

A Breath of Fresh Air: Constable and the Coast

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Constable is usually thought of as a painter of inland countryside: he is famous for his depictions of canal scenes and meadows, enlivened by country labourers and animals. In contrast, his coastal paintings might be considered as a somewhat peripheral part of his output. Yet, as Anne Lyles has recently pointed out, “coastal and marine subjects form an important part ... of his full range as a landscape painter” and it could be argued that they are central to his concerns with light, atmosphere and weather.ⁱ There were many reasons why Constable was keen on coastal scenery. The coast was an excellent place to study the clouds and the sky, and the movement of waves and wind. It played a key role in the development of his mastery of what he called the “chiaroscuro of nature”: those evanescent effects that gave life, contrast and dynamic movement to landscape painting. In addition, coastal scenes engaged many of his deepest beliefs and emotions. In the long nineteenth century the coast had a threefold significance. Firstly, as the edge of the land and site of frequent shipwrecks, it symbolized birth, death and immortality. Secondly, as boundary of the nation, it needed to be well protected against enemy invasion, which was a very real threat in the early 1800s and haunted the national consciousness for the rest of the century. Thirdly, the coast was a location where invalids, especially consumptives, hoped to be restored to health, a place of fresh breezes, a source of easy breathing and life-giving fecundity.ⁱⁱ

Constable’s sketch, *Hove Beach* (fig. 1), with its solitary figure on the beach, gazing out to sea, is reminiscent of Caspar David Friedrich’s famous painting, *The Monk by the Sea* (1809; Nationalgalerie, Berlin). Constable was almost certainly unaware of the Friedrich work, but the paintings may have a common origin in English poetry. The German poet, Heinrich von Kleist, wrote that Friedrich’s painting seemed to be dreaming Young’s *Night Thoughts*, and that part of the attraction of gazing at the sea from the shore consisted in the idea that the human soul has come from there and must return.ⁱⁱⁱ Edward Young’s long poem, *Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality* (1742-5),

repeatedly uses the ocean as a metaphor for eternal life. Young imagines the human soul waiting to embark across the sea of death, beyond which there are “Worlds unknown.” He advises his readers to “Walk thoughtfull on the silent, solemn Shore,/ Of that vast Ocean.”^{iv} Although he was an avid reader of poetry, Constable is not definitely known to have read Young’s poem. However, it was very popular in his lifetime, and the ideas were sufficiently widespread for him to have been affected by them. It was certainly well known to some of his artistic contemporaries. Young’s *Night Thoughts* was illustrated by William Blake, made a strong impression on Samuel Palmer, and was apparently one of the three volumes J. M. W. Turner carried around with him in his travelling-box.^v It was translated into French and German, and went through many English editions up to the mid-nineteenth century.^{vi}

Although the connection with Young is somewhat speculative, we are on stronger ground when we consider the influence of Wordsworth, whom Constable is known to have admired. The famous lines from *Intimations of Immortality*, first published in *Poems*, 1807, expresses ideas similar to those of Young:

Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.^{vii}

The “immortal sea” is a metaphor for the eternal life from which the human soul comes and to which it must return after death. Wordsworth, like Young, assumes that death is not an ending, but a voyage to a new life, just as a journey across the sea results in a landing on a distant shore. These metaphorical readings of the sea and coast were combined with belief in a benevolent Christian God, a belief that was certainly shared by Constable. In a letter to his great friend, Archdeacon John Fisher, Constable writes admiringly of Fisher’s reference to the “everlasting voice” of the sea.^{viii} Fisher,

in turn, may have got this idea from Robert Southey's lines: "Great ocean with its everlasting voice,/ As in perpetual jubilee, proclaim'd/ The wonders of the almighty."^{ix} And, as we shall see, Constable's contacts with the coast came at crucial times in his life, when thoughts of birth and death were uppermost in his mind.

The coast was also a protective, political boundary, the edge of the nation. In the early nineteenth century this identification was particularly powerful, as a consequence of the Napoleonic Wars. Visitors to seaside resorts would see the Channel fleet patrolling the coasts, protecting them from enemy action. The invasion threat reached a peak in the summer of 1803, after the rupture of the Peace of Amiens. Constable spent nearly four weeks on an East Indiaman, the *Coutts*, earlier in this year, a time of temporary peace with Napoleonic France. He went on board and sketched Nelson's ship, the *Victory*, at Chatham, travelled down the Thames to Gravesend, Deal and Dover, and made many studies of shipping, probably with the idea of a career as a marine painter.^x Constable's childhood and early adulthood had already been marked by recurrent threats of revolution and invasion, especially in his home area of East Anglia. He was fiercely patriotic and right-wing throughout his life, fearful of demagogues, agitators and the rabble. He was an avid reader of *John Bull*, the ultra-Tory newspaper, opposed Parliamentary reform because it would give the government into what he called the dregs of the people, and was deeply suspicious of the French. For Constable, as for many of his contemporaries, the English Channel was a barrier to the contagion of revolution, as well as a protection against an invading enemy.

Thirdly, the coast was a place to go in search of health and convalescence, where sea-bathing might restore the animal spirits and cure depression, and where the fresh air and sea breezes could be beneficial to those with respiratory diseases. Constable spent several holidays in Brighton, where his wife Maria went to relieve her tuberculosis. However, the association of the coast with health was balanced by the ever-present consciousness of the dangers of the sea. Shipwrecks were extremely common in Constable's lifetime. His coastal scenes, more often than not, show stormy weather and

waves whipped up by the wind. This choice of effects emphasizes the health-giving properties of the sea air, which was constantly being cleansed and renewed by the wind. Unlike today's tourists, who seek warmth and sunshine on the beach, early nineteenth-century visitors were more interested in the bracing and exhilarating properties of the sea air. At times, however, Constable's obvious delight in such effects appears to shade over into a much darker vision of the sea as the harbinger of death.

The sea and coast were important to Constable's family. His uncle served in the Royal Navy, and Constable himself grew up at East Bergholt, not far from where the River Stour enters the sea at Harwich. Flour produced at Flatford Mill was taken down the Stour to Mistley (on the estuary just south of Ipswich) and then on to London in his father's ship, the *Telegraph*.^{xi} Constable's voyage on the *Coutts* in April 1803 took him from Chatham past Sheerness and Margate round the North Foreland to Dover. In 1816, he spent seven weeks near the Dorset coast on his honeymoon with John Fisher and his wife in Osmington, just to the north and east of Weymouth. Later on, from 1824 to 1828 there were regular visits to Brighton. He produced two large coastal scenes for exhibitions: *The Chain Pier, Brighton* (fig. 7), and *Hadleigh Castle* (fig. 8), the latter based on a site he had visited in 1814 and presumably passed on his *Coutts* voyage in 1803. In the early 1820s he also painted a number of pictures of Harwich and Great Yarmouth (figs. 3 and 4): he could have visited Harwich easily from East Bergholt, but, curiously, there is no record of him ever visiting Great Yarmouth. The coast as Constable knew it, therefore, was the so-called invasion coast of south-east England, the broad beaches where Napoleon threatened to land in his flat-bottomed boats, protected by the Martello towers that were being built in his lifetime. Hadleigh Castle is the relic of an earlier time of war with France, protecting the approaches up the Thames to London.

In October 1816 Constable's married life began with a seven-week honeymoon in John Fisher's house, at Osmington near Weymouth. Here the two couples went on walks along the shore and on the hills above the sea. Constable's sketches from that period show a new interest in the sky and in

stormy weather: he seems to have been stimulated by the coastal setting and its associations to branch out in a new direction in his art. The couple in his small sketch, *Weymouth Bay* (fig. 2) have been interpreted as Fisher and his wife, but they might equally well have an autobiographical significance, representing a young couple setting out together to face whatever storms life may bring.^{xii}

This sketch became the basis for one of the mezzotints engraved by David Lucas for Constable's publication of 1829, *English Landscape Scenery*. In the mezzotint, however, the couple have been replaced by anonymous working figures, suggesting that Constable felt the earlier composition was too personal. The scene had other connotations as well. In 1830 Constable gave a proof of the mezzotint to Mrs Leslie, the wife of his good friend and eventual biographer, Charles Robert Leslie, the man who replaced John Fisher as Constable's closest friend after the latter died in 1832. He accompanied the gift with a letter which shows that he was aware of the association of the area with the death of John Wordsworth, brother of the poet and cousin to Mrs Fisher:

I shall now to give value to the fragment I send you, apply to it the lines of Wordsworth – '...That sea in anger/ And that dismal shoar.' I think of 'Wordsworth' for on that spot, perished his brother in the wreck of the Abergavenny.^{xiii}

John Wordsworth was the captain of the *Earl of Abergavenny*, which sank off the coast of Weymouth on 6 February 1805. The poet wrote his *Elegiac Stanzas, suggested by a picture of Peele Castle, in a storm, painted by Sir George Beaumont* in July 1806. Wordsworth writes of how he "could have fancied that the mighty Deep/ Was even the gentlest of all gentle things"; but since his brother's death by drowning, everything has changed: "Not for a moment could I now behold/ A smiling sea, and be what I have been."^{xiv} This poem is likely to have been well known to Constable before his honeymoon, as Sir George Beaumont was an early friend and patron of his. One can only speculate on the conversations in Fisher's house during that holiday in 1816,

but thoughts of new beginnings, and tragic endings, in life were evidently associated with the symbolism of the sea and shore. Maria, Constable's new wife, was probably pregnant by the time they left in December, as she had a miscarriage in February.

A new interest in weather is also evident in the National Gallery's *Weymouth Bay*, probably produced on this honeymoon but possibly adapted later from a sketch done at that time. Constable shows a storm clearing off, with an astonishing arrangement of clouds which has been described as "perhaps the most distinctive and individual sky Constable had yet painted."^{xv} Though it looks sketchy – and the ground has been left bare for the sand – it is quite large at 21 by 30 inches, the size of canvas Constable preferred for the pictures he painted entirely in the open air. It is assumed that Constable witnessed this cloudscape on the spot, but it is uncannily similar to the cloudscape in a painting by Ruisdael, *Wheat Fields*, which is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. There was a painting by Constable, a copy after "The Cornfield" by Ruisdael, in the sale of the artist's possessions after he died (no. 52).^{xvi} Perhaps Constable sketched the cloud formations because they reminded him of a Ruisdael painting. Whatever the precise nature of the relationship with the earlier painting, it is significant that it was on the coast that Constable first felt able to produce such effective perspective and movement in his clouds.

Constable also painted a picture of *Weymouth Bay from the Downs above Osmington Mills* (now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), looking towards the Isle of Portland – an exhilarating expanse of turf, sea and sky. It is the same size as the National Gallery picture, but more finished, though the foreground is still quite sketchy. Neither painting was exhibited or sold and they probably would have been too lacking in "incident" for contemporary tastes – another painting of Weymouth Bay which Constable exhibited in 1819 was described by one critic as "a sketch of barren sand without interest."^{xvii} To modern eyes, used to excessive tourist development, it is precisely the emptiness of these scenes that makes them so attractive, however.

More successful commercially were the pictures of Harwich and Yarmouth. Rather shockingly, he produced at least three replicas, or versions, of each one and used the same sky for them all – even though they were oriented in opposite directions, so that in the Harwich pictures the clouds move away from the land, while in the Yarmouth pictures, exactly the same formation is moving towards the coast. A *Harwich Lighthouse* (fig. 3) was exhibited in 1820, a *Yarmouth Jetty* (fig. 4) in 1823. Harwich is close to East Bergholt and there is a sketchbook drawing of the scene. But there are no surviving preparatory studies at all for the view of Yarmouth, nor is there any other evidence that Constable ever went there.^{xviii} As well as selling versions of these compositions, he gave them away to friends, and their reactions show that the pictures were appreciated because they reminded their viewers of the health-giving effects of a visit to the seaside. Mr Pulham wrote to thank Constable for a *Harwich Lighthouse* in 1824:

I do not know that you could have pleased me more, than by giving me a Resemblance of a scene, that brought to my mind the remembrance of many a youthful Ramble over the very spot you have so faithfully delineated ... I think I feel myself benefitted by the sea air.^{xix}

While Constable wrote to a friend, the bibliographer John Martin, in 1831 that

My poor friend Dr Gooch used to put a similar picture of Yarmouth which I did for him – on the sofa while he breakfasted as he used to say on the seashore enjoying its breezes –^{xx}

Dr Gooch was given the picture in gratitude for his care of Constable's wife – and like her he was in need of sea breezes as he also suffered from consumption.^{xxi}

By the time he exhibited *Yarmouth Jetty* Constable had spent two summers at Hampstead making systematic studies of skies and clouds. He annotated these with notes about the wind speed, using the Beaufort scale which had originally been developed for use at sea.^{xxii} Therefore, when he started

making studies on the coast again at Brighton in 1824 he was extremely knowledgeable about meteorology. He was obviously prepared to use these cloud studies for future paintings: on one of them, a cloud study now in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, he noted that it was “very appropriate for the coast at Osmington”.^{xxiii} Constable argued in one of his lectures on landscape that painting was a “science”, which should be pursued as “an inquiry into the laws of nature”, but it is rather surprising that he was prepared to use a sky he had recorded in Hampstead for a coastal scene, where, presumably, the atmospheric conditions, including the behaviour of the wind and the degree of pollution would have been quite different.^{xxiv}

It was in May 1824 that Constable first sent his wife and children down to Brighton: as he wrote to Fisher, “this warm weather has hurt her a good deal, and we are told we must try the sea”, so they took a house close to the beach, which evidently had a view of the sea.^{xxv} There is no evidence that Constable or his wife bathed in the sea when they were in Brighton – in fact Constable was doubtful about the efficacy of bathing for the children and told Maria she should not make them bathe if they do not want to.^{xxvi} Instead, they took advantage of the walks and the fresh air, and the views that could be seen from the windows and on the nearby beach. Maria also did some sketching. On 23 May 1824 Maria wrote to Constable “I do nothing but study skies all day, it is a fine situation for that.”^{xxvii} And later that year, in October, she wrote “We have a fine gale today and a grand sea ... I have not been able to stir out to day for the wind.”^{xxviii}

Constable’s first Brighton sketches demonstrate a heartfelt response to the wide spaces and the opportunities for observing the clouds as they rolled across the sky. He adopted a broad, panoramic format for some of his sketches, and most of them show stormy or at least cloudy weather. *Brighton Beach, with Colliers* (Victoria and Albert Museum) is exceptional in showing sunshine and blue sky. The inscription on the back was made partly for the benefit of Constable’s friend John Fisher, who was godfather to his daughter Maria:

3d tide receding left the beach wet – Head of the Chain Pier Brighton Beach July 19 Evg. 1824 – My dear Maria’s Birthday Your God-daughter – Very lovely Evening – looking eastward – cliffs & light off a dark grey [?] effect – background – very white and golden light.^{xxix}

It is significant that Constable chose to make a sketch on a family birthday, when one might suppose he had other demands on his time. Was he thinking of Wordsworth’s “immortal sea” from which little Maria, now five years old, had come? This sketch was one of a series lent to Fisher in 1825. Fisher had asked Constable to lend him a sketchbook, so that his wife could make copies from it to improve her drawing skills; Constable responded by sending a batch of sketches to his friend in January 1825, writing ‘I have enclosed in the box a dozen of my Brighton oil sketches - perhaps the sight of the sea may cheer Mrs F’ (who had been ill with inflammation on her chest) ‘- they were done in the lid of my box on my knees as usual.’^{xxx} As with the paintings owned by Pulham and Gooch, there was an assumption that looking at paintings of the coast would have beneficial effects similar to those experienced by actually visiting and breathing the sea air. Returning them to Constable three months later (although Constable had asked for them back “at your leisure but the sooner the better”), Fisher enclosed as a “remunerating fee” a set of sermons by William Paley, which he said were “fit companions” for the sketches, being “exactly like them: full of vigour, and nature, fresh, original, warm from observation of nature, hasty, unpolished, untouched afterwards.”^{xxxi} The exchange of sermons for sketches – and sermons by the man who had done more than anyone else to popularize the idea of the “Argument from Design” that is, the argument that the perfection of the world proved the existence of a benevolent creator – strongly implies that Constable’s sketching was regarded by both men as having a spiritual dimension.

Perhaps this was Constable’s state of mind when he made a sketch on New Year’s Day 1825, *Sea near Brighton* (fig. 5) one of the very few occasions when he sketched out of doors in the winter. It was also a Sunday. It is puzzling that he would have sat out on the beach for two whole hours at this time of day, presumably leaving his family indoors. He may have hoped that

the painting would serve as an act of praise of the Creator, equivalent to worship in church, as well as a charm to ensure a better prospect for his wife's health in the new year. It is not clear how far Constable was aware that Maria's illness was terminal. The symptoms of tuberculosis, or consumption, were well known, but the name of her disease is never mentioned in his correspondence. After she died he drew analogies between his state of mind and the increasingly stormy landscapes that he produced. It was in the later Brighton sketches that some of the most spectacular storms appear. *Stormy Sea, Brighton*, 1828 (fig. 6) dates from their last visit, just a few months before Maria died, and its stormy subject and rough palette knife technique have been linked to Constable's emotional turmoil at this time. With sketches like these, it is tempting to think that painting the sea had a therapeutic benefit for Constable, soothing his mental and emotional health just as the breezes soothed his wife's physical condition.

Most of Constable's Brighton oil sketches concentrate on sea and sky. However, he was also making drawings of the human activities going on in the resort, and at one point had a commission for 12 drawings, which were to be engraved in London and published in Paris.^{xxxii} His initial reaction to Brighton, a fashionable, and growing resort in the 1820s, was not at all favourable. He was famously dismissive of its modern aspects in a letter to John Fisher:

Brighton is the receptacle of the fashion and off-scouring of London ... the beach is only Piccadilly ... by the seaside. Ladies dressed & undressed – gentlemen in morning gowns & slippers on, or without them altogether about knee deep in the breakers – footmen – children – nursery maids, dogs, boys, fishermen – preventive service men (with hangers and pistols), rotten fish & those hideous amphibious animals the old bathing women, whose language both in oath and voice resembles men – all are mixed up in endless and indecent confusion. The genteeler part, the marine parade, is still more unnatural – with its trimmed and neat appearance & the dandy jetty or chain pier, with its long and elegant strides into the sea a full ¼ of a mile. In short there is

nothing here for the painter but the breakers - & sky – which have been lovely indeed and always varying.^{.xxxiii}

Constable appears to have been shocked by the social mixing and “indecent” he found in Brighton. He was also contemptuous of the new building in the resort which he found “unnatural”. Nevertheless, the marine parade and chain pier provided the subject for his only big exhibition painting of Brighton, *The Chain Pier, Brighton* (fig. 7). It is likely that Constable hoped its subject matter would appeal to a buyer who had spent a holiday in the town, although in the event it was not a commercial success, and stayed in his possession until his death. This painting is very different from his sketches but it still manages to accommodate “the breakers and the sky” – indeed, as Timothy Wilcox has pointed out, this painting includes a sky which is the largest in area that he ever painted.^{.xxxiv}

Constable’s correspondence shows that he thought of the coast as a place for healthy air and fecundity. In April 1825 he writes to Fisher of the coast at Osmington, the “air of which is a delicious mixture of warmth and freshness” and how it will settle his (that is, Fisher’s) wife to rights.^{.xxxv} Perhaps the sea air also had aphrodisiac qualities for him. In September 1826 he went to Brighton alone, to fetch back his two sons who had been staying there with a family friend. While he was there he wrote to Maria:

I wished much for you when I heard – and saw – and smelt – the dear old sea, which has always done you so much good, and certainly there is no such place for children – and moreover they swarm here ... if I may judge by appearances, Old Neptune gets all the Ladies with child – for we can hardly lay it to the men which we see pulled and led about the beach here.^{.xxxvi}

Constable seems to have overcome his initial prudishness to see the coast as a good place for flirtation and procreation. Brighton, of course, already had a strong reputation for sexual pleasures, thanks to the residence of the Prince Regent. Constable’s idea that it is Old Neptune, rather than the male invalids

in evidence on the beach, that gets the women pregnant conjures up images of the delights of bathing that are reminiscent of the drawings of Thomas Rowlandson.

It was during these Brighton years that Constable had major success in France, selling several pictures to two French dealers, Arrowsmith and Schroth, and winning gold medals at the Paris Salon of 1824 and at Lille in 1825. He resisted invitations to pay a visit across the Channel, however. On 22 June 1824 he wrote to Maria “I hope not to go to Paris as long as I live. I do not see any end it is going to answer.”^{xxxvii} A few weeks later he reported that the French critics are angry with the French artists for admiring his works: he writes to his wife:

All this is funny enough, and very amusing, but they can't get at me on this side of the water, and [I] will never forsake old England, the land of my happiness ...^{xxxviii}

Although he later relented somewhat from this stance, and was more positive in later letters about the likelihood of a visit to Paris, the idea of old England, and the need for protection against France, the traditional enemy, seem to have inspired Constable's last major painting of the coast, *Hadleigh Castle* (fig. 8).

It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1829, entitled “Hadleigh Castle. The mouth of the Thames – morning after a stormy night.” Constable made his first drawing of the subject in June 1814, when the Napoleonic wars seemed to have ended with the Treaty of Fontainebleau, but were in fact to resume in the “Hundred Days” leading up to Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo in 1815. He wrote to Maria Bicknell, who at that point was his fiancée: “At Hadleigh there is a ruin of a castle which from its situation is a really fine place – it commands a view of the Kent hills, the Nore and North Foreland & looking many miles out to sea”.^{xxxix} It was obviously the view that really seized Constable's imagination, especially since it looked towards the Nore, a large sandbank at the mouth of the Medway, next to the naval dockyards at

Sheerness where warships were stationed. The view from the castle in 1814 would have reminded him of his trip on the *Coutts* in 1803, also made at a time when the war seemed to be over. In Constable's correspondence, the painting is often referred to simply as "the Nore".^{xI} The ruin of the castle, built by Edward III in the thirteenth century in the face of an earlier threat from France, dominates the left-hand side of the painting, but on the right and in the distance the rays of the sun break through the clouds to shine on the Nore, and the shipping sheltering there, as well as on the dockyard town of Sheerness. In the foreground a shepherd and a herdsman go about their peaceful everyday activity, protected by the Royal Navy from the disruption that would have ensued if Napoleon had invaded. Both in 1814 and in 1829, the latter part of Constable's title, "morning after a stormy night" would have had a metaphorical significance, the "stormy night" being the years of war. This theme gave him the excuse to paint a splendidly stormy sky.

The subject also had a more personal significance for Constable. On that visit in 1814 he had met the vicar who had christened him, and he had written to Maria that he "was always delighted with the melancholy grandeur of a sea-shore."^{xII} When he took up the subject again in 1828 that impression of melancholy was made all the more intense by Maria's recent death. He jokingly referred to himself as a "ruin" in this period of his life: did he think of the stretch of water between the two sides of the Thames estuary as being like the uncrossable gulf that separated him from his beloved wife? Sheerness is lit up by the rays of the morning sun, like a distant prospect of a promised land, or a heavenly one.

In 1829, when he published his collection of mezzotints entitled "English Landscape Scenery", Constable included four coastal scenes amongst the 22 plates. In the letterpress to one of these, Sea-beach, Brighton, he wrote: "Of all the works of the Creation none is so imposing as the Ocean; nor does Nature anywhere present a scene that is more exhilarating than a sea-beach, or one that is so replete with interesting material to fill the canvass (sic) of the Painter."^{xIII} This accolade is perhaps surprising, as Constable painted few exhibition pictures of the coast, but his coastal sketches obviously had great

significance for him. He gave away small coast scenes as presents to friends, and lent the sketches to his friend John Fisher. They are associated with events such as his own birth, his daughter's birthday, the start of his married life and the beginning of a new year. For Constable, the coast was the boundary between earthly and heavenly life, but also between "old England" and the foreigner; and it was a place where his interest in skies and weather could develop freely, bringing the health-giving sea breezes back into his pastoral landscapes, and thus to his legacy as the quintessential painter of rural England.

i Anne Lyles, "'Turner, Calcott and Collins will not like it': Constable, Brighton and the Sea," in Christine Riding and Richard Johns, *Turner and the Sea* (London: Thames and Hudson in association with Royal Museums Greenwich, 2014), p. 158.

ii See Christiana Payne, *Where the Sea meets the Land: Artists on the Coast in Nineteenth-century Britain* (Bristol: Sansom and Company, 2007), especially Chapters 1, 3 and 4.

iii Heinrich von Kleist, "Emotions upon viewing Friedrich's Seascape", first published in *Berliner Abendblätter*, no 12, 13 October 1810. In E. G. Holt, ed., *The Triumph of Art for the Public, 1785-1848* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 173.

iv "Night" V, II, 669-70.

v On the importance of Young to Blake and Palmer, see Christiana Payne, "'A mild, a grateful, an unearthly lustre': Samuel Palmer and the moon", *Burlington Magazine* No. 1310, vol CLIV (May 2012), p. 336. For Turner and Young, see W. Thornbury, *The Life of J. M. W. Turner, R. A.* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1897), p. 364.

vi Harold Forster, *Edward Young: The Poet of the Night Thoughts* (Harleston, Norfolk: the Erskine Press, 1986), p. 341ff, p. 387ff.

vii "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood", ll. 162-8. Walford Davies, ed., *William Wordsworth: Selected Poems* (London and Melbourne: Dent Everyman, 1975), p. 110.

viii R. B. Beckett, ed., *John Constable's Correspondence* (6 volumes, Ipswich: Suffolk Records Society, 1962-8) (hereafter JCC) Vol. II, p. 171. Letter posted 29 August 1824.

ix From *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*, I, ll. 292-4.

x See Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), Vol. I, nos. 1803.5-51, pp. 45-51.

xi JCC I, pp. 5-6, 15.

xii Mark Evans, with Stephen Calloway and Susan Owens, *John Constable: The Making of a Master* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum Publishing, 2014), p. 68.

xiii JCC III, pp. 28-9.

xiv Ll. 11-12, 37-8. Davies, ed., *Wordsworth*, pp. 127-8.

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- xv Catalogue entry by Timothy Wilcox in Edward Morris, ed., *Constable's Clouds. Paintings and Cloud Studies by John Constable* (National Gallery of Scotland and National Museums and Galleries on Mersyde, 2000), p. 46.
- xvi Seymour Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael: Master of Landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 35.
- xvii Graham Reynolds, *The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), Vol I, no. 19.9, p. 32.
- xviii Reynolds, *Later Paintings*, Vol. I, nos. 22.36-8, p. 108.
- xix JCC IV, p. 92, 18 July 1824.
- xx JCC V p. 89, c. July or August 1831.
- xxi Anthony Bailey, *John Constable: A Kingdom of his Own* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2006), p. 187.
- xxii John Thornes has found that a form of the scale was used in 23 of the 49 surviving inscribed sky studies. J. E. Thornes, *John Constable's Skies* (Birmingham University Press, 1999), p. 58.
- xxiii This cloud study is dated 5 September 1822.
- xxiv R. B. Beckett, ed., *John Constable's Discourses* (Ipswich: Suffolk Records Society, 1970) p. 69.
- xxv JCC VI, p. 157, letter dated 8 May 1824.
- xxvi JCC II, p. 388, 9 September 1825.
- xxvii JCC II, p. 316.
- xxviii Ibid p. 368-9, 26 or 27 October 1824.
- xxix Reproduced in Evans et al., *John Constable*, p. 72.
- xxx JCC VI, p. 189. Letter dated 5 January 1825.
- xxxi JCC VI, p. 196. Letter dated 8 April 1825.
- xxxii This was a commission from John Arrowsmith. See JCC VI, p. 184, letter dated 17 December 1824.
- xxxiii JCC VI, p. 171.
- xxxiv In Morris, ed., *Constable's Clouds*, p. 93.
- xxxv JCC VI, p. 198.
- xxxvi JCC II, p. 433-4.
- xxxvii JCC II, p. 340.
- xxxviii JCC II, p. 356, 7 July 1824.
- xxxix JCC II, p. 127. Letter dated 3 July 1814.
- xl See Payne, *Where the Sea meets the Land*, pp. 73-5.
- xli JCC II, p. 127. Letter dated 3 Jul 1814.
- xlii Andrew Wilton, *Constable's 'English Landscape Scenery'* (London: British Museum Publications Ltd, 1979), p. 42.

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