberglaslyn and its mountain scenery. The reproduction of this view in *The Beauties of England and Wales* would have added to the site's popularity with visitors to north Wales. Artists established the Pont Aberglaslyn viewpoint as a site that was ideally suited to a sublime treatment or a more picturesque response depending upon their requirements and working methods. The success and the status that this image accrued in the first quarter of the nineteenth century can be ascertained by the many versions of this subject that were reproduced in plate books and exhibited on the walls of the London exhibitions.

This subject was first shown at the *Royal Academy* in 1793. That year John Laporte (1761-1839) exhibited a work titled, *Pont Aberglaslyn, North Wales*. This subject

appeared three more times on the walls of the Academy before 1800.<sup>33</sup> There were fourteen named works exhibited at the *Royal Academy* between 1800 and 1825 that depicted the scenery at Pont Aberglaslyn by eleven different artists.<sup>34</sup>

It was this perceived familiarity with the numerous representations of mountain scenery at the Pont Aberglaslyn that led the Reverend G J Freeman to make the following comment in his *Sketches in Wales* published in 1826:

After breakfast we all made an excursion on foot to the *Pont Aberglas Llyn*, or *Bridge at the conflux of the blue pool*, a spot, that poetry, painting, and the imagination, have done so much to embellish, that I shall say little about it.<sup>35</sup>

Freeman did not reproduce any views of the Pont Aberglaslyn in his book. As he explained this was because of its over exposure in various media from painting to poetry. Fifteen lithographic plates were inserted into the text and these describe locations that derive from Freeman's three tours to north Wales. Of the fifteen prints drawn on stone by the artist Thomas Baynes (1794-1852),<sup>36</sup> eleven depict mountain subjects.<sup>37</sup> Freeman also chose not to reproduce the Snowdon vista as seen from Capel Curig, describing the latter as, 'a fine and well-known view over the two pools and up the valley to *Snowdon*'.<sup>38</sup>

Thomas Roscoe (1791-1871)<sup>39</sup> did not share Freeman's view on the over exposure of these sites and he published an illustrated guide to north Wales in 1836. For his book, *Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales*, Roscoe commissioned five artists, to make the illustrations specifically for reproduction in the guidebook. William Radclyffe (1780-1855) subsequently engraved these pictures and all fifty-one plates are of the highest quality. Roscoe's careful choice of artists to make the drawings along with the highly skilled engraver he chose to reproduce them indicate the importance that he attached to the visual element of his guide to north Wales. The five artists who contributed drawings to Roscoe's work were Cattermole, Cox, Creswick, Watson and Wrightson. David Cox provided the majority of works for the north Wales edition, some thirty-one in total.<sup>40</sup> That Cox was able to provide such a large number of the mountain subjects for this work reflects his developing knowledge and expertise in rendering Welsh mountain scenery. Some of the mountain landscapes that

Cox delineated for the Roscoe's guide to north Wales are more subliminal rather than picturesque. This particular aspect was noticed by Solly, Cox's biographer who observed that eleven of these reproduced works fitted this description:

They are all well-chosen and effective, but the following are especially noteworthy from their spirit and their grand representations of mountains overhung with mists and clouds, wild passes and rock-bound torrents...<sup>41</sup>

The eleven works referred to by Solly include seven prints of mountain scenery.<sup>42</sup> These prints represent the mountain sublime and they can be described as 'grand representations of mountains overhung with mists and clouds'. A good example of one of these sublime prints is *Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 69), which is Plate XXXVIII in Roscoe's book. It is not dissimilar to John P. Neale's *Pont Aberglaslyn, North Wales* (Figure 68) that was discussed earlier except that in the Cox version the bridge is placed at the centre of the composition. This results in a sense of unease for the spectator and this allows even greater feelings of the sublime to emerge. Apart from the realignment of the bridge in the Cox the other landscape features remain very similar to the earlier version. The treatment of light and dark is replicated in the Cox. In both versions the atmosphere is illuminated by an area of lighter sky in the distance, immediately above the intruding mountain mass on the left. In the Cox, (Figure 69) this area is also the lightest tone within the picture and this in turn generates a feeling of isolated gloom that permeates throughout the rest of the image which is tonally subdued and sombre. On the right, in the background the high mountains meet and mingle with the clouds. This area is delineated uniformly in a mid grey tone and this produces an obscured view. This obscurity generates the sublime rather than the picturesque. The painting that Cox supplied of this location complements Roscoe's text description of the same view:

The approach to the bridge which connects Caernarvonshire with Merionethshire is wonderfully striking – in some points of view, sublime and terrific. The road where the view first bursts upon the eye in all its varied and extraordinary features, by its bleak, barren aspect, overhung by huge precipices and broken rocks stretching far into the distance, well prepares the mind for those impressions which, on whatever side approached, by day or by moon-light, as Bingley so enthusiastically describes it, never fail to call forth the admiration of the coldest traveller. All the milder features of landscape are here lost in the sublime and

terrible; instead of the softer interchange of hill, and lake, and glen, the grandeur of the whole scene, breaking suddenly on the eye, at once arrests and employs the imagination.<sup>43</sup>

In this extract of Roscoe's text narrative he uses the word sublime twice along with related words such as terrific, terrible and grandeur. The connection between image and text empower both equally. This connection was clear to Roscoe as he stated in the preface of his guidebook to north Wales:

...this new and happy *combination* of the arts (happily for us, not amenable to the laws) is of a less imposing and more gentle; character and the artist and the author may walk arm-in-arm over the pleasant hills, by the green or the sunny shores, ever ready 'to catch the Cynthia of the minute,' to take Nature as they find her, in her more joyous, her passionate, her solitary, and her mournful moods. *Here*, at least, their ambition has wholly been to interpret her language in a simple and faithful manner...leaving the judicious Artist to speak to his eye, and his imagination, in colours bright and manifold as the rainbow.<sup>44</sup>

This association between text and image empowers Roscoe's work as a whole and gives status to both his narrative and the pictures that he commissioned to support his text descriptions. The sublime mountain landscapes that were originally drawn by Cox acquired added status with their appearance in Roscoe. Visitors to these viewpoints expected their visual experience of place to be similar to the reproduced picture and the text description of the location that was supplied in the guidebook. Visitor's applied these criteria to their visioning of the mountain scenery and artists delineated their own version of the published picture. This identity of place had been visually introduced to readers before they saw the view in reality. Therefore their reaction to the subject was pre determined by others, they were unable to see the view from a neutral perspective. As Roscoe observed, 'In describing scenery familiar to almost every eye, how little chance has the tourist at home of winning even a passing glance without borrowing some grace from the sister arts!' <sup>45</sup> Roscoe acknowledged this relationship between image and text that had now become a feature in many publications:

Every age has its prevailing fashion, and that of the present is, assuredly, pictorial embellishment – illustration in all its forms and branches. Our most distinguished living poets, and, indeed, writers of every class, seldom now reappear before the world



unrecommended by the genius of the painter, and the magic influence of the engraver.<sup>46</sup>

Roscoe believed that this collaboration between writers and artists allowed, ‘an alliance every way so desirable and calculated to gratify both the eye and the mind...’<sup>47</sup>

In David Cox’s painting of the *Pont Aberglaslyn, North Wales* (Figure 35), reproduced in conjunction with Roscoe’s description of the location, a number of figures can be seen. A collective role that the figures fulfil suggests the accessibility of the viewpoint and the wide range of experiences that can be enjoyed there. This allows many different readings to be made depending on the point of view of the spectator. These readings range from individual activities like fishing to the whole picture that in turn produces a universal image of mountain scenery. Cox inserted the following figures and activities; in the immediate foreground can be seen two fishermen who are shown fishing just below the level of the road and in front of the bridge. They are being observed by a figure looking over the road wall above them. On the bridge and facing us, the spectator, are two figures enjoying the spectacle of mountain scenery from their elevated and secure viewpoint. Above them on the road coming towards the bridge from Beddgelert are a group of riders on horseback. They are likely to be a party of pleasure visiting north Wales to enjoy its mountain scenery. In the middle distance, at a point where the road is about to disappear out of sight, can be seen two pedestrian tourists. All these figures represent different experiences and activities within one composite picture. This produces a credible vision of the potential merits of the location and these factors can be read and accessed from many different points of view. The *Pont Aberglaslyn* print served several roles at once, it produced an picture of the mountain scenery on the one hand while giving a reality to the more practical aspects of actually making a visit to this sublime spot. Roscoe aimed his book at the potential tourist, ‘to convey some idea of the delight and the advantage to be derived, so near at hand, from an autumnal ramble among the hills and lakes of our ancient British home’.<sup>48</sup> Roscoe also promotes the merits of Snowdonia’s mountain scenery by applying the status of Alpine scenery to the mountains of north Wales:

He has sought to convey with fidelity his impressions of the noble

and picturesque scenery of our British Alps...<sup>49</sup>

At the Pont Aberglaslyn viewpoint Roscoe made a direct connection with the merits of Alpine scenery and applied it to his text description at this location. This piece of text is located immediately before the inserted picture of this sublime scene:

Not a feature of landscape was wanting to complete the mournful charm of the hour and the spot. The gathering twilight giving broader masses to the rude rocks, soaring in succession above, bolder cliffs here piled tier upon tier, and again broken by the huge serpentine chasm,- with the wild wooded scene,- stretched far below,-the bright river, - and the deep green glen stretched far below -recalled to mind some of the boldest Alpine scenery that ever inspired the genius of the painter, or the gloomy joy of the robber chief.<sup>50</sup>

Roscoe made this reference to Alpine scenery in his text and it gives added status to the representations of mountain scenery in north Wales. The Welsh mountains were now being described as Alpine and this particularly applied to the more sublime mountain subjects such as those depicted by Cox for Roscoe's book. All these constituent parts came together to form a number of composite associations that contribute a sense of purpose and an identity that is representative of Welsh mountain scenery. The engraving of the *Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 69) is an example of this process, it is a visioning response that allows many individual readings to be made as well as an awareness of the sublime mood that pervades the whole picture.

In Roscoe's book at the Pont Aberglaslyn viewpoint there is a revisioning of identity. This process can be seen in both the image and in the text. In the guidebook Cox's view replicates Neale's earlier version of the scene and it re-establishes and maintains nearly all of its visual credentials. Roscoe, in his narrative of the scenery around the bridge, refers to Wyndham's earlier descriptive account and presents that description to his readers.<sup>51</sup> A number of writers, including Roscoe, re-use poetry to elaborate their texts and this also gave status to their own books. At the Pont Aberglaslyn viewpoint for example Roscoe quotes from poetic sources which he includes in his text descriptions of the bridge and its scenery. These are revised versions that have been extensively quoted before by writers on north Wales such as Bingley, Evans and others.<sup>52</sup> All these various layered connections manifest themselves in a range of subject identities within an image and these visioning processes can be used to

establish the visual credibility of a particular place like Pont Aberglaslyn. These all come together and establish a sense of place for a given location in terms of the visioning processes used. This in turn allows particular responses to be made. These derive from a range of differing types of recorded media, embracing written description, imaged depiction and poetic imagining. Add to this the idea that the perceived image may not always live up to the actual experience of place. This is a factor in the revisioning of place, especially among artists who could be making a painting of this subject in their London studio remote from the site. These artists could refer to the large amount of reproduced material both written and pictorial for any additional information they might need on the characteristics of the site. This would be in preference to making a special journey to re-visit the site. This situation particularly applied in the winter months, which were not conducive to travelling through the mountainous country of north Wales.

The visual identity that was established for the representation of the Pont Aberglaslyn site as reproduced in Roscoe's book reinforced the same visual ingredients that Neale had established for his depiction of the scene in the earlier book by Evans on north Wales. This was reproduced in the *Beauties of England and Wales* series that was originally published in 1812. The establishment at this location of a more sublime motif enabling this visual identity to become established was built upon previous renderings of the subject. These include Grimm's early view of 1777 that was published in 1781 and Griffith's version of the subject published in print form in Pennant's book in 1784.

The Pont Aberglaslyn motif became a popular subject in the London exhibitions. An example of this can be seen in the work of John Varley, who exhibited six versions of this subject at the annual exhibitions of the Old Water-Colour Society between 1805 and 1834.<sup>53</sup> A pair of works with almost the same title were shown there in the 1805 exhibition, this was *View near Pont Aber Glass llyn* (No29) and *View near Pont Aber Glaslyn* (No215). Also exhibited that year was another work with the title, *Pont Aber Glass Llynn* (No40). In 1806 Varley exhibited *The Salmon Leap at Pont Aber-Glass-Llyn* (No224). In 1830 he exhibited a work titled, *Pont Aberglaslyn* (No161) and in 1834 he showed *Pont Aber Glaslynn* (No255). An example of Varley's revisioning of this subject can be seen in a replica watercolour of about 1830. This is titled, *The Aberglaslyn Falls, near Beddgelert* (Figure 70) and it depicts the view above the

bridge from the same viewpoint used by Towne (Figure 62) and Grimm (Figure 63) for their versions made on the spot in 1777. The format that Varley has chosen for his picture of the falls and their mountain backdrop is vertical. This replicates the format that both Towne and Grimm selected for their rendering of this subject. Varley's treatment of the view is less sublime than either Towne or Grimm which could be the result of his distance, both actual and mental, from the experience of place.

The picture Varley presents in *The Aberglaslyn Falls, near Beddgelert* (Figure 70) has the look of the topographical and it retains more picturesque qualities than sublime ones. In this watercolour a large amount of the sky is allowed to dwarf the mountains. In Varley's sublime versions of this view this feature is reversed. An element of the site's potential for producing the sublime is retained to a degree by Varley's use of a suspended viewpoint above the river Glaslyn. It is not possible to be sure whether the viewpoint is set on the bridge or just below it. This sublime effect, caused by no visible foreground is somewhat negated by the large expanse of sunny sky that in turn bathes the whole of the composition in a clear soft light. Varley has widened the pass in his picture to allow him to insert the distant Snowdon into his composition. It is not possible to see the mountain in reality from this position by the bridge and from such a low viewpoint. Varley's picture is an idealised version of this location a reworking of subject and motif that deliberately lacks the awesome power of some interpretations by artists of the scenic Pont Aberglaslyn. In Varley's watercolour, no threat of danger is allowed to intrude in to the picture and he has placed his image of the Pont Aberglaslyn into a classical guise. It is this classical framework that is underpinning Varley's treatment of this motif and it is this structure that renders it picturesque rather than sublime. The light in this Varley is more reminiscent of Italy than the weather effects of north Wales. The road to Beddgelert is clearly visible on the left-hand side of the composition. Along the road, at a point on the golden mean, a figure on horseback can be seen. Above his head a bird is soaring and this subject also contributes to the overall effect of the picturesque. In the distance near to the water's edge can be seen some smoke from a fire and this suggests a human presence in the landscape, again this negates any reference to the terrible sublime.

The treatment that Varley has used for his depiction of the Pont Aberglaslyn presents the mountains of north Wales in a subdued state and he presents a formulaic approach

to the cycle of picturesque representation. As John Ruskin observed, this fault was also apparent in other contemporary artists as well as in Varley. Ruskin discussed this situation in volume one of *Modern Painters*:

Among our greater artist, the chief want, at the present day, is that of *solemnity* and definite purpose. We have too much picture - manufacturing, too much making up of lay figures with a certain quantity of foliage, and a certain quantity of sky, and a certain quantity of water; a little bit of all that is pretty... Or if the aim be higher, as was the case with Barret and Varley, We are generally put off with stale repetitions of eternal composition.<sup>54</sup>

An image of the Pont Aberglaslyn site dating from the same period as Varley's view, but representing a more substantial and subliminal treatment of the location is John Glover's (1767-1849)<sup>55</sup> oil painting titled, *Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 71). Glover has selected the same viewpoint used by Grimm for his representation of the site. This was an expansive horizontal view of the river Glaslyn, its bridge and mountain backdrop. It was this picture, now in its engraved form, that Glover would have seen reproduced in Wyndham's tour book (Figure 64). In a recent essay Francis McCarthy has described Glover's particular method of oil painting used in his paintings of north Wales.<sup>56</sup> This is a technique which uses a split haired brush to obtain an all over stippled surface applied uniformly across the canvas. McCarthy suggests in his essay that Grimm's technique 'has some affinity with Glover's.'<sup>57</sup> Glover has taken an element of his style and technique from Grimm but it would appear that this stylistic influence is derived directly from the engraved plates rather than from the original watercolours. In the engraved version of Grimm's *Aberglaslyn* (Figure 64) for example the feathery and stippled effect produced in the printing process can be clearly seen. It is this re-interpretation, via the print process itself, rather than from the original artwork that contributed to Glover's oil painting technique. Glover applied elements of this technique to many of his later pictures of Welsh mountain scenery.

Glover's *Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 71) depicts the same view that Wyndham had reproduced over fifty years earlier. The bridge is shown on the left, its arch clearly delineated against the lighter tone of the river. In the foreground area are a group of figures standing and sitting on a rocky outcrop. The right hand figure is pointing to the bridge with his arm outstretched, while his companion looks in the same direction.

A further figure in this group is shown sitting facing the view with a dog that is close to the edge of an invisible drop. Although it is only a short distance down to the river from this point the illusion that Glover has created is that of a deep and sublime space that opens up between the foreground area and the bridge in the middle distance. Above the bridge, on the road can be seen a figure on horseback. This figure replicates the figure on horseback that appears in the same place in Grimm's picture. The only change Glover has instigated is that his rider is shown riding towards the bridge, rather than away from it as in Grimm's view. In the distance, at a point where the road disappears out of sight another figure can be seen silhouetted against the darker mountain mass that makes up the backdrop of this sublime scene. This also replicates the figure seen at the same point on the road in Grimm's earlier engraved view. Glover's picture has the same mountain landscape forms that appear in Grimm's composition. In Glover's picture there is a deeper compositional space below the bridge and this allows the foreground area of rock (which includes our scenic admirers) to function as an entry point into the picture space. On the right hand side of the foreground area there is no solid ground. There is nowhere to stand and this produces an element of unease in the viewer as the river flows past beneath our feet. Another feature that empowers the sublime rather than the picturesque is the lack of sky in Glover's rendering of this view. The sky is shown in a lighter tone adjacent to the darkened mass of the mountains. Its precipice-like edge gives form to the mountains that rise up from the river gorge. These peaks run from left to right across the top of the picture. It is their unique geological structure which determines the particular profile edge that meets the sky. The area of sky that is left has been deliberately reduced to only a small surface area, allowing a more subliminal reading of this image to be made. On the top right of Glover's picture, the higher mountain peaks are permitted to touch the top of the frame. This pictorial device increases our sense of awe, enhancing the sublime. Glover painted this oil in Australia, many miles from the site and many years after his visit. This shows the inherent power which the Pont Aberglaslyn motif still retained in his memory and its pictorial viability as a subject for painting. Glover applied his own visioning process to this motif and gave it a sublime power. In his *Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 71) Glover has produced a vision of place that is as much emblematic as it is realistic. It is this interchange between the various visualised ingredients that make this image of the location so potent. This

potency now becomes intrinsically symbolic producing a sense of place, a vision that is both imagined and real simultaneously.

A further example of this revisioning of place can be seen in Myles Birket Foster's picturesque image of the Pont Aberglaslyn site. This engraving is reproduced in *Black's Picturesque Guide to North Wales*. Black's guides were designed for the railway age and this edition contained a comprehensive and detailed map of north Wales. Foster, who drew the illustrations for this book, was a popular choice of artist.<sup>58</sup> He was also an artist well able to meet the requirements of the public's taste. A taste, that, during the last decades of the 19th century, often preferred a more picturesque and sentimental approach to the treatment of landscape scenery. Foster's picture titled, *Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 72) reproduced in Black's guide is an example of a more sentimentalised and overtly picturesque treatment of this subject. It was engraved by Edmund Evans. This sentimental aspect is now being applied to the Pont Aberglaslyn viewpoint in order to meet the contemporary requirement for this type of depiction in Black's guide. This illustration is vertical and it is taken from the established viewpoint that is sited below the bridge. In this print the vertical format suggests that a sublime composition will be seen, yet in spite of some of these visual ingredients being present the whole potential for a sublime effect has been weakened by the way it has been drawn. Foster's attitude and mood in this interpretation are firmly centred on the picturesque rather than the sublime. This representation has no large darkened areas to produce any sublime effects and the whole picture is much lighter tonally. This lighter touch contributes to the picturesque qualities that Foster sought for this view of the Aberglaslyn bridge. On the bridge can be seen two visitors and beyond them, through the arch can be seen the salmon leap rocks in the streambed. The river is shown in a very placid low water state so there is no hint of any potential spectacle here. The exaggeration in the depiction of the mountains' height, particularly beyond the bridge on the left is so great that this negates a feature that would usually increase ideas of a sublime nature. In the picture the mountains reveal weaknesses of drawing of topographic structure, and this further enhances the picturesque imagery of the overall piece. The sky is equally calm and placid, the summer day equivalent of a classical treatment which allow the idealised clouds to recede in diminishing bands of perspective from the bridge to the distant but still encroaching mountains.

The text in the Black's guide that describes the scenery at the Pont Aberglaslyn site appears on the opposite page to the engraved image that depicts it. This written description describes the mountain scenery in the pass seen just beyond the bridge. It largely parallels Foster's romantic vision of the location and this narrative conveniently fits the depiction of the site. The first part of this text begins in a factual manner and then it soon relies upon the imaginative powers of the reader to make the connections that establishes an idea of place that is both perceived and imagined at the same time. This text begins with some facts pertinent to the location and then induces the imaginative aspect:

THE PASS OF ABERGLASLYN, which extends from a little below Beddgelert to the bridge called Pont Aberglaslyn a mile and a half from the village, is certainly one of the most remarkable and romantic scenes in North Wales.<sup>59</sup>

After a further descriptive meander through the pass where the two counties that meet here are acknowledged and the road to Beddgelert is mentioned as still only being just wide enough for two carriages to pass. This is then followed by a reference to the rock strata of the pass. The text then directly evokes the imaginative power of this romantic site, 'The terrific grandeur of the scene powerfully arrests and excites the imagination'.<sup>60</sup> The description of the bridge and the river follows, then there is a reference to the siting of the bridge:

In the structure itself there is nothing extraordinary, but its position is peculiarly striking, and every part of the surrounding scenery is of surpassing grandeur.<sup>61</sup>

These text descriptions of the Pont Aberglaslyn scenery rely upon the imagination of the reader for their effect and Foster's picture *Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 72) which is reproduced on the adjacent page, complements this imaginative process and reinforces a picturesque and romantic reading of this location. This print serves a dual role, first it supports the text and secondly it maintains its own independent identity..

An illustration of the Aberglaslyn Pass by George Lowthian Hall is reproduced in the *Pictorial Itinerary* section of the *Gossiping Guide to Wales*.<sup>62</sup> This picture, as reproduced in the 1883 edition is titled, *Pass of Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 73) and it



depicts the view up the pass as seen from a point midway across the bridge. In spite of a vertical composition this line drawing is structurally weaker than Foster's picture. The picturesque qualities are still present in this drawing but the objectivity of the actual topography has been compromised and this inaccuracy mars the reality of the view. The result is an image that does not appear authentic to the location in any visual sense and the picture has become flattened in perspective and this also adds to this negative aspect. The restricted space that is associated with this view is not allowed to function pictorially. The visual quality of this treatment also contributes to the picture's lack of artistic status. This sketch is one of over a hundred that were inserted in to the *Pictorial Itinerary* to represent the scenic beauties of north Wales. Another factor in this representation that negates the depicted authenticity of this scenic location is the complete absence of any figures. This also adds to a lack of reality and this produces a landscape that is more invention than visual fact. This in spite of retaining several features associated with the site such as the curving road and the centralised river nonetheless becomes a token gesture of place. It retains elements of its identity, as subject but does not empower it as other pictures of the site have done. These include Fosters (Figure 72) picturesque treatment along with the sublime treatment found in J.P.Neales (Figure 68) and David Cox's (Figure 69) representations of the Pont Aberglaslyn site.

In his written account of the Pont Aberglaslyn site Askew Roberts described the nearby Cynicht mountain and its similarity to Alpine scenery in general and to the Matterhorn in particular. He then draws attention to the popularity of the Pont Aberglaslyn site with artists and then he again makes a reference to Alpine scenery:

...we reach a scene that has occupied the artist's pencil perhaps more than any other in North Wales; the far - famed bridge over the Glaslyn. No words can describe the rich beauty of this attractive spot. The road suddenly narrows into a pass overhung with perpendicular rocks on one side; and the pines give quite an Alpine tinge to the scene.<sup>63</sup>

In the *Gossiping Guide to Wales* a picture of the Pont Aberglaslyn is not reproduced in connection with the text narrative. Instead the images of mountain scenery have been collected together and inserted into the *Pictorial Itinerary*. This gives a practical guide to travel in Snowdonia by both rail and road.<sup>64</sup> In his text Roberts mentions the

encroaching growth of pine trees in his description of the Pont Aberglaslyn site and during the nineteenth century there was steady tree growth in the valley of the Glaslyn at and around the Pont Aberglaslyn. In Moses Griffiths day, the tidal waters of the sea came right up to the bridge and this can be seen in Griffith's picture *Pont Aber Glas Llyn* (Figure 66) and this change of land use would have contributed to the increase of vegetation. After the reclamation of the Treath Mawr the landscape that J.M.W. Turner had recorded in 1799 would never look the same.<sup>65</sup>

In a later section of the *Pictorial Itinerary* in the *Gossiping Guide to Wales* Roberts has reproduced another line drawing by Hall of the site, *Pont Aberglaslyn* (Figure 74). This uncaptioned vertical picture depicts a picturesque view towards the bridge and trees are beginning to obscure the view up the valley. Roberts described this approach to the bridge from the south and his text is placed with the illustration that depicts it:

There is a pretty reach of the river Glaslyn in front, and on the left in many parts of the road there is a picturesque combination of wood and cliff... PONT ABERGLASLYN... a scene of exquisite beauty.<sup>66</sup>

A comparison with Griffith's (Figure 66) early representation of this site with later versions such as Foster's (Figure 72) picture and the illustration from the *Gossiping Guide* (Figure 74) provide the evidence for the intrusion of trees into the valley of the Glaslyn at the Pont Aberglaslyn. When I first visited the site in the summer of 1994 it was impossible to take any photographs near the bridge due to the density of the tree cover to be found there. I returned the following winter and the trees still marred all attempts to photograph the view from below the bridge. The view upstream from the bridge today is also obscured by the encroachment of trees and other natural vegetation. Today it is this view that is reproduced in the contemporary tourist literature. An example of this can be seen in a photograph of the view taken upstream from the centre of the bridge that looks ahead to a view now completely obscured by trees. This colour photograph is reproduced in *A journey through Wales*, in the *North Wales* section of this Wales Tourist Board publication. It is titled, *Just south of Beddgelert the Glaslyn rushes through the shady, steep-sided Aberglaslyn Pass* (Figure 75).<sup>67</sup> Using a vertical format reminiscent of Towne's (Figure 62) and Grimm's (Figure 63) earlier views this photograph depicts the rushing river and the tree-filled valley with vertical cliffs rising above the treetops in the distance. There is

a reference to the shady nature of this spot today in the title but there is no longer a reference to the actual Pont Aberglaslyn bridge which was once so much a feature of this scenic location.

This change of land use from an open-grazed landscape to a tree-planted landscape can cause problems of identification. The visual identity of other viewpoints can also become altered by the subsequent growth in vegetation.<sup>68</sup> Today it is not possible to enjoy the same views at the Pont Aberglaslyn sites as visitors had done in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This obscuring of the views towards the bridge, its river and mountain backdrop by trees and other natural growth occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century and has continued ever since. Later visitors and artists to this scenic location could no longer find a point of view either towards or from the bridge due to the encroaching tree growth that severely limited their potential for observing such a view. The site ceased to exist in reality as far as artists were concerned.

The last named work of the Pont Aberglaslyn exhibited at the *Royal Academy* during the nineteenth century was in 1857.<sup>69</sup> The last exhibited work that is connected with the site in general was shown in 1872.<sup>70</sup> This illustrates the decline of this subject at the *Royal Academy* in the second half of the century and this was due to the actual disappearance of the viewpoints at this location in reality. After 1850 there is only one other work exhibited of this subject and that was in 1851.<sup>71</sup> This is in marked contrast to the twelve named works shown of the Pont Aberglaslyn subject that were exhibited at the *Royal Academy* in the first half of the century.<sup>72</sup> The titles of these exhibited works were:

- (1) The pass leading to Pont Aberglaslyn from Beth Kellert, (1800) - Francois L.T. Francia
- (2) Pont Aber Glaslyn, (1801) - R.S.Booth
- (3) Pont Aber Glas-y-Llyn, (1802) - J.Fleury
- (4) Pont Aber-glaslyn, North Wales, (1802) - Paul Sandby Munn
- (5) Pont Aberglaslyn, North Wales - storm clearing away, (1803) - Tom Taylor
- (6) The pass of the Aberglaslyn, North Wales, (1803) - William Delamotte
- (7) Aberglaslyn, North Wales - Evening, (1804) - Edward Goodwin
- (8) Pont Aber Glas-Llyn, North Wales, (1806) - George Samuel
- (9) Pont Aberglaslyn, North Wales, (1808) - Tom Taylor
- (10) Mountain Scene near Pont Aber Glaslyn (1818) - George Cuitt
- (11) View near Pont Aber Glaslyn, North Wales, (1820) - William Lewis

(12) Mountainous view near Pont Aber-Glas-Llyn, (1821) - William Lewis<sup>73</sup>

In 1802 two named works of the Pont Aberglaslyn were shown at the *Royal Academy*. They were among fourteen pictures of north Wales exhibited that year. The other subjects exhibited were three castle pictures, three general views, two mountain views, two lakes, one waterfall, and one mill.<sup>74</sup> This corroborates the status that the Pont Aberglaslyn site had acquired in the exhibition venues of the day. At the *British Institution* for example, between 1828 and 1862, six views were shown which have a connection with the Pont Aberglaslyn in their titles.<sup>75</sup> At the *Society of Artists* an exhibition venue that had ceased by 1791 no works of the Pont Aberglaslyn were exhibited.<sup>76</sup> The majority of the exhibited views of the Pont Aberglaslyn were in the first half of the nineteenth century. This corresponds to the upsurge in the Pont Aberglaslyn motif and its reproduction in the travel literature during the same period.

As can be seen from the list of twelve views shown at the *Royal Academy* since 1801 all twelve of these works were shown there before 1821. After this date only two works depicting the Pont Aberglaslyn itself were exhibited in the annual exhibitions of the *Royal Academy* with the last exhibit in 1857.<sup>77</sup> By the second half of the nineteenth century and prior to the publication of the *Black's* and *The Gossipping Guide*, artists' pictures of the Pont Aberglaslyn were in decline. These works were no longer appearing on the walls of the *Royal Academy* or at other major London exhibition venues as they had been earlier in the century.<sup>78</sup>

The pictures reproduced in the guides are among the last representations of this picturesque scenic spot that were possible before it became obscured. The text descriptions of this site could no longer be supported by a pictorial indication of the established visual merits of the location. The representations by artists who would have been familiar with reproduced images of the Pont Aberglaslyn site and its scenery stopped. The familiar picturesque motif of bridge, river and mountain backdrop could no longer be seen. The Pont Aberglaslyn motif had retained an unchanging visual structure whilst the subject remained pictorially viable.<sup>79</sup> It was the methods and treatments that artists applied to the motif which varied according to their individual requirements. This treatment of identity applied equally to the written descriptions of the subject as much as it did to the artist's visions of the site. This included both picturesque and sublime treatments and various combinations of these

concepts. This pictorial element was also applied to the manner in which the motif was appropriated to serve and support the literature of travel description. In the majority of illustrated guidebooks the texts describing the scenery at Pont Aberglaslyn are supported by pictorial representations of the site. The style of these pictures varied according to the needs of the particular text it had been selected to serve. This is in contrast to the view of Snowdon from Capel Curig, a mountain vista that has remained unchanged pictorially since Griffith's and De Loutherbouurg's day and this view has remained a viable subject for artists and photographers ever since.<sup>80</sup>

This chapter has established by examining the sites pictorial history that it was the picturesque aesthetic that artists consistently applied at the Pont Aberglaslyn viewpoints. In this context, I also examined the relationships between text and image, in the tour and guidebook literature. A hundred years after the first pictures were drawn this viewpoint disappeared from view and ceased to be a viable subject for artists and literary description also stopped. The reproduced images in the guidebook literature retain a picturesque vision of place that is appropriate to the text narrative that described the scenery they illustrated. This has left a significant legacy in the travel literature of the Pont Aberglaslyn site and in the many paintings and prints that have depicted this picturesque location.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Robert Price of Foxley (1717-1761) managed Foxley his Herefordshire estate from 1743. His son Uvedale Price (1747-1829) played an important role in the picturesque debates of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century. This drawing by Robert Price is number 16 from a set which record a tour to Wales made in 1758. *A View of the bridge from above the cascade of Pontaberglaslyn in Merionethshire*, 1758, pen & wash, 9¾ x 14¾ (24.5 x 37.5) is in the Special Collection at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Robert Hasell Newell, *Letters on the Scenery of Wales including a series of Subjects for the pencil, with their Stations. Determined on a General Principal: and Instructions to Pedestrian Tourists*, Baldwin Cradock and Joy, London, 1821, p.3. For further information on Newell and his guidebook, see chapter two, note no. 70.

<sup>3</sup> Francis Towne (1740-1816) landscape painter in oils and watercolour and a drawing master. He exhibited 56 works in London exhibitions between 1762-1815, including 27 at the Royal Academy and 16 at the Society of Artists. A successful artist who had many commissions to paint country houses and estates in oil. He made several tours around Britain, including north Wales in 1777 and the Lake District in 1786. While in Italy in 1780-81 he met Thomas Jones and William Pars. It was Pars who made the first watercolours of the Alps in 1770, exhibiting Alpine pictures at the RA in 1771. See, A.P.Oppe, 'Francis Towne, Landscape Painter', *Walpole Society*, VIII, 1920, pp. 98-9. And Timothy Wilcox, *Francis Towne*, Tate Gallery Publishing Ltd, London, 1997.

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Leslie Parris, *Landscape in Britain, c. 1750-1850*, exhibition catalogue, The Tate Gallery, London, 1973, catalogue entry p.57, and no. 103. I have not been able to authenticate this inscription by a visual check on the verso of this watercolour.

<sup>5</sup> S.H. Grimm's contributions to Wyndham's book were discussed in Chapter 1, see Chapter 1, p.14, and note nos. 39-40.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, *A Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales, Made in the Months of June and July 1774, and in the Months of June, July, and August 1777*, Salisbury, 1781, p. 126.

<sup>7</sup> See chapter four, p.77, and note no.15.

<sup>8</sup> Wyndham, *A Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales*, preface i.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, preface i.

<sup>10</sup> This monochrome wash drawing is in Turner's *Lancashire and North Wales Sketchbook* and would have been drawn on the spot at the Pont Aberglaslyn site in 1799. JMW Turner, *Lancashire and North Wales Sketchbook*, 1799, Turner Bequest, (Finberg XLV) Tate Britain, London.

<sup>11</sup> Wyndham, *A Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales*, p.125.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.126.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, 2 vols., Benjamin White at Horace's Head, London, 1784, vol. 2, p.189.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.190.

<sup>15</sup> This watercolour by Francis Towne was sold at the London picture dealers Thos. Agnew & Sons Ltd, 43 Old Bond Street, in March 1999. It is reproduced in colour in the catalogue, *English Watercolours and Drawings Agnew's 126th Annual Exhibition*, 3rd-26th March 1999, plate no. 13. The title given to this Towne watercolour by Agnew's is, *A River in North Wales*, signed and dated 1795. I have been able to confirm the pictorial content of this picture as representing the *Pont Aberglaslyn* by a comparison with other works depicting this viewpoint, particularly the engraving that is in Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* of this view. The large expanse of water in the foreground can be misleading as both pictures predate the building of the Maddocks dyke. For further information on Maddocks and the construction of the dyke, see, note no. 16

<sup>16</sup> William Alexandra Maddocks (1774-1828) was born in Denbighshire and educated at Oxford University. He inherited his father's fortune and was a Member of Parliament for Boston in Lincolnshire. He moved to an estate at Tan-yr-Allt where he later in 1812 invited the poet Percy Bysshe Shelly to stay. His engineering project to drain the Treath Mawr sands when finished prevented the tidal waters from encroaching to the Pont Aberglaslyn. Thomas Paine working for Maddocks started this project in 1805 and it was finally completed in 1813. The actual dam across the river Glaslyn was constructed in 1811. Today it is known as the Cob. Maddocks is the founder of Treamadoc, which bears his name, as does the new harbour at Portmadoc for which he was also responsible. For further information on Maddocks, see, R.Williams, *A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen*, Llandoverly, 1853, pp.168-76.

<sup>17</sup> See chapter four, pp.94-96.

<sup>18</sup> Edward Pugh, *Cambria Depicta: A Tour through North Wales, Illustrated with Picturesque Views*, E. Williams, London, 1816, pp.150-51.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.151.

<sup>20</sup> William Bingley (1774-1823) was born in Doncaster. A graduate of Cambridge University and resident of that city. He was a member of the Linnean Society and an amateur artist. He used his long vacations from the church to make tours of Britain. Making recorded tours to north Wales in 1798, 1800, and 1801. His three guides to north Wales were published in 1800, 1804 and 1814. For the titles of these published books see the *Bibliography of the published and unpublished tour accounts and the guidebook literature of Snowdonia 1770-1900*.

<sup>21</sup> William Bingley, *North Wales Delineated from two Excursions through that Highly Beautiful and Romantic Country and intended as a Guide to Future Tourists*, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London, 1814, title page, no pagination.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, pp. vii-viii.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, see, p. 252.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251. lines 2-3, 6-9.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252-53.

<sup>28</sup> The book on north Wales is the seventeenth volume in the series of twenty five books that were published. John Britton and Edward Brayley instigated this large project in 1804. The print runs averaged between three thousand and four thousand copies per volume. The withdrawal of Britton and

Brayley resulted in the later volumes being written by others. The *North Wales* volume has a publication date of 1812 as the plates have dates of 1813 and 1814 its release was delayed by two years.

<sup>29</sup> John Preston Neale (1780-1847) a topographical artist who worked in both watercolour and oil. He produced a number of pen and wash drawings of churches and landed gentry estates. Based in London where he exhibited 74 works from 1797 to 1844, including 47 at the RA, 14 at the BI and 7 at the OWCS.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Rev. J Evans, *The Beauties of England and Wales: or Original Delineations, Topographical, Historical, and Descriptive, of each county, Vol. XVII, North Wales*, Vernor, Hood and Sharpe, Longman & Co, London 1812, p. 402.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 402-03.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404.

<sup>33</sup> These were, (1) *View near Pont Aberglaslyn*, by Richard Courbould in 1796, (2) *Pont Aberglaslyn, Carnarvonshire*, by J.G. Worthington in 1798. (3) *View of Pont Aberglaslyn, North Wales*, by William Delamotte, in 1799, Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>34</sup> Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>35</sup> G. J. Freeman, *Sketches in Wales or A Diary of Three Walking Excursions in that Principality in the Years 1823, 1824, 1825*. Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, London 1826, p. 200.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Mann Baynes (1794-1852) was an artist of topographical views in watercolour and oil. Based in London where he exhibited 51 works from 1811-1852, including 41 at the RA, 5 at Suffolk Street and 5 at the New Watercolour Society. He produced all 15 lithographic images for Freeman's *Sketches in Wales* published in 1826. He also contributed images to other 19th century publications.

<sup>37</sup> The plates of mountain scenery are, (1) Cwm Elain, (2) Pont Breen, (3) Castel Dinas Bran, (6) Llyn Idwal, (7) Rhaidr y wenol, (8) Nant Lleder, (9) Trivaen, (10) Falls of the Ogwen, (11) View in ascending Snowdon, (12) Llanberis, (13) Snowdon from Nantle. In, G J Freeman, *Sketches in Wales*, 'Directions to the Binder for the Placing the Plates' f, p. xvi.

<sup>38</sup> Freeman *Sketches in Wales*, p. 153.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Roscoe (1791-1871) was resident in Liverpool where he worked in his father's bank. From 1816 onwards he worked in journalism and wrote biography. Roscoe published *Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales* in 1836 (republished with a revised text in 1844) and in 1837 by *Wanderings and Excursions in South Wales including the Scenery of the River Wye*. The north Wales book contains fifty-one engravings cut by William Radclyffe (1780-1855) and the South Wales edition, forty-eight. All the images were derived from commissioned watercolours by a range of artists. David Cox Senior supplying 29 images for north Wales and 18 for South Wales. In 1839 Roscoe published, *The Book of the Grand Junction Railway*, which contains three pictures by Cox.

<sup>40</sup> I am counting only those prints which depict a named subject and are actually ascribed to Cox on the plate. This totals 31.

<sup>41</sup> Nathaniel Neil Solly, *Memoir of the life of David Cox with selections from his correspondence, and Some account of his works*, Chapman & Hall, London 1873, p.57.

<sup>42</sup> The seven prints of mountain scenery are, Pass of Llanberis, The Tryfan Mountain, Llyn Idwal, Falls of the Ogwen, Nant Ffrancon, Pont Aberglaslyn and Rhaidair Cwm.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Roscoe, *Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales*, C.Tilt, and Simkin & Co. Wrightson and Webb Birmingham, London and Birmingham, 1836, p.203.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, no pagination, lines 1-9 and 11-13.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, no pagination, lines 6-8.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, no pagination, lines 1-5.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, no pagination, lines 14-15.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, no pagination, lines 28-30.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, no pagination, lines 21-22.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.204.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205., lines 23-29. The Roscoe text that uses Wyndham's account is, 'Among other tourists, Mr Wyndham justly extols the picturesque grandeur of the scenery around the unrivalled pass unfolding some new features at every step hues of brown and black, and often, when the sun emerges from behind his canopy of clouds, the variegated summits are enriched with the most brilliant tints of light and gold.'

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204. Roscoe quotes from part of a poetic text in the last 10 lines of 16, from two sources, William Bingley, *North Wales*, London, 1814, p. 251., and from J. Evans, *The Beauties of England and Wales, North Wales*, London, 1812, p. 403.

<sup>53</sup> I have used the 'List of works exhibited by John Varley', compiled by Basil Long at the V&A, reprinted from 'OWCS Club Volume, II, 1924-5', in C.M.Kauffmann, *John Varley 1778-1842*, B.T. Batsford Ltd, & Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 1984, pp. 75-85.

<sup>54</sup> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Volume I, Of General Principles, and of Truth*, (1843) George Allen & Sons, London, 1908, part VI, chapter III, 'Modern Art and Modern Criticism', p. 448.

<sup>55</sup> John Glover (1767-1849) a landscape artist in both watercolour and oil who was based in London till 1831. Largely self taught but he had a few lessons from William Payne and John Warwick Smith. He exhibited 445 works in the London exhibitions between 1795-1832. A total of 290 at the OWCS, 113 at Suffolk Street, 22 at BI, 20 at RA. He made many tours in Britain and abroad. He made a visit to north Wales in 1808, to France in 1814, and Switzerland in 1815. From 1831 he lived in Tasmania but still produced European subjects as well as Australian ones that were sent back to Britain for exhibition. A major show of sixty-eight paintings was held in London in 1835. Glover continued to produce north Wales landscapes after 1831, a work titled, *Dinas Bran near Llangollen*, signed and dated 1837, was sold as lot 100 in a sale at Leonard Joel, Melbourne, Australia, on April 17th 1985. The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, has a sketchbook of north Wales landscapes, dated 1808 (No.394). For a discussion on Glover's treatment of Welsh mountain scenery see, Francis McCarthy 'John Glover: Snowdon and Dolbardarn Castle' in Paul Joyner, ed., *Dolbadarn Studies on a Theme*, exhibition catalogue, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1990, pp.53-63.

<sup>56</sup> This is discussed in connection with an essay on John Glover's depiction of the Dolbardarn Castle site, see, Francis McCarthy 'John Glover: Snowdon and Dolbardarn Castle' in Paul Joyner, ed., *Dolbadarn Studies on a Theme*, exhibition catalogue, The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1990, pp.53-63.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>58</sup> This popularity was partly due to Myles Birket Foster (1825-1899) being acknowledged as Queen Victoria's favourite artist, see also, chapter 4, note no.59.

<sup>59</sup> Adam and Charles Black, eds., *Black's Picturesque Guide to North Wales*, Adam and Charles Black, Edinburgh, 1886, p. 130.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>62</sup> Askew Roberts, *The Gossiping Guide, Pictorial Itinerary and Snowdon Panorama*, Hodder and Stoughton & Woodhall and Co, London & Oswestry, 1883, p. 251. This guide and its importance in the promotion of mountain scenery in north Wales were discussed in chapter 3, pp.66-67.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p.194.

<sup>64</sup> This was discussed in Chapter 3, p.18.

<sup>65</sup> J. M.W. Turner, *Treath Mawr, with Y Cnicht and Moelwyn Mawr*, 1799, pencil and watercolour, Tate Britain. It is reproduced in colour in Anne Lyles, *Young Turner: Early Work to 1800*, The Tate Gallery, London, 1989, p.18, cat No.37. A detail from this picture has been reproduced on the front cover of this publication. The watercolour shows the Treath Mawr prior to its reclamation from the tidal influences of the sea in 1806-16. See note no. 16.

<sup>66</sup> Roberts, *Gossiping Guide*, p. 310.

<sup>67</sup> Roger Thomas, *A journey through Wales*, Jarrold Publishing in conjunction with Wales Tourist Board, Norwich, 1990, No. 62. (Photograph Jarrold Publishing)

<sup>68</sup> Another example of this can be seen at the Pont-y-Pair bridge site. The view of mountains beyond this 15th century bridge is now completely hidden by trees. At the end of the eighteenth century this was an open landscape in which the bridge formed a picturesque motif beyond which could be seen a view towards the high mountains of the Snowdon massif and many representations depict this wild landscape seen beyond the bridge. Another viewpoint was from a spot below the bridge in centre the of the streambed where a series of dramatically shaped boulders lie. These boulders have remained unchanged over the years and they can be a useful factor in identifying this subject. This view became increasingly obscured by the increasing tree growth during David Cox's visits in the first half of the nineteenth century. Today this bridge has been assimilated into the centre of Bettws-y-Coed. Houses are now adjacent to the bridge and beyond it, along the road to Capel Curig. The reality of this viewpoint has completely changed as a result of these changes in land use.

<sup>69</sup> This was *Pont Aber Glaslyn, Carnarvonshire* by George Bowles. Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>70</sup> This was, *Near Aberglaslyn, North Wales* by E Shipam. Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>71</sup> This was, *Aberglaslyn Pass, North Wales*, by G Leftwich. Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>72</sup> Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>73</sup> Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>74</sup> Source, Royal Academy database.



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<sup>75</sup> Source, British Intuition database.

<sup>76</sup> Source, Society of Artists database.

<sup>77</sup> These were 1851, *Aberglaslyn Pass, North Wales*, by G.Leftwich, and 1857, *Pont Aber Glaslyn, Caernarvonshire*, by George Bowles. Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>78</sup> Apart from the works shown at the Royal Academy and the British Institution this subject was exhibited at the Watercolour exhibitions in the first half of the 19th century. At the Old Water-Colour Society for example John Varley showed six versions of the Pont Aberglaslyn subject.

<sup>79</sup> In the context of this discussion the actual landscape features are not changing. Today the views at this location are totally obscured by the continued tree growth since the 19th century. I revisited this site in 1999 to photograph it, but even in winter, trees block any view towards the bridge. From the bridge the view is also hidden by this tree growth. In the pass beyond the bridge the recent intrusion of conifers in to this steep sided valley can be seen and these are changing the landscape further. Among the varieties that are colonising this open country are *Chamaecyparis* (*Cupressus*) *Lawsoniana* and *Leylandii* (*Cupressocyparis*).

<sup>80</sup> This classical viewpoint, *Snowdon from Capel Curig*, is the subject of the previous chapter, see, chapter 4, pp. 73-114.

## Sublime Snowdonia: Llyn Idwal.

As a subject for painting Llyn Idwal appeared comparatively late. Even though it was described in text as early as Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* it was not generally depicted until the third decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In 1836 an engraved version of this subject, originally drawn by David Cox, appeared in Thomas Roscoe's *North Wales*. This print is titled, *Llyn Idwal* (Figure 76) and it is reproduced as Plate XXIII in Roscoe's book. The compositional structure that Cox applied to this motif of lake and mountain is sublime rather than picturesque. This viewpoint is only accessible on foot and is located half a mile from the Ogwen Falls Bridge on the road between Bangor and Capel Curig in the Nant Ffrancon Pass. The site consists of a mountain lake trapped in a hollow below a barrier of mountains which rise vertically all around it. This enclosed viewpoint did not fit the accepted visual processes that artists had applied earlier to other mountain subjects, such as the landscape vista towards Snowdon from Capel Curig or the tripartite structure that was used at the Pont Aberglaslyn viewpoints. Neither did the topographical features of this site fit the usual spatial ingredients of composition that were applied to the mountain scenery of Snowdonia such as that found at the Dolbadarn site. But from the second quarter of the 19th century the Llyn Idwal viewpoint became viable as a motif that was ideally suited to a sublime treatment. The geographical structures of the location perfectly fitted this type of visual treatment and consequently the site became promoted for its ability to produce the effects of the sublime both on artists and visitors alike. Thus the site found favour as a sublime motif and from 1840 onwards made its appearance on the walls of the *Royal Academy*.<sup>2</sup>

Pennant recorded his visit to Llyn Idwal in *A Tour in Wales* and he particularly noted the rare plants that are to be found close to the lake high up on the surrounding mountains. Pennant does not offer a straightforward description of the scenery at this location preferring instead to relate a murder story concerning Owen Gwynedd's son. This text parallels the sites potential for generating thoughts of a sublime nature. The

text then highlights Llyn Idwal's own potential for generating the sublime by virtue of its dramatic scenery of lake and mountain:

It was a fit place to inspire murderous thoughts, environed with horrible precipices, shading a lake, lodged in its bottom. The Shepherds fable, that it is the haunt of Demons; that no bird dare fly over its damned water...<sup>3</sup>

The sentiment that Pennant is expressing here would soon give way to a more overt description of the site's potential to generate a sublime response. The weather at this location is often extreme, a vicious combination of wind and rain. The cloud base is often low enough to obscure the mountain profiles above the lake and these atmospheric conditions are factors that also contribute to a sublime response.

In Wyndham's *A Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales*, an account based on two tours into the mountains of north Wales, there is no reference to Llyn Idwal. In the 1770s there was no convenient access road through the Nant Ffrancon Pass. The difficulties of this route and the state of the pony path were highlighted by Pennant in his text:

The way from that place into the valley or rather chasm, of *Nant Frankon*, is called *The Ben-glog*, the most dreadful horse path in *Wales*, worked in the rudest manner into steps, for a great length.<sup>4</sup>

Wyndham, whilst on his tour, stayed on the major routes through Snowdonia.<sup>5</sup> This pony path route through the Nant Ffrancon Pass was improved after the Wyndham and Pennant books had been published. The poor access into the Nant Francon was a factor that initially restricted the representation of the Idwal site. This would change after the road improvements were carried out for the mail route that operated along this route from 1808. Thomas Telford (1757-1834) further improved this road in the first quarter of the nineteenth century and these improvements were completed by 1830. During these years there was a steady increase in both the through coaching traffic and the number of visitors in search of mountain scenery.

The Reverend William Bingley referred to the improvement of the road, shortly after the regular mail service began, in his book, *North Wales delineated from Two Excursions through that Highly Beautiful and Romantic Country and intended as a*

*guide to future tourists* (1814). In chapter eleven of this book under the sub heading, *New Road*, Bingley describes the benefits that the improved road access gave and the potential appreciation of the mountain scenery that the visitor could now enjoy in the Nant Ffrancon valley.<sup>6</sup> Bingley's visit to Llyn Idwal was made on foot over the mountains from Llanberis. His text is similar to Pennant's and describes the story of the murder of Idwal, Gwynedd's son.<sup>7</sup> He precedes this with a description of the actual place 'This hollow, surrounded on all sides by dark and picturesque and prominent rocks is called *Cwm Idwel*'.<sup>8</sup> He then draws attention to the site's potential for a pictorial treatment.<sup>9</sup> Standing close to a rock feature usually referred to as the *Devil's Kitchen* which is visible in the curtain wall of rock beyond the lake Bingley makes a connection between this location and the sublime work of Salvator Rosa (1615-1673).<sup>10</sup>

...we soon found ourselves at the foot of a tremendous rent, or chasm in the mountain called Tull Du, *The Black Cleft*. A more grand, or more sublime scene, the pencil even of Salvator Rosa could not be traced.<sup>11</sup>

Like Bingley, Edward Pugh does not reproduce a picture of the Llyn Idwal site preferring instead to restrict himself to a narrative account of this sublime spot. In his *Cambria Depicta* (1816) Pugh highlights the Llyn Idwal site's suitability as a subject that could be used by artists:

I had in front the bold and noble rocks above Llyn Idwal; on all sides finely-broken eminencies, jutting out in a manner that captivates the attention, and irresistibly impels the artist to open his portfolio.<sup>12</sup>

Pugh then gives advice on the access to the Llyn Idwal site. He states that carriages and horses must be left and the journey made on foot. Then he describes the spectacle to be found there and prepares his readers for the experience of this place that they are about to encounter. Then, like Bingley and Pennant before him, Pugh made a reference to the story of the murdered Idwal. This description of the Llyn Idwal draws attention to the site's potential to generate the sublime by association with the earlier legend and in this text Pugh also highlighted the topographical features of the site. He described this sublime identity that would feature in the many subsequent interpretations of this site. Pugh, an artist himself, wrote this description based upon his own experiences at this restricted and closed in viewpoint:

Upon entering the cwm strangers have stood aghast for the moment, appearing more like fixed statues than animated nature; the mind is instantly filled with thoughts accordant to the horrific gloom and melan- choly that pervade the vast profundity of this British Pandae- monium; the awful and formidable black precipices, that nearly surround this dismal pool, forming a wonderful amphitheatre, mysteriously reared by the magic spell of nature, has an irresistible effect upon the nerves of the most gay and airy; and those who have viewed it with such sensations, as the place is so well calculated to inspire, will not wonder when they are told, that in this hollow was foully murdered a young person of the name of Idwal, from whom it derived the appellation of Cwm Idwal.<sup>13</sup>

This text description by Pugh is written in a language that has its origins in Edmund Burke's essay on the sublime. Pugh's use of words such as 'horrific', 'gloom', 'melancholy', 'pervades', 'awful', 'formidable', 'dismal' are words associated with the Sublime. The word 'vast' along with the colour 'black' are words that are to be found in Edmund Burke's treatise, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1759). The characteristics of this site met the criteria that Burke had suggested were capable of producing the sublime. This was a combination of theories and factors rather than one particular phenomenon. An example of this philosophy, that can be applied to Pugh's written description of Llyn Idwal or an picture of it, such as the Cox print (Figure 42), appears in the *Enquiry* under the heading of *Vastness*.<sup>14</sup> The Llyn Idwal site was a ready-made location for illustrating the terrible sublime of Edmund Burke. By the late eighteenth century the taste in mountain scenery began to change from the formulaic picturesque towards a more atmospheric treatment of mountain terrain in Snowdonia. During the second half of this decade JMW Turner painted sublime alpine pictures that convey the awesome grandeur of mountain scenery in both watercolour and oil. Turner was a regular exhibitor in London as was David Cox who, like Turner, increasingly depicted atmospheric effects rather than a transcription of place. George Fennel Robson (1788-1833) had been exhibiting Scottish mountain views at the Old Watercolour Society from 1813 to his death in 1833. An example at Yale is *Loch Coruisk, Isle of Skye* dated to 1832 it is one of six versions exhibited. This watercolour depicts a barrier of encircling rock that rises above an enclosed lake. A compositional structure that is similar to the Llyn Idwal site.

A picture of this site that reflects this changing attitude yet still retains elements of the picturesque in conjunction with aspects of the sublime, was reproduced in G.J Freeman's book, *Sketches in Wales* (1826). This lithograph drawn by Thomas Mann Baynes (1794-1852) <sup>15</sup> is titled, *Llyn Idwal* (Figure 77) and predates the engraved picture by Cox that is reproduced in Roscoe's *North Wales* guidebook by ten years. In this version a group of visitors are shown admiring the scenic spectacle. Two figures occupy the foreground next to two large rocks that are often included in the representations of this subject. Also near the lake shore and some little way into the picture on the left are two ladies and a male figure shown admiring the mountain scenery. The placement of these figures within the composition contributes to a picturesque reading of the picture even though the image is topographically sublime in the compositional structure that the site provides. The vertical stream descending straight down towards the lake from the high mountain heightens the more sublime aspect of this picture. In Baynes' picture there is very little sky present and this is another feature that is often associated with the sublime. However, the even and clear light that is devoid of any impenetrable dark and sublime tones along with the absence of any cloud-obscured peaks in this example allows a major picturesque element to be present in his picture of *Llyn Idwal* (Figure 77).

Freeman made three pedestrian tours to Wales and his diary of these excursions is illustrated by fifteen lithographs. This book is one of the first to make use of this new process. In his text he describes a visit to the Llyn Idwal site, in weather that was much closer to the experience of the sublime than the reproduced picture suggested:

It was just above the falls the *Ogwen*, that we made this deviation towards a dark hollow of the mountains on the right hand, which we conjectured to contain *Llyn idwal*. We walked up a stream, which leaped, rather, than flowed past us, so turbulent was its character, till we came insight of the waters of that lake, at a considerable elevation above those of *Ogwen*, and reposing under the darkest and loftiest precipices of the *Glyder*... In front of us, at the other extremity of the *Llyn* we observed a stream falling headlong in a silvery line, from the top of the mountain to its base; and high up the cliffs, to the right of this was seen a black fissure in the rock, which I believed to be *Twl-du*, mentioned by *Pennant*, as a horrible aperture in the mountains. We did

not think fit, under present circumstances, to explore that side of *Llyn idwal* at all, though had it been fair... But the rain came now faster, and we fled for shelter...<sup>16</sup>

Freeman in his account of his three tours to Wales presents a personal record of his experiences in visiting the mountains of central and north Wales and in the advertisement section to this book he explains the reason to recount these journeys in print form. He states that this was due to the encouragement of his friends, whom he did not wish to offend, that prompted Freeman to pursue this project.<sup>17</sup> It is apparent that the illustrations that illustrate the text of Freeman's book were inserted at a later date and were not made on the spot under Freeman's direction. A smaller half page that is inserted at the beginning of the text, with the title, '*Directions to the Binder for Placing the Plates*', can be seen as evidence for this.<sup>18</sup> This accounts for the discrepancies between the written descriptions and the depicted images that have been placed next to the relevant text. This approach is different from Pennant, Wyndham, Pugh and Roscoe, who, with the exception of Pugh, employed artists directly to record the mountain scenery under their direction. Pugh was both the author and artist of his own *Cambria Depicta*. Books such as Freeman's *Sketches in Wales* had limited circulation compared with the specialist guidebooks that began to appear at this time, such as Roscoe's *North Wales* which was aimed directly at the visiting tourist rather than offering a printed diary account. In the advertisement within his book Freeman recounts how his information was acquired, he wrote:

The following pages were written from day to day, at the inns, or by the road side, or on the mountain top, just as thought occurred or information was collected, during three tours in different parts of Wales.<sup>19</sup>

This type of tour book gave way to the more useful guidebook and the output of these volumes declined while the number of published guidebooks increased. This took place during a period when a greater number of people were able to visit north Wales which was the result of the expansion of the railway system.

The David Cox picture of *Llyn Idwal* (Figure 76) reproduced in Roscoe's guidebook, promoted the sublime merits of this site over the picturesque. This volume which was so lavishly illustrated by artists helped to maintain the established viewpoints and gave visual identity to lesser-known sites, such as the viewpoint at Llyn Idwal. At the

same time artists became interested in depicting the mountains of north Wales from a sublime point of view allowing a more atmospheric picture of mountain scenery to be delineated rather than making a picturesque illustration of it. Artists, such as David Cox, increasingly depicted the sublime effects generated by the weather and the terrain to be found in the heart of Snowdonia. Cox often combined weather and subject together. Cox's landscape watercolours were collected during his own lifetime and the influential critic John Ruskin was among the collectors.<sup>20</sup> His methods and techniques capturing mountain scenery in Snowdonia were admired by many of his contemporaries and some of these artists arrived in north Wales because of his vision of mountain scenery.<sup>21</sup>

*Llyn Idwal* (Figure 76) in its engraved state makes full use of the print medium's capability to produce deep velvety blacks and these are allowed to dominate this view. The viewer is presented with the deep grand gloom that is a feature of Cox's vision of mountain scenery. 'Cox sought for gloom and mystery as an expression of the infinite'<sup>22</sup> was how Solly, Cox's biographer, described this aspect of the artist's vision. In this image clouds obscure the high mountain peaks on the left of the picture and the lightest part of the sky appears contrasted against the dark mountain profiles with their characteristic edge outlines that run round the top of the sheer vertical cliffs which drop into the dark lake. The atmospheric conditions and extremes of light and dark that Cox applied to his vision of mountain scenery were described by Solly:

He knew well the value of the streak of light close to the horizon, seen beneath a dark and lowering sky, when the departing day is deepening into night, or when the first flush of dawn is seen struggling through the rising mists, and illuminating the mountain tops, the valleys being still shrouded in obscurity and gloom.<sup>23</sup>

Gone from this view of *Llyn Idwal* (Figure 76) by Cox are the reassuring figures that were present in Baynes' lithograph of *Llyn Idwal* (Figure 77). Instead we are presented with some wild looking goats silhouetted against the dark and forbidding looking lake. A lone bird is depicted flying across the lake which is represented light against dark, its lack of height above the water contributing to the spectator's sense of isolation within this vast mountain arena. The vertical stream running straight down from the mountain heights of Glyder Fawr (3279') and Y Garn (3104') to the bottom of the Idwal slabs shows up as a streak of light tone illuminated against the darker



mountain side beyond the lake. This picture by Cox is an accurate and worthy accompaniment to Roscoe's text:

I was particularly struck with the bleak and stormy character of the scenery around Lake Idwall, singularly situated in a hollow of the mountain summit. Restless as the sea, and fiercely swept by the autumnal blasts, as I passed the lone and savage spot, its aspect fell chill upon the spirits, and I felt how truly the popular feeling, which seldom errs, had given to this gloomy region the marked appellations of the 'Cold Mountain Waste,' and the 'Shepherd's Hill of Storms.'<sup>24</sup>

Roscoe then makes reference to the story of the murdered prince, said to have taken place at this desolate spot. He then describes the mountain scenery around the Idwal lake and its suitability for visual treatment by artists of landscape scenery and he draws attention to how both Richard Wilson and Salvator Rosa might have responded to the challenge offered by this spectacle of mountain scenery:

It was a combination of the picturesque and terrible, not unsuited in its sternest mood to the genius of Salvator; and had the foot of Wilson penetrated these grander recesses of the Caernarvon hills, the noble taste of that enthusiast of nature must have seized some of its features for his scarcely less divine landscapes... No one can imagine all these wildly blending into one picture, - each calculated to rivet the eye of the true painter, - clothed in the rich variegated hues I then beheld them.<sup>25</sup>

Roscoe is adding to the status of this mountain scenery at and around the Llyn Idwal site by associating it with Rosa and Wilson, two significant practitioners of landscape painting from the previous two centuries. By drawing attention to the site's potential for painting Roscoe is stimulating interest in this subject visually and this aspect is given even greater credibility by the inclusion of David Cox's *Llyn Idwal* (Figure 76); a sublime representation of this site. This was one of the many commissioned watercolours from Cox and others that Roscoe instigated to illustrate his book on north Wales.<sup>26</sup>

A watercolour predating Roscoe's book by five years is George Fennel Robson's (1788-1833)<sup>27</sup> *The Devil's Kitchen, Llyn Idwal, North Wales* (Figure 78). This watercolour was painted between 1830 and 1833<sup>28</sup> and it depicts the enclosed lake and its mountain backdrop from the same viewpoint used by Cox. It is likely to be the

work that Robson exhibited at the OWCS in 1831 as *Llyn Idwal, North Wales, - Twilight* (No59). It is almost certain that Cox would have seen Robson's version of this subject at the OWCS exhibition in 1831. Cox exhibited nineteen works of his own at this exhibition including six watercolours of Wales.<sup>29</sup> At this time Cox was also resident in London.<sup>30</sup>

Robson's, *The Devil's Kitchen, Llyn Idwal, North Wales* (Figure 78) is more sublime than picturesque in the attitude it possesses towards mountain scenery. Devoid of any figures this watercolour is closer to Cox's (Figure 76) sublime rendering of this scene than Baynes' (Figure 77) earlier version with its predominately picturesque treatment. In the title of this watercolour there is a reference to the Devil's Kitchen a feature of the location that Pennant had pointed out in his *A Tours in Wales*. Pennant described the scene:

OBSERVE, on the right, a stupendous *roche fendue*, or split rock, called *Twll-Du*, and *The Devil's Kitchen*. It is a horrible gap, in the centre of a great black precipice, extending in length about a hundred and fifty yards; in depth, about a hundred; and only six wide; perpendicularly open to the surface of the mountain.<sup>31</sup>

Robson's *The Devil's Kitchen, Llyn Idwal, North Wales* (Figure 78) captures many features of the site that also appear in the Cox. In the foreground can be seen the mountain goats that also feature in the Cox representation. In Robson's picture these goats appear more contrived and artificial looking than in the Cox. The mountain stream is also depicted as a lighter thin line descending straight to the lakeshore. Across the steel blue lake the mountain cliffs are painted in a deep rich tone and they rise sheer above the lake to meet the sky where the cloud looks capable of obscuring these mountain heights at any minute. Robson's picture increases the sense of isolation which is often experienced at this spot by the use of the dark earthy colours that describe it in an almost abstract way. These abstracted cliffs contribute to the sense of scale that is so much a feature of this location. The top of the dark vertical cliffs are offset by a thin streak of horizontal light, which silhouettes their outlines against a threatening sky. The overall compositional structure consists of a vertical barrier denying recessionary space and this type of composition was a favoured motif used by Robson in a number of other similar works.<sup>32</sup>

John Ruskin described Robson's particular ability to capture the emotional feel of a place via its colour and highlighting his use of the colour purple, a colour associated with mountain landscape. In the third volume of *Modern Painters*, in the last chapter titled, *Of the Teachers of Turner*, Ruskin stated that in comparison with the foreign landscape schools of the past, English artists, such as Robson, were making paintings:

...for the sake of the nature, not the picture, and therefore, having this germ of true life, it grew and throve. Robson did not paint purple hills because he wanted to show how he could lay on purple; but because he truly loved their dark peaks.<sup>33</sup>

Robson in his choice of a barrier motif applies a compositional formula that was particularly appropriate to the Llyn Idwal site and this compositional integrity contributed greatly to the concept of the Burkean sublime. This denied recessional space and increased the verticality of the rock and mountain heights at this awesome site. In many versions of this subject the sky is reduced to a small proportion only at the top of the image. At Llyn Idwal the compositional element of a sublime aesthetic was further empowered by the weather effects that were often applied to this motif. These effects further encouraged a sublime response by artists and writers visiting this spot. These combined compositional concepts became associated with the visual methods that artists could apply to this majestic site. In Robson's rendering of *The Devil's Kitchen, Llyn Idwal, North Wales* (Figure 78) the artist has been able to visualise the salient features of this location which have established the visual identity of this location. It was his ability to depict mountain scenery that Ruskin praised in the first volume of *Modern Painters*. This was published in 1843 a decade after the artists' death. In Ruskin's text he refers to Robson's abilities to paint mountain scenery and Ruskin's comments can also be applied to the artists painting of *The Devil's Kitchen, Llyn Idwal, North Wales* (Figure 78). As Ruskin wrote in Robson's mountain scenery:

...there is thorough affection for the thing drawn; they are serious and quiet in the highest degree, certain qualities of atmosphere and texture in them have never been excelled, and certain facts of mountain scenery never but by them expressed; as, for instance, the stillness and depth of the mountain tarns, with the reversed imagery of their darkness signed across by the soft lines of faintly touching winds; the solemn flush of the brown fern and glowing heath under evening light; the purple mass of mountains far removed, seen against clear still twilight.<sup>34</sup>

Ruskin held George Fennel Robson as an artist of mountain landscape in high regard although he did acknowledge some of the artist's failings. Ruskin perceived these to be in drawing, colour, and composition along with his tendency to use an over elaborate technique in the final finishing stages of his work.<sup>35</sup> His artistic shortcomings are overcome by the sheer visual power that he is able to apply to his chosen mountain subjects and particularly to a place like the Llyn Idwal. This amphitheatre of lake and surrounding mountain was a ready-made subject for an artist like Robson who was able to combine technique and place so effectively into a visual statement. His *The Devil's Kitchen, Llyn Idwal, North Wales* (Figure 78) is a powerful evocation of Welsh mountain scenery and it was this subject that Robson displayed at the Old Water-Colour Society exhibition of 1831.

Samuel Jackson (1749-1869)<sup>36</sup> painted a watercolour that is more evocative of the atmosphere of the Llyn Idwal site than Robson's picture. It is titled, *Llyn Idwal, Snowdonia* (Figure 79) it derives from a tour made in 1833 to north Wales in the company of William James Muller (1812-1845) and John Skinner Prout (1806-1876). This picture by Jackson was made from the same viewpoint that Robson and Cox used. This work is undated, however, it was either made in 1833 or drawn the following year. Jane Munro has drawn attention to the similarities between this watercolour by Jackson and the text description of this site that Roscoe wrote in the *Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales* guide book of 1836.<sup>37</sup> After mentioning the lack of any figures or goats in Jackson's view Munro states that 'its composition closely resembles a similar view by David Cox, engraved by W. Radclyffe in Thomas Roscoe's *Wanderings through North Wales*.' (sic)<sup>38</sup> The compositional associations are more extensive than the single connection with the Cox version of the scene. Other artists, such as George Fennel Robson during the 1830s, were able to realise the potential of this site for generating a sublime response.

In Samuel Jackson's view of *Llyn Idwal, Snowdonia* (Figure 79) we are confronted with a barrier motif that runs across the whole composition from left to right. On the right the sky is obliterated altogether by the towering rock that rises vertically from the lake at a point where it is hidden behind a large boulder that sits menacingly in the foreground. The treatment of light also enables a sublime reading of the image to be

made. Jackson has applied a particular method of working to this view of the Llyn Idwal, one that enables the picture to be built up by a process of diffused watercolour washes that are also dabbed and scratched away from the surface to allow highlights to exist minutely. The result of this process is to present an image that is defused and, to a degree, out of focus. This aspect of its obscurity produces the sublime rather than the picturesque. The solid forms of the mountains are now reduced to a transient spectacle seen through the subdued light of dawn that now is only illuminating the surrounding high peaks. It is not a topographical picture of mountain structure. However Jackson's diffused work is supported by an accurately drawn structure which lies beneath the dissolving forms that make up this painting. This information comes to the fore in certain areas of the picture. It can be observed in the foreground rocks and on the profile of the enclosing mountain ridge where it meets the pale and infinite looking sky. The shore of the lake is obscured and bathed in shadow to the extent that there is no definite shoreline that marks the transition from the lake to the mountain backdrop.

Jackson has severely restricted his use of colour in this work and this contributes to the sublime mood that pervades the entire picture. In *Llyn Idwal, Snowdonia* (Figure 79) the artist has used a predominantly grey-green combination of colours for the mountain and lake. These are offset by the pale intermingled tints of the yellowish and blue colours of the sky. Also in this part the vibrant light of the dawn breaks in from the left side of the picture and this allows a range of lighter hues to be present on the mountain summits where they make contact with the sky. The absence of any figures or animals in this painting further enhances the sublime aspect that Jackson is presenting to the viewer in his picture *Llyn Idwal, Snowdonia* (Figure 79).

It was the increased use of this site by visiting artists during the third decade of the nineteenth century along with the increasing reproduction of this motif in the travel literature of the period which encouraged further artists to visit. From this time to the end of the century there was a steady number of artists making an excursion to see the Llyn Idwal site and to delineate it. During the nineteenth century the *Royal Academy* showed sixteen named works of the Llyn Idwal site by ten different artists.<sup>39</sup> The first exhibit to depict this location was shown at the *Royal Academy* in 1840 and was a work by William Fowler titled, *Llyn Idwal near Capel Curig*, (No372). The last

named exhibit displayed there was in 1899 by John Salmon and was titled, *Idwal* (No1050). The variation of title used at this viewpoint is as diverse as it was at other viewpoints in Snowdonia. These include the Capel Curig viewpoint towards Snowdon and the Pont Aberglaslyn. These title variations at the Llyn Idwal site allow an individual artist to seek a more personal title for his work, even though the view that is depicted is similar. The same artist often reworked several versions of this motif of lake and mountain as seen at the Llyn Idwal site. This revisioning process often requires an individual title to be applied to the work and this allows a differentiation to be made between works that are often visually very similar. The variations of title used by artists exhibiting at the *Royal Academy* between 1840 and 1899 are as follows:

- (1) Llyn Idwal near Capel Curig, (1840) - William Fowler
- (2) Twill-du-The Devils Kitchen, Carnarvonshire, (1856) - John Brooks
- (3) The Stream from Llyn Idwal, Caernarvonshire, (1856) - Alfred W. Hunt
- (4) Moonlight on the mountains Lyn Idwal, North Wales, (1871) - Arthur Gilbert
- (5) The Mountain path, Llyn Idwal, North Wales, (1871) - George Hastings
- (6) Wild weather: Idwal, North Wales, (1872) - George Hastings
- (7) Llyn Idwal, North Wales, (1872) - William H. Cubley
- (8) The Idwal Mountains, (1877) - James J. Curnock
- (9) Idwal - morning, (1877) - Edwin A. Pettitt
- (10) The Idwal Stream, (1878) - James J. Curnock
- (11) Llyn Idwal (1883) - James J. Curnock
- (12) Llyn Idwal (1884) - John C. Salmon
- (13) A bright night, Llyn Idwal, North Wales, (1885) - Arthur Gilbert
- (14) Llyn Idwal, North Wales, (1886) - Sidney Richard Percy
- (15) Idwal 'He watereth the hills from his chambers...' (1892) - Johnstone J. Inglis
- (16) Idwal, (1899) - John C. Salmon.<sup>40</sup>

There were sixteen exhibited works at the *Royal Academy* of the Llyn Idwal site and only two titles are duplicated. The other twelve titles applied to works exhibited at the Academy were individual ones and this gave identity and authority to their representations of the Llyn Idwal site.

The *British Institution* showed three named works of the Llyn Idwal site. The first was in 1832 twenty-six years after the first exhibition by that society and this predates the appearance of this subject at the *Royal Academy* by eight years. The second work was shown there in 1862 and the third work was shown in 1867, the last year that the *British Institution* existed. The three works were:

- (1) Llyn Idwal, Stormy, (1832) - Thomas C. Hofland
- (2) Morning the summit of the Glyder from Llyn Idwal, (1862) - Walter Williams
- (3) Llyn Idwal - Evening, (1867) - John T. Adams.<sup>41</sup>

At the *British Institution* as at the *Royal Academy* individual titles have been applied to the exhibited pictures depicting this location. The combined totals of the two exhibition venues until the end of the nineteenth century produced 15 individual titles from the total of 19 exhibited works. The two duplicate titles are both from the *Royal Academy* exhibitions and these are:

- (1) Llyn Idwal, (1883) - James J. Curnock
- (2) Llyn Idwal, (1884) - John C. Salmon
- (1) Llyn Idwal, North Wales, (1872) - William Harold Cubley
- (2) Llyn Idwal, North Wales, (1886) - Sidney Richard Percy.<sup>42</sup>

From its first appearance on the walls of the *Royal Academy* in 1840 the Llyn Idwal theme of lake and mountain consistently continued to be displayed there until the end of the nineteenth century. The 1860s is the only decade when a named work of the Llyn Idwal was not exhibited. This decade marked a low point in the *Royal Academy's* attitude towards the display of landscape subjects in the annual exhibitions. There was a perceived lack of confidence in landscape painting generally and among the academicians in particular. This was partly due to their own lack of interest in landscape as a subject and this was further compounded by the recent deaths of such illustrious practitioners as J.M.W. Turner in 1851 and David Cox in 1859. This blight did not effect the watercolour societies who continued to display a large number of landscapes executed in that media.<sup>43</sup> In spite of these factors within the *Royal Academy* a small number of north Wales landscapes continued to be shown each year during the 1860s with the exception of 1869 and 1870 when none were represented.<sup>44</sup> After the 1860s the number of pictures of the Llyn Idwal exhibited at the *Royal Academy* increased, with a peak of seven works displayed there during the 1870's. The following decade saw the beginning of a decline in the numbers of exhibits of the Llyn Idwal subject and only four works were shown. By the 1890s only two works related to the Llyn Idwal site were exhibited.

In the 1870's the visual identity of the location fitted the visual requirements of a range of artists, particularly those who were in search of the more sublime aspects of

mountain scenery. This period also saw a wide range of artistic practice being pursued in landscape. This ranged from the factual rendering of landscape form as suggested by Pre-Raphaelite principles, to an atmospheric rendering reminiscent of David Cox's late manner, or the absorption of Ruskin's advice following the publication of the influential fourth volume of *Modern Painters* titled, '*Of Mountain Beauty*' in 1856. In the second half of the nineteenth century artists combined some of these elements together to suit their individual preferences, applying only those elements that suited their purpose in delineating their vision of mountain scenery. Samuel Jackson and James Whaite (fl.1870-1916) combined truth to nature with an atmospheric treatment of light in order to produce sublime effects.

William Harold Cubley (1816-1896) <sup>45</sup> was another artist who was able to combine the truth to nature dictum with an atmospheric handling of light as he seen in his rendering of Welsh mountain scenery. A painting that reveals these concepts was exhibited at the *Royal Academy* in 1872. This work is the large rectangular oil painting by William Harold Cubley titled, *Llyn Idwal, North Wales* <sup>46</sup> (Figure 80). In this painting we are presented with a view of the Llyn Idwal from the same viewpoint used by Samuel Jackson for his watercolour forty years earlier titled, *Llyn Idwal, Snowdonia* (Figure 79). In Cubley's revision of this subject many of the ingredients of Jackson's vision are maintained and are further developed towards the sublime merits of the site. Roscoe expressed these associations with the natural sublime in his written descriptions of the weather effects encountered at this location in the heart of upland Snowdonia.<sup>47</sup> The compositional structure of Cubley's *Llyn Idwal, North Wales* (Figure 80) is almost identical to Jackson's earlier version with a similar ratio of sky to mountain and a large boulder is also present in the right foreground of the painting as it is in the Jackson picture. The ethereal stillness of Jackson's version of the site painting is now replaced by Cubley's more violent atmospheric conditions. This is achieved by the obscuring of the right section of the high mountains by a darkened mass of swirling cloud that is allowed to envelope and mask this side of the picture. This darkened area runs from the top to the bottom of the composition on the right section of the picture and it obscures everything from view, sky, mountainside, lake and foreshore. The lightest part of the sky is immediately above the highest peak of the mountain, above the lake at the left centre of the picture. On the left side of the painting visually linking both mountain and lake can be seen a rainbow which casts its



prismatic colour into this part of the gloomy composition. This partly formed transient rainbow rises above the lake and this short-lived natural phenomenon introduces an element of time into the painting. In the immediate foreground a solitary sheep is depicted and this also contributes to a sense of remoteness that also echoes the wild nature of the place. This animal has been carefully placed on the vertical golden mean within the composition and this gives a sense of scale for the rest of the picture. In Cubley's *Llyn Idwal, North Wales*, as in Jackson's painting, there are no figures present and this also contributes to the sense of an untamed wilderness that is prevalent in the more sublime representations of this subject. Cubley's picture is finely painted yet it is able to retain its mysterious atmosphere in spite of the objective handling of the oil paint media. The technique that Cubley has used in this painting combines an accurate method of depiction with the absorption of an out of focus approach that enables an element of obscurity to be present. Cubley, in his choice of the Llyn Idwal motif, was able to produce a picture whose image perfectly fitted the sublime treatment that he was able to apply to it.

The atmospheric light encountered at the Llyn Idwal viewpoint became as much a subject for painting as the view itself and together they combine to produce an image that symbolises this sublime site. An example of this treatment can be seen in a watercolour by the Manchester based artist James Whaite.<sup>48</sup> His *Llyn Idwal* (Figure 81) is dated 1867 and shows the view across the lake to the mountains that rise steeply from the lakeshore. In this version Whaite has moved further round the lake to the right so that the large boulder is now silhouetted on the left of the composition. Shafts of light can be seen breaking into the basin above the lake from the mountain ridge that connects the Glyder Fawr, which is partly obscured by cloud on the top left to the summit of the Devils Kitchen on the extreme right of the picture. These mountains form a barrier that allows a spectacular treatment of light to be described in the painting at the same time maintaining the authenticity of the Llyn Idwal site. The wild nature of the landscape has been enhanced further by the absence of both figures and animals from Whaite's representation.

In Charles Mansell Lewis' (1845-1932)<sup>49</sup> oil painting of 1882 titled, *The Devil's Kitchen* (Figure 82) we are presented with a view of high mountains encircling the unseen lake. In this rectangular painting by Lewis the mountains are shown

silhouetted against the light from the centre top to the right of the painting. On the left side the highest mountains are hidden by the obscuring cloud that is masking their profiles from view. These mountains are depicted in very deep shadow and this evokes a sublime effect which pervades the rest of the picture. A thin streak of sunlight cuts across the top of the foreground ridge where a number of sheep can also be seen but no figures are present. The immediate foreground is also in shadow caused by the darkening clouds overhead. A thin patch of sunlight can be seen on the extreme right above this foreground area and this compositionally links this foreground with the dark mountains beyond. The visual power of this work is enhanced by the contrasts of light and dark that Lewis has employed to produce an evocation of sublime mountain scenery. This is also representative of the visual experience of place that had become established by this date for this location in Snowdonia.

An illustration of the Llyn Idwal site was reproduced in Askew Roberts' *Gossiping Guide to Wales* in the *Pictorial Itinerary* section of the guide which had been available from 1869 and was republished many times. This picture by George Lowthian Hall is titled, *Llyn Idwal, ¼ Hour's Walk from Coach Road* (Figure 83). The drawing shows the view from the lakeshore towards the mountain backdrop with the words *Devil's Kitchen* superimposed in type above this feature within the frame. In this representation there are no figures or animals present and this promotes the desolate and wild aspect of the site rather than extolling any particular picturesque virtues. The sky above the lake follows the visual practice of a very light area immediately above the mountaintops with threatening clouds appearing at each end of the encircling mountain ridge. The view reproduced captures the ingredients of the site that artists had exploited as offering the most viable treatment of the location and this attitude is also reflected in the text descriptions that described this location. Roberts wrote:

Llyn Idwal, a gloomy lake in a hollow backed by the steep sides  
Of Glyder Fawr...If you have your choice of days and can afford  
to brave the weather, choose a day when the clouds are scudding  
about the mountains to see Idwal, and then you will certainly  
remember it.<sup>50</sup>

As can be seen from Roberts' description the visitor is recommended to visit the Llyn Idwal site on a day when the clouds will add visual drama to the scene. After further descriptions of a practical nature concerning the various features of this location that a visitor might explore Roberts makes a reference to Thomas Pennant's description of the Prince Idwal legend that had appeared a century earlier in *A Tour in Wales*.<sup>51</sup> Pennant was still being quoted in the later Victorian guides to Wales as he had been at the turn of the century by writers such as Bingley. The text description that Roberts used to describe the Llyn Idwal as with Roscoe's earlier descriptions of 1836 are written equivalents to artists' visions of the same site. Thus each reinforced each other and simultaneously gave an identity to this landscape and predicted how it should be experienced and painted.

A written description that highlighted the sublime aspects of Llyn Idwal appeared in the 1886 edition of *Black's Picturesque Guide to North Wales*. This landscape of lake and mountain at Llyn Idwal was described in the guide:

LLYN IDWAL is a smaller pool, situated in a dark deep hollow of the Glyder mountains, at a considerable elevation above the falls of Benglog. The lofty, black, perpendicular rocks, by which it is surrounded, render it a scene of gloom and horror, sometimes made still more appalling by the violent agitation of the waters, when currents of air produce fierce eddies and toss up waves resembling in force and height those of the ocean in a storm.<sup>52</sup>

In spite of the title of this guide having an emphasis on the word 'picturesque' there is nothing *picturesque* in this description of the scenery at Llyn Idwal. The text here puts an emphasis on the sublime features of the site generated jointly by the weather effects to be found there and by the topographical features of the location. These together produce a sublime identity for Llyn Idwal.

The mountain photographer Walter Poucher was still writing about the sublime potential of the Llyn Idwal site in the mid twentieth century in his book, *Snowdon Holiday*, published in 1943. On visiting Llyn Idwal, he wrote:

I was making my way along the western shore of Llyn Idwal. This lake, with its magnificent amphitheatre of crags, always appeals to me as one of the finest cwms in all wild Wales. There is scarcely a

tree to be seen, and yet the desolation breathes a sublime beauty.<sup>53</sup>

A watercolour of the Tryfan mountain rising above the Nant Ffrancon pass with its distinctive profile was painted in the third decade of the nineteenth century by George Fennel Robson. His *Tryfan, Caernarvonshire* (Figure 84) is a rectangular work that depicts Tryfan as seen from the north side of the Nant Ffrancon pass. This work was exhibited in London at the *Old Watercolour Society* in 1827, no.152.<sup>54</sup> The Tryfan mountain dominates the composition and it has been placed on the golden section at the left of the picture. The sky that Robson has painted is a moody and threatening one and it fits the ideal conditions that Edward Pugh recommended in his *Cambria Depicta* as desirable for artists to use at this location. In addition to this, Pugh gave instructions as to where an artist should stand to see the dominating Tryfan. Robson's choice of viewpoint for this picture agrees with Pugh's advice and Pugh's description. As Pugh stated:

I would advise the artist to get to the north side of the Ogwen lake, and up the heights, till he can suit himself with points to his mind; assuring him that Llyn Idwal, with other grand objects, come in very boldly, and if he is so lucky as to be favoured with a murky sky, still clear enough to get the contour of the mountain and rocks, he will not be disappointed. As the new road on the north side of the river is finished, travellers, in this track, will be much more delighted with the sublimity of the scenery all the way down Nant Ffrancon, because the western side of it is by much the grandest...<sup>55</sup>

In Robson's *Tryfan, Caernarvonshire* (Figure 84) the painted weather effects combine two ingredients that Pugh had referred to in his text description, that is a murky sky and a visibility that allows the mountain masses to be seen clearly. The summits of the mountains have the remainders of winter snow and serve to highlight the bleakness of the location. In this picture at the extreme left foreground two figures can be seen. One of these is riding a horse and is behind the other figure. Two figures also on horseback can be seen in the distance making their way along the road below the mountain itself. The animals scattered across the foreground areas are more likely to have been inserted by the painter Robert Hills<sup>56</sup> than by Robson himself.<sup>57</sup> These range from a heron on the left to a bird in flight, centre, to sheep on the right along with a pair of horses grazing. These animals act as a foil to the empty bareness of the mountain masses beyond. Also on the right can be seen the beginning of Lake Ogwen

The composition here is restricted by the enclosing mountains but offers a much greater distance than was possible at the Llyn Idwal viewpoint. The construction that Robson has used consists of a foreground followed by a barrier space running across the work from left to right. There is a larger proportion of sky visible in the images made from this viewpoint than at Llyn Idwal. In Pugh's *Cambria Depicta* he reproduced an aquatint from his own drawing illustrating the Nant Ffrancon and although it is not from the same viewpoint as Robson's view of Tryfan it does suggest the wild and desolate nature of the place. This aquatint is titled, *Nant Ffrancon* (Figure 85) and shows the sweep of the new road through the pass against the backdrop of the highest mountains in Snowdonia. One factor that can be seen in this picture is the apparent ease with which visitors could now travel through this region of north Wales as they can still do today on the metalled A5. In Pugh's picture two figures can be seen on the road at the bottom left, a gentleman who is pointing to the scenery for his lady companion to enjoy while on the right underneath the mountain backdrop can be seen a coach with two horses. Pugh's proportions are similar to those that Robson used ten years later for his watercolour of Tryfan.

A view of Tryfan that predates Robson's view by a year was made from a point above the road and close to the Robson viewpoint, this watercolour was drawn by Thomas Mann Baynes<sup>58</sup> and was reproduced as a lithograph in Freeman's *Sketches in Wales*, published in 1826. This view by Baynes is titled, *Trivaen* (figure 86) and this picture has the same compositional structure as Robson's painting with the Tryfan mountain placed at the left of the composition. There are travellers clearly visible on the road in the centre foreground. Freeman, the author who also sketched, was seeking to find the viewpoint that Griffith had used for his view of Tryfan, he wrote:

My primary object was to find a spot where I could combine that singular mountain *Trivaen* and *Llyn Ogwen* in one landscape, after the example of my worthy predecessor *Moses Griffiths*, whose view is the best, if not the only good one, in his master's work. He must have gone, however much more to the right than I did in search of his station, by which he might have commanded the mountain more in profile, than it appears in the annexed view.<sup>59</sup>

Freeman failed to locate the actual viewpoint that Griffith portrayed, however, Freeman's comment illustrates that Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* was still being consulted for information regarding mountain viewpoints in Snowdonia. The annexed

view that Freeman is referring to is the one supplied by Baynes, *Trivaen* (Figure 86) and inserted opposite the text description in the book, *Sketches in Wales*.

A revision of Robson's picture, *Tryfan, Caernarvonshire* (Figure 84) was replicated in a twentieth century poster by Gerald Baker (fl.1933-1937)<sup>60</sup> with the title, *Snowdonia* (Figure 87). This lithographic poster was produced for the London Midland and Scottish Railway and dates from the 1930s.<sup>61</sup> Below the picture the word Tryfan appears discreetly at the bottom left. The nearest rail access points to the area around Tryfan are at Bangor, eight miles to the north and Betws-y-Coed nine miles to the southeast. This lithograph is printed in flat planes of solid colour and evokes an idea of Snowdonia which transcends the practicalities of travel and presents an appealing symbol of mountain scenery that is simultaneously beautiful and sublime. The huge bulk of the silhouetted Tryfan is depicted in a grey-blue colour and this is offset by a sky of muted yellow complete with a burst of sunshine whose reassuring rays light up a patch of emerald green in the darker green foreground that is in shadow.

A picture of Tryfan by David Cox was engraved for Roscoe's *North Wales*, published in 1836. *The Trifaen Mountain* (Figure 88) is an engraving by Radclyffe from a commissioned watercolour by Cox. It presents a view of Tryfan mountain from a roadside viewpoint in the Ffroncon valley a mile short of the Ogwen lake. The Cox view depicts the same proportions of mountain scenery in relation to the picture frame as Baynes (Figure 86) and Robson (Figure 84) had used for their representations of Tryfan and the mountain occupies the same relative position on the left of the work. The cloud base in this picture is almost in contact with the summit peaks drawn by Cox in his representation. These are from left to right, part of Glyder Fach (3262), Tryfan (3010') and part of Y Garn (3104). On the left the southern slopes of the Tryfan Bach descend to the valley floor and on the extreme right can be seen the rising slopes of Yr Ole Wen. The surrounding mountains rise high above the relatively flat valley floor and dwarf all the figures in this view. In the foreground in characteristic Cox fashion are a group of figures passing each other on the road. There are two figures coming towards the viewer, on the right a young woman is leading a cow. The group with the large baskets on pack ponies are heading in the direction of Bangor. Just ahead of them in an area of shadow can be seen the back of a cart which is also heading down the valley. This group are local people going about their

business rather than visiting travellers admiring the scenery. Ahead of the main group further silhouetted figures in reduced scale can be ascertained, two are on horseback. Further down the valley on the right in silhouette a commercial coach and four can be seen en route between Shrewsbury and Holyhead.<sup>62</sup> All this activity on the road in Nant Ffrancon highlights the increased access to the area, which was the result of Telford's recent improvements to the road.<sup>63</sup> After the plates that illustrated both the Tryfan mountain and Llyn Idwal, Roscoe drew attention to the merits of the Nant Ffrancon and its suitability for artistic depiction, along with an appreciation of their artistic interpretations which he had observed on his travels through Snowdonia. This text also refers back to the difficulty of travel in Pennant's day and then connects the Nant Ffrancon mountains with the merits of Alpine scenery. In his narrative Roscoe was an enthusiastic supporter of this particular mountain region and its scenery. As he stated in his book:

I was not a little interested, also, while passing through these wilder Snowdon-hills, in comparing the bold, picturesque sketches of the enthusiastic artist with the real magnificent objects before my eyes. The subjects, especially those taken in the vicinity of the valley and lake Idwall, struck me by their faithful and characteristic delineation: and I could not mistake the sites, as I took my way into the pass and deep Valley of Nant Ffrangon. here I entered the road by the terrific Benglog, where the once dreadful horse path, mentioned by Mr. Pennant, is now, by the industry and ingenuity of man, exchanged for the safe and admirable highway to Holyhead, which presents some of the grandest features of Alpine scenery.<sup>64</sup>

Roscoe's book was aimed at the artist as well as the traveller to north Wales and consequently it was lavishly illustrated. Roscoe gently reminded his readers in the preface of his guide that 'Every age has its prevailing fashion, and that of the present is, assuredly, pictorial embellishment-illustration in all its forms and branches'.<sup>65</sup> Roscoe's book further encouraged the pictorial embellishment of Snowdonia after its publication in 1836.

Roscoe recorded an ascent he made out of the Nant Ffrancon valley to visit the summit of the Glyder Fawr from where he could obtain a view of the Tryfan as Pennant and Griffith had done previously in the 18th century. He described his

experiences on the top of one of Snowdonia's most rugged mountains and the expansive views that are to be seen from this elevated spot:

From the summit of the Great Glyder, I marked the scenes through Which I had passed on the previous days, spread on every side in novel beauty and magnificence. To the west lay the vale and extensive lakes of Llanberis; more near the barren tract of Waun Oer and the Lesser Glyder- on one side the towering precipice of Clogwyn-du overhanging the dark Llyn Idwal, the deep fissured rock, of Twill- du the strangely indented Trifaen, the massy Carnedd of David and Llewellyn and below the yawning chasm of Benglog opening into Nant Ffrangon, and the Ogwen pouring its waters into the deep glens below.<sup>66</sup>

An artist who painted the scenery described by Roscoe on the elevated heights of the Glyders and Tryfan was Alfred William Hunt (1830-1896).<sup>67</sup> This watercolour is titled, *Mountain Landscape, Cwm Tryfan* (Figure 89) and is dated 1856. This watercolour is devoid of any figures and it shows the jagged summit profiles of the Tryfan peak emerging from the cloud that is obscuring the rest of the mountain ridge. In this work Hunt has combined Cox's working methods with an awareness of Ruskin's attitudes towards truth as he expressed them in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*. It was subtitled '*Of Mountain Beauty*'. The fourth volume was published in 1856 the same year that Hunt's picture was drawn. Hunt's picture also reveals his awareness of contemporary Pre-Raphaelite technique particularly in relation to geological fact. The foreground area of rock in this picture is depicted but not described in detail, instead a more generalised approach has been applied so the eye is not distracted away from Tryfan itself. The colours used by Hunt for this section are subdued and understated. There is no immediate foreground to interrupt our entry into the picture and our eye is controlled schematically. We are invited towards the obscuring cloud which is threatening to obscure the remaining mountain from view. The visible part of Tryfan is depicted with geological accuracy and this is set against a lightening sky, a device that was much favoured by Cox in his views of Welsh mountain scenery. Hunt's picture fits this description of the scenery that Roscoe encountered on the summit of the Glyder as he looked towards Tryfan situated on the skyline ahead of him, as he stated:

The surface of the ground upon which I stood, - the summit of the Glyder Fawr, - had a most singular appearance. It seemed as if it had been washed by a tremendous sea; the stones lay loose,



and strewn at hazard as on some wild coast; the rocks, bare, cloven, and jagged, lay crossing each other in different directions; while the huge, pointed Trifaen, with its sharp, angular projections, height above height, seemed like some huge monster... And well, at the moment, appeared this desert tract of Snowdon to have been thus designated, as I marked the traces of the tempest's far and fierce career around and on all sides, with naked peaks that reared their grey crests to the clouds.<sup>68</sup>

Hunt in his *Mountain Landscape, Cwm Tryfan* (Figure 89) sought to paint an image of mountain scenery that would embody the sublime as well as the truth to nature dictum extolled by both Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelite landscape painters such as William Dyce. Hunt's subject of 1856 echoes the sentiments promoted by Ruskin in two chapter titles in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*; these are, '*The Mountain Gloom*' and '*The Mountain Glory*'.

The same year, 1856, Ruskin praised Hunt's exhibit at the *Royal Academy*. This was the oil painting *The Stream from Llyn Idwal, Carnarvonshire*, (no.39). Ruskin wrote of this work: 'The best landscape I have seen in the exhibition for many a day - uniting most subtle finish and watchfulness of nature, with real and rare power of composition'.<sup>69</sup> Hunt was able to heed Ruskin's advice without losing his own individuality which was a composite of PRB<sup>70</sup> practice and the atmospheric effects of the later Cox style with its emphasis on stormy and gloomy weather effects. Two years later Hunt painted another view of Cwm Tryfan, this time in oil paint, titled, *Cwm Trifaen, The Track of an Ancient Glacier* (Figure 90) which Hunt submitted to the *Royal Academy* without success in 1858. The title that Hunt has carefully applied to this work reveals its source. This originates in the fourth volume of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, chapter thirteen, *Of the Sculpture of Mountains*. Hunt has borrowed the phrase 'the tracks of ancient glaciers' from a section of Ruskin's text that concerned itself primarily with alpine scenery, as Ruskin stated:

...another fact of not less importance. - that over the whole of the rounded banks of lower mountain, wherever they have been in anywise protected from the injuries of time, there are yet visible the tracks of ancient glaciers.<sup>71</sup>

Hunt's *Cwm Trifaen, The Tracks of an ancient Glacier* (Figure 90) presents a more expansive view of the wild mountain landscape with the obscured peaks of Tryfan appearing as a dark silhouette at the top right of the picture. The mountain ridge that

Hunt has depicted in the upper portion of the picture acts as a barrier within the composition and this restricts the amount of recession space that can be seen. In this painting the viewer is suspended above a deep space consisting of rock strata before the eye is led across this stage to the mountains beyond. As with other sublime representations of this site there is very little sky present in this vision of Snowdonia. The atmospheric and stormy weather effects depicted by Hunt are a visual equivalent to Roscoe's text descriptions of this location in his guide to *North Wales*.<sup>72</sup> Although this work retains an element of Cox's treatment of weather there is also a dominant overlay in the Pre-Raphaelite treatment of the oil paint surface. This accurate treatment is echoed in the depiction of the rocks in the foreground and the middle distance areas along with their associated mountain forms. Hunt's technique is able to reveal the particular geology of the site without illustrating. The treatment of light is harsh with a marked contrast between those parts in shadow and those in bright sunshine. This sunlit portion is illuminated by a burst of sunshine that is in direct contrast to the upper portion which depicts the silhouetted mountain summits, swirling clouds and darkening sky.

An example of a Pre-Raphaelite technique being applied to a representation of Tryfan mountain can be seen in a watercolour by William Dyce (1806-1864)<sup>73</sup> drawn two years after Hunt's oil painting of 1858 (Figure 90) and four years after his watercolour of the same subject (Figure 89). This horizontal work is titled, *Tryfan, Snowdonia* (Figure 91). Unlike Hunt's weather saturated and partly obscured views of this subject Dyce has portrayed the mountain in a clear bright daylight consistent with the visual clarity that the purest application of the PRB method demanded. In this picture the geological concerns of PRB landscape practice have come to the fore and this gives the painting both its reality and its solidity. The mountain profiles that Dyce has delineated are accurate and precise in their depiction of mountain terrain. As Allen Staley has pointed out Dyce was aware of the geological differences between the mountains of Scotland to those in north Wales where they are, as Dyce wrote, 'more awful and terrific looking than anything I know of in Scotland.'<sup>74</sup> This composition by Dyce consists of a barrier motif with the broad ridge of Tryfan at the top and a dark foreground sweep of mountain below, the mountain forms running across the whole of the picture space from left to right. This watercolour has been drawn in front of the motif and this contributes to its freshness.<sup>75</sup> The colour is topographically

descriptive and in a tonal range often used by Ruskin for his watercolours of Alpine scenery. This watercolour devoid of figures has been used as the background study for Dyce's small oil painting *Welsh Landscape with Figures* that was painted the same year.<sup>76</sup>

Hunt and Dyce both painted the same subject in watercolour within four years of each other and, although the motif may be similar, their process and application of visioning were very different. Each artist has applied a visioning process appropriate to their requirements, Hunt (Figure 89) and Dyce (Figure 91) have pictured this wild and desolate mountain according to their preferences. These differences of vision highlight the wide range of practice that were available to painters in the second half of the 19th century.

Tryfan, when seen from various distances produced a barrier composition that enabled pictures with a restricted space to be made by various artists using a variety of methods and processes. The nearby Llyn Idwal site produced the most impressive barrier motif composition available in the whole of Snowdonia and was visited accordingly. The written and artistic depictions of the Llyn Idwal appear to conjure up an image of the location that filtrates the imagination in a way that photographs of the same view do not. Even when a vertical frame is used the tonal arrangements of reality do not lend themselves to photographic representation. An example of this can be seen from a photograph by Ronald Thompson published in a promotional publication issued by the National Parks Authority in 1973. This monochrome photograph is captioned *Cwm Idwal, looking towards 'Idwal Slabs' on Glyder Fawr* (Figure 92). The picture depicts only a part of the arena of lake and mountain and does not conform to the accepted motif that the majority of prints and paintings possess that identify the location. There is no obscuring or threatening weather to envelop the high peaks that surround the lake. The complete absence of any figures or animals in the picture suggest its wild state but only hints at the sites potential for producing a sublime experience due to the calm conditions that are depicted. The vertical format on this occasion also fails to render a sublime image because of the bland tones of the photograph do not signify a strong presence of lake or mountain. Although only a small proportion of sky is shown it is represented by a single pale tint of grey and this also fails to contribute any sublime qualities to the rest of the picture.

The written narrative in this guide concentrates on the rare alpine fauna and flora as Pennant also did but unlike Pennant, there is no description of the site from a visual point of view. The site's suitability for rock climbing is also mentioned along with the site's geological importance.<sup>77</sup> Therefore there was no requirement for the reproduced photograph to offer a sublime interpretation of the site.

The mountain photographer Walter Poucher (1891-1988)<sup>78</sup> has photographed the Llyn Idwal site from the same viewpoint used by artists for their views of this lake and mountain. A photograph that depicts the foreground rocks that are so much a feature of the artist's views across the lake that includes the Devil's Kitchen was published in Poucher's photographic book, *The Welsh Peaks*.<sup>79</sup> This is a pictorial guidebook detailing the pedestrian routes that can be traversed safely over the highest of Snowdonia's mountains. There are several photographs of the Llyn Idwal in the guide and I have selected one as an example, *Plate 112 Route 26* (Figure 93). The selection of the 234 photographs for the guide was not based on any potential sublime quality but rather on their clarity in depicting accurately the reality of the mountain terrain.

In this chapter I have shown that the Llyn Idwal site became the first destination for artists and visitors seeking the ultimate sublime landscape in Snowdonia. An hour is enough time to enable a visit to this spectacular location to be made. If longer was available then the neighbouring mountains that are situated relatively close by could be visited as well and the sublime experience encountered there could be recorded. This activity increased as the taste for mountain scenery grew and more visitors and artists were attracted to these mountains as a visual experience and subject. Artists and others had the example of Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* which contained pictures of Glyder Fach and Tryfan that were drawn by Griffith. The Griffith etching of Tryfan introduced this image of wild looking mountain scenery to a wider audience comparatively early. The numerous written descriptions of the Llyn Idwal site and the immediate mountains from Pennant onwards also contributed to the exposure of these sites. The continued road improvement through the Nant Ffrancon pass from the late 18th century onwards enabled greater numbers of visitors to have access to this remote and wild mountainous country. As some artists sought more sublime sites in the 19th century the Llyn Idwal viewpoint with its barrier motif suitably met their

requirements. This location supplied a ready-made view of lake and mountain whose summits were often hidden and dramatically obscured by cloud and this contributed to the sublime. The pursuit of cloud covered and partly obscured mountains could also be satisfied close by at other locations such as the nearby Tryfan and on the approaches to the mountain itself from the Nant Ffrancon Valley. In this chapter I have shown how artists applied their own interpretations to the barrier motif seen at the Llyn Idwal site and how this location became and how it has continued to remain the most viable location for the representation of the mountain sublime in Snowdonia.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> An exception to this is a watercolour by the amateur artist Edmund Becker (fl.1780-1810) a pupil of Richard Cooper (1740-1814) titled, *Combe Idwall between Capel Curig and Bangor, North Wales*, 1792, monochrome wash drawing, 8 x 11¼ (20 x 25.5), National Library of Wales. Other subjects by Becker from the 1792 tour in the National Library of Wales include *Snowdon from the Inn at Capel Curig* and *Pont Aberglaslyn*.

<sup>2</sup> The first painting shown at the Royal Academy of this subject was *Llyn Idwal near Capel Curig* (no375) by William Fowler, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1840. Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, 2 vols., Benjamin White at Horace's Head, London, 1784, Vol. 2. p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> The route of the tour is listed over four pages in the second edition of Wyndham's book, see Henry Penruddock Wyndham, *A Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales, Made in the Months of June and July 1774, and the Months of June, July, and August 1777*, Salisbury, 1781, pp. ix-xi.

<sup>6</sup> Bingley has described this improvement, see, William Bingley, *North Wales delineated from Two Excursions through that Highly Beautiful and Romantic Country and intended as a guide to future tourists*, Longman, Hurst, Orme and Brown, London, 1814, p. 122.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., see, p. 182.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>10</sup> In the nineteenth century the work of Salvator Rosa (1615-1673) was seen as the embodiment of the sublime in nature by those artists associated with pictorial aesthetics in landscape. His influence applied equally to the writers and poets of this period.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Pugh, *Cambria Depicta: A Tour through North Wales Illustrated with Picturesque Views*, E Williams, London, 1816, p. 106.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>14</sup> I have previously quoted from this passage, see chapter one p.18, note no. 64. For the full text see, Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. (1757) *The Ninth Edition. With an Introductory DISCOURSE concerning TASTE, and several other Additions*. J. Dodsley in Pall-Mall, London, 1782, pp. 127-28.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Mann Baynes (1794-1852) a Landscape artist in watercolour and oil who also practised as an architect. He was resident in London where he exhibited 51 works between 1811-1852, including 41 at the RA, where in 1875, he showed *Cader Idris* (no.548) and *Dolbardon Castle* (no.712). He supplied all the pictures of north Wales for G.J. Freeman's book, *Sketches in Wales; or A Diary of Three Walking Excursions in that Principality in the Years, 1823, 1824, 1825*, London, 1826. These were drawn directly on to stone and printed by the new lithographic process by Charles Hullmandel (1789-1850). Hullmandel was a leading lithographic printer of his day. Hullmandel, a landscape artist himself, developed new methods to facilitate the reproduction of watercolour tones by this new print process.

- <sup>16</sup> Rev. G.J.Freeman, *Sketches in Wales, or A Dairy of Three Walking Excursions in that Principality, in the Years 1823, 1824, 1825*, Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, London, 1826, p.113.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., advertisement, no pagination.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., this insert follows p. xvi.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., advertisement, no pagination.
- <sup>20</sup> An example of this is the watercolour that John Ruskin purchased from David Cox at the 1837 Old Water-Colour Society exhibition that year. This work was *Water Mill, near Dolbenmaen*.
- <sup>21</sup> For a recent discussion of this topic see, Peter Lord, *Clarence Whaite and the Welsh Art World, The Betws-y-Coed Artists' Colony 1844-1914*, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1998.
- <sup>22</sup> Nanthaniel Neil Solly, *Memoir of the Life of David Cox with selections from his correspondence and some account of his works*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1873, p. 312.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 312.
- <sup>24</sup> Thomas Roscoe, *Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales*, C. Tilt, and Simpkin and Co, Wrighton and Webb, London & Birmingham, 1836, p. 159.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., p 160.
- <sup>26</sup> David Cox drew 31 commissioned pictures that were reproduced for Thomas Roscoe's, *Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales*, C.Tilt, Simpkin and Co, Wrighton and Webb, London & Birmingham, 1836, see chapter 5. pp. 128-131.
- <sup>27</sup> George Fennel Robson (1788-1833) a professional landscape artist primarily in watercolour. He specialised in mountain scenery of a wild and remote nature. Based Durham, later London where he exhibited 700 works in the London exhibitions including, 651 at the OWCS. Robson made tours to Scotland and to north Wales to collect material for his paintings of mountain scenery, which were closer to the sublime than the picturesque in their grandeur. In 1814 he published *Scenery of the Grampian Mountains*, London, 1814. This volume contains 41 soft ground etchings drawn by Robson and engraved by Henry Morton. Robson became president of the OWCS in 1820. For further information see, T. Unwins, 'George Fennel Robson 1788-1833', *Old Water-Colour Society's Club*, XVI, 1938, pp. 37-49.
- <sup>28</sup> The paper that this watercolour is drawn on is watermarked 1830 and Robson died in 1833.
- <sup>29</sup> Nathaniel Neal Solly, *Memoir of the Life of David Cox, with Selections from his Correspondence, and some Account of his Works*, Chapman and Hall, London, 1873, appendix, *Drawings by David Cox Exhibited at the Society of Painters of in Watercolours, London from 1813 to 1859*, p. 319.
- <sup>30</sup> In 1831 David Cox was living in London at 9 Foxley Road, Kennington.
- <sup>31</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, 2 vols., Benjamin White at Horace's Head, London, 1784), vol.2. p. 163.
- <sup>32</sup> An example of George Fennel Robson's use of a barrier motif composition is, *The Gap of Dunloe*, watercolour, circa, 1831, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester (D.1892.126). This mountain pass is located west of Killarney in Ireland and it was a landscape motif that lent itself to a sublime treatment. This work is structurally similar to, *The Devils Kitchen, Llyn Idwal, North Wales* and it contains similar colour relationships and abstracted forms and has a similar streak of light in the sky.
- <sup>33</sup> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Volume 3, Of Many Things* (1856) George Allen & Sons, London, 1910, section IV, chapter XVIII, 'Of the Teachers of Turner' p. 345.
- <sup>34</sup> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Volume 1, Of General Principles, and of Truth*, (1843) George Allen & Sons, London, 1908, section I, chapter VII, 'General Application of the Foregoing Principles' p. 101.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 101.
- <sup>36</sup> Samuel Jackson (1794-1869) a landscape painter in watercolour especially of marine subjects. Based in Bristol where he was a member of the Bristol Sketching Club and he was a member of the OWCS from 1823 till he resigned in 1848. He showed 51 works in the London exhibitions between 1823 and 1848 including 49 at the OWCS. He made two tours to north Wales in 1828 and in 1833. Travelled abroad, visiting the West Indies in 1829 and Switzerland in 1853 and 1858. For a further information see, *The Bristol Landscape, The Watercolours of Samuel Jackson 1794-1869*, exhibition catalogue, F. Greenacre & S. Stoddard, eds., Bristol City Art Gallery, Bristol, 1986.
- <sup>37</sup> This text description by Roscoe was quoted earlier, see this chapter, p. 6., note no.24.
- <sup>38</sup> Jane Munro, *British Landscape Watercolours 1750-1850*, exhibition catalogue, Herbert Press & Fitzwilliam Museum, London & Cambridge, 1994, p. 12
- <sup>39</sup> Source, Royal Academy database.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>41</sup> Source, British Institution database.
- <sup>42</sup> Source, Royal Academy database.

<sup>43</sup> For further information and a discussion on the exhibition societies in London during the nineteenth century, see Scott Wilcox, 'Landscape in the Watercolour Societies', in Scott Wilcox and Christopher Newell, eds., *Victorian Landscape Watercolours*, exhibition catalogue, Hudson Hills Press and Yale Centre for British Art, New York, 1992.

<sup>44</sup> Source, Royal Academy database. There are only nine years between 1769 and 1900 that a landscape picture depicting north Wales was not shown at the Royal Academy. The missing years are, 1769, 1770, 1772, 1773, 1782, 1790, 1841, 1893 and 1897.

<sup>45</sup> William Harold Cubley (1816-1896) a landscape painter resident in Newark. He exhibited a total of 13 works in the London exhibitions between 1863-1878, including 4 at the Royal Academy and 9 at Suffolk Street.

<sup>46</sup> This painting is in the possession of the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool where it is catalogued as, *Llyn Idwal*, 1872, oil on canvas, 111 x 187.7 cm. (ref. No. 1811). This painting is signed and dated 1872 and is the same picture that Cubley exhibited at the Royal Academy that year. To the title of *Llyn Idwal*, Cubley added the words *North Wales* to the catalogue title when it was shown at the Royal Academy. In this study I am using the original title as it appeared in the RA catalogue. Charles W. Jones presented this painting to the Walker Art Gallery in 1891. It now requires restoration before it can be put on public display.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Roscoe's description from *Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales* was quoted earlier in this chapter, see, p.155, note no. 24.

<sup>48</sup> James Whaite, (fl.1870-1916) a landscape artist in watercolour who was based in Manchester. He exhibited a total of 11 works in London between 1867-1881, including 3 at the R.A. At the RA in 1896 Whaite, *The Lledr Valley, North Wales*, (no.1044). Whaite showed two works at the New Watercolour Society.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Mansel Lewis (1845-1931) was educated at Eton College where he was taught drawing and introduced to art by Samuel Evans the art master. At Oxford University Mansel read classics and became friendly with Slade Professor William Riviere and soon purchased some work by his son Briton. A member of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers. An artist of domestic scenes who also worked in landscape. Based at Stradly Castle, Llanelly South, Wales which he inherited in 1872. During the refurbishment of his house he met Hubert Herkomer and began to purchase work from the artist. His long association with Herkomer influenced his style and he benefited from his technical advice. Mansel Lewis exhibited 16 works in the London exhibitions between 1872 and 1882, including 9 at the R.A. I refer the reader to Stephanie Jones recently published study on Mansel Lewis. I have used her research to compile much of this biographical information, see, Stephanie Jones, *Charles Mansel Lewis, Painter, Patron and Promoter of Art in Wales*, University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth, 1998.

<sup>50</sup> Askew Roberts, *The Gossiping Guide to Wales; Pictorial Itinerary and Snowdon Panorama*, Hodder and Stoughton & Woodall and Co, London & Oswestry, 1883), p.188.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.189. For the original text description, see, Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales*, vol. 2., p.162.

<sup>52</sup> Adam and Charles Black, eds., *Black's Picturesque Guide to North Wales*, Adam and Charles Black, Edinburgh, 1886, p.120.

<sup>53</sup> Walter Arthur Poucher, *Snowdon Holiday*, Chapman & Hall Ltd, London, 1943, p.14.

<sup>54</sup> This is likely to be the same work that Robson had exhibited at the Old Water-Colour Society in 1827. Both have the same title. Even if another work was exhibited the visual appearance is likely to be similar to this picture.

<sup>55</sup> Edward Pugh, *Cambria Depicta*, p.111-12.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Hills (1769-1844) a painter of animal subjects who studied at the Royal Academy in 1788 under J.A.Gresse. Painted animals for a number of artists including G.F.Robson, W.A.Nesfield and G.B.Barret Junior. He made a number of tours in Britain and visited Holland in 1815. For further information see, M. Lambourne, '*A Watercolourist's Countryside: The Art of Robert Hills*', *Country Life*, CXLIV, 25 July 1968, pp. 235-38.

<sup>57</sup> Robson often employed Robert Hills to paint the animals in his pictures.

<sup>58</sup> Thomas Mann Baynes (1794-1852). For further biographical information, see, chapter five, note no. 36.

<sup>59</sup> G.J.Freeman, *Sketches in Wales*, p.153.

<sup>60</sup> Gerald Baker (fl. 1933-1937) a graphic artists who produced posters for the Great Western Railway and the London and Scottish Railway during the 1930's. His travel poster, *Snowdonia*, c.1933-1935, National Railway Museum, York, (ref. 82/38/64) is incorrectly attributed in the existing literature produced by the Museum. I am grateful to Beverley Cole, curator of pictorial collections at the Museum for bringing this error to my notice.

- <sup>61</sup> The London Midland and Scottish Railway was in operation between 1928 and 1948.
- <sup>62</sup> The subject of coach travel and the opening of the route through the Nant Ffrancon pass were discussed in Chapter four, p.77. & pp. 80-82.
- <sup>63</sup> With the completion of Telford's suspension bridge across the Menai Straits in 1826 the improvements to the London to Holyhead road via Shrewsbury and Capel Curig were complete. Freeman in *Sketches in Wales* describes the bridge as it neared completion in 1825 and he also gives technical information concerning its construction, see, Freeman, *Sketches in Wales*, pp. 171-175. An image of the bridge, reproduced in Roscoe's *North Wales* by Cox, which shows the new white suspension bridge in the centre of the picture where it has become treated as a picturesque subject, see Thomas Roscoe, *North Wales*, The Menai Bridge, plate XXVII, p.169.
- <sup>64</sup> Thomas Roscoe, *North Wales*, p. 161.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid., preface, no pagination.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.158.
- <sup>67</sup> Alfred William Hunt (1830-1896) a landscape painter born and resident in Liverpool who specialised in watercolour. He showed a total of 395 works in the London exhibitions between 1846-1893. Including 334 at the OWCS and 37 at the RA. Studied art the Liverpool Academy in the late 1840's. Also educated at Corpus Christi College Oxford where he won the Newgate prize for poetry in 1851 before graduating from Oxford in 1852. Taught art by his father, Andrew Hunt (1790-1861) a landscape painter and friend of David Cox who Hunt also knew Cox. This influence can be seen in Hunt's own pictures. By the mid 1850's Hunt had become a full time professional artist. Member of the OWCS from 1862. It was at this time that Hunt became interested in Ruskin's ideas and writings along with an appreciation of the new Pre-Raphaelite style. This gave an emphasis to the depiction of geological fact and the painting of direct sunlight out of doors. Tour's to north Wales in 1856 and 1857. Praised by John Ruskin in his *Academy Notes*. Hunt got to know Ruskin well who became a godfather to one of Hunt's daughters.
- <sup>68</sup> Thomas Roscoe, *North Wales*, pp. 158-59.
- <sup>69</sup> Quoted in Allen Staley, *The Pre-Raphaelite Landscape*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1973 p.144.
- <sup>70</sup> The initials PRB stand for the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.
- <sup>71</sup> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Volume 4, Of Mountain Beauty*, (1856) George Allen & Sons, London, 1910, part 5, chapter XIII, 'Of the Sculpture of Mountains: Secondly, the Central Peaks' p.178.
- <sup>72</sup> Roscoe described the weather effects that can be encountered close to the Tryfan mountain, quoted in this chapter, pp. 174-176. Roscoe also described the weather effects that he encountered at the Llyn Idwal site, see this chapter, p. 154.
- <sup>73</sup> William Dyce (1806-1864) was primarily an artist of figure subjects in oil and a muralist. He also worked in watercolour from 1836 and from this date he resided in London. Dyce who was born in Aberdeen where his father was a medical lecturer, trained first in Edinburgh then London at the Royal Academy Schools and he spent time in Italy 1827-30. Elected ARA in 1844 and RA in 1848. Dyce showed a total of 45 works in the London exhibitions between 1827 and 1861, 41 at the RA and 4 at the BI. He went on a tour to north Wales in 1860. Dyce saw the new PRB style at the RA in 1850 and he introduced Ruskin to their style and work. He adapted his own work to emulate the PRB methods and produced '*Titian Preparing to Make his First Essay in Colouring*', in 1857, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums. His '*Pegwell Bay: A recollection of October 5th, 1858*', 1858-60, Tate Britain, London is an example of a geological landscape subject that was finished the same year as the watercolour of *Tryfan, Snowdonia* was painted. For further information on Dyce, see, Marcia Pointon, *William Dyce 1806 - 1864: A Critical Biography*, Oxford, 1979.
- <sup>74</sup> Quoted in Alan Staley, *The Pre-Raphaelite Landscape*, p. 166.
- <sup>75</sup> William Dyce visited north Wales in 1860.
- <sup>76</sup> William Dyce, *Welsh Landscape with two Figures*, 1860, oil on board, 13"x 19", private collection. This oil contains two women in the foreground, one old, who is sitting on a large rock and one young woman who is standing in front of her. They are both dressed in Welsh costume and are wearing chimney hats. Behind them is an expansive view of the Snowdonia mountains. This painting is reproduced in monochrome in, Alan Staley, *The Pre-Raphaelite Landscape*, fig., no. 95 b.
- <sup>77</sup> *Snowdonia National Park Guide Number 2*, ed., G. Rhys Edwards, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1973, pp.65-68.
- <sup>78</sup> Walter Poucher (1891-1988). For biographical information see, chapter 4, note no.16.
- <sup>79</sup> Walter Poucher, *The Welsh Peaks, A Pictorial Guide to walking in this region and to the safe ascent of its principle mountain groups*, (1962) Constable and Company Ltd, London, 1987.



Snowdonia was thus particularly suitable for visiting artists because it fitted their preconceptions. These visual and narrative interpretations all form part of a legacy of vision and revision of mountain scenery in Snowdonia.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The construction of these databases is described in the preface, pp. v-vi. The exhibition databases are listed in vol.3., Appendix II-V.

<sup>2</sup> The database *Artists of Snowdonia Mountain Scenery 1750-2000. A reference list* contains over 550 artists who have delineated this mountain scenery. See vol.3., Appendix I.

## Conclusion

As a region Snowdonia offers many types of mountain terrain. Visually however only those views that corresponded to a pre-formed landscape aesthetic and its associated construction of pictorial space were utilised. In Snowdonia only a small proportion of the actual landscape is being represented. Once a mountain landscape became established any practitioners seeking a similar pictorial identity subsequently replicated it. Certain landscape views became popular because they were given exposure via exhibited pictures and published prints. Compositional structures were established for each viewpoint and later artists used these constructions originally worked out by others. This has produced a large number of similar views at each viewpoint. This study has concentrated on this visual material particularly in relation to these viewpoints and the aesthetics used to visualise them. It has shown that although a vast number of pictures have been produced many are pictorial repeats and that the inclusion of many of these works in studies and exhibitions would serve no useful purpose other than in highlighting this aspect in its own right.

This study demonstrates how these mountain landscapes have been subjected to a process of vision and revision. This comprises work by artists, illustrators, photographers and writers. The landscape aesthetics of the topographical, the classical, the picturesque and the sublime have all been applied to this mountain scenery. In this context four mountain viewpoints have been selected to represent each aesthetic category. Together they show the wide range of visual aesthetics that could be utilised in the representation of Snowdonia's mountain scenery.

Chapter one, *Landscape Aesthetics* discusses the landscape categories that have been applied to the visualisation of Snowdonia. The aesthetics of the topographical and the classical were applied to subjects that required either a realist approach or a recessional construction of space such as a vista. The later aesthetics of the picturesque and the sublime with their reduced pictorial space were also applied to the depiction of this mountain scenery. The visual attributes of Gilpin's picturesque aesthetics were highlighted along with Burke's theories of the sublime. The

compositional formula of each category was deconstructed in relation to the depiction of mountain landscape.

The second chapter, *Wilson's Imagery: Snowdon and Cader Idris* examines the viewpoint of Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle that was depicted by Richard Wilson in the 1760s. My research has revealed that there was little revision by artists of the Wilson viewpoint towards Snowdon. This was confirmed by an analysis of the London exhibition venues on the database where no work of revision came to light. At the *Royal Academy* for example there were no exhibited pictures bearing the title *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle*. The contemporary tourist board's appropriation of Wilson's visual identity is evident in their advertisements reverse this situation. Today the tourist authorities are keen to exploit Wilson's visual identity while not acknowledging his contribution to their visual promotion of north Wales. The lack of revisioning by artists of Wilson's view of Snowdon along with the companion painting of Cader Idris was due in part to the high status that both of these pictures already possessed. In *A Tour in Wales* Pennant refers the reader directly to the Wilson pictures of Snowdon and Cader Idris in their engraved form. Pennant therefore had no incentive to reproduce the Wilson views in his book. Other writers on Snowdonia such as Edward Pugh in *Cambria Depicta* also referred their readers to the print versions of Wilson's two important pictures of Welsh mountain scenery. In the majority of the travel literature of north Wales the two Wilson pictures of Snowdonia are referred to in complementary terms but the actual Wilson painting or a version of it was not reproduced in these guidebooks in the way that the other mountain viewpoints were. With no visual guide to these Wilson viewpoints artists did not have any visual warning in advance of them and therefore they were unable to replicate them or to undertake a revision of them. Another factor that would have limited the revisioning of this view of *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle*, was the overtly classical vision that Wilson had applied to this view of Snowdon and later association with this vision would suggest overtly Wilson's identity rather than another artist's revision. I have argued that it is the symbolism of Wilson's view of Snowdon and its unacknowledged status that empowers the representations of Snowdonia in contemporary travel literature. They are promoting north Wales via the photograph in much the same way as Richard Wilson had done in his painting two hundred and thirty five years ago. In connection with this premise I have deconstructed both of

these paintings and have demonstrated that both depict visitors to north Wales for leisure, before the fashion for touring had become established. These paintings not only promoted the mountain landscape of Snowdonia but also reinforced the status of the landowners whose extent of land these paintings recorded. It was Wilson's original use of a classical construction of space and light that gave added status to these oil paintings and that this enabled these views of Welsh mountain scenery to gain their status among the elite of Wilson's day relatively early after their completion. So visually successful were they that Wilson made replicas of them and they were engraved and issued in print form.

Chapter three, *Topographical Snowdonia: A View in Nant Berris* examines the topographical aesthetic in relation to the historical viewpoint that depicts Dolbadarn castle, Llyn Peris and Snowdon. I show how this viewpoint is almost exclusively a topographical one. I have shown how this viewpoint has retained its realist treatment from Buck's early view to more recent depictions in photography. I have discussed the reasons why this viewpoint has maintained a topographical tradition and suggested that this is mainly due to the need to illustrate the castle accurately in the landscape. The geographical layout of the lake and valley with the flank of Snowdon rising behind is all relatively distant and this also favours an accurate vision of place. The authentic reproduction of this view in the guidebook literature from Pennant onwards also contributed to the viewpoint's topographical identity. The decline in artists' pictures in the nineteenth century was due to the emergence of other locations and categories such as the sublime.

Chapter four, *Classical Snowdonia: Snowdon from Capel Curig* examines the site that generated the view of Snowdon seen from Capel Curig. This consists of a landscape vista with Snowdon filling the western horizon. I have shown how these landscape forms perfectly fitted a classical structure. When De Loutherbourg exhibited *Snowdon from Capel Curig, a morning*, at the *Royal Academy* in 1787 he established a classical identity for this vista. It was this classical construction of the picture space that became established as the most viable treatment in the depiction of this location. As I have shown, almost all the revisions made of this site adhered to this classical identity and a proportion of it was always retained. This retention can be seen, in a John Varley watercolour, in an advertisement for the former Royal Hotel at Capel Curig

and in a promotional colour photograph on the front cover of a Salmon calendar for the year 2000. I have demonstrated how this classic image of Snowdon has been appropriated to serve as an advertisement for the mountain scenery of Snowdonia as promoted by the various tourist boards. This subject is usually presented in a photographic format but it has also been shown in an illustrated form. In this chapter many other examples of revisioning are cited and in this context the associated guide book literature is examined. Text descriptions of this location are close to the visual treatment of the view. These written narratives were often illustrated in conjunction with the textual description. By analysing the titles of the artists' pictures that were exhibited in the London exhibitions further evidence of this revisioning process is shown in the many variations of title that was used by these exhibiting artists. In those exhibits shown at the *Royal Academy* between 1807 and 1867 there were five variations on the title *Snowdon from Capel Curig*. This information has been derived from the *Royal Academy* database. By constructing databases for the principal London exhibitions I have been able to analyse this data in connection with this mountain landscape scenery.<sup>1</sup>

Chapter five, *Picturesque Snowdonia: Pont Aberglaslyn* examines the restricted viewpoint of the Pont Aberglaslyn. This consists of a bridge, river and a mountain backdrop. This site as perfectly fitted the compositional schemas that were advocated by William Gilpin in his guides to the picturesque. This site was first represented in the 1770s by visiting artists such as Francis Towne and Samuel Hieronymus Grimm on their travels through Snowdonia. Grimm's drawings were used to illustrate Henry Penruddocke Wyndham's travel book published in 1781. The view towards the bridge from a point downstream was equally favoured and this was reproduced in Thomas Pennant's book, *A Tour in Wales*. The connections between the travel writers' descriptions of this scenic location and the artists' depiction of it are explored in this chapter. This revealed the very close similarity between the two modes of description that essentially described the same pictorial identity. This identity was subjected to a process of revision by both writers and artists and vice a versa. As the site became overgrown in the second half of the nineteenth century the visual representations declined ahead of the written descriptions of it. The record of pictures of the Pont Aberglaslyn site exhibited at the *Royal Academy* reflects this decline during the nineteenth century. The database reveals there were twelve named pictures of this site

shown at the *Royal Academy* between 1800 and 1821 and from this date to 1872 only three works were shown there and after 1872 not a single work was exhibited during the rest of the century. The text accounts continued to be written for a period after the exhibited pictures of the site ceased. This site could fit the requirements of the picturesque as seen in the example of Myles Birket Foster as well as the sublime as represented by an artist such as John Glover. As the nineteenth century progressed it was the sublime treatment of this location that became dominant although elements of the picturesque were still retained. This motif signified a vision of Snowdonia's mountain scenery in general as much as a representation of a topographical view of place. Today the only pictures that can be made at this location depict the view up the gorge from the centre of the bridge. It was from this same viewpoint that the original views by Towne and Grimm were made in the eighteenth century. In a recent tourist publication a colour photograph was reproduced that shows this view from the bridge and within this picture the encroachment of trees can be seen. The view towards the Pont Aberglaslyn has completely disappeared from view since Moses Griffith stood on the banks of the river Glaslyn downstream from the bridge in the 1760s and sketched the view that was subsequently reproduced in Pennant's book.

Chapter six, *Sublime Snowdonia: Llyn Idwal* examines the Llyn Idwal viewpoint set above the Nant Ffrancon pass. This site consists of a mountain lake, which is overshadowed by an arena of high mountains. This location came into prominence as a sublime site of mountain scenery in the third decade of the nineteenth century. The exposure of this site was enhanced by the recent road improvements to the area and the building of additional hotel accommodation. The database confirms there were sixteen works exhibited at the *Royal Academy* alone between 1840 and 1899 featuring Llyn Idwal. The Llyn Idwal site was ideally suited to producing a barrier composition that met the requirements of those artists seeking a motif of mountain scenery that left relatively little sky in the frame. Although this site was described by Pennant in *A Tour in Wales* it was not illustrated. This site presented the visiting artists with a spectacle of dark vertical rock rising above the flat plane of the lake. The enclosed vista of the Llyn Idwal site prevented any rendering of traditional recessional space and the inclement weather associated with this location often produced images that were also partially obscured. An example of this sublime treatment can be seen in David Cox's *Llyn Idwal*. Thomas Roscoe had commissioned this picture for

reproduction in his north Wales guidebook of 1836. It was Roscoe's descriptive prose as much as Cox's sublime image of this Welsh mountain scenery that contributed to the site's exposure. From this period onwards the Llyn Idwal site produces a motif of mountain scenery that was repeatedly revisioned by artists during the remainder of the nineteenth century. This revisioning of the Llyn Idwal site is discussed in relation to those artists such as George Fennel Robson and Alfred William Hunt (who painted the nearby Tryfan) who concurred with John Ruskin's advocacy of mountain scenery as he had stated in *Modern Painters*. A number of other revisions of the Llyn Idwal site are also explored and this motif is still being depicted today. The nearby mountains of Tryfan and the Glyders are also part of this landscape. Both these mountains were described and depicted by Moses Griffith in Pennant's *A Tour in Wales*. The various text descriptions of this scenery are considered in relation to the depicted pictures and attention is drawn to the connections between these text descriptions and the drawn experience.

This study has revealed that the pictorial representation of Snowdonia by artists is far more extensive in both scope and in the number of individual artists involved than has hitherto been known. In many publications on British Art only a small number of examples of this mountain scenery are given and it is therefore implied that the depiction of this particular landscape was only a marginal activity. I have revealed this activity to be extensive within the history of British Landscape painting.<sup>2</sup> The wide range of available landscape features present in Snowdonia met the particular requirements of those artists who were engaged in the depiction of mountain scenery. As the sites became established artists began to formulate their own visions of place and this was acquired and sanctioned by a process of revision. These landscapes in north Wales were sufficiently adaptable to enable this process of revisioning to take place. The viewpoints discussed illustrate this and as the identity of each site became established it took on the additional role of a motif. This feature was reinforced by the written descriptions of place in the guidebook literature and further compounded by the reproduction of the associated imagery adjacent to the text. The motif became the subject as much as the subject became the motif. The landscape categories of the topographical, the classical, the picturesque and the sublime were all utilised in the depiction of Snowdonia. This study shows how these aesthetic categories were applied to the mountain viewpoints selected for them and how the geography of

Snowdonia was thus particularly suitable for visiting artists because it fitted their preconceptions. These visual and narrative interpretations all form part of a legacy of vision and revision of mountain scenery in Snowdonia.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The construction of these databases is described in the preface, pp. v-vi. The exhibition databases are listed in vol.3., Appendix II-V.

<sup>2</sup> The database *Artists of Snowdonia Mountain Scenery 1750-2000. A reference list* contains over 550 artists who have delineated this mountain scenery. See vol.3., Appendix I.



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